

as a guide to a party of tourists inspecting the lions of the capital, or for a few pence carry a message to the most remote part of the town. Sometimes he figured as an extra waiter at a public dinner." Having donned a dirty surplice, he officiated in some of the most aristocratic English marriages of the time. The prophet was not without honour save among his own people.

But expedition and cheapness soon directed lovers to a more convenient point, where equally disreputable parsons could be had for a guinea. The village of Gretna, in the south-east corner of Dumfriesshire, acquired a monopoly in the matter of fugitive marriages, and furnished a succession of officiators worthy of the cause. A cottager named Scott was the first of this string of couplers; but, owing to his comparatively respectable antecedents and character, very little more is known of him. George Gordon, a retired soldier, succeeded Scott, and professed to be licensed by Government at an annual sacrifice to himself of £50. His commission was never examined, but his occupation was lost on account of the superior qualifications of Joe Paisley, of the tobacco trade. This individual was chiefly distinguished for his eminently ecclesiastical demeanor, and for his immense capacity as regards brandy. While George Gordon officiated in complete military costume, consisting of a large cocked hat, red coat, high-top boots, and an enormous sword, "Joe Paisley's 'get up' was strictly clerical," comprising "a gown, cassock, bands, and a three-cornered hat that gave his comely face and form a most imposing appearance." When the old war-horse raved about his royal commission and £50 a year, Joe Paisley calmly called for another quart of brandy, and went to work at another quid of tobacco. The tavern-keepers of Gretna could never be callous to the claims of a man who, with

"Ned the Turner," had in the space of six secular days drunk a whole anker of cognac, and had appeared at Kirk on the seventh day in a clean shirt, and looking as if nothing had happened to him. He drank more brandy and chewed more tobacco than any other Scotchman, and finished a long and successful career in old age, at a weight of twenty-five stone.

On the death of this celebrity, David Laing, the retired pedler, reigned in his stead. His official uniform was an orthodox three-cornered hat, a black coat, black velvet waistcoat and breeches, and high-top boots. But he never attained to the height or weight of his illustrious predecessor, who, in his peculiar line, was never surpassed.

It was by such fellows as these that some of England's most highly descended sons and daughters were united in the bonds of holy matrimony. They blessed the fugitives who had come under their administration with priestly solemnity, commanded them to kiss each other in token of their tender feelings, and handed to them a dirty, mis-spelt certificate, which should be the only proof of their children's legitimacy. Railway enterprise bore a principal part in putting a stop to their vocation. The alarming facilities afforded to runaway matches by a speed of forty miles an hour, impressed the English mind with a due sense of the pressing need of reform, and the 19 & 20 Vict., c. 96, enacts that, "After the thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, no irregular marriage contracted in Scotland by declaration, acknowledgment, or ceremony, shall be valid unless one of the parties has at the date thereof his or her usual place of residence there, or has lived in Scotland for twenty-one days next preceding such marriage; any law, custom, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding."