

II.—PSALM BOOK AND BIBLE.

A COLLEGE education, a high moral character, a license to preach the Gospel, and a patron, were necessary for the equipment of the minister. Still he was a man inferior to the beadle—in the beadle's estimation. To be minister's man was no easy matter—at least the man thought so, and no one seems to have cared to contradict him. It is recorded of a beadle who, having been requested to recommend somebody for a beadleship, thought for a few minutes, and then said—"No. Had it been a minister, I could ha'e dune something for ye, but a beadle's a different matter."

The minister's man, from long association with his master, and from being in all the secrets of manse and church, considered himself *the* man in the parish who knew how things were going, and *the* man in the parish who was required to keep things going right. Very often he was humoured by the minister, and silently obeyed by all those of the congregation with whom he came in contact; and between one thing and another, he was a character well-defined, apart, and distinctive from his fellow parishioners.

An amusing instance of the exaggerated ideas of his own importance is told of the beadle of the City Road Church in Brechin. The church used to be

called the Back Side Church by adherents of rival sects. The beadle was engaged one day sweeping out the church and dusting the seats. It happened that a young probationer, rather a tyro in pulpit oratory, had been engaged to preach on the morrow, and had stolen down quietly to have a look at the church and familiarise himself somewhat with the surroundings. The supercilious beadle watched him out of the corner of his eye for a few moments, taking a mental inventory of his appearance. Then, with all the conscious pride of office, and with a swelling sense of local importance, he addressed the timid, shrinking youth—"Are ye the chiel that's to preach the morn?" "Yes, I believe I am," answered the minister. "Aweel, then," answered the beadle, "see an' tak' care o' yoursel'. Ye ken *this* is Brechin."

A beadle, who had also an idea of his own importance, on being asked if he knew whether or not the minister was to be preaching on the approaching Sabbath, dryly replied, "It's ill for me to ken a' that the minister intends doin'. Come ye to the kirk, an' whether the minister's there or no', ye'll see me in the poopit as usual, at ony rate."

"Indeed, sir," said Robert Fairgrieve, the beadle of Ancrum, one day to the minister, "huz that are office-bearers should be ensamples to the flock."

In a church in Glasgow there was an aged beadle who was something of a character. Among the children he was familiarly known as "Robbie Roy, the beadle boy." "Well, Robert," said a friend shortly

after the settlement of a new minister, "how is the new minister going to do?" "Oh," was the cheery reply, "we're getting him into shape by degrees!"

The beadle seldom failed to indulge in a little bit of sarcasm at the expense of young sprigs of the ministry. A young minister, with rather an exalted opinion of his powers, said to the beadle—"I don't think I need put on the gown, John. It's only an encumbrance, though some folk seem to think it makes a preacher more impressive." John, who had a less exalted opinion of the preacher's powers, quietly replied,—“Ay, sir, that's juist it, sir. Pit it on for ony sake. It mak's ye mair impressive, and ye need it a', ye need it a'.”

But sarcasm was not always the predominating feature. They were kindly disposed at times. A young student, when about to deliver his "maiden" sermon in a village on the East Coast, felt a little discomfited at the sea of faces before him, and for the time being was at a loss how to begin. The old beadle, standing at the door, and taking in the situation at a glance, walked straight through the church, mounted the pulpit steps, and whispered in his ear—"Preach awa', my mannie, and dinna gi'e a damn for ony o' them!"

In a Parish Church near Glasgow, a baptism was to take place one Sabbath, but, owing to some street repairs, no water could be got for the font. "What shall we do, John?" said the minister. John, eager to assist in the difficulty, replied, "Juist

put your hand in the font an' lat on there's water in't, and I am sure the wean'll no ken ony odds."

A good story relative to shortness of supply—though of a different liquid—come from Kirkintilloch. In a village about three miles from that town an epidemic fever was raging, and, some of the victims being elders of a certain church, a number of the Kirkintilloch elders went to officiate at the Communion in place of the "departed" or "late" officials. While the service was proceeding, the beadle approached the minister and said: "Sir, the elements are done." "Which do you mean, John," enquired the minister, "the bread or the wine?" "The wine, sir," was the reply. "How can you account for that, since we have no more communicants than we had last year, and we ordered the same amount of wine?" pursued the divine. "Hoot awa', sir," retorted John, earnestly; "d'ye no' ken there's a when o' the Kirkintilloch anes ower, an' it's juist a 'clean pop-aff' wi' them!"

"Well, John," said the minister one Sabbath after a collection on behalf of the Jewish Mission, "what sort of help have the Jews got to-day?" "Ou weel," was the pawky beadle's cautious response "I'm thinkin' it'll maybe as weel for the Jews gin they ha'e something o' their ain to fa' back on."

If the beadle was not slow to criticise the collection, he was as quick to sit in judgment on the minister and his pulpit abilities.

An aged country minister, who had an old tailor

as his beadle for many years, was returning from church one Sabbath with the latter, when he thus addressed him—"Thomas, I cannot think how it is that our church should be getting thinner and thinner, for I am sure I preach as well as ever I did, and ought to have far more experience than I had when I first came amongst you." "Indeed," replied Thomas; "I'll tell you what; auld ministers, now-a-days, are just like auld tailors, for I am sure I sew as well as ever I did in my life, and the cloth the same; but it's the cut, sir; ah, it's the new cut."

A minister, who was preaching for a brother minister, was anxious to know what impression he had made, and asked the beadle—"Was my discourse pitched in too high a key? I hope I did not shoot over the heads of the people." "No, ye dinna dae that, sir." "Was it a suitable theme?" asked the preacher. "Yes, it was about right." "Was it too long?" "No, but it was just long enough." "I'm glad of that, for, to tell you the truth, the other day, as I was getting this sermon ready, my dog destroyed four or five pages, and that has made it much shorter." "Eh, man," said the beadle, "I just wish ye could let oor minister ha'e a pup o' that dog."

Another minister was preaching at a small fishing town, and after the service he asked "Weelum," the beadle, how he liked the sermon. "Oh!" quoth Weelum, eagerly, "I liked it rale weel, unco' weel, 'deed, sir, I did; but there was ae thing I didna like." "What was that?" queried the minister.

"It was you tellin' fouk to cast their anchor on the Rock o' Ages. Man," continued the beadle, pawkily, "there is nothing to hold to on a rock."

But if the beadle liked to criticise, he also was criticised, and that to some purpose.

A minister in the north asked his housekeeper what she thought of his new man. "A muckle feckless gomer!" she replied, "that's what I think o' him." "Well," said her master, "I am sorry to hear that, for I have good reason to think that he is very fond of you, and wishes to marry you. But of course from what you say you would not have him." "Oh, weel, I dinna ken," was the reply, "seekin' me wad mak' a difference."

Beadles were often practical men and always looked to the profitable side of things.

The election of a minister to the vacant parish of B—— was keenly contested. It was observed that the beadle took a very active interest in the success of one of the candidates, who, to that official's satisfaction, headed the poll on the voting day. The minister, after his ordination, was told how much he was indebted to the beadle for his good fortune. He felt that he ought to make himself agreeable to his supporter, and accordingly said to him one Sabbath morning—"Sandy, what was it in my sermon that led you to prefer me to Mr. W——?" "Nae-thin' in your sermon at a' man," answered the beadle; "you being juist aboot my ain size, an' Mester W—— sae wee, I thocht your auld claes wad

fit me better." Preaching ability is, therefore, not the only recommendation one may have.

A new minister succeeded in a rural parish a much-respected divine. A gentleman visiting the district shortly after the new settlement, got into conversation with the minister's man on the subject of the new preacher and how he was liked. "Oh! we like him rale weel, but nae sae weel as the auld ane." "Indeed, how's that?" said the visitor; "I hear he's a good preacher, etc." "Oh, ay, he's a guid preacher; but he's naething to the auld ane. Ye see oor last man was terrible weel acquaint wi' the deevil; an', to my mind, a kirk without a deevil is nae worth a doit!"

Ministers, like other folks, sometimes allow the pleasures of the week to enter into their Sabbath. A late reverend doctor, who was a devoted disciple of the rod and reel, had been looking forward to the coming Monday with great anticipation, having made all necessary preparations for an excursion into the country to gratify what with him had become an absorbing passion. Upon his entering the pulpit on Sabbath forenoon, and when John was in the act of turning round to descend the pulpit stair, the minister suddenly leant over, and in an anxious voice, loud enough to be heard by some of his hearers, inquired—"Are you sure, John, the worms are all right?" Appropriately enough, he thereafter preached an eloquent discourse from the

text, "They had toiled all night and caught nothing."

Here is the story of one beadle who was behind his fellows. In the days when the bell of the Old Church of Arbroath was rung by means of a rope which hung down into the lobby of the old spire, the beadle was one Monday forenoon busy at his work. It was a hot day, and to get the benefit of the cool breeze, he had stepped out on to the pavement, and was pulling away vigorously. "Ye're busy the day, Weelum," said a country friend who was passing on a cart. "Fat's adae that you're makin' sic a din?" "A meetin' o' the Guildry," said Weelum, after a specially vigorous pull. "The Guildry? and fa micht they be, na?" Weelum gave another vicious tug at the rope, and then remarked, "Oh, fa wid ken? Anither brak aff they Seceder buddies, I suppose."

The minister of a country parish was suddenly taken ill, and the beadle was deputed to find a substitute to preach on the morrow—Sabbath. The notice was very short, and he had great difficulty in getting someone to fill the pulpit. But finally he decided to call upon an ex-Moderator of the General Assembly, and request him to conduct the service. He did so, and his reverence at once complied. "I hope, sir," said the beadle, apologetically, "that you don't think it presumption, sir. A worse preacher would have done if I had only known where to find him." The speech was somewhat unfortunate, but

the ex-Moderator would doubtless see the point the beadle wished to emphasise.

Some fifty years ago a minister of Monikie had driven in winter to preach for a friend in a bleak upland parish. Drawing his plaid carefully around him, he remarked to his man, "John, this is a caulder pairt than ours." "'Deed is it, minister; it is a full flannel sark caulder nor Monikie."

A probationer was once sent to preach at a small out-of-the-way Highland church. He put up at the local hotel, and after preaching twice on Sabbath was handed the sum of one pound. "Oh, never mind," said the preacher, with an injured and grandiloquent manner. "Hoots, tak' it, laddie; it's fat they a' get," said the beadle, who had been entrusted with the payment. "It will scarcely cover my expenses, or little more; for between hotel and railway fare I'll be out something like seventeen and six." "Seventeen and sax," repeated the beadle musingly; "that wad mak' it one-and-three the sermon, an' dear at the money."

One Sabbath the minister of a small country parish had the misfortune to forget his sermon, and did not discover his loss till he reached the church. The congregation being already assembled, he was in a sorry plight. Suddenly an idea struck him. He sent for John, the beadle, and instructed him to give out the 119th Psalm, while he hurried home for his sermon. On his journey back to church, he saw the faithful beadle standing at the church door

waving his arms and shouting to him. On reaching the door, he exclaimed, "Are they always singing yet, John?" "Ay, sir," replied John, "they're at it yet, but they're cheepin' like sparries."

In a large north country church a fashionably dressed lady happened to go into one of the private pews. The beadle, who was a very stern old fellow, immediately bustled up to her and said, "I'm afraid, miss, you'll have to come out of that; this is a paid pew." "Sir," said the young lady turning sharply round, "do you know who I am? I'm one of the Fifes." "I dinna care," said the old man, "if you are the big drum, you'll ha'e to come out."

A parish church was being beautified by the insertion of a memorial stained-glass window. The old beadle, who was a confirmed grumbler, looked for some time at the operation of the glaziers while inserting the window. The minister, seeing John thus intently gazing, turned to him and said, "Well, John, what is your opinion of our new window?" "Weel, sir," was the reply, "it's maybe very bonny, but in my opinion they micht ha'e been content wi' the gless as God made it."

John Sloan was for a long time beadle to Dr. William Lindsay Alexander, and he and the Doctor got on capitally together. "There were never words atween me and the Doctor," said Sloan. "I did my wark, an' said straicht what cam' into my head, an' the Doctor liked it." Sloan seldom volunteered

advice, but when he did, it was always with good effect. On one occasion he found himself in the Deacons' vestry putting coals on the fire, when the subject under discussion was whether a service, at which a special collection was to be asked, should be held on Sabbath afternoon or evening. Dr. Alexander had just said that he would prefer the afternoon, when Sloan paused for a moment, coal-scuttle in hand, and facing round said, "The Doctor's richt. In the afternoon we'll ha'e oor ain fouk; at nicht there'll be a when Presbyterians—I reckon them at thruppence a dizzen!"

"Well, Saunders," said a country minister to his beadle one Monday morning, "how did you like that minister who was preaching for me yesterday?" "Oh, juist very middlin' ways. He was far ower plain and simple for me. I like a preacher that jummils the joodgment and confoonds the sense awee; and dod, sir, I never hear ony o' them that beat yoursel' at that."

A minister much given to lengthy sermons was preaching one Sabbath in his usual style, oblivious of the fact that the congregation was quietly dispersing. At last he was left alone with the beadle, who, after enduring the sermon for some time, stepped to the door, and, turning, looked at the minister and quietly remarked, "Ca' awa' man, an' fan ye're dune, juist turn the key in the door!"

A newly-placed minister was curious to know what impression his preaching was making upon the

congregation, and with a view to eliciting the information, inquired one day of the beadle—"Well, James, how do you think my preaching is pleasing the people?" "Weel, sir," replied James, "I dinna ken what the congregation may think aboot ye, but as for me, ye're a' richt, sir."

We have said that the beadle was sometimes self-important; he was occasionally vain of his personal appearance.

A young and newly-placed minister was annoyed to find that his beadle was in the habit of using a hair-brush and comb which lay in the vestry, and he even suspected him of utilising his tooth-brush as well. Having resolved to put a stop to this state of matters, he accused the beadle one day of using these articles. "Oo, ay," said Sandy; "I gi'e mysel' a bit touch up like yoursel' on the Sabbath mornin'. It's but richt, sir, that me and you, wha ha'e to stand in the poopit and face the people, should see to our personal appearance."

A minister of a Parish Church in Ayrshire was about to enter the pulpit one day when he found that the precentor had not arrived. In the emergency the beadle was instructed to ring the bell five minutes longer, but even at the end of this period it was found that the precentor had failed to make his appearance. "What's to be done, John?" said the minister to his beadle, in great perplexity. "Weel, sir, I see naething for it but for you to raise the singin' yoursel'." "I do not see how that can be,"

returned his reverence. "I have no voice, so, I think, John, you must try it." "Ah, no, sir;" said the beadle, conscious of ability in at least one thing, "I couldna dae that. I could mebbe at an antrin' time tak' the poopit, but I could never think o' tryin' the lattern."

At a church meeting held about some alterations necessitatng the re-arrangement of the seats, the minister, at the conclusion of his remarks, turned to his beadle and said, "Now, James, don't you think the alterations I have suggested would be a great improvement?" James was not so clear upon this point, but giving his head a scratch, he said, "Weel, sir, I dinna ken. Div ye think it wad gar ye preach ony better?" "Well, I really believe it would." "Then" said James emphatically, "there can be nae doot about the improvement, and the suner it's dune the better."

Sometimes the worthy beadle had his faults, and went down before temptation. A church officer in the north systematically pilfered as much of the collection as would keep him in snuff. The elder habitually counted the money in presence of the minister, put it into the box, turned the key in the lock, and left it there, and as habitually was it discovered that small sums were being extracted. Suspicion fell on the beadle, and one Sabbath after the minister had seen the elder count over the day's drawings, and place the money in the box in the usual way, he returned to the session-house when the



NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT

BRUCE SMITH

Sabbath School was dismissed, and, counting the money again, noticed that the usual small amount was missing. The beadle was accordingly summoned. "David," said the minister "there is something wrong here. Some one has been abstracting money from the box; and you know that no one has access to it but you and me." "Weel, minister," said David in a quite matter-of-fact way, and without the least sign of conscious guilt, "if there is a deficiency, it's for you and me to mak' it up atween us, and say naething about it!"

The worthy functionary has sometimes other, if less heinous faults. A beadle in the west heated his church so effectually one winter day that the building took fire and was burned to the ground. The Deacon's Court held a meeting, which Jeems was called to, and at which he was admonished for his carelessness. Jeems listened for some time to the severe censures passed upon him by the minister, but at length broke in indignantly, exclaiming, "'Deed, sir, but you're makin' an awfu' fuss about it; man, it's the first kirk I ever burned i' ma life."

"I think our minister does weel," said one beadle to another, when their respective ministers were under discussion. "Man! hoo he gars the stour flee oot o' the cooshions!" "Stour oot o' the cooshions!" sneered the other. "If ye've a notion o' powerfu' preachin', come ower and gi'e us a day's hearin'. Wad ye believe it?—for a' the short time yon man o' ours has delivered the Word amang us, he has

knockit three poopits a' to shivers an' dung the guts out o' five Bibles!"

Sometimes the beadle shares his duties, and Will Spiers, a well-known half-wit, was accustomed to assist the beadle of the church of which he was a member. On one occasion a fight took place between two sturdy collies, in one of the aisles, and this interrupted the service for a time. Will rushed to the scene of the riot, and belabouring the belligerents with a stick, exclaimed—"If you would pay mair attention to what the minister's sayin' to you, it would be muckle better for you than tearing your tousie jackets at that gait. 'Tak' better care o' your claes, you blockheads, for there's na' a tailor in Beith can either mend thae, or mak' new anes to you when they're dune."

A village kirk door had been left open during service, and a lamb strayed into the church and began to disturb the congregation by its mournful bleating. The minister leaned over the pulpit, woke the beadle who sat below, and whispered to him in audible tones—"Sandy, remove the lamb." Sandy accordingly proceeded to catch the lamb, and after an exciting chase round the kirk, he got it down the aisle, calling to it in the gentlest tones all the way. "Come awa', my wee lambie, come awa'." The door was reached at last, and quietly shut, but those of the congregation who were near that end of the kirk heard a scuffle and a kick, and an angry voice say, "Get oot o' the hoose o' the Lord, ye brute."

A beadle not far from the parish of St. Andrews was in the habit of going to sleep during service. One Sabbath he took a stranger friend with him to his own seat. By the time the sermon began, John was serenely snoring in the arms of Morpheus, loud enough to cause considerable consternation among the good folks assembled. The minister stopped his discourse, and, addressing the friend of the unconscious beadle, said in a tone of evident irritation, "Would you waken John Campbell there?" With some difficulty his friend succeeded in wakening the somnolent official, who, turning to his visitor, said in a voice of deep vexation and disgust, "Man, he's aye waukenin' me;" and, turning his head, went peacefully to sleep again."

A minister, on being inducted to a very lucrative charge, resolved to secure the full favour of the congregation, and learning that the old beadle was a veritable wiseacre, he at once took him into confidence, by consulting him as to the surest way of attaining his object. "Flatter their supposed virtues," was the advice given by the worthy beadle, "an' wink at their fauts, an' ye'll succeed to perfection, sir."

A minister was one day catechising his flock. The beadle thought it best to keep a modest place near the door, in the hope of escaping the inquisition; but the minister observed him and called him forward. "John," said he, "what is baptism?" "Oh, sir," answered John, scratching his head, "ye ken it's

just saxpence to me and fifteenpence to the precentor."

An Aberdeen church officer was met one day with a bag of sticks on his back. "Far are ye gaen wi' the sticks, John?" said an acquaintance. "To the kirk Sandy, far ither?" "Ay, ay" said Sandy, "fouk need something to keep them warm; an it's nae religion that'll dee't." "Na," said John, dryly, "but the want o't'll keep some fouk I ken gey warm yet, I'm thinkin'."

Dr. William Lindsay Alexander told the following anecdote, which is identified with his first pulpit appearance in the congregation which had known him "man and boy," in a church meeting not very long before his death. "As well as I remember," he said, "I discharged the duty to the best of my ability. But, on coming down to the vestry, one of the worthy deacons came to me and said some very disparaging things about my sermon, saying plainly that this sort of thing would never do! Among other things he said it was too flowery. Saunders, the church-officer, who was in the vestry and was standing with his hand on the door turned round and said, 'F'loers! an' what for no'? What ails ye at floers?' After the deacon went out I went up to Saunders and thanked him for taking my part. 'Weel, Maister Weelum, I juist didna like to see him ower ill to ye; but atween oorsel's, he wisna far wrang, ye ken. *Yon'll no' dae!*'"

This defence of the minister was once undertaken

by Robertson of Irvine's beadle. Dr. Buchanan, the Free Church leader, was preaching at Irvine on one occasion, and his eye being arrested by some *bas reliefs* on the pulpit, he became desirous of some explanations, and called the beadle. The worthy beadle, however, imagined that the Free Church leader saw something Popish in the ornaments, and, fearing that he might expose his minister, would communicate nothing. Questions were asked, but John ventured no explanation. "I canna lay it aff to ye, sir," was all the beadle would say. "Ye'll ha'e to ask himsel'."

The late Rev. Mr. Niven, of Balfron, when he took possession of the manse, employed the servant man who had been with his predecessor for over thirty years. About twenty years after he had been settled Tom was still with him, but one day they had a quarrel, and the minister said—"Now, Tom, we must part at the Term." "Part," said Tom, with the calm determination that he was settled, "whaur are ye thinkin' o' gangin'? Ha'e ye gotten anither kirk?"

John Braedine, beadle in the parish church of Lochwinnoch, somewhat more than a century ago, was once examined by the Presbytery of Paisley as to whether the crime of bigamy was committed in the parish. John could not comprehend what was meant by the term, and when he requested explanation the moderator told him that "it meant a man having two wives at once." "Twa wives at ance!"

said the astonished beadle; "I ken naebody that ever did sic a foolish thing; but I can tell ye o' twa-three that wad like to get quat o' ane."

The worthy beadle of a village of Perthshire was well-known in the neighbourhood as being "drouthy," but at a curling match one winter he unwittingly gave himself away. He was well-nigh being left out of account with the customary dram, when a wag present remarked, "It's little maitter, I'm hearin' he's joined teetotal." "Teetotal!" repudiated John, "I'm the very opposite."

A minister of a Fife church, expostulated one day with his beadle, who was also a drouthy customer, on the evils of drink, said "Man, John, drink is your worst enemy." "Ay," said John thoughtfully, "but ye keep tellin's to love oor enemies." "Yes, John," retorted the minister, "but not to swallow them."

Besides his church duties the beadle almost invariably in country places at least, was gravedigger, and this office added to his emoluments.

"Thomas," said a country minister one day to his "man," "that Disestablishment cry is becoming a serious matter. A number of agitators are going to hold a meeting in our parish this week, and they'll not rest, I fear, until they get us all thrown out of kirk and manse together." "Dinna bother yoursel' about that," responded the beadle, "if the kirk continues to do her duty, the wicked winna prevail against her. As an example o' that, d'ye

mind yon five of the Dissenters that tried to put me out o' the gravediggin' twa years since? Aweel, then, I've happit doon four o' them noo!"

There is a story told of one who was very much addicted to inquiring after sick people. Some one told him old Brown was very ill. "Puir man!" ejaculated the gravedigger, with a feeling, "I am sorry to hear it, but I just houp he'll hover till ance the frost breaks."

On one occasion, when Robin Allison, who was beadle at Kilwinning, had carried some goods for a traveller visiting his customers, he was delighted with a dram over and above his pay. "Dod, that's rale gude o' ye, noo," said Robin; "but maybe I'll be able to dae ye a gude turn yet. Ye ken I'm the gravedigger. Dae—dae ye like your heid heich?" The answer is unknown, but doubtless it was a comforting question.

It is sometimes said that gravediggers never allow long accounts. A young minister was wont to remonstrate with his man for always demanding the burial fee so shortly after an interment had taken place. The beadle "tholed" for a time, but at last made to justify his action, "Eh, sirs, me! I see your reverence maun spend a wheen mair days amang the fouk here afore ye can understand their nature. The principle I ha'e aye found necessary to adopt in a' my business dealin's wi' them is ane I learnt frae my faither afore me. 'Aye tak' the mourner wi' the tear in's e'e'. As sure as death,

sir, gif I waited till the grass grew ower a new-made grave afore I asked for my siller, I may as weel expect the earth to open up an' deliver back its dead as to lippen on gettin' it!"

Shrewd as may be the foregoing "view," the following anecdote shows that another gravedigger was able to guard his own interests:—A vacancy having occurred in the office of gravedigger in a small country parish, one Pate Hardie made application for the appointment. The rate per burial having been duly fixed, the minister had almost closed the bargain, when Pate, with an eye to self-interest, said—"But am I to get onything like steady wark?" "Guid forbid, Pate!" answered the minister, "or ye'd buiry a' the parish in a fortnicht."

Even in his capacity of gravedigger the beadle was not devoid of humour.

In a parish near Inverurie the worthy master of obsequies was rather drouthy, and the minister took occasion once to rebuke him for his misconduct. John faithfully promised he would never get "fou" again. A few days afterwards, however, the minister, on entering the churchyard, found John digging a grave—"bleezin' fou." The minister remonstrated with him, saying, "You have told me a lie, John." John replied, "Ye tell lees yoursel', sir." "How can you make that out?" asked the minister. "Dod, ye tell lees oot o' the poopit. It's nae mony weeks sin ye said 'there was nae repent-

ance in the grave,' an' I've been repentin' here this twa hoors and canna' win oot o' this."

But all the tipping beadles did not seek to hide their faults in the grave. When one of the fraternity was hauled over the coals for his alcoholic propensities by his superior, who thus remonstrated with him, "Look at me, John, I can go through the whole parish without tasting a glass of whisky," he replied triumphantly, "Nae doot, sir, nae doot, but ye see, sir, ye maun understaun' ye're no' half sae *pop'lar* as me."

The gravedigger in a village in the north was much grieved at the death of an intimate crony. Indeed, he took the matter so sorely to heart that he would not speak to any one. On the day of the funeral, when the coffin was lowered, and the ceremony finished, he turned to one of the mourners a very woe-begone countenance, and, in a choking, husky voice, said, "Man, mony a dram we've had thegither."

Notwithstanding the foregoing anecdote, the callousness of gravediggers to grief is proverbial; the nature of their occupation, like that of the surgeon, seemingly dries up the emotional forces of their being. A cheery old man engaged in digging a grave was surprised by a visit from the minister, a young man lately ordained. "You'll have been a long time here, I dare say?" "Ay; I've been beadle and sexton for mair than thirty years," replied the old man, cheerily. "I suppose,



now, you must have buried one member or more out of every family in the parish in that time?" "Gey near't; a' but ane," was the cheery response. Then, in asort of complaining tone, he added, "But there's thae Kidds, noo; they havena sae muckle as broken grund yet."

After a funeral in the north, the son of the deceased handed the gravedigger 10s. 6d., saying, "I suppose that will do?" The official, pocketing the money, remarked rather drily, "I suppose I'll be daein' wi' it, but if your faither had buried you, he wad ha'e gi'en me a guinea."

There is on record a retort of a beadle which is almost equally moving. Saunders was a victim of chronic asthma, and one day, whilst in the act of opening a grave, was seized with a violent fit of coughing. The minister, towards whom Saunders bore little affection, came up to the old man as he was leaning over his spade wiping the tears from his eyes, and said, "That's a very bad cough you've got, Saunders." "Ay, it's no' very gude," was the dry response, "still, there's a hantle fouk lying round about ye there that wud be gey glad o' the like o't."

The beadle of Ancrum, when on his death-bed, was visited by the minister, who was a little surprised to find him in a somewhat restless and discontented humour. On inquiring into the cause of this uneasiness, he received the reply, "Weel, sir, I was just mindin' that I have buried 598 fowk

since I was made bedral of Ancrum, and I was anxious, gin it were His holy will, that I might be spared to mak' it the sax hunder."

A gravedigger of a Perthshire village met the minister's wife one evening, who remarked, "This is cauld an' unhealthy weather, Jeems." "Oh, it's gey cauld, mistress," returned James, "but I can see naething unhealthy about it." "What, James, do you admire this weather?" "No, but it's no' unhealthy. Losh, I ha'ena had ane come my way since auld Peggy Dunlop, an' *she was deein' at ony rate.*"

A gravedigger was remonstrated with for making a serious overcharge for digging a grave. "Weel, ye see, sir," said the old man in explanation, making a motion with his thumb towards the grave, "Him and me had a bit o' a tift twa-three years syne ower the head o' a watch I selt him, an' I've never been able to get the money oot o' him yet. 'Now,' says I to mysel', 'this is my last chance, an' I'll better tak' it.'"

John Prentice, of Carnwath, put his plaint in a pleasant form. "Hech, wow!" he would say, when told of the death of any person. "Ay, man, an' is So-and-So dead? Weel, I wad rather it had been anither twa!"

"Rin awa' hame, bairns," a Perthshire beadle was in the habit of saying to such children as curiosity or playfulness brought to the churchyard. "Awa'

wi' ye! an' dinna come back here again on your ain feet."

The gravedigger seems to have been so callous at times as to look forward to a victim. After an interment one day, as the mourners were retiring, one of the party gave a cough, which caused the sexton to look, and, glancing towards a friend who stood by, he enquired, "Wha ga'e yon howe hoast? He'll be my way gin March."

"I'm gettin' auld an' frail noo, Jamie," said a timorous old lady one day to this same functionary; "there's a saxpence to ye to buy snuff. An' if I sud be ta'en awa' afore I see ye again, ye'll mind an' lay me in oor wastmost lair." "A' richt," said Jamie. "but there may be ithers i' the family that wad like the wastmost lair as weel as you, so, to save disappointment, ye'd better just hurry up an' tak' possession."

But the beadle sometimes meets his match in so far as callous indifference and the practical side of the business are concerned. "What's to pey, John?" asked a farmer of the beadle of Kilwinning, as the finishing touches were being given to the sod on the grave of the farmer's wife. "Five shillin's" said John. "Five shillin's for that sma' job? It's oot o' a' reason. Ye're weel pey'd wi' hauf-a-croon." "She's doon seven feet," said John; "an' I've tell't ye my charge." "I dinna want to quarrel wi' ye here the day, John," said the farmer, very gruffly; "so there's four shillin's, but I winna gi'e ye a far-

din' mair!" "See here!" said John, holding the money on the palm of his left hand just as he had received it, whilst he seized the handle of the spade in a business-like way with the other, "doon wi' the ither shillin', or up she comes!"

In addition to being beadle and sexton and gravedigger, the "man" was occasionally engaged on the glebe at the manse. Mr. Forman, the minister of Kirkintilloch, shortly after his induction, was getting some work done in his garden by the beadle, who demanded payment. On Mr Forman stating that he had got such work done gratis in his former parish, he received the reply, "Na, na, that's no the way here; it's pay and *be paid*."

In the village of M—— an old man was appointed bellman in the parish kirk. This caused great delight to his wife, and one day when she was out talking to her neighbours, she enquired of them, "Did ye hear tell o' the grand job that oor John has got?" "No," said one, "what is it?" The ringing o' the kirk bell." "And what kind o' a wage does he get for that?" queried another. "Oh, he is weel paid. He gets £15 a year an' a *free grave*."

The gravedigger of C—— was much annoyed by a number of lads running over the graves which he had been at some trouble to trim, and on turning on them in indignation, he shouted at the pitch of his voice, "Ye young rascals, ye! if they were

your ain graves you wadna loup ower them sae briskly."

The gravedigger's business is associated to a large extent with fear, and the "city of the dead" after nightfall is a place to be shunned.

In an old-fashioned churchyard a pile of skulls and bones had been turned up in the process of gravedigging. The ploughman in a bothy near by offered a "loon" five shillings to go at night, and remove one. The lad agreed, and started in dark. As he lifted one skull, a hollow voice said, "That's mine!" "A' richt," said the lad, laying the thing down to lift another. Again came from the darkness a voice, "That's mine!" "Gae awa', ye haverin' idiot!" exclaimed the youth in a tone of perfect fearlessness. "Ye canna h'ae twa skulls!"

A gravedigger had occasion to go from home one day on business, and on his way back in the evening he met two fishermen belonging to the same place, whose company he joined. Various subjects were talked over, and about a mile from the village the fishermen bade Willie "goodnight," saying they would take the low road, as they were afraid to pass the kirkyard in the dark. "Oh," said Willie, "I would be more afraid of one living man than ten dead." "A' verra good for you," replied one of his companions, "you're acquaint wi' them."

A gravedigger in a rural district on the Borders became too feeble to perform his duties, and had

to get an assistant. The two did not agree well, but after a few months elapsed Sandy (the gravedigger) died, and Tammas, his assistant, had to perform the last services for his late partner. The minister, who was a wag in his way, strolled up to Tammas while he was giving the finishing touches to the grave, and remarked, "Have ye put Sandy weel doon, Tammas?" "I have done that sir," said Tammas decidedly. "Sandy *may* get up, but he'll be amang the hindmost."

A gravedigger was once asked if he considered himself at liberty to pray for his daily bread consistently with the commandment which enjoined him to wish no evil to his neighbours, and he replied, "Of course I can, sir; ye ken fowk maun be buried."

A gravedigger in the north was asked by his minister one day if he had called upon a certain rich lady to see how she was keeping. "Na, na, sir," was the reply, given with some asperity. "Div ye think I'm a fule? It wad be a rather delicate thing for me, seein' as I'm the gravedigger, to ask about the health of onybody that wasna weel."

In addition to his duties in the churchyard, the beadle was sometimes engaged in agricultural work in the parish.

A minister in the north had a servant man who was familiarly called Jamie. One afternoon the minister was visiting in his parish, and while doing so came up to Jamie, who was resting while the

horses were standing at the "heidrig" of a field which was being ploughed. "Man, Jamie," said the minister, blandly, "you might have had a scythe with you, and been cutting some of this grass on the ditch side while the horses were resting. "Ay, sir," answered Jamie, pawkily, "an' the next time ye're i' the poopit, micht tak' a tub o' tatties wi' ye, an' be parin' them the time the fouk are singin'. Na, na, sir; when fouks restin', they're restin'."

"Oh, Jamie," said the minister another day when they met, "your drills are not nearly straight at all—that is nothing like Willie's work over at the Mains." "Tuts," answered Jamie, pretty coolly, as he turned his team about, "Willie doesna ken his wark. Ye see, sir, when the drills are crookit, the sun gets in on a' sides, an'—an' ye get early taties in consequence!"

Jamie was not the only man who knew his business. A divine in Glenrinnnes engaged a new "minister's man," who hailed from the county of Moray. One morning about the middle of September he burst into the manse in a state of great excitement. "Ah, sir," he broke out, "it's been an awfu' nicht, an' the corn's clean frozen!" "Well, well, John," returned the minister, "it can't be helped; that's what comes of our being so great sinners." "Great sinners," retorted John, "great fiddlesticks! I've been twenty years in the Laich o' Moray, where there's is greater sinners than ever

there was in Glenrinnas, and the deil a pickle corn did ever I see frozen in't."

"Make the paling very high and strong, John," said a minister to his beadle and man-of-all-work, who was erecting a boundary paling in the garden, "for my Christianity can't stand the test of my neighbour's poultry grubbing up my plants." "I believe ye, sir," said the beadle; "because I ha'e aye noticed that there was an end to a' peace, guid-will, and religion whan there wasna a fence."

A minister's man was busily engaged digging one warm spring day when he was visited by the minister. After a few preliminary remarks as to the weather, etc., John dropped a hint that he would be none the worse for a dram, and the hint being taken the bottle was produced. "Dod, sir," said John, as he tasted the liquor, which was hardly of the strongest; "this drap drink brings me in mind o' a sermon ye preached short syne." "How so, John?" queried the minister. "Weel, sir, that day ye had for your subjeck the story o' the gairden and hoo the spirit was willin' but the flesh weak; but I'm thinkin' enoo it's direckly the contrar', for the flesh is willin' but, by my sang! the spirit's weak—ay, deevilish weak!"

Dr. Alexander one day told "Jimms," who, like others of his calling, had his own idea of things, and was somewhat self-willed, that he had planned a new approach to the house, and intended to set about and have it made at once. "Na, na, Doctor,

that'll no dae at a'," Jimms sturdily exclaimed, when explanations of the plan had been laid before him. "Well, but I have resolved to have it done," said the Doctor, reminding Jimms that he was there to carry out orders. "Nae doot, Doctor, in a certain sense that's true." was the reply. "Still I'm here to prevent ye frae spoilin' the property." But the alteration was carried out, and when accomplished Jimms took his full share of the credit. "Ou, ay," he used to say when any expression of approval was made, "nane o' your landscape gardeners here. Me an' the Doctor, we manage it a'."

Sometimes we meet the minister and his man in other circumstances. The story goes that when a certain University sold her honours, a minister, who deemed that his ministrations would be more acceptable and more useful if he possessed a doctorate, put £15 in his purse, and went to that university to purchase for himself a degree. His man-servant accompanied him, and was present when his master was formally admitted to the long-desired honour. On his return, "the Doctor" addressed his servant somewhat as follows, "Noo, Saunders, ye'll aye be sure to ca' me the Doctor; and gin onybody spiers at you aboot me, ye'll be aye sure to say, 'the Doctor's in his study,' or 'the Doctor's engaged,' or, 'the Doctor will see you in a crack.'" "That a' depends," was the reply, "on whether you ca' me the Doctor, too." The Reverend Doctor stared. "Ay, it's juist so," con-

tinued the beadle, "for when I fand that it cost sae little, I e'en got a diploma mysel'. Sae ye'll juist be guid eneuch to say 'Doctor, put on some coals,' or 'Doctor, bring the whisky and hot water;' and gin onybody spiers at ye about me, ye'll be sure to say, 'the Doctor's in the pantry,' or 'the Doctor's diggin' potatoes,' as the case may be."

We have spoken of the "man" indulging sometimes, but he was not alone. The minister was occasionally in the same boat. A former Clerk of the Assembly long presided over a country parish, where his social qualities caused him to be in great request. His man could not always be considered the most perfect example of sobriety, but his shrewd, quaint replies generally contrived to evade the point of the reproof administered to him by his master. On one occasion the minister had been dining with a heritor, and on leaving had enveloped himself in another guest's great-coat without becoming aware of the exchange till he was pursued and the garment reclaimed. Within the week the minister's man was overtaken in his accustomed fault, and on the following morning was called to account, and received a severe reprimand. He took it meekly enough, but just as he was about to retire, and with his hand opening the study door, he delivered himself of this Parthian shot, "Weel, sir, I'll no' say I didna deserve your rebuke; I maybe wisna juist mysel' last night, but there's ae thing I can say, I never was sae bad as no' to ken ma ain claes!"

A minister and his beadle were returning from a real old-fashioned marriage. "We had better gang in by the back, the nicht," said the minister, on arriving near the manse. "What wey?" queried Sandy. "Aweel, there's been a deal o' whisky gaein', and I think it wad be better." "Na, na, straucht forrit, straucht forrit," persisted Sandy. "Very weel, then, but, at ony rate, I'll walk on in front a meenit, and you'll tell's how I'm daein'." This was agreed to, and the minister having walked on a few yards, called back, "How am I daein', then Sandy?" "Brawly, sir, brawly," said the beadle, "but *wha's that wi' ye?*"

Danny Cooper, a beadle at Kirkintilloch, was very fond of whisky, and could drink an inordinate quantity. He was being treated one day, and after swallowing three glasses was asked by the host, "How do you like *that* whisky, Danny?" "'Deed," replied Danny, "I haena fand the taste o't yet!"

Sometimes the beadle is of service to the minister on election and other similar occasions. "Weel, Janet," said Jeems Broom, the beadle, canvassing on behalf of his reverence, "are ye gaun to plump for Mr. P—— at the School Board election? I'm sure ye're ane o' the kindliest, kirk-gaun folk in this parish." "'Deed, no," replied Janet, paying little heed to the latter compliment, "for gif the meenister peys nae mair attention to the weans than he does to their parents, they'll never miss him oot o' the Brod!"

A beadle had repeated cause to complain to his minister of the interference with his duties on the part of his superannuated predecessor. Coming up to the minister one day, he exclaimed, "John's been interferin' again, an' I've come to see what's to be dune?" "Well, I'm sorry to hear it," said the minister, "but, as I have told you before, David, John's a silly body, and you should try, I think, other means of getting rid of his annoyance than by openly resisting him. Why not follow the Scriptural injunction given for our guidance in such cases, and so heap coals of fire on your enemy's head." "Dod, sir, that's the very thing," cried David, taking the minister literally, and grinning with glee at the prospect of an effectual settlement of the difficulty. "Capital, minister; that'll sort him, dod, ay—heap lowin' coals on his head, and burn the wratch."

An old minister, who was for the third time a widower, got into conversation with his beadle, to whom he mentioned his intention of marrying for the fourth time. "Ay, John," said his reverence, "this will be my fourth ane noo." "Juist sae," said John, slowly but moodily. "I would like to have another, just to close my eyes when I'm leaving this world, you know," said the minister. "What do you think of it, John?" "Weel," said John, humorously, "I've only had *twa*, but I can tell ye they've opened my eyes!"

Tammas Smith, the beadle of S—, went home

to his wife, Betty, complaining of being unwell. "An' what's like the matter wi' ye?" asked Betty. "I think it's indigestion," quoth Tammas. "An' hoo ha'e ye got indigestion?" "Aweel," explained Tammas, "I brocht a box frae the train the day to the manse, an' the minister gi'ed me my dinner." "An' what was wrang wi' the dinner?" queried his goodwife. "Oh, the soup was guid, an' the mutton was guid, but it was the prunes did it, for I didna ken what to do wi' the stanes." "An' what did ye do?" "I just swallowed every ane."

We have met the beadle in many circumstances, and we sometimes meet him at the close of his days. The beadle, too, must die.

A story is told of old John Aitken, who officiated for nearly a life-time as beadle of Albion Chapel, City Wall, London. As his end approached, he called his son to his bedside. "Noo, John," he said, "I'm deein'. I've been beadle o' Albion Chapel fifty-twa years, John, an' when I'm gane, they may ca' on you to tak' my place. Noo, my son, I have only ae bit o' advice to gi'e ye." Then, in most solemn and impressive accents, he said, "*Resist a' impruvments!*"

And so, old friend, good-bye.