

SCOT WIT AND IRISH HUMOR

By Allen Jones

principal characters of this anecdote are Dr. Henry, the author of "A History of Eng-

ENGLISHMEN, particularly those inhabiting the British Isles, display a tendency to haggle, first, over the exact shade of difference between wit and humor, and, second, over the quality and quantity of wit or humor possessed by their neighbors the Scots and the Irish. A discussion of the second invariably culminates in a wrangle over the first. The contention that the Scots are deficient in humor is met with the statement that, while they may lack humor, they are abundantly supplied with wit, which brings out the counter charge that the Irish, and not the Scots, hold the laurels for wit; and the counter to the counter charge is that it is the Irish who possess humor and the Scots who are witty. Naturally the discussion shifts to the difference between the two words.

To reach an agreement concerning the meaning of the two words, wit and humor appears to present no great difficulties, and to appportion the terms it seems to be necessary only to compare legitimate specimens of characteristic anecdotes of the two peoples. James C. Fernald probably agrees with all other authorities in defining wit as "the quick perception of unusual or commonly unperceived analogies or relations between things apparently unrelated, and has been said to depend upon a union of surprise and pleasure. The analogies with which wit plays are often superficial or artificial, humor deals with real analogies of amusing or entertaining kind. Wit is keen, sudden, brief, and sometimes severe, humor is deep, thoughtful, and sustained." With the meaning of the terms thus definitely fixed, a comparison of legitimate characteristic anecdotes should determine the class to which the pleasantries of the Scots or the Irish belong.

To secure "legitimate characteristic anecdotes," it is necessary to go back to a period before the advent of cheap literature; for what now masquerades as Scot wit or Irish humor may first have seen the light of day in the office of "The Fliegende Blaetter," "Le Rire," or some of the humorous publications of Spain, Italy, or even the United States. The old Scot ministry furnished an almost unending supply of legitimate anecdotes, and one, selected at random for comparison with another of Irish origin, admirably illustrates the difference between Scot wit and Irish humor.

The Difference Illustrated

MR. SHIRRA, a seceding minister possessing some eccentric qualities, who was well known for the quaint parenthetical comments he introduced in his reading of Scripture, took for his text one day the eleventh verse of the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm.

"I said in my haste, All men are liars," he read, and then quietly observed, "Indeed, David, an ye had been in this parish, ye might hae said it at your leisure."

That certainly meets all requirements for classification as wit. It is keen, sudden, brief, and it is moderately severe. It also displays quick perception of unperceived analogies. To compare with this, there is an anecdote of undisputed Irish origin.

A particularly diminutive Colonel was putting a strapping Irish private, over six feet in height, through his paces. "Come man!" he shouted. "Hold up your head!"

"Yes, sir."
"Higher, man, higher, I tell you—higher!"
"This way, sir?" asked the recruit, raising his head much above the horizontal parallel.

"Yes, man."
"And am I always to hold it so?"
"Yes, you are."
"Then I'll say goodbye to you, Colonel, for I shall never see you again."

Applying the accepted definition, this one falls readily under the classification of humor. While it is not particularly deep, it is thoughtful and sustained. It certainly is not keen, and it is not sudden; for the private was forced to pave the way for his point. Many of the examples of pure Irish humor will be found to follow the same general line, requiring a word or two in advance of the point and sometimes a rather elaborate setting to produce the humor.

Fixing His Occupation

THIS characteristic of Irish humor is further illustrated in a rebuke once administered by an Irishman to the famous Mitchner, proprietor of an equally famous hotel in Margate. The smallness of Mitchner's wine bottles bore no proportion whatever to the high price of the wine, a fact that disgusted an Irishman who frequented the place.

"Look here, Mitchner!" said the Irishman, who had just paid the high price for a short bottle. "I and my friend have just had a bet as to what profession you were bred to originally, and we must appeal to your good nature to decide the matter for us."

After some hesitation, Mitchner replied in his usual affected manner, "I was bred to the law."
"In that case," said the Irishman, "I have lost my bet; for I had laid odds that you were bred a packer."

"A packer, sir!" exclaimed Mitchner, in well feigned horror. "What could induce you to think, sir, I was bred a packer?"

"Why, sir," was the reply, "I judged so from your wine measures, for I thought no one but a very skilful packer, who had acquired the knack in his youth, could ever get a quart of wine into a pint bottle."

The thoughtful preparation for the point is clearly shown in this bit of Irish humor. The trap was set deliberately, it was well baited, and the victim was almost dragged to it. It has the thoughtfulness of humor, but lacks the spontaneity of wit.

With this may be compared another anecdote, also selected from the abundant supply contributed by the old Scot ministry. The

land," and Dr. Macknight, a celebrated scholar and commentator.

Dr. Macknight was caught in a heavy down-pour of rain while on his way to his church one Sunday morning, and when he arrived at the vestry he was very wet. Every means was used to dry him out in time for the service; but as the hour drew near Dr. Macknight became nervous, fearing that he would not be in fit condition to appear before his flock.

"Oh, I wish I was dry!" he wailed. "Do you think I'm dry enuech noo?"
Patting him on the shoulder, Dr. Henry replied in his most soothing manner, "Bide a wee, doctor, and ye'll be dry enuech when ye get into the pulpit."

Here are all the classifications of wit, except that it is only mildly severe. Here is keenness, spontaneity, and brevity. There is no thoughtful preparation, no leading up to the point; the victim himself made the opening, baited his own trap, and then walked into it.

Who Was Head of the House

ONE more comparison should establish the Scotsman's claim to wit and fix upon Irish pleasantries the label of humor.

A Scot minister of the Gospel, while making his usual rounds among the members of his flock, came to the door of a house where his gentle tapping could not be heard for the noise of a contention within.

After waiting a little, he opened the door and walked in, saying with an authoritative voice, "I should like to know who is the head of this house!"

"Weel, sir," said the husband, "if ye'll sit doon a wee, we'll maybe be able to tell ye; for we are just trying to settle that point."

This like the anecdotes already repeated, and like all legitimate Scottish anecdotes, possesses all the characteristics of wit; while the following Irish anecdote, like practically all legitimate Irish anecdotes, possesses none of the characteristics of wit, but all of the qualities of humor.

Long Out of the Sea

MR. GAYNOR, an Irishman celebrated for his good humor, was dining one Friday with a friend, and fish was the only meat served. Gaynor was particularly fond of haddock, and seated himself near a fine specimen. His olfactory nerves, however, soon made him aware that the fish was not too fresh. He first lowered his mouth toward the head of the fish, and then his ear, as if conversing with it. The woman of the house, perceiving his peculiar motions, asked him whether he wished anything.

"Nothing," replied Gaynor, "nothing at all, ma'am. I was merely asking this haddock whether he could give me any news of my friend, Captain Murphy, who was drowned last Monday; but he tells me that he knows nothing of the matter, for he himself hasn't been to sea these three weeks."

The Irish Bull

THE Irish bull, for which the son of Erin has ever been renowned, belongs to an entirely different class. While it possesses the spontaneity and the brevity of wit, it is lacking in wisdom, an important characteristic; and it certainly lacks the thoughtfulness of humor. Irish bulls, like Irish humor, have been grossly counterfeited, and poor Paddy has been made to shoulder breaks that even an Irishman would not dare to make. A number of legitimate Irish bulls are still to be found, however, and one or two will be sufficient to show the quality of the pure Irish article.

An Irish doctor, who had just returned from the West Indies, said in describing the climate, "It is most infernal. Had I lived there until to-day, I should have been dead of yellow fever two years ago."

Another doctor, without observing the bull, agreed with the speaker, and declared that the climate must be very unwholesome, because a vast number of people died there.

"Very true," remarked another physician; "but if you will tell me of any country where people do not die, I shall go and end my days there to-morrow."

Thus in a very ordinary conversation two outrageous bulls are recorded; but all that were perpetrated in the Irish House of Commons, when Ireland still had her Parliament, would fill a volume.

Soles and Bald Heads

DURING the discussion of the leather tax, at the time of the war with France, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that "in the prosecution of the present war every man ought to give his last guinea to protect the remainder."

Vandeleur replied that "however that may be, the tax on leather would be severely felt by the barefooted peasantry of Ireland"; while Sir Boyle Roche suggested that "this could be remedied by making the under leathers of wood."

There is also the story of the Irishman who was traveling with a bald headed man. They both put up at the same inn, and the Irishman instructed the waiter to call him at sunrise. It so happened that the Irishman had had his hair clipped close to his head before starting on the journey, a circumstance that he had entirely forgotten. When he was called from a deep slumber by the waiter, he put his hand to his head, in a manner characteristic of the people, and, feeling it practically bald, shouted to the waiter, "Look here, you spalpeen! What do you mean by this? You have waked the bald man instead of me."

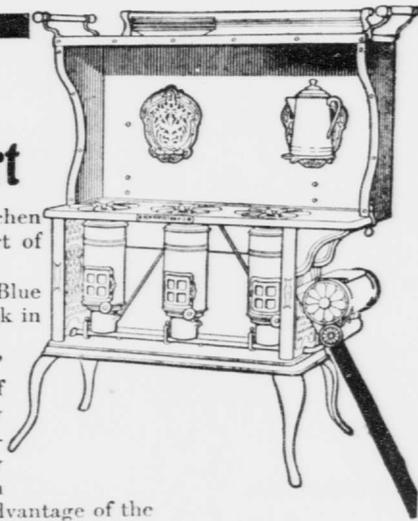
There are no Scot bulls; but the Scots have been guilty of some bad breaks that bear

Plan for Summer Comfort

Don't add the heat of a kitchen fire to the sufficient discomfort of hot weather.

Use a New Perfection Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove and cook in comfort.

With a "New Perfection" Oil Stove the preparation of daily meals, or the big weekly "baking," is done without raising the temperature perceptibly above that of any other room in the house. Another great advantage of the



NEW PERFECTION

Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove

is its handsome CABINET TOP, which gives it every convenience of the modern steel range. Has an ample top shelf for warming plates and keeping cooked food hot, drop shelves for holding small cooking utensils, and is even fitted with racks for towels. Made in three sizes, and can be had with or without Cabinet Top. If not at your dealer's address our nearest agency.

The **Rayo Lamp** gives perfect combustion whether high or low—is therefore free from disagreeable odor and cannot smoke. Safe, convenient, ornamental—the ideal light. If not at your dealer's address our nearest agency.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY (Incorporated)



PATENT YOUR IDEAS

\$8,500 for one invention. Book, "How to Obtain a Patent" and "What to Invent" sent free. Send rough sketch for free report as to patentability. Patents advertised for sale at our expense in fourteen Manufacturers' Journals. Patent Obtained or Fee Returned. CHANDLER & CHANDLER, Patent Att'ys. Established 16 Years. 954 F. Street, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED

Send sketch for free search of Patent Office records. Our four guidebooks sent free. How to Obtain a Patent, Fortunes in Patents, Patents That Pay and What to Invent (containing list of inventions wanted) and prices for inventions. Patents advertised free.

VICTOR J. EVANS & CO., Washington, D. C.

PATENT SENSE and PATENTS THAT PROTECT yield our clients enormous profits. Write us for PICOOF. Inventors lose millions through worthless patents. R. S. & A. B. LACEY, Dept. 44, Washington, D. C. 1816-1819.

PATENTS Interesting book for Inventors mailed free. Trade-marks registered. BEELER & ROBE, 23-29 McGill Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PAY 2 Books Free: "Fortunes in Patent," and "84-page Guide." Free report as to Patentability. E. E. VROOMAN, Patent Lawyer, 1175 F St., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS Watson E. Coleman, Washington, D. C. Books free. High-est references. Best results.

PATENTS No attorney's fee until patent is allowed. Write for Inventor's Guide. FRANKLIN H. HOUGH, Loan & Trust Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Print Your Own

Cards, circulars, book, newspaper. Press \$5. Larger \$18. Save money. Print for others, big profit. All easy, rules sent. Write factory for press catalog, type, paper, etc. THE PRESS CO., Meriden, Connecticut.



Don't blame the razor if it dulls quickly. Maybe it's your fault. Rob a few drops of 3-in-One oil on your razor strip. When leather is pliable strip as usual. Any razor will cut easier, better and stay sharp longer. After using, draw blade between thumb and finger moistened with 3-in-One. This prevents rust, keeps edge smooth and keen, always sharp and ready for immediate use. Don't scrape your face. Use 3-in-One on your razor and shave right. FREE Write for liberal free sample and special scientific circular. Try it yourself. 3-IN-ONE OIL COMPANY, 37 Broadway, New York.

"SAVE THE HORSE" SPAVIN CURE.



Narragansett Park, Providence, R. I. TROY CHEMICAL CO., Binghamton, N. Y. I have taken hog spavins off of four horses with your Save-the-Horse. I buy it of T. W. Rounds & Co., Providence. Have never yet had to ask for any money back. C. P. JONES. I cured a horse twenty three years old of a bad bone spavin with your great remedy. Used the horse right along. THEODORE JACOBUS, Glen Ridge, N. J. \$5.00 a bottle with legal written guarantee or contra 1. Send for copy booklet and letters from business men and trainers on every kind of case. Permanently cures Spavin, Thrush, Pin, Ringbone, Trampol, Curb, Splint, Capped Hock, Wind-puff, Shoe Ball, Injured Tendons and All Lameness. No scar or loss of hair. Horse works as usual. Write for FREE Circular. Troy Chemical Company, 111 Commercial Ave., Binghamton, N. Y.

Grand Prize Contest

An Unlimited Number of Prizes will be distributed among those who make a copy of this picture. If our Art Director decides that your copy is even 40 per cent. as good as the original, it will win an illustrated magazine FREE OF CHARGE FOR SIX MONTHS, showing the work of the most prominent artists of the country.

No Money Required to Win a Prize—It will not cost you a cent to enter this contest. Sit right down now and copy this picture with either pencil or pen and ink. See how well you can do it. If you are a prize winner it will prove you have talent for drawing.

Copy This Picture and Win a Prize

Thousands of people now earning small pay have illustrating ability, but do not know it. If you will send your drawing to-day, we will tell you whether you possess this talent. If your drawing is even 40 per cent. as good as the original, you have this natural ability, and we can start you on the road to a comfortable and independent living, with pleasant, steady and profitable employment.

Correspondence Institute of America, Dept. 655, Scranton, Pa.

