

Farewell Miss Julie Logan
A Wintry Tale

By J. M. Barrie



New York

Charles Scribner's Sons

1932

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I

THE ENGLISH

This is December One, 186—

 THINK it prudent to go no nearer to the date, in case what I am writing should take an ill turn or fall into curious hands. I need not be so guarded about the weather. It is a night of sudden blasts that half an hour ago threw my window at me. They went skirling from room to room, like officers of the law seeking to seize and deliver to justice the venturesome Scots minister who is sitting here ready to impeach all wraiths and warlocks. There was another blast the now. I believe I could rope the winds of the manse to my bidding to-night, and by running from door to door, opening and shutting, become the conductor of a gey sinister orchestra.

I am trying to make a start at the Diary

the English have challenged me to write. There is no call to begin to-night, for as yet not a flake has fallen in this my first winter in the glen; and the Diary is to be a record of my life here during the weeks ('tis said it may be months) in which the glen is 'locked,' meaning it may be so happit in snow that no one who is in can get out of it, and no one who is out can get in. Then, according to the stories that crawl like mists among our hills, where the English must have picked them up, come forms called the 'Strangers.' You 'go queer' yourself without knowing it and walk and talk with these doolies, thinking they are of your world till maybe they have mischieved you.

It is all, of course, superstitious havers, bred of folk who are used to the travail of out of doors, and take ill with having to squat by the saut-bucket; but I have promised with a smile to keep my eyes and ears intent for tergiversations among my flock, and to record them for the benefit of the English when they come back next August.

My name is the Rev. Adam Yestreen;

and to be candid I care not for the Adam with its unfortunate associations. I am twenty-six years of age and, though long in the legs, look maybe younger than is seemly in my sacred calling, being clean-shaven without any need to use an implement; indeed I may say I have desisted for two years back.

I took a fair degree at St. Andrews, but my Intellectuals suffered from an addiction to putting away my books and playing on the fiddle. When I got my call to this place my proper course was to have got rid of the fiddle before I made my entry into the glen, which I did walking with affected humility behind three cart-loads of furniture all my own, and well aware, though I looked down, that I was being keeked at from every window, of which there are about two to the mile.

When the English discovered how ashamed I was of my old backsliding with the fiddle, they had the effrontery to prig with me to give them a tune, but I hope it is unnecessary for me to say that they had to retire discomfited. I have never once

performed on the instrument here, though I may have taken it out of its case nows and nans to fondle the strings.

What I miss, when my unstable mind is on the things of this world, is less my own poor cajoling with the gut than not hearing the tunes from better hands; the more homely Scottish lilts, I mean, for of course the old reprehensible songs that kow-tow to the Stewarts find no asylum with me.

Though but half a Highlander, I have the Gaelic sufficiently to be able to preach in it once every Sabbath, as enjoined; but the attendances are small, as, except for stravaigers, there are not so many pure Hielandmen nowadays in the glen.

My manse and kirk are isolated on one side of the burn, and the English call them cold as paddocks, but methinks a noble look falls on them when the Sabbath bell is ringing. My predecessor, Mr. Carluke, tore down the jargonelle tree, which used to cling to my gable-end, because he considered that, when in flourish (or as the English say, in blossom, a word with no gallantry intilt), it gave the manse the

appearance of a light woman. The marks are still scarted on the wall. Round the manse, within a neat paling that encloses my demesne, there are grossart-bushes, rizers and rasps, a gean, bee-skeps and the like, that in former hands were called the yard, but I call it the garden, and have made other improvements.

The gean is my only tree, but close by is a small wood of fir and birch with a path through it that since long before my time has been called the Thinking Path because so many ministers have walked up and down it before the diets of worship with their hands behind their backs. I try to emulate them, but they were deeper men than I am, and many a time I forget to think, though such had been my intention. In other days a squirrel frequented this wood, and as you might say adopted one minister after another, taking nuts from their hands, though scorning all overtures from the laity; but I have never seen it, and my detractors, of whom there are a flow (though I think I am well likit as a whole), say that it deserted the wood as a

protest when it heard that I preached in a gown.

There is a deal of character about the manse, particularly, of course, in the study, which is also my living-room. It and my dining-room are the only two rooms in the glen (except at the Grand House) without a bed in them, and I mention this, not with complacence to show how I live nowadays, but as evidence that we are a thrifty people, though on Sabbath well put on. Some are also well plenished within; and to have their porridge with porter instead of milk is not an uncommon occurrence.

The finest of my gear, all the chairs in horse-hair, belong to the dining-room, which, however, is best fitted for stately occasions, and you would know it is seldom used by the way the fire smokes. I cannot say that I am at ease in it, while, on the other hand, I never enter my study up the stair without feeling we are sib; to which one might say it responds.

Never have I a greater drawing to my study than when the lamp is lit and the glow from the fire plays on my red curtains

and the blue camstane and my clouty rug. It is an open fireplace without a grate, and I used to be shamed of its wood and peat scattering such a mess of ashes till the English told me that piles of ashes are a great adornment, since when I have conflict with my bit maid, because she wants to carry them away daily, not having the wit to know that they are an acquisition.

Most of my wall space and especially two presses are sternly lined with mighty books, such as have made some of my congregation thankful that they have never learned to read. Yet it is a room that says to any one of spirit, 'Come in by and take a chair, and not only a chair but the best chair,' which is the high-backed grandy, agreeably riven in the seat. I seldom occupy it myself, except at a by-time on a Sabbath afternoon when the two diets have exhausted me a wee, but Dr. John sinks into it as naturally as if he had bought it at the roup. This was the auction of such plenishing as Mr. Carluke did not take away with him, and in the inventory there was mentioned as part of the study furni-

ture, 'servant's chair,' which puzzled some of the bidders, but I saw through it at once. It meant, not to his glorification, that a kitchen chair was kept here for the servant to sit on, and this meant that he held both morning and evening family exercise in the study, which meant again that he breakfasted and supped there; for he wouldna have two fires. It made me smile in a tolerant way, for one would have thought, on the night I spent with him, that the dining-room was his common resort.

On the other side of the burn, but so close that I can keep a vigilant eye on them, are the Five Houses in a Row, which the English say, incorrectly but with no evil design, contain all the congregation I can depend upon in a tack of wild weather. On the contrair, there is a hantle of small farms in the glen, forbye shepherds' shielings and bothies, and an occasional roadside bigging of clay and divot in which may be man or beast; truly, when I chap I am sometimes doubtful which will come to the door.

The English, who make play with many old words that even our Highlandmen have forgotten, call the Five Houses the 'clachan.' They are one-storey houses, white-washed and thacked, and every one of them (to the astonishment of the English) has a hallan to itself. We may be poor, say the Scottish, but we will not open into a room. The doors face the glen road, on which grows a coarse bent grass in lines as straight as potato drills, and carriage-folk who do not keep the ruts are shaken most terrible. One of the English told me that his machine sometimes threw him so high in the air that when he was up there he saw small lochs hitherto unknown to man, and stopped his beast and fished them. The English, however, who have many virtues, though not of a very solid kind, are great exaggerators.

The carriage-folk, except when she lets what is familiarly called the Grand House to the English, consist of Mistress Lindinock alone, who is called (but never to her face) the Old Lady. She has two spirited ponies, but not so spirited as herself. She

goes to Edinburgh while the Grand House is let, and, excepting myself (on account of my office), she is the chief person in the glen. She has been a fine friend to me, but I have sometimes to admonish her for a little coarseness in her language, which may escape from her even when she is most genteel. I grieve to say that this lady of many commendable parts plays cards, and I once saw her at it. Her adversary was a travelling watchmaker, one of those who traverse the whole land carrying a wooden box of watches on his back, with a dozen more ticking in his many waistcoat pockets. They were playing for high sums too, the Old Lady sitting inside one of her windows and the man outside it on his box. I think this is done to preserve the difference in rank; but when I called her before me for it she said the object was to make all right for her future, as the players being on different sides of the window took away the curse.

She is also at times overly sly for one so old and little, and I am now referring to my gown. Soon after my settlement the

ladies of the congregation presented me with a gown, and she as the most well to pass was the monetary strength of the movement; but though I was proud to wear my gown (without vain glory), we had members who argued that it had a touch of Rome. One may say that the congregation was divided anent it, and some Sabbaths I was sore bested whether to put it on or not. Whiles the decision was even taken out of my hands, for the gown would disappear at the back-end of the week and be returned to its nail on the Monday morning, the work undoubtedly of the no-gown party. On those occasions, of course, I made shift without it, and feeling ran so high that I could not but be conscious as I ascended the pulpit that they were titting at one another's sleeves.

They invented the phrase 'a gown Sabbath.' I took to hiding it, but whoever were the miscreants (and well I knew they were in their pews in front of me, looking as if they had never heard the word gown), they usually found my hoddie place. I mind once sitting on it a long Saturday

night when I was labouring at my sermon, the which incident got about among my people. The Old Lady was very sympathetic and pressed me to lay the trouble before the Session, which in fairness to her as the outstanding subscriber I ettdled to do, until (could any one believe it?) I discovered that she was the miscreant herself. I sorted her for it.

She is back again now, for the English, of course, have departed long since, and will not be seen again in the glen till next year's shooting time comes round. On the day they left they crossed over to remind me that they were looking forward to the Diary, and when I protested that I did not even know how to begin they said in their audacious way, 'You could begin by writing about us.' I have taken them at their word, though they little understand that I may have been making a quiet study of them while they thought that I was the divert.

As I say, I have found them to be very pleasant persons, so long as you make allowances for them that one could not be

expected to make for his own people. The bright array of their kilts is a pretty bit of colour to us, the trousered people of the glen. They have a happy knack of skimming life that has a sort of attraction for deeper but undoubtedly slower natures.

The way they riot with their pockets is beyond words; I am credibly informed by Posty that they even have worms sent to them by post in tins.

They are easy to exploit for gain, as Posty was quick to see, and many a glass of — has he, to my grief (for I am a totaler), got from them by referring to himself as ‘she.’ I have written that word with a dash because, now I cast back, I believe I have never heard it spoken by the glen folk. One might say that it is thus, —, pronounced by them. They invite you to partake, and you are dull in the uptake if you don’t understand of what you are being asked to partake.

They make a complete sentence by saying of a friend, ‘He is one who on a market day,’ and leaving the rest to the listener’s common sense.