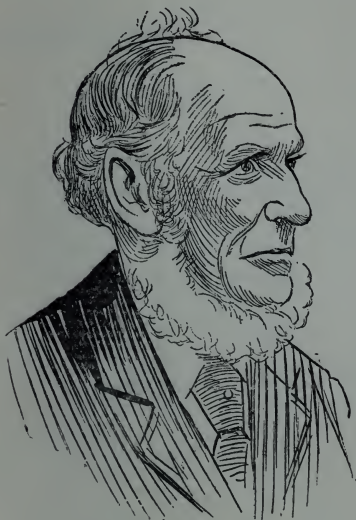


**Bailie CLARK,**

**BLAIRGOWRIE.**



BAILIE CLARK

**MAN OF INDEPENDENT MIND.**

## XLVIII.

Bailie CLARK,

BLAIRGOWRIE.

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Bailie Clark is one of the most notable men in Blairgowrie, although he would be the first to deny it—with emphasis. Regarded simply as a servant of the public, he has many claims to recognition. Born at Forneth, five miles from Blairgowrie, in the year 1836, and learning the tailoring trade there under his father, it is over thirty years since he settled down in the city of “Rest and be thankful,” which in his case, at least, has not belied its reputation, so far as thankfulness is concerned, although one is not so sure about the “rest”—the Bailie treating himself much as he used to treat the tramps that came before him, with an everlasting “move on!” For the whole of the period named—and, in some memorable ways, even in his native village long before that—he has been more or less before the public—as politician, man of business, Town Councillor, &c., and he is now the oldest unpaid public servant the town possesses. On the old Parochial Board and new Parish Council he has served over twenty years; as Police Commissioner and Town Councillor he has put in some fifteen

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies:

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years' service, three of which were as Bailie; and on the Water Committee also he has

### A LONG AND EXCELLENT RECORD.

As a Radical of the most pronounced type, he has borne his share of the fighting in all the great political contests which the county has seen in his time, and recalls with infinite satisfaction—his active snuff-mull being one of the outward manifestations thereof—the many thorough lickings which his friends the Tories have had to submit to—the latest being the unopposed return of Mr T. R. Buchanan as M.P. for East Perthshire. He is also a keen curler and an equally enthusiastic bowler, and, as a special hobby has his bees to attend to. Some lively experiences he has had, too, on occasions in this last connection, one of which was when an inquisitive bee got into his ear and had to be comatosed by means of a drop or two of Dewar's extra special before it was got rid of.

But, after all, it is not so much the amount of the work the Bailie has done as the character he has exhibited in the doing of it that has given him his position in public estimation. He is beyond all question the most uncompromising man of duty Blairgowrie can boast of. Once he has made up his mind on any matter—and in most cases it is the right mind—nothing on earth will shunt him from the straight course he has chalked out for himself—self-interest, popularity, private friendships all go if necessary. Bailie Clark and destiny are

### SYNONYMOUS TERMS :

as well try to alter the one as the other. Witness his action when the extension of the water district was being discussed—how he took the unpopular side—to include Roselea—knowing

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## Bailie Clark, Blairgowrie.

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that the proposal if carried out, which it was, would increase his own rates as a proprietor and tenant. Witness his action again when the paving question out to Falcon House was the sore point. Once more he threw his weight into the unpopular side against his own private interests. Witness the water question, when, with a heroism as rare as admirable, he undertook the thankless duty of proposing the deposition of one of his own intimate friends from high office in favour of another—probably about the most trying bit of work the inexorable Bailie ever performed. Witness once more his position with respect to the Wellmeadow question. It is hardly necessary to say that as one of the chief advocates of the "Coronation Avenue," he was in very bad odour with the people, who hoped to recover and retain everlasting youth by means of the

### SHOWS AND SWEETIE STANDS

of the Fair o' Blair. He didn't get his way that time, however, although that counts for little with the Bailie; and it was one of the most amusing incidents in connection with this agitation when, at the election of a Bailie by the Town Council, he allowed himself to be nominated for the post with the dead certainty that he would be ignominiously rejected by the Wellmeadow party—simply that these might not be able to say that they had no other name before them but that of the man of their own way of thinking.

It is hardly any wonder that he is the most respected and most detested man in Blairgowrie, and if ever there was an adept at the gentle art of making enemies, it is the Bailie. He is a thorough believer with Josh Billings

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies:

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that although "honesty is the best policy," he who is honest on policy is not an honest man; and there is only one individual that our friend can tolerate, and that is the man who has decided views regarding things, and can stick to them. The views may be the antithesis of the Bailie's, but he cannot withhold his respect for his opponent's honesty, although he may label him silently as a "peer thing" for his lack of judgment. The knock-kneed and the invertebrate among men he cannot abide at all; they are "anathema maranatha" to him, a burden to themselves, and a plague to all progress and order in the community. If one asks the reason of the Bailie's unpopularity with a certain section of the public it is certainly not far to seek. That proverbially unruly member, the tongue, has much to do with it; there is not another man who can display a

### MORE CAUSTIC WIT OR MORE IRONICAL MANNER

than he on occasions, and men do not care to be spitted and basted and roasted in public for the entertainment of others. Even the worm will turn, we are told, and so it does in Blair sometimes. One can see it squirming under his heel. His method is not the bludgeon, but rather the rapier, and he uses no button; only, it must be admitted, he forgets the courtesies of combat at times, and has even been accused of pinking a bound and unarmed opponent when moved by strong excitement.

It used to be a beautiful sight—a contest between the late Factor Panton and our friend. The latter would thrust the enemy through and through in a dozen several places, every one of them fatal, but without the slightest effect upon

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## Bailie Clark, Blairgowrie.

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the invulnerable Factor, who might have been "air, thin air," for all that the Bailie's expert work showed upon him. There is a legend that the Factor was seen to wince once; but that wants authentication. One thing is certain, however, no one had a greater respect for the Bailie than that first-class judge of character himself—notwithstanding all he suffered, or was supposed to suffer, at his hands.

Touching his tenure of office as Bailie—it was a pronounced success. The only people who objected to his sentences while on the bench were the culprits sentenced, and, as they were in the minority, their opinions were ignored. So far as one can judge, the

### BAILIE'S GUIDING PRINCIPLE

seemed to be—"The law was made for evil-doers; let them get the full benefit of it." Which they usually did; so that when a band of "tinkies," the story goes, coming from Coupar Angus, learned that the Bailie was on the bench, they deemed it wisest policy to change their route for Dunkeld. On another occasion, when a number of slides of local celebrities were being thrown on the screen at a public entertainment, the Bailie's familiar features were greeted by a wag with the exclamation—"Sixty days!" to the huge delight of the audience—and the grim satisfaction of the original, who was present.

Behind the counter, on the bowling green, or in any other private relation, the Bailie is one of the best of good fellows. His intelligent grip of affairs, local and Imperial; his political reminiscences and inexhaustible stores of racy anecdotes; and, let one haste to add, his in-

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies.

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dispensable snuff-mull, make the time pass quickly and agreeably in his company. It is impossible to conceive the Bailie without his mull, and the number of people who "drop in" just to have a pinch is legion. It is well known that, like the rain and sunshine, which fall upon the evil and the good, the famous crooked horn is free to Tory and Radical alike. Probably its owner's most convenient method of classifying humanity—after those who vote Liberal and those who don't—is the snuffers and non-snuffers, but every one has to partake who has the privilege of the Bailie's acquaintance, and the verdict of every one who knows him and can appreciate a good and genuine thing when he finds it is, that the man is as good as his snuff, and that Æsop with his torch might have discovered the object of his search in a certain tailor's place of business in Leslie Street, had he only known of it.