

THE HUMOURS OF SCOTTISH LIFE

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The humours of Scottish life by John Gillespie

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JOHN GILLESPIE

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OF SCOTTISH LIFE**

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BY

THE VERY REV. JOHN GILLESPIE, LL.D.

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written at the repeated solicitation of very many friends. Becoming acquainted to some extent with the repertoire of Scottish wit and humour which I happen to possess, they have often urged me to put it into a permanent form. I have not given it the title of "Reminiscences," but it will be observed that many of the incidents are of that nature. They are illustrative of Scottish humour on the part of people in different grades of life.

Carlyle has said "Humour has justly been regarded as the finest perfection of poetic genius. He who wants it, be his other gifts what they may, has only half a mind: an eye for what is above him, not for what is about him or below him." The saying of Whipple may also be quoted: "Humour, warm and all embracing as the sunshine, bathes its objects in a genial and abiding light."

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Preface

Several eminent persons have asserted that the Scotch as a people are deficient in, if not even destitute of, what has been well termed "the saving grace of humour." The saying of Sydney Smith is familiar to most people: "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding." The similar statement of Horace Walpole is not so generally known: "The whole (Scotch) nation hitherto has been void of wit and humour, and even incapable of relishing it." Dean Ramsay's "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character" showed how entirely unfounded these assertions are, and the following pages may serve as corroborative proof.

It is a pity to allow good humorous sayings characteristic of Scottish life and character to die out and be forgotten. Should any of my readers be good enough to enlarge my store I shall be grateful to them.

MOUSWALD MANSE,
DUMFRIESSHIRE, *September 1904.*

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PUTTING D.D. ON ANYTHING.

THE Rev Dr Norman M'Leod, the illustrious minister of the Barony Parish, Glasgow, was minister of Dalkeith when he had the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred upon him by his Alma Mater. Shortly after he was capped he was in the landward part of his parish, when he noticed some contractor's plant, near the public road, with D.D. branded on the principal articles. As these letters were running in his head at the time, he was curious to know what they could mean where he saw them. Addressing a man who was

A Glasgow LL.D.

passing he said, "My good man, can you tell me, what D.D. branded on all these articles means?" The reply, which was calculated to serve as a damper to a more ordinary man, was in these terms, "No, sir, I canna tell ye; but (raising his nose in the air) to tell ye the truth, they pit D.D. on onything nowadays!"

A GLASGOW LL.D.

A LAWYER in Glasgow, called Colquhoun, had ingratiated himself so much with the University authorities, that they conferred the Honorary Degree of LL.D. upon him. It turned out that all the while he was artfully pursuing a career of the grossest fraud, of which he was convicted, and for which he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Shortly after the exposure I was going into a Glasgow Club one day for luncheon with a friend, a member of the legal profession, when we met a leading merchant, to whom I was introduced. By way of associating me with the city my host said to the merchant, "You know, my friend,"