

LUDICROUS STORY OF A MONKEY.

[From Blackwood's Magazine.]

I dinna think that in a' nature there's a mair curiouser creatur than a monkey. I make this observe frae being witness to an extraordinary event that took place in Hamilton, three or four days after my never-to-be-forgotten Battle of the Brecks. Some even gaed the length to say that it was to the full mair curiouser than that affair, in sae far as the principal performer in the case was a rational man, whereas in the ither he was only a bit ape. But folk may talk as they like about monkeys, and cry them down for being stupid and mischievous, for aye will no gang that length. Whatever they may be on the score of mischief, there can be nae doubt, that, sae far as gumption is concerned, they are just uncommon; and for wit and fun they would beat any man black and blue. In fact, I dinna think that monkeys are beasts ava. I hae half notion that they are just wee hairy men that canna, or rather that winna speak, in case they be made to weel like ither folk, instead of leading a life of idleness.

But to the point: I ance had a monkey, ane of the drollest looking devils ye ever saw. He was gayan big for a monkey, and was hairy a' ower, except his face and his bit hurdies, which had a degree of bareness about them, and were nearly as soft as a lady's loof. Weel, what think ye that I did with the beastie?—Odds, man, I dressed him up like a Heeland man, and put a kilt upon him, and a lang tailed red coat, and blue bannet, which for security's sake I tied, woman like, below his chin wi' twa bits of yellow ribbon. I not only did this, but I learned him to walk on his twa hinder legs, and to carry a stick in his right hand when he gaed out, the better to support him in his peregrinations. He was for a' the world like a wee man in kilts—sae much sae that when Glangarry the great Heeland chieftain, who happened to be at Hamilton on a visit to the duke, saw him by chance, he swore by the powers, that he was like aye of the Celtic Society, and that if I likit he would endeavor to get him admitted a member of that body. I thought at the time Glangarry was joking, but I hae since had gude reason for thinking that he was in real earnest, as Andrew Brand says that he and the Celts hae been like to cut ane another's throats, and that he might mean this as an affront upon them. Howsomever, I maun do Glangarry the justice to say, that had he got my Nosey (that was his name) made a member, he wadna hae proved the least witty or courageous of the society, and would hae done nae disgrace to the chief's recommendation.

But I am fleeing awa like a shuttle frae the subject on hand. Weel, it turned out in this manner, as ye shall hear. Ae afternoon towards the gloomin, I was obligated to tak' a step down to the Cross, wi' a web under my arm, which I had finished for Mr. West, the muslin manufacturer. By way of frolic, a gayan foolish aye, I allow, I brocht Nosey along wi' me. He had on, as for ordinar, his Heeland dress, and walkit behind me, wi' the stick in his hand, and his tail sticking out frae below his kilt, as if he had been my flunky. It was after a' a queer sight, and, as may be supposed, I drew a haill crowd of bairns af'er me, bawling out, "Here's Willy M'Gee's monkey," and giv'ing him nuts and gingerbread, and makin' as much of the creatur as could be; for Nosey was a great favourite to the town, and every one likit him for his droll tricks and the way he used to grin, and dance, and tumble ower his head to amuse them.

On entering Mr. West's shop, I fand it empty: there wasna a leevin' soul within; I suppose he had gone out for a licht; and being gayan familiar wi' him I took a step ben to the back shop, leaving Nosey in the forea. I sat for twa or three minutes, but naebody made his appearance. At last the front door which I had ta'en care to shut after me, opened, and I look't to see what it could be, thinking that nae doubt it was Mr. West, or his apprentice. It was neither the one nor the ither, but a strong middle aged, red faced Heeland man wi' specks on, and wi' a kilt and bannet, by a' the world like my monkey's. Now what think ye Nosey was about a' this time? He was stiven' behind the counter u, on the lang three leggit stool that stood forenent Mr. West's desk, and was turning ower the leaves of his ledger wi' a look which for auld fashioned sagaciousness, was wonderfu' to behold. I was sae tickled at the sight that I paid nae sort of attention to the Heelandman, but continued looking frae the back shop at Nosey, laughing a' the time in my sleeve—for I jealousyed that some queer scene would tak' place between the twa. And I wasna far wrang, for the stranger, takin' out a pound from his spleuchan, handed it ower to the monkey, and speered at him in his droll Norlan dialect, if he could change a note. When I heard this I thought I would hae laughed outright; and naething but sheer curiosity to see how the thing would end made me keep my gravity. It was plain that Donald had a' en Nosey for aye of his ain countrymen—and the thing after a' wasna greatly to be wondered at, and that for three reasons:

- Firstly, the shop was rather darkish.
- Secondly, the Heelandman had on specks, as I hae just said; and it was likely on this account that he was rather short sighted—and
- Thirdly, Nosey, wi' his kilt, and bannet, and red coat, was, to a' intents and purposes, as like a human creatur as a monkey could weel be.

Na sooner, then, had he got the note than he opened it out, and lookit at it wi' his wee glowrin', restless een, as if to see that it wasna forgeary. He then shook his head like a doctor, when he's no very sure what's wrang wi' a person, but wants to make it appear that he kens a' about it—and continued in this style till the Heelandman's patience began to get exhausted.

"Can ye no change the note, old shentleman?" quo' Donald. Nosey gied his head another shake, and lookit uncommon wise.

"Is the note no good, Sir?" spak the Heelandman, a second time; but the creatur, instead of answering him, only gied anither of his wise shakes, as much as to say, "I'm no very sure about it." At this Donald lost temper. "If the note doesna please ye, Sir," quo' he, "I'll thank ye to gie me it back again, and I'll gang to some ither place." And he stretchit out his hand to tak' haud o't, when my friend wi' the tail, lifting up his stick, lent him sic a smack ower the fingers as made him put back in the twinkling of an ee.

"Got tamm ye, ye auld scoundrel," said the man, "do ye mean to tak' my money frae me? and he lifted up a rung big enough to fell a stot, and let flice at the monkey; but Nosey was ower quick for him, and, jumping aside, he liehed on a shelf before aye could say Jock Robinson. Here he rowed up the note like a baw in his hand, and put it into his coat pouch like ony rational creatur. Not only this, but he mockit the Heelandman by a' manner of means, snorting out his tongue at him, spitting at him, and grining at him, wi' his queer outlandish physionomy. Then he

would tak' his tail in his twa hands, and wag it at Donald, and sneeking his nieves, he would seem to threaten him with a latherin'. A'thegither he was desperate impudent, and enough to try the patience of a saint, not to speak o' a hetblinded Heelandman. It was gude for sair een to see how Donald behaved on this occasion.—He raged like ane demented, miscalling the monkey beyond measure, and swearing as ony Gaelic aiths as michi hae said'd an ordinar man for a twalmonth. During this time, I never steer'd a foot, but keptit peeping frae the back shop upon a' that was ganging on. I was highly delighted; and jealousyed that Nosey was ower supple to be easily caught, I had nae apprehension for the event and remained snug in my birn to see the upshot.

In a short time in comes Mr. West, wi' a piece of lawg paper in his hand, that he had got frae the next door to licht, the shop; and nae sooner did Donald see him than he ax'd him for his note.

"What note, honest man?" said Mr. West.

"Got tamm," quo' Donald; "the note the auld scoundrel, your grandfather, stole frae me."

"My grandfather!" answered the ither, wi' amazement. "I am thinking, honest man, ye hae had a glass ower muckle. My grandfather has been dead for sixteen years, and I ne'er heard tell, till now that he was a thief."

"Weel, weel then," quo' the Heeland man, "I don't care naething about it. If he's no your grandfather, he'll be your father, or your brother, or your cousin."

"My father, or my brother, or my cousin?" repeated Mr. West, "I maun tell ye plainly, friend, that I hae neither father, nor brother, nor cousin of any description, on this side of the grave. I dinna understand ye, honest man, but I reckon that ye hae sat ower lang at the waskey, and my advice to ye is to step away hame and sleep it off."

At this speech the Heelandman lost a' patience, and lookit sae awfully fairce, that ane or twice I was on the nick of coming forrit, and explaining how matters really stood; but curiosity kepit me chained to the back shop, and I jaw tho' I would bide a wee and see how the affair was like to end.

"Pray, wha are ye, sir?" said Donald, putting his hands in his sides, and looking through his specks, upon Mr. West, like a devil incarnate. "Wha are ye, sir, that daur to speak to me in this manner?"

"Wha am I?" said the ither, dropping the remnant of the paper, which was burnin' close to his fingers. "I am Saunders West, manufacturer in Hamilton—that's wha I am."

"And I am Donald Campbell, pipar's sisters' son to his grace the great grand Duke of Argyle," thundred out the Heelandman, wi' a voice that was fearsome to hear.

"And what about that?" quo' Mr. West, rather snappshy, as I thought. "If ye were the great grand Duke of Argyle him self, as ye ca' him, I'll no permit ye to kick up a dust in my shop."

"Ye scoundrel," said Donald, seizing Mr. West by the throat, and shaking him till he tottered like an aspen leaf, "do ye mean to speak ill of his grace the Duke of Argyle?" And gied him anither shake—then, laying haud of his nose, he swore that he would pu' as lang as a caw's tail, if he dur'd that instant restore him his lost property. At this sight I began to grow awer, and now saw the necessity of stepping in, and saving my employer frae farther damage, bodily and th'wise. Na sooner did I make my appearance than Donald let go his grip of Mr. West's nose,

and the latter, in a great passion, cried out, "William M'Gee, I sat ye to witness, what I hae suffer'd frae this blood-thirsty Heelandman! it's no to be endured in a christian country. I'll hae the law of him, that I will. I'll be whuppi but I'll hae a weel, although it cost me twenty pounds!"

"What's the matter?" quo' I, pretending ignorance of the haill concern. "What in the name of Nebuchadnezzar, has set ye together by theugs?" Then Mr. West began his tale how he had been collared and weel nigh thuppi'd in his anther shop, then the ither said, how, in the first place, Mr. West's grandfather, as he ca'd Nosey, had stolen a note, and how, in the second place, Mr. West had maun'd the great grand Duke of Argyle. In a word, there was a desperate lock up between them; the one, hoping that he would tak' the law of the ither immediately. Na, in this respect, Donald gaid the greatest lengths, for he swore that, rather than be deair'd, he wad carry a cause to the house of lords, although it cost him thirty pounds sterling. I now saw it was time to pu' in a word.

"Houts houts, gentlemen," quo' I, "what's the use of a' this chismaciever? Ye've baun'd guston the wrang law by the lug, or my name's no William M'Gee. I'll wager ye a penny-piece, that my monkey Nosey is at the bottom of the business."

Na sooner had I spoken the word, then the twa, looking round the shop, spied the beastie sitting upon the shelf, grinning at them, and putting out his tongue, and wiggle-wagging his walking stick ower his left elbow, as if he had been playing upon the fiddle. Mr. West at this apparition set up a loud laugh; his passion left him in a moment, when he saw the ridiculous mistake that the Heelandman had fa'en into, and I thoct he would hae bursted his sides wi' even down t'rement. At first Donald lookit desperate angry, and jogg'ing frae the way he was twisting about his mouth and rowing his een, I opined that he intended some deadly skath to the monkey. But his gude sense, of which Heelandmen are not a'thegither destitute, got the better of his anger, and he roared and laugh'd like the very mischief. Nor was this a', for nae sooner had he begun to laugh than the monkey did the same thing, and held his sides in precisely the same manner, imitating his actions in the most amusing way imaginable. Thus only set Donald aiauching mair than ever, and when he lifted up his nieve, and slunk it at Nosey in a gude humored way, what think ye that the creatur did? Odds, man, he took the note frae his pouch, where it lay rowed up like a baw, and, popping it at Donald, hit him as fairly upon the nose, as if it had been shot out a weel aimed musket. There was nae resisting this. The haill three, or rather the haill four, for Nosey joined us, set up a loud laugh, and the Heelandman's was louden of a', showing that he was really a man of sense, and could take a joke as weel as his neighbors.

When the laughing was a wee subsided, Mr. Campbell, in order to shew that he nae nae ill will to Mr. West, ax'd his pardon for the rough way he had treat'd him, but the worthy manufacturer winna hear o't. "Houts, man," quo' he, "dinna say a word about it. It's a mistake a'thegither, and Solomon himself wad see, whiles gaid wrang." Whereupon the Heelandman bought a Kilmarnock night-cap, price seven pence-happenny frae Mr. West, and said him wi' part of the very note that brocht on the jerry. I hae just been relating. But his gude will didna end here, for he insisted on takin' us a'—Nosey among the lave—to the nearest public, where he gied us a friendly glass, and we kepit talking about monkeys, in a what not, in a manner a' aye edifying and amusing to hear.

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