

ABS.1.84.13(1-10)

National Library of Scotland



B000344286

Contents

- 1 Complete Suffrage, Aberdeen 1842
- 2 Reminiscences. — 1859.
3. Mary Leslie — 1861.
4. Synonymy. — 1867.
5. Hajay Itis Spdachde — 1867.
6. Aberdonian — 1872.
7. Reminiscences of a
Police Officer. Aberdeen 1873
8. Play-Acting &c — 1876
9. The Patronage Committee. —

~~University of Aberdeen~~ 1873

THE
PATRONAGE COMMITTEE:

OR

The Other Side of the New Deer
Church Case.

BY

W. L.

Lay patronage is but a weed
In Zion's bonnie garden ;
But ye gae help to saw its seed,
Sae tak yer just rewardin',
Or pluck it up an' fling't awa,
Since new licht on ye glances ;
But, beggar like, stick fast to a'
Yer bonnie *Glebes* an' *Manses*.

P. STILL.

A B E R D E E N.

1876.

The Patronage Committee,

&c. &c.

WE have resolved here to go a little more into the New Deer Church Vacancy Case. A rather irksome affair, but no matter. A certain work had to be done, and never, since the beginning of patronage committeeism was it made such a nonsensical muddle of. With their twaddle and jargon, this same New Deer Case has been a disgraceful absurdity from beginning to end. On the part of the Presbytery of Deer, whenever it was known to them who was the so-called popular candidate, it has been one continual string of plotting and planning, and never, I think, was Reverend Vulpine cunning so terribly defeated.

The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley.

The first notice we had of the affair was that a certain Nonconformist lairdie was anxious to get his name put upon the communion roll, as an adherent of the church. The roll and the kirk session itself not being in the best of order at the time (no matter), the afore-said gentleman was admitted as an adherent, and who turned out to be no other than our much respected friend, Sir William, the day-dreamer of knighthood.

The New Deer folks asked one another what business he had putting his nose into the pan, and got some one to give him a good thrashing and drive him home again. Sir William cowed, threw the whole affair at his heels in high indignation. Bravo, Sir William!

Sir William wished to have a man there after his own heart, and it would not have been one of the seven wonders of the world, though the lot had fallen on the Reverend Sir that said the long prayers to the Duke of Edinburgh at the point of the north extension pier. But the fates willed it otherwise. Sir William gave it up in high dudgeon. Poor fellow, if he don't take care, old Samuel Martin will be knighted before him. It was a rash step of Sir William to begin to tamper with the

New Deer folk. He would have been better in his proper place at such-and-such a railway station on Deeside, a flunkeying after a certain popular lady, as she passes to and from Balmoral.

May the Queen take Sir William to Balmoral as a lodger,
If ever I cease to—*umphum!*

The first step in the business was, as the moderator of the kirk session expressed it, to elect a committee, and after a fair share of winnowing and sifting, twenty five were elected as members of committee. These members were elected from the various districts, showing that it was for the representation of the parish they were there, and not as they have done—worked for their own damnable self-interest, and acted as the bagatelle flunkeys of the presbytery. This clique of the committee was a monster bass fiddle, on which the bishop and the presbytery of Deer played the patrons “Auld Langsyne.” It may be asked, what kind of men they were that acted in such a childish manner. Mains, the knight of the feathered hat, is an auld kirk man, and was for sending George Hope to parliament, because he could spread lime. George, poor man, was to go up to St. Stephen’s to teach old Benjamin the art of spreading lime. Magnanimous idea! Old Ben. has got something better in his sack’s mouth than shovels and lime.

Another character—the Doctor. Why they should have chosen him as one is not quite certain, unless it was as he himself said—“he would make an excellent member of committee, though not a communicant.”

But let alone communion, it has turned out that the Dr., previous to the vacancy, was not a member of any church or denomination whatever—nay, even, up to that time, as it appears, was not twice within a church door for the space of two years.

Hold, enough! We will go no further. With such men, no wonder the time was squandered away—deputations to Fraserburgh, &c.

And the whole burden of their story seemed to be: “The Rev. Peter M’Laren said this, and the Rev. Peter M’Laren said that. But what i’ the mischief had the Rev. Peter M’Laren to do with it, I wonder?”

At the first meeting of the presbytery of Deer, we

have an inkling of who was really at the bottom of the whole proceeding.

Oswald Prosser insisted on being heard. The Rev. Peter M'Laren got terribly excited, and foamed at the mouth.

The moderator—Now, are there any parties! (He knew that there were protestors, ay, and also who they were). But on Mr. Johnston rising—

The Rev. Pat.—Who are you, sir? (The Rev. P. M'Laren never saw him, or even knew anything about this man, William Johnston, although he was the only one of the deputation that came to him soliciting him to become a candidate for the vacancy.)

But it so happened that the Rev. Pat. was feuing his glebe, and also had speculated a good deal upon school buildings, and had to get four of his bagatelles on the school board as a security, also to keep the purse mouth tight—therefore he could not come; but he would recommend them to a friend of his. Now, do you think if it had been his said friend that was the popular candidate, the Rev. Peter M'Laren would have gone mad about it as he did at the meeting of the presbytery of Deer; or, forsooth, if it had been a friend of the Rev. Mr. Mitchell's, would he have babbled in such a nonsensical manner about the *de momento in momentum, jus devolutum*, the hereas, and the whereas, and all the horrid jargon of old red tape. No, no; it won't do. The law would have suited them excellent, had it not been for this popular candidate—ay, this tamed lion of Portlethen;—it is him they are all terrified at, and no monder, for the like of him are born enemies to such as the pasteboard characters of the presbytery of Deer.

A little ago, a certain presbytery sent a deputation to Portlethen, to see if this man (the Rev. Wm. Bruce) would use a paper in the pulpit; but no: "you may as well hang a millstone round my neck," said he. "Ah! well then, you will repent it." They went their way, and may they never show their face again!

Mr. Johnston protested—"that, whereas unjustifiable means have been used (but what was the means Mr. Johnston used in order to get up his small number—he had only one convert, and how did he get him)." This turncoat was no other than the "Tippenny Tailor of Fedderate." The manner was as follows:—The Tip-

penny Tailor was invited to the mansion house of Hill-head, where he was feasted upon fine yellow fish, bonny cakes, with plenty of butter and nice preserves, and various other knick-knacks along with it—no scruple as to drink after the feast. No wonder then that the tailor went home to beat the wife, as his clothes had become by far too little for him since he went away ; and, though he was awful bad for a while after it, yet he was all right again by the appointed day, and at his post in the uproarious meeting, rose up and spoke :—“ Am I to understand !—am I to understand ! ” accompanied with very elegant brandishing of the arms, which the reporters (being very ignorant men, and not understanding whip-the-cat refinement), put down at the end of their report, *much confusion from among the proceed party*. But Mr. Bruce's supporters were still worse—one of them seeing him remarked to his neighbour, “ Ay, man, that's a lad across there wud fight.”

Our friend, the doctor, tried his hand at the same trick, but did not succeed so well as the other gentleman. The patient on whom he tried his experiment was no other than Mr. John Thom. Bravo, Doctor ! How did he get on ?

A Play in One Act.

Scene First and Last.

Enter—*The Doctor, riding in his gig, halts before Mr. Thom's shop door ; walks in with a pleasant smile.*
“ A nice morning to you, and how do you do ? ”

THE DOCTOR.—By the bye, how are you getting on with the ministers ; are the folk settling down any yet. I don't think Mr. Bruce would suit us at all. He has had some dealings with a widow wife in Aberdeen, and she has some children, whom he is taking a very fatherly care of.

JOHN THOM.—Well, doctor, you might let that flea stick to the wall. You know, they that live in glass houses should not throw stones.

THE DOCTOR.—What do you mean to say, sir (getting very indignant) ?

JOHN THOM.—I mean to say that you are guilty of the same thing, you know, with Mrs. R—— of L—.

THE DOCTOR.—Who told you that, I would like to know, and I'll soon let you see what I'll do with them.

JOHN THOM.—Well, it was just Mr. R — himself.

Exit the doctor, in a great flourish of indignation, and applies the whip to the horses back in a most furious manner.

Enter a customer, who finds Mr. Thom in a fit of laughter. Having regained his composure—

The CUSTOMER.—Weel, merchant, hiv' you ony Portlethen worset, man ; ay, an' I wud need some doctor's needles ?

JOHN THOM.—I have just this moment, before you came in, got a very large additional stock of them.

Exeunt omnes, and the curtain falls.

Now, of Mr. John Thom and the Doctor, if I remember my etiquette properly, excuse me, gentlemen, but you know modern cock-fighting has become so nice, that I have resolved to work the above into a lengthened play, and give it to the people at Her Majesty's Opera House, and if they should give me a good market price for it, I will have it brought upon the stage in all due formality. The Doctor's Benefit Night !

Now, it may be asked, what about Mr. Bruce and the widow wife. The facts are these :—A certain gentleman died, and Mr. Bruce was appointed one of the executors. Now he pressed hard to get the family given a good education with the money—and quite right. But the doctor and a drunken elder of the kirk of New Deer put another face upon it. Mr. Bruce's supporters have not been idle, so swift and acute have they been, that, if they do not now get Mr. Bruce for their pastor, there will be a fine Court of Session—with ten or twelve cases of wilful and downright malicious slander : Ay, the very men that slandered Mr. Bruce's character have been guilty of shocking cases of adultery, and the children smuggled away in the most disgraceful manner. May the gods avert the omen ! *Tell it not in Gath : publish it not in the streets of Askelon, &c.* Why did the New Deer folk rise in open rebellion against the clique and the presbytery ? Was it because this man Mr. Bruce was far superior in character and ability to the rest ? Oh, dear, no ! It was because he did not get a fair trial with them ; and the folk, from the stump orator down to the auld wife and her umbrella, asserted with one voice—that they would not

have it;—and the clique, or other party, by acting the way they did, took the sure way of putting him on: For, if he had got a fair chance along with the rest, it is ten to one he would have never been heard of as pastor of New Deer. Though he stands next to Spurgeon of pulpit orators of the present day—And fancy a radical wag o' the Broch twiggung the bishop with an “och, sir! take a swatch of the minister o' New Deer.”

Dr. Pirie said that Mr. Peter had done most admirably, from beginning to end, a thing that is very questionable—for, just on the very morning of the uproarious meeting, and at the very hour when the people should have been admitted, he, along with some others of the clique, were sitting in the session house at a hole-and-corner meeting of their own about how they were to proceed, and the door had to be forced open, when they heard Cauldcraft, clerk at the hole-and-corner, whisper “whist, whist! here's a man!”

Now Dr. Pirie was there and saw, and behold all things were good. Dr. Pirie was a wag in his young days. Reward—£365 for the person that will name the day and the year on which Dr. Pirie preached a sermon without winding up with some ridicule at the Free Church folk, whom he used to designate rabbits and mad men, about the time of the disruption.

We might just as well believe old Falsehood Doubledites as what Dr. Pirie said.

Fragments of the Lost Book of Revelations.

THE VISION OF JOCK-A-TAM.

1. Now it came to pass in these days, that there was no pastor in the parish of New Deer, and the people were harassed and in sore travail, for there was no king or leader in the land, every man doing that which was right in his own eyes.

2. Then they said amongst themselves—come and let us elect a pastor for ourselves, that we may be as other parishes, and not be lorded over by the clique and the presbytery.

3. They then chose a man of the family of Bruce, of the line of Thor, of the tribe of Portlethen. Now this man was very popular amongst them, and the people did cleave unto him.

4. Now when this thing that the people of New Deer had done reached the ears of the presbytery, they were exceeding wroth, and great fear came upon them on account of this man whom they had selected.

5. Then the bishop of the city of Broch, that is by the sea side, rose up and said "if we let this man come in amongst us, he shall be to us as a consuming fire; he shall put out our pipes, and we will appear to the people as babes.

6. Now this thing that the bishop had said was well pleasing to them, for they were as hireling priests and crafty men. Then they reasoned amongst themselves, and one said to his fellow, "come, now, let us rise up and gird up our loins, and go out to battle against this man Jock-a-Tam, for it is he that has kindled up the anger of the people against us, and stirred them up to do this thing."

7. Then it came to pass that the presbytery sent out privily and took this man Jock-a-Tam and bound him with chains, and banished him to the bogs of peatmoss, that he might be silenced for ever.

8. And this man Jock-a-Tam lay there for many days, and was sore distressed in spirit. Now there came upon him, as it were, a vision;

9. And he saw in the vision and beheld a tamed lion come out of Portlethen, having a tongue like a two-edged sword, cutting up the wire-pullers and flunkies; and lo and behold, he fell upon the presbytery and smote them, because they had hooks and took out of the flesh pots, and would not ordain him and give to him his just stipend.

10. Then he sent out a forerunner, by name Oswald Prosser, who, being girt with a sword of sharpness, and having shoes of swiftness on his feet, came upon the presbytery unawares, and pulled them up before the high courts of the chief magistrates.

11. And the presbytery were brought into trouble on account of their own wickedness, and were fined severely, and had to pay the stipend and were disgraced in the eyes of all men.

12. And this tamed lion of Portlethen being strong, and in the right, prevailed over them and they were vanquished—then the land was at rest, and they were heard of no more.

13. Now, as Jock-a-Tam lay there, he was in a great sweat, there appeared to him a second vision, as if a revelation, and behold! a fishwife, with a great creel on her back, was struggling to get through the bogs of peatmoss, and she was in sore travail.

14. And from the corner of the creel that is called Broch, there hung a great sheet: and upon this sheet there was a placard, and the writing of it that was written upon it was thus:—

The Ecclesiastical Tramway Co. (Limited).

Paid-up Capital, 100 Stipends of £400 each.

President—The Bishop of the Broch.

Vice-President—The High Steward of Peterfit.

**The Oreed of the Company, indited by the
Bishop (in Three Clauses)—**

1. That the aim of the company is to establish a spiritual commerce between New Deer and the Broch, and for that purpose a tramway shall run direct between the two places.

2. That the traffic shall consist of that much-valued article *peace*. *Minister placing* shall be loaded on the tramway at New Deer. *The East Coast Mission, Bell Ringing, and Fishermen Rows* at the Broch, shall be shipped direct and credited on our accounts with auld Hornie.

3. That Dr. Adair shall be appointed medical superintendent in chief. Though lately deceased, has risen again from the dead, and is now doing well—being first seen of the bishop, and then of the rest.

Now the bishop and the doctor have laid their heads together and resolved to cheat auld Nick.

Jock-a-Tam then awoke, and was surprised to find that the world was getting on so well since he left it to roam in the land of revelation and dreams.

The Ecclesiastical Tramway Co. (Limited).

Paid up Capital, 100 Shares of £400 each.

President - The Bishop of the Breck.

Vice President - The High Steward of Peterborough.

The Groves of the Company, limited by the

Bishop (in Three Classes).

1. That the aim of the company is to establish a spiritual connection between New Deer and the Breck, and for that purpose a tramway shall run direct between the two places.

2. That the traffic shall consist of that much-valued article, Grace. Ministerializing shall be loaded on the tramway at New Deer. The Post Coat Mission, Bell Busby, and the Breck, shall be ship-board direct and credited on our accounts with said Grace.

3. That Dr. Adair shall be appointed medical superintendent in chief. Through lately deceased, has risen again from the dead, and is now doing well—being first seen of the bishop, and then of the rest.

Now the bishop and the doctor have laid their heads together and resolved to elect and Nick.

Jack-a-Tam then awoke, and was surprised to find that the world was getting on so well since he left it to roam in the land of revelation and dreams.





