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Witty and Entertaining Exploits

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GEORGE BUCHANAN

COMMONLY CALLED

THE KING'S FOOL.

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THE WHOLE SIX PARTS COMPLETE.

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G L A S G O W,  
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M D C C X C V I I.

# WITTY EXPLOITS, &c.

**M**R. GEORGE BUCHANAN was a Scotchman born, and though of mean parentage, made great progress in learning. As for his understanding, and ready wit, he exceeded all men then alive in that age, that ever proposed questions to him. He was servant, or teacher to King James VI. as his private counsellor, but publickly he acted as a fool.

1. It happened one day, that a young airy nobleman went into the king's garden, to pull a flower for a young lady he fancied. George followed at a distance; so when the young man found a flower to his pleasure, he would not pull it himself, but to find it again, without further searching, he covered it with his hat, and went away for his sweet-heart: No sooner was he gone, but up goes George, lifts his hat, pulls the flower, then eases himself on the spot, and covers it with the hat again, and away he goes. In comes the young man, leading his sweet-heart to pull the flower below the hat: but as soon as he lifted the hat, and saw what was below; he looked like a fool. The lady flies in a passion, off she goes, and never would countenance him any more. The young man, being sadly vexed at this affront done to him by George, sent him a challenge to fight him, appointing day and place where they were to meet. Being to fight on horseback, George gets an old stiff horse, and for harnessing covers him about with blown bladders, with a little small stone in each, without either sword or spear, away to the field he goes, where the duel was appointed: so when George saw his enemy coming against him, all in glittering armour, armed with sword and spear, he rode up to him with all the speed his horse could carry him, and his horse, as said is, being all covered over with bladders, the small stones in them made such a terrible noise, that the gentleman's fine gelding would not stand the battle, but ran away and threw his master to the ground, which caused all the spectators to laugh and say, The gentleman was more fool than George. The gentleman being so enraged at this second affront, he would fight with George on foot; but his friends persuaded him that it would be no honour for him to fight and kill the king's fool, and far

less to be killed by the fool; so they were advised both to agree. But the gentleman would try another exploit with George; for to have it said, he was still the cleverest man, to hold him a jumping bout publickly the next day thereafter. With all my heart, says George, and we will end in and about where we began; they not knowing his meaning in this. The place and hour being set, where they were to meet next morning, George, in the night, caused a deep pit to be made, and the earth of it carried away, afterwards filled it up with dung from a privy, and covered it over with a green turf, so that it might not be known by the other ground: So according to promise, they both met in the morning against the time appointed: Now George being the oldest man, and by them counted the greatest fool, the young man permitted him to jump first, which he, according to order, performed; and jumped within a foot of the place where the ground was falsified: The young man seeing this, made his performance afterwards, with great airs, and all his might, so that he jumped a foot over George, but to his oxters among clean dung; whereat the whole multitude of spectators cried out with huzzas and laughter. Now says George, I told you we would end in and about where we began, and that was in clean dirt.

On a time after this, the king and his court were going into the country, and they would have George to ride before them in the fool's dress, whereunto he seemed unwilling, but it was the king's pleasure; so George was mounted upon an old horse, a pair of old riven boots, with the heels hanging down, a palmer coat patched over with pictures of divers kinds. George rode before them in this posture, which caused great laughter and diversion, until they came to an inn, where they alighted for to dine; and the time they were at dinner, George went into the stables, and with a knife cut all their horses chafes, not fore, but so as they might bleed. Now, as soon as dinner was over, and they mounted on their horses again, George riding before them as usual, in his palmer coat and old boots, they began to make their game of him; then George turned about suddenly, and clapping his hands with a loud laughter, the king asked him what made him laugh so; laugh, says George, how can I but laugh, when horses

cannot hold their peace? O my Sovereign, says he, don't you see how your horses have rent all their chafes laughing at my old boots; then every man looking at his horse's mouth, they were all in a rage against George; the King caused him to be dismounted directly, and charged him never to let him see his face on English ground. Now, George knowing that nothing could reconcile the King at this time, he came away to Scotland, and caused make him a pair of great boots, and put a quantity of Scottish earth in each of them, and away he goes for England to see the King once more. He hearing the king and his court were to pass through a country village, George places himself up in an old window, and sets up his bare arse to the King and his court, as they passed by. The King, being greatly amazed to see such an unusual honour done to him, was curious to know the performer; so he called unto him, asking him to come down, and finding it to be George, Sir, says the King, Did not I charge you never to let me see your face again? True my Sovereign, says George, for which I let you see my arse. Ay, but says the King, you were never to come on English ground again: Neither did I, says George, pulling off his boots before the King, saying, Behold my Sovereign, it is all Scots earth I stand upon. The King and his court being so diverted with this merry joke, George was admitted again to the King's favour.

After this, there arose a debate betwixt the King and the Queen about votes in the Parliament; as the King had two votes; the Queen would have one, and would needs be a Parliamenter, or no peace without the preferment; this matter was committed to George by the King; so it was agreed with the Parliamenters, that the Queen should be admitted into Parliament for a day; and, accordingly she came, and was received with all the honour and congratulations which were due and becoming her high station: but before any matter of consequence was brought to the board, George seated himself hard by the Queen's seat; all being silent, he rose up very quickly, and lifted one of his legs, and then gave a great fart, which set the whole house a laughing: Whereat the Queen was greatly offended, crying, Go take the rogue and hang him; to which George answered, a fine Parliamenter indeed, to

hang a man for a senseless infirmity and that's a fart. The Queen being so enraged at this affront, put on her first proposal at Parliament, went off in a passion, and never would countenance them any more. But yet to be revenged on George, she would never give the King rest till he delivered up George into her hands, that he might be punished at her pleasure; which the King accordingly commanded to be done, knowing that George would rescue himself by some intrigue or other. No sooner was he delivered into her hands, to be at her disposal, but she and her Maries pronounced his doom, which was as follows: 'As he had affronted the Queen among so great an equipage, who ought to be honoured in chief, and above all women in the nation, that he should be stoned to death, by the hands of women.' Now his time being come that he was to die, according to their appointment, he was taken into a park, where a great number of women were waiting upon him, with their aprons full of stones to fall upon him, and to put him to death, according to the Queen's appointment.

## HIS SPEECH TO HIS EXECUTIONERS.

'Here's a female band with bags of stones,  
 'To kill a man for rumple groines:  
 'I'm clean of rapine, blood, and thefts,  
 'Could I convert my farts to rifts?  
 'Since I the first for farting die,  
 'Close up the place from whence they fly:  
 'To commit my crime, I think ye'll scarce,  
 'If once you do cork up your arse.  
 'And now since women stones do carry,  
 'Men need not in the world tarry.  
 'Judge if such women be chaste complete,  
 'With forty stones between their feet;  
 'But since 'tis so, ye will come on,  
 'The greatest whore throw the first stone.'

When he ended with these words, 'The greatest whore should throw the first stone.' every one put it to another to cast the first stone; but knowing they would attain the character of a whore for so doing, they all refused till the dying hour was past, and then he took a protest against them, and by these means gained his life.

## 6 THE WITTY EXPLOITS

After this he was admitted to the Queen's favour and presence, attending the court as formerly. About this time the French King not knowing how to pick a quarrel with Great Britain, sent a letter to the King, desiring it to be read before the Parliament, and the writing was as follows: 'Will I come? Will I come? Will I come?' This letter being read before the King and his courtiers, they all concluded that the French King designed to invade England: therefore they wrote a letter on purpose, to send to him again, upbraiding him with the breach of peace, and putting him in mind of their last treaty: 'This letter being read over before the King and his nobles, they all condescended that it should be sent as an answer; but, George smiling and shaking his head, cried out,

Many men, many minds;

Who knows what he designs?

They then asked George, what he thought the French King meant by such a letter; to which he answered, I suppose he wants an invitation to come over to dine, and then go back in a friendly manner; but you are going to charge him with a breach of peace, before he has given any sign of offence or war; his letter is indeed dark and mystical, but send him an answer according to his question.

Now George being ordered to write the answer, it was 'And ye come, And ye come, And ye come.' This being sent to the French King, he admired it beyond expression, saying it was an answer more valiant and daring than he expected; so the enmity he intended was extinguished thereby and turned into love.

About this time, it happened, that a malignant party in Scotland, sent up a great spokesman to the King and Parliament for the seducing of the Church: George hearing of his coming, went away and met him on the bridge and the salutation that he gave him, was the cutting off his head, and throwing it over the bridge; he then ran to the King with all his might, falling down before him pleading most heartily for a pardon, or without it he was a dead man: the King most furiously asked him what he had done now? To which he answered, He had only thrown the Scotch Bishop's hat over the bridge, which made the King to laugh, to hear him ask a pardon for such a small fault; but he had no sooner gotten the pa-

don sealed by the King's hand, than he said, Indeed my Sovereign, I threw his hat over the bridge, but his head was in it. Geordy, Geordy, says the King, thou wilt never give over till thou be hanged.

After this, a nobleman in England agreed with the King, how to put a trick upon George, to try his manly courage, in sending him to a certain house for a bag of money. On his way home thro' St. James' park, they caused a sturdy fellow, to go and set the way upon him, and take the money; he, being armed with sword and pistol, came up briskly, and attacked George with these words, 'You, Sir, deliver what money you have, or you are a dead man.' To which George answered, 'Sir, I have money, but it is not my own, and I am sorry to give it, nevertheless, since I am not armed as you are, to exchange blows for it, you shall have it: but pray, do me the favour, to fire your pistol through the lap of my cloak, that the owners may see I have been in danger of my life, before I lost the money;' which he accordingly performed. No sooner had he fired it, than George whips out his hanger from below his cloak, and with one stroke cut off his right hand, wherein he held his sword, so that his sword and hand fell to the ground; but George lifted his hand, and carried it to the King. No sooner did he come before them, but they asked him, saying, 'Well George, did you see any body to trouble you by the way; No, said he, but one fellow, who was going to take the money from me; but I made him give me his hand he would not do the like again.' 'You did,' says the fellow's master; 'Yes, I did, says George, Let works bear witness,' throwing down the fellow's hand upon the table before them all.

Now this last exploit of George's caused many of the English to hate him, and amongst the rest, a young nobleman fell a joking of George, in saying, 'He would be as famous a champion for Scotland as Sir William Wallace was.' Ay, ay, says George, 'William Wallace was a brave man in his time.' True, indeed, says the other, 'but when he came to London, we did him all manner of justice, and for honour of the Scots, we have his effigy in the shite-house to this-very day.' 'And do you not know the reason of that?' says George: No, I don't

‘ says he : Well, I will tell you, says George, he was such a terror to the Englishmen when he was alive, that a sight of him yet makes them bespite themselves.’ The English took this answer as a great affront, and forthwith caused Wallace’s picture to be taken out of that place.

There was a young English girl in love with a Scotsman, and petitioned him several times to marry her, which he refused, and upon revenge thereof, she went to a justice, and swore a rape against him, which is death by the law. George hearing this, went into the prison where the young man was ; and instructed him how to behave before the judge. So in the time of the trial George came in, while the judge was crying to the man, but never a word he could get him to answer, or tell whether he was guilty or not: After the judge had given him over to be deaf and dumb ; others fell a shouting in his ears, but never a word he would speak. Then the judge perceiving George, called him, saying, George, do you know what is the matter with this man ? ‘ Yes, I do very well :’ What is it, says the judge ? ‘ Why, says George, the woman made such a noise and crying when he was ravishing her, it has put the poor man quite deaf, I assure you.’ Is it so, says the Judge ! ‘ No, no, says the woman, my lord Judge, you may believe me, I lay as mute as a lamb, and never spoke a word all the time.’ Very well confessed, said the judge, and you have sworn a rape against him ! ‘ Go, take the whore to Newgate, and set the poor man about his business,’ and so it ended.

## P A R T II.

GEORGE happened one night to be in company with a bishop, and so they fell to argumenting anent religion, wherein George got the better of him, and the bishop himself found he was wrong : then one of the company addressed himself to George in these words, ‘ Thou Scot, said he ought not to have left thy country ;’ For what, says George, ‘ Because thou hast brought all the knowledge in it along with thee :’ No, no, says George, ‘ The shepherds in Scotland will argument with any bishop in England and exceed them mighty far in knowledge.’ the English clergy took this as a great affront, and several noblemen affirmed it to be as George had said,



Wagers were laid thereon, and three of the English clergy were chosen and sent away to Scotland, to dispute it with the shepherds, accompanied with several gentlemen who were to bear witness of what they heard pass between them. Now, George hearing what way they were gone, took another road, and came into the Scots bounds before them, made up his acquaintance with a shepherd at the border, whose pasture lay hard by the way-side, where the clergymen were to pass, and here George mounted himself in a shepherd's dress, and when he saw the clergymen coming, he conveyed his flock to the road side, where he fell a singing a Latin song; and so to begin the quarrel one of them asked him in French, 'What o'clock it was?' To which he answered in Hebrew, 'It is directly about the time of the day it was yesterday at this time.' Another asked him in Greek, 'What countryman he was?' To which he answered in Flemish, 'If you knew that, you would be as wise as myself.' The third asked him in Dutch, 'Where was you educate?' to which he answered in Earse, 'Herding my sheep betwixt this and Lochaber.' This they begged him to explain into English, which he accordingly did. Now said they one to another, we need not go any farther. What, says George, are you butchers? I'll sell you a few sheep. To this they made no answer, but went away shamefully, swearing, that the Scots had gone thro' all the nations in the world to learn their language, or the devil had taught them it, for we have no share here but shame.

After George had ended the dispute with the English clergymen, he stript off his shepherd's dress, and went up through England with all the haste imaginable, so that he arrived at the place from whence they set out, three days before them; and went every day, asking if they were come, so that he might not be suspected. Now, upon their arrival all that were concerned in the matter, and many more, to hear what news from the Scottish shepherds, came crowding in to know what was done. No sooner had the three gentlemen declared what had pass between the clergymen and the shepherds, whom they found on the Scots border, but the old bishop made answer; And think you, said he, that a shepherd could answer these questions? It has been none else but the devil: for the Scots ministers

themselves could not do it: They are ignorant of such matters; a parcel of beardless boys.—Then George thought it was time to take speech in hand. Well, my lord bishop, says he, You call them a parcel of ignorant beardless boys; you have a great long beard yourself, my lord bishop, and if the grace of God were measured by beards, you bishops, and the goats will have it all, and that will be quite averse to scripture. What, says the bishop, are you a Scot? Yes, says George, I am a Scot: Well, says the bishop, and what is the difference between a Scot and a sot? Nothing at present, says George, but the breadth of the table, (there being a table betwixt the bishop and George,) so the bishop went off in a high passion, while the whole multitude were like to split their jaws with laughter.

About this time, there was an act of Parliament for the benefit of murderers, that any person who committed murder, if they forfeited five hundred merks, which went under the name of KIN-BOOT, because so much of this fine went to the murdered persons nearest relations, as the price of blood, the murderer got a remit. Now George knowing this to be contrary to Moses' laws, was very much grieved to see so many pardons sealed with the king's hand for murder, almost one every week; it being so usual for the king to subscribe them, that he would not read them, nor enquire what they were; for which cause, George writes a right to the crown, and sent it to the King to be subscribed, which he actually did, and never looking what it was, returned it to George: No sooner had he received it, but he goes to the King, and told him, it was not time for him now to be sitting there, whereat the King greatly amazed, started up; then George in a great haste set himself down in the king's schair, forthwith declaring himself king; saying, 'You who was King must be my fool, for I am now the wisest man.' The King at this was greatly offended, until George shewed him his seal and subscription; but from that day forth the king knew what he subscribed.

The next pardon that came to be sealed by the King, was to a gentleman that had killed two men before, and had gotten pardons for them by money. This being the third, the King looked very silent in looking over the petition. George standing by, asked the King what he was

going to deal now? To which he answered, it is a remit for a man who has killed three men at sundry times, I gave him two remits before. O! says George, He has killed but one man: and who killed the other two, says the King? You did, says George; for if you had given him justice when he killed the first, he had killed no more. When the King heard these words, he threw down the pen, and declared, that such an act to save a murderer, should be null ever after by him.

One day after this, George having no money, he goes away and gets a pick and spade, and then falls to digging at a corner of the king's palace, which the king perceiving from his window, calls what he was wanting there? Are you going to undermine my house, and make it fall! No, my Sovereign, said he, but it is verily reported, that there is plenty of money about this house, and where can it be, says George? I cannot find it: for it is not within the house to do me service, then surely it must be below it. O George, that is a crave after the new fashion; what money you want, I will order it for you. Then my Sovereign, I will dig no more.

One time after this, George being in the country, he came to an inn, where he alighted to refresh himself and his horse; the inn-keeper charged him double price for every thing he called for: George never grumbled at this but gave him all his demands, and away he goes on his journey; and where he quartered the night following, he was used after the same manner, if not worse. Now George having little farther to go, he returned the next day and came that night to the inn where he had refreshed himself the day before; so when he alighted, the boy asked him, Sir, What shall I give your horse? What you will boy, says George. No sooner had he gone into his room, but the drawer asked him, What will you have to drink, Sir? What you will, says George. The master of the inn came into his room before supper, asked him, What will you have for supper, Sir? What you will landlord, says George. Now after supper being ended, and a hearty bowl to put all over, George went to bed, and got up pretty early in the morning, called for the boy to make ready his horse in all haste, for he designed to mount him and go directly; so in a short time he went into the stable

where the boy was, calling for his horse, and mounting him with all the speed he could, giving the boy a piece of money; saying, Here my boy, this is for your care taking of my horse, I have paid for all I called for in the house, and off he goes. Now about mid-day he alighted again at an inn, to refresh himself and his horse, and there he chanced to be in company with his other landlord where he was the night before, who charged him with the double reckoning; so George addressed himself to him after this manner: Sir, says George, I do believe I was in your house here yesternight. O yes, Sir, I mind of you pretty well; And where was you last night? Last night! says George, I was in one of the finest inns, and with the civilest landlord I ever had in my life; they brought all things I stood in need of unto me, without calling for it, and when I came off this morning they charged me nothing, and I paid nothing but sixpence to the boy for dressing my horse. Blood and wounds, says the old fellow, then I will go there this night. Ay, says George, do, and mind this when they ask you what you will have for yourself and your horse, answer nothing but what you will, Sir: Now George smiled within himself to think how he had got the one extortioner to take a mends of the other. So the foresaid inn-keeper rode that night, until many of the people of the inn were gone to bed before he came in. No sooner was he lighted from his horse, than the boy asked him what shall I give to your horse, master? To which he answered, What you will, boy. The boy hearing this, he runs away (leaving him and his horse to stand at the door) up stairs to his master's room, crying, Master, Master, What you will come again! O the rogue, cries he, Where is he? I'll catch him! I'll what you will him by and by! and to him he runs with his cane, licks him and kicks him, until he was scarce able to mount his horse, and would give him no entertainment there; which caused him to ride the whole length of a cold winter night, after he had got his bones all beat and bruised. So the one pursued the other as a murderer; and his defence was, that he was a cheat and a scorner of his house, until the truth was found out.

About this time, the French King sent and demanded from the King of England three men of different qual-

ties, the one was to be a mighty strong man, the other a very wise man, and the third a great fool; so that he might have none in all France to match them in their stations. So accordingly there were two men chosen, the one a strong man, and the other a wise man; but George was to act as a fool: nevertheless, he was the teacher of the other two. And on their way to France, George asked the strong man, What will you answer the French King if he asks if you be a strong man? I will say I am. Then says George, he'll get a stronger man than you, who may kill you and affront your country. What shall I say then, said the strong man? Why, says George, Tell him you are strong enough untried. Then says George to the wise man, And what will you say to the King, when he asks if you be a wise man? I will tell him I am, and answer all the questions I know. Very well, says George, and what if he ask you what you do not know, then you will affront your country, and be looked upon as a greater fool than I. What shall I answer then? said the wise man, Why, says George, tell him, He only is a wise man that can take care of himself; and I shall come in after you, and take care of you all together. No sooner were they come to the King's palace, than the King sent for them to try them. The strong man being first called for, in he goes; then the King asked him, Are you a strong man, Sir? To which he answered, 'O King, I am strong enough untried.' Very good, said the King. After him entered the wise man, to whom the King put the question, Sir, are you a wise man? To which he answered, 'He only is a wise man that can take care of himself.' Very good, says the King; with that George pushes up the door, and in he goes with loud laughter, pisses directly in the King's face, which blinded both his eyes, and set the whole court in amaze. Now, now, says the King, It is true enough the wise man says, for if I had taken care of myself, I needed not been pissed upon by the English fool. O ho, says George, Fools always strive to make fools of others, but wise men make fools of themselves. The King imagined as much as he was made the greatest fool, and charged them forthwith to go home, for he wanted no more of England's strength, wisdom, nor folly.

One night after this a highland drover chanced to be at

a drinking bout with an English captain of a ship, and at last, the English captain and he came to be very hearty over their cups; so they called in their servants to have a share of their liquor: the drover's servant looked like a wild man, going without breeches, stockings, or shoes, not so much as a bonnet on his head, with a long peel'd rung in his hand. The captain asked how long it was since he caught him; about two years since I hauled him out of the sea with a net, and afterwards he ran unto the mountains, where I caught him with a pack of hounds. The captain believed it was so: But, says he, I have a servant the best swimmer in Europe: Oh but says the drover, my servant will swim him to death. No, says the captain, I will lay two hundred guineas on it. Then says the drover, I hold it one for one, and stakes directly: the day being appointed when trial was to be made. Now the drover when he came to himself, thinking what a bargain he had made, did not know what to do, knowing very well his servant could swim none. He hearing of George being in town, who always was a good friend to a Scotsman, he went unto him, and told him the whole story, and that he would be entirely broken, and durst never return home to his own country, for he was sure to lose. Now George called the drover and his servant aside, and instructed them how to bring him off with safety and gain too; so accordingly they met at the place appointed: The captain's servant stripped directly, and threw himself into the sea, taking a turn until the Highlandman was ready, for the drover took some time to put his servant in order; after he was stripped, his master took his plaid, and rolled a kebbock of cheese, a big loaf, and a bottle of gin in it, and this he bound on his shoulders, giving him a direction to tell his wife and children that he was well; to be sure he returned with an answer against that day se'ennight: So as he went into the sea, he looked back to his master, and cries out to him for his claymore. And what waits he for now, says he who was to swim along with him? He wants his sword, says his master. His sword! says the fellow: What is he to do with a sword! Why, says his master, if he meet a whale or a monstrous beast, it is to defend his life: I know he will have to fight his way thro' the north seas, e'er he go to Lochaber. Then cries the other, I will swim none

with him if he takes his sword. Ay, but says the master, you shall, or lose the wager; take you another sword with you. No, says the fellow, I never did swim with a sword, nor any man else that ever I saw or heard of; I know not but that wild-like man will kill me in the deep water; I would not for the whole world venture myself with him and a sword. The captain seeing his servant afraid to venture, or if he did, he was sure never to see him again alive; therefore, he desired an agreement with the drover, who at first seemed unwilling; but the captain put it in his will: so the drover quit him for one hundred guineas: This he came to thro' George's advice.

## P A R T III.

**A**FTER this, George being in Cornwall about some business, where he chanced to run short of money, and not knowing what to do, being acquainted with none in that country, and knowing his landlord to be loyal to the government, and a great favourite to the King his master; he takes a piece of brick, and brays it into a small powder, mixed with a little chalk, so that it might seem in colour like Arsenick, which is strong poison: Then tying it up in papers, writing on this direction, 'The stronger poison for the King,' and on the other paper, 'The slower poison for the Queen.' Out he goes on purpose, and leaves the paper lying on a table, where he knew they would be looking at them: The landlord perceived the direction; so in comes George in a great haste, and calls out, 'O landlord, did you see two small bundles I have lost, I know not what I shall do, for it was my main business to take them to London.' O you murdering rogue! cries the landlord, I will have you hanged for what you intend. George at this made off, and was going to fly for it, but the landlord called for assistance; so he was apprehended and made prisoner of state, and carried to London by a troop of horse; when the people there began to know him and tell who he was, his guard slipt away shamefully and left him; so George thanked them for their good company and safe convoy.

There was a law made against wearing swords at balls and assemblies, in the reign of King James the VI. because they were inconvenient on these occasions: But George to be witty on the act, provided himself with a very long scabbard, and got himself introduced to a ball where the King

and his court were present: George made several turns thro' the company, making his scabbard hit against their shins, and sometimes slip it below a lady's fardingale; and in short, molested the company so much that he was taken notice of, and seized as a person who had incurred the penalties of the act aforesaid. But George excused himself, telling them that the law was only against swords, and as he only wore a scabbard, was no ways liable. At seeing this, the King and his court were convinced that the law was imperfect, and that George had more wit than themselves.

George, one day easing himself at the corner of a hedge, was espied by an English 'squire, who began to mock him, asking him, Why he did not keckle like the hens? But George, whose wit was always ready, told him, He was afraid to keckle, lest he would come and snatch up the egg. Which rebuff made the 'squire walk off as mute as a fish.

George was professor in the college of St. Andrews, and slipped out one day in his gown and slippers, and went to his travels thro' Italy, and several other foreign countries, and after seven years, returned with the same dress he went off in: and entering the college, took possession of his seat there, but the professor in his room quarrelled him for so doing. Ay, says George, it is a very odd thing, that a man cannot take a walk out in his slippers, but another will take up his seat. And so let the other professor about his business.

George was met one day by three bishops, who paid him the following compliments. Says the first, Good-day, father Abraham; says the second, Good day, father Isaac; says the third, Good-day, father Jacob. To which he replied, 'I am neither father Abraham, father Isaac, nor father Jacob; but I am Saul the son of Kish, sent out to seek my father's asses, and lo! I have found three of them.' Which answer convinced the bishops, that they had mistaken their man.

A poor Scotchman dined one day at a public house in London upon eggs, and not having money to pay, got credit till he would return; the man being lucky in trade, acquired vast riches; and after some years returned, and calling at the house where he was owing his dinner of eggs, asked the landlord what he had to pay for his dinner of eggs, he had from him such a time; but the landlord seeing him now rich, gave him a bill of some hundred pounds,



telling him the reason for so extravagant a charge: That these eggs, had they been hatched, would have been chickens; and these laying more eggs, would have been more chickens; and soon multiplying the eggs and their product, till such a time as their value should amount to the sum he charged. The man, refusing to comply with his demand, was charged before a judge; but in the mean, time made his affair known to George Buchanan his countryman, who promised to appear in the hour of cause; which he accordingly did, all in a sweat, with a great basket of boiled pease: which appearance surprized the judge, who asked him what he meant by these boiled pease? says George, I am going to sow them: When will they grow? says the judge. They will grow when sodden eggs grow chickens. Which answer, convinced the judge of the extravagance of the Englishman's demand, and the Scotsman was absolved upon paying two pence half-penny.

There was a bell at Dalkeith, which the Popish clergy made use of to extort confession from the ignorant people, in the following manner: They told the persons whom they suspected guilty, that the bell would rive at the touch of a guilty person; but if not guilty, it would not; by these means they generally frightened the ignorant into confession; for if the bell would rive, the person was then to be condemned to death: But they managed the matter so, that the bell was never put to the trial, till George did as follows, He was taken up for saying, 'That the Pope was fallible himself; and could not pardon the sins of others.' George owned he said so, but would refer to the bell whether he was guilty or not. The priests, though unwilling, were obliged to comply. George touched the bell, repeating as before, 'The Pope is fallible, and cannot pardon sin:' moreover added, 'the Pope and popish clergy are impostors;' and thereupon touched the bell, referring to it for the truth; but the bell not riving, the priests were disgraced as impostors, and he was honourably acquitted, and the bell was laid aside.

George desired a member of the college of St. Andrews to lend him a book; the other told him, he could not possibly spare it out of his chamber, but if he pleased he might come there and read all the day long. Some time after, the same gentleman sent to George to borrow

his bellows; but he sent him word, he could not possibly spare them out of his kitchen, but he might come there and blow all the day if he would.

A scholar at the grammar school of St. Andrews, coming into a room where his master had laid down a basket of fine cherries for his own eating; the waggish boy took it up, and cries aloud, I publish the banns between these cherries and my mouth, if any know any just cause or impediment, why these two should not be joined together, let them declare it. The master, being in the next room, overheard all that was said; and coming into the school, he ordered the boy who had eaten his cherries to be taken up, or as he called it, hors'd on another boy's back; but before he proceeded to the usual discipline, he cried out aloud as the delinquent had done. I publish the banns between this boy's breech and my taws: if any one knows any just cause or impediment, why these two should not be joined together, let them declare it. George passing by in the mean time, overheard this proclamation: I forbid the banns, cried he. Why so? says the schoolmaster: Because the parties are not agreed, replied he. Which answer so pleased the master, that the boy was set down without any punishment.

A young gentleman, that wanted to be witty on the Scriptures, eating some cheese full of mites one night at a tavern: Now, said he, I have done as much as Samson for I have slain my thousands and ten thousands. Yes, replied George, who happened to be in his company, and with the same weapon too, the jaw-bone of an ass; which answer set the whole company a laughing, to see the young gentleman beat with his own weapon.

George being in company where three bishops were present at dinner, they knowing George to be a great scholar, and comical withal, they put upon him to say the grace, which he did as follows,

Here are three brethren of the coat,  
Who for thy blessings thank thee not;  
Curse them Lord, and bless them not. Amen.

Fall on gentlemen, the cause is good. This grace made the bishops look like fools to one another, while George laughed heartily at the confusion they were in.

A Candle-maker having had some candles stolen, was telling it in a company where George was present, who bade him be of good cheer, for in a short time, says he, I am assured they will come to light.

George, being sent to Paris about some business, went from thence to Varfailles, to see the French King's court; and being known there to several of the courtiers, who had been at the English court, one of them took occasion to tell the French King, that George was one of the wittiest men in England; upon which the French King desired to see him, which he did; but George, it seems, was out of humour, or at least seemingly so, and spoke but little to the purpose; so that the French King told the nobleman that commended him for such a wit, that he looked upon him as a very dull fellow; but the nobleman assured the King, that whatever he thought of him, George was a very witty and ingenious man; whereupon the King was resolved to make farther trial of him, and took him into a great gallery where there were abundance of fine pictures; and, among the rest, shewed him the picture of Christ on the cross; and asked him, if he knew who that was; but George made himself very ignorant, and answered, No. Why, says the King, I will tell you if you do not know: This is the picture of our Saviour on the cross, and that on the right hand is the Pope's, and that on the left is my own. Whereupon George replied, I humbly thank your Majesty for the information, for tho' I have often heard that our Saviour was crucified between two thieves, yet I never knew who they were before.

A Sharper, who had acquired vast riches by cheating, told George, that if such a thing as a good name were to be purchased, he would freely give ten thousand pounds for one. Sir, said George, it would certainly be the worst money you ever laid out in your life. Why so, said the Sharper, Because, answered he, you would lose it in less than a week.

One asked George, Why men always made suit to the women, and women never to the men? Why, says he, Because the women are always ready for the men, but the men are not always ready for the women.

George went into the mint one day, when they were melting gold. One of them asked George, if he would

have his hat full of gold? George readily accepted, but it burnt the bottom out of his hat, as they knew it would, and for that bout they foiled George. However, George to be even with them, bought a fine large hat, and caused a plate of copper to be put betwixt the hat, and the lining; and returning next day, they jestingly asked him, if he would have another hat full of gold? he said he would: They gave it red hot, and George now laughed at them in his turn; telling them, That his new hat was a good one, and stood fire better than the old one, and so carried it off honestly; and being afterwards prosecuted for to return it, he excused himself, telling the judge, That he took nothing but what was given him; and therefore he was honourably acquitted, and the other heartily laughed at.

In the reign of King James the VI. George dining one day with the Lord Mayor, after two or three healths, the ministry was toasted; but when it came to George's turn to drink, he diverted it some time, by telling a story to the person who sat next to him, the chief magistrate not seeing his toast go round, calls out, What sticks the ministry at? At nothing, cries George, and so drank off his glass.

George being one day along with the King and his nobles a-hunting, and being but very sorrily mounted; when he was spurring up his horse, he observed the horse to have a trick of falling down on his knees, George immediately thought how he should make use of that very thing to divert his majesty; therefore pretended that his horse could set hares, and knowing some hare seats, rode that way to show the company the truth of what he affirmed, but when he had found the hare, by giving his horse a spur he immediately clapped down; this he repeated several times, till he put the whole company in belief that what he had said was true: And one of the noblemen being charmed with the performance of George's horse, would have George change with him. George seemed at first unwilling to part with his horse; but at last was prevailed upon to part with him for the nobleman's horse, and a hundred guineas to boot. But afterwards riding thro' a river pretty deep, the nobleman spurring his new horse, he clapped down on his belly; which George seeing, called out to the company to return with the dogs, for the nobleman's horse had certainly set a hare; which

set the whole company a laughing. The poor nobleman was obliged to leave his horse set in the water, and waddle thro' on foot, all wet to the shoulders.

A Scotsman being reduced to poverty, made his court to George to put him in a way; George told him he would, providing he would do as he directed him. There was an old miser, an usurer and money-changer hard by; George desired the poor fellow to pretend an errand to the miser, and when he came to the table where the heaps of money lay, to thrust his hand among the gold, but to lift none and run off. This the poor fellow did, and was chased by the miser, and his servants, who ran after him into the street, calling, Stop the thief: The poor fellow was stopt (as George had desired him to let them catch him.) George appeared in the mob, and went along with the poor fellow, who was carried before a judge, where he was searched, and nothing being found upon him, he was acquitted, and the miser fined in a large sum for accusing him. Afterwards, George desired him to go to the same place, and thrust in both his hands, and lift up as much as he could, and run off. This he did, but the miser told him he was not such a fool as to follow him, for he knew he designed to play the fool, to have him fined again. By these means the poor fellow was enriched, and afterwards lived honestly.

George, being at dinner one day where the broth was exceeding hot, burnt his mouth, at the same time letting go a loud-sart. It is very good for you, says George, that you made your escape, for I should have burnt you alive had you staid.

#### P A R T IV.

**A** Young Curate, with more pertness than wit or learning, being asked in company, how he came to take it into his head to enter into the ministry of the church? Because, said he, the Lord hath need of me. That may be, replied George, who was present, for I have often read that the Lord had once need of an ass.

After this, George being sent with the British ambassador into Italy, by the way of Paris; as they were viewing the beautiful statues and large buildings of that spacious city, the King and many of his nobles in company,

as they were walking thro' the King's garden among the images of the saints, they came to the image of the Virgin Mary, who stood in a melancholy posture with the babe in her arms; one of the noblemen says to the British ambassador, Don't you think but she looks as she were angry? O yes, says George, She is angry when she sees Englishmen and Frenchmen in friendship and unity one with another. No, no, says the French King, She loves nothing better than the reconciliation of enemies: Peace and unity is her delight. Then George gets in below the statue, and looks up; 'O says George, I know what is the matter now, some body has driven a great nail in her arse; I see the head of it sticking out, it would vex any living be's a piece of wood.' At this the King was greatly enraged against George, for calling her a piece of wood; and nothing would satisfy the King unless that George would fall down and worship the Virgin Mary, and crave mercy of her for the blasphemous reproaches wherewith he had reproached her. Then George cries out, 'O may it please your Majesty to omit it at this time, I dare not look her in the face, she frowns on me with such an angry countenance, this dutiful command of yours must be delayed, until I return from Italy, and then I shall fulfil your demand, in paying all dutiful respect and worship unto her, according to what she is.' So here the ambassador stood bound for George; that he would perform this piece of worship at his return, according to the King's pleasure.

Now, during their stay in Italy, they chanced to be in a nobleman's house where they kept but few servants, because of a spirit that haunted the house for the space of two hundred years before that time, so that no servant could work any kind of labour in or about the house for it, except cooks; for what they vulgarly called a Brownie, it did all itself, and would suffer no fellow-labourer to work along with it. On the next morning, George got up pretty early, called for water to wash himself; then directly comes the Brownie, with a basin of water in the one hand, and a clean cloth in the other. George perceiving him have such a pale ghosly countenance, and not to be an earthly creature, said, Of what nation art thou? To which it answered in Gaellic, or Earse, A countryman of yours, Sir. The ambassador smiled, and joked George.

telling him, it was a devil, and how could it be a countryman of his? O says George, I will show you the contrary of that, for the devil dare not stay in our country. George having washed himself, it came again to take away the bason and water; then says George, And how long is it since you left your own country? About two hundred and fifty years ago, replied it. Then certainly says he, Thou art a devil, and not an earthly creature. To which it answered,

I am what I am, and a Christian too.

Then I am what I am to conjure you, says George.

—He taking a handful of water, and throwing it upon the old withered face of it, repeated the form of the words of baptism in Earle; saying, If thou be a Christian, thou art old enough now to be baptized. No sooner had he done this, but it went off weeping and crying, O! let never a rogue put trust in his countryman after me. Now, says George, I told you the devil dare not stay in my country, nor yet look a Scotsman in the face in his own. What! says the Italian lord, Do you imagine that this is the devil's own country? It appears so, says George, for he is the oldest residenter in it I know; but my lord, said he, and if it please your grace, I think the clergymen are very scant in this country, when you have kept the devil so long for a chaplain. The nobleman unto this gave no answer, but expressed his sorrow to be very great for the loss of his Browne.

Now the ambassador having done his business in Italy, they returned homeward: and on their way the ambassador began to question George, How he thought to escape Paris without committing idolatry? No, no, says George, I never did worship any image nor never shall; but I shall make them worship the worst that is in my guts. No sooner were they arrived at Paris, but George leaves the ambassador and goes directly to the Virgin Mary, jumps in over the rail to the holy ground (as they termed it) whereon she stood, where few durst go but priests and friars; and there he loosed his breeches, and made such a groaning easing himself, that he was heard at a distance by the priests and friars who were walking near by; and they perceiving this heinous abomination, ran upon him like a

pack of hounds, and carried him before the cardinals and father confessors, where he was allowed to speak for himself, which he did as follows: ‘ May it please your most excellent worships to hear my reasons before you pronounce my sentence to be put in execution against me. It was my fortune to be passing through this city a few months ago with the British ambassador on our way to Italy; and one day being walking in the King’s garden, in presence of the King and many of his nobles, who can bear witness to the truth of the same; I being ignorant of your traditions and rites of religion, foolishly offended, reproaching the Virgin Mary to her face; and ever since she has plagued me with boundness in my belly that I have voided nought but clean haugh; so now on my return, I went and implored her to open my fundament, and she has done so; I being overjoyed with the miraculous healing, in getting a passage in her presence, left it as a memorial of the miracle in that place.’ When hearing this, they all with one consent, lifted up their hands and blessed the Virgin Mary, for the wonderful miracle she had done; and ordered George to go about his business, and declare unto all what was done unto him by the Holy Virgin, for the confirmation of their religion. So all the devoted Romans came to view his dung, and worship over it; the King himself kneeled down and worshipped, bowing his body over it in the presence of many people; and also caused a holy-day to be observed thro’ all his dominions, for the miraculous cure.

Now George being a long time absent from Britain, he thought fit to go and visit the King and his court in disguise. He meeting with an old man driving two old horses loaded with coals to sell; George here makes a bargain with the old man, for the loan of his clothes, his horses and coals, whip, and every thing for to complete him as a real coal-driver; so away he goes in this dress, until he came before the King’s palace, where he began to cry, with an audible voice, ‘ Buy coals, buy coals; better buy than borrow.’ Now the King being in company with his young chaplain, who was a foundling, that none knew his original; and had been fostered and educated out of charity by the King’s father, yet he was become as proud as Lucifer, and as proud in his own conceit as the King



himself. Now the King knowing George's voice, tho' he was in a coalman's dress, desired the chaplain to ask the coalman why he called so loud, making such a terrible noise. The chaplain opened the window, and with great airs called unto him, You, Sir, What do you cry so for? Why, says George, I cry for people to come and buy my coals, and give me money for them: but what do you cry for? What, Sir! says the young priest, I cry for you to hold your peace. Then, says George, come here then and cry for me, and go sell my coals, and I will hold my peace. Sell thy coals, says the priest; do you know to whom you speak! Yes, I do know, says George, but you do not. What are you? says the priest, I am a mortal and so are you, says George. What is your father's name, since you will not tell your own? says the priest. You may go ask that at my mother, says George; for I was not sufficient, when she got me, to know him. What! says the priest, do you not know your own father? I know my mother, and my mother did know my father, says George, and that is sufficient, and more than you can say perhaps. The priest thinking he was coming too near him, thought to put him off with a scriptural question, by asking him, If he knew who was Melchisedec's father? Indeed, master priest, says George, Melchisedec's descent was not counted, neither is yours, then who can declare your generation? The priest, at this answer, would stand the argument no longer, but closed the window in great haste, while the King, and all who knew the priest to be a foundling, were like to burst their sides with laughing; so George went off with his coals, and the priest became more humble than he was formerly, for he thought that every body knew who he was, when the coalman knew so well.

One night after this, an English Squire who professed to be better versed in poetry than George, laid a wager with another gentleman, five guineas against one, that George would not metre the first words he would say to him in the morning when newly awaked out of his sleep; so the gentleman went, the night before, and told George the story, and bade him be on his guard, for in the morning they would certainly come, and that right early. At midnight if ye will, says George, I will order my servant to let you in.

So the English 'squire sat up all night conferring with his friends, whether to put a high verse to him, or mean simple words; thinking that George would be sitting up all night meditating on an answer; so they all agreed, that mean and simple words he would not be thinking on, and have no answer provided for such. Then away they came in the morning very early, with several gentlemen in company to hear the diversion. George's servant opened the door according to his master's orders. The 'squire entered the room first, and awaked George out of his sleep, then said,

Rise up you madman, and put on your clothes,  
[To which George answered.]

O thou hast lost thy wad man, for I am none of those. The English 'squire confessed he was fairly beat and would match with him no more. Then another gentleman would hold five guineas, that he would give him a word or line, that he could not metre at the first answer; and to answer it directly as soon as he had done speaking; but George ordered him first to table the money, and then to proceed, which he did in all haste, and said as follows.

My belly rumbled, and then I farted,  
[George, gripping to the money, answered,]  
A fool and his money is soon parted.

'Then they all cried out, he was fairly beaten, and that what George had said was really true; but he never would lay any more wagers concerning poetry.

After this, George got a letter from a bishop, telling him that he was coming to visit him and take dinner with him in his lodgings; George sent an answer, that he would wait upon his Lordship at the time appointed; but well did George know it was not for any love he had unto him, he was coming to visit him, but to spy fairlies; therefore he thought he would give him something to talk about. So George sent his servant to a Bookseller's shop, to buy a dozen of small pamphlets, about a halfpenny a piece; such as, A Groat-worth's of Wit, for a Penny; the History of the King and the Cöbler, and such pieces as the \*; taking all his own books away, and putting the pamphlets in their place, which he presented to the bishop, when he asked for

a sight of his library. What, says the bishop, Have you no more books but these? No more, says George, but my Bible; just no more. O! says the bishop, I wonder how you can either speak plain, or write a perfect sentence, when you have no other book than these. O! says George, do you think that I am a clergyman, to borrow other men's sermons to beautify my works; no, no, not I! all that I write, I dote and meditate out of my own brain. This check concerning borrowing, put the bishop in a cold sweat, yet he concealed his passion.—Then George called to his servant if dinner was ready yet; to which he answered, Come, Master, come, the pot is on the boil, get out the meal-pock; then George came into the room where his servant was, and set the bishop at the one side of the fire, and sat down on the other himself; while his servant made a great bowl full of milk-brose, and set them between the bishop and George; then George desired his Lordship to ask a blessing to what they were to receive: the bishop did not know what he meant by a blessing, it not being usual for the English to do so: asked at George, What it was? but George took up a great ram-horn spoon, and put it into the bishop's hand, saying, There it is, my Lord. What! says the bishop, call you that a blessing? We call that a spoon. O my Lord, says George, it is the best blessing you can ask, if it does not come empty.

Well, says the bishop, and how do you call that scalded meal? Why, says George, we call it Scots brose. O! said the bishop, I cannot eat it. O! says he, the thing we cannot eat we sup, my Lord: Since you are in a Scotsman's house, you must partake of a Scotsman's victuals. Then, says the bishop, I always thought the Scots had lived well till now; I would not be a Scotsman for the world. O! said George, if a Scotsman live twenty years, and get but nineteen years meat, he cannot be badly off. What! not badly off, and want a year's victuals said the bishop! upon my word of honour, if I wanted one day's victuals, I'd be sure to die the next. O! says George, we drink water when we cannot do better, and that puts us in remembrance of wealth, for a dish of contentment is good cheer.

Then, said the bishop, I will drink water too, if it be good for the memory. Ay, do, said George, and you will remember me when you do so. Now, after dinner.

the bishop took his leave of George, and desired him next day to come and dine with him.

## P A R T V.

**N**EXT day, George according to promise, went to the bishop's lodging; but no sooner did the bishop see George, then he saluted him with these words,

Your servant master wise man,  
And yet you have no books;  
How can one have knowledge  
That no man instructs;

[George answered,]

Your servant master bishop,  
Your salutation's good:  
Your knowledge is in your library,  
Whilst others are in their hood.

Now, after a sumptuous dinner, the bishop took George into his library, shewing him a great quantity of books, which George praised very much, and amongst the rest an old Hebrew Bible, which George taking up, asked at the bishop what book it was; the bishop looking at it very sincerely, said he could not tell. Why then do you keep a book you do not know the name of? It may be the book of black art. No, I do not think that, said the bishop, but can you tell what it is? Yes says George, it is the Bible, the best book for a bishop I know, if he had eyes to see the inside of it: so he desired George to read a piece of it; but when he did, he could not understand it; therefore he desired him to explain it, which sentence he did as follows, Isa. ix. 16. 'For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed.' To which George added, This is the blind leading the blind. So taking his leave of the bishop, he parted with him, saying these words,

Good night, hail master bishop,  
Of books you have great store;  
Yet cannot read the half of them,  
Then what use are they for?

Many of the clergymen in England desired greatly to be in company with George, because of his comical and

witty expressions; so George happened one night to be called into a company, where there were two bishops, as also a priest who wanted to be licensed by them. One of the bishops asked George, Why the people in Scotland did not love bishops. Because, says George, they are like old beggars advanced to be rulers over barrow-men, still instructing them in things they know not themselves, ordering them to carry stones to the builders, which they will not receive, and which they themselves had never power to move; the Scots having knowledge of this, hate to see the bishops have great lordships for their ignorance, and the poor labourer have little or nothing for his toil. One of the bishops, looking at George with an angry countenance, answered, saying, You Scot must be made a bishop yourself, and we bishops made priests, and that will serve well for your turn. No, no, said George. That will not do; for if I be made a bishop, I will have no broken bishops to serve as priests under me, for they are such bad masters, they'll become the worst of all servants. At this the two bishops left the room in a great passion, leaving George and the young priest only by themselves. Now, now, says George, this proves the bishops to be but hirelings and not true shepherds, pointing to the young priest. You see they are fled for their own safety, and here they have left you a lamb, before the mouth of me a fox, and who knows but I may worry you. Run, run too master sneep, says George; and if you have eyes guide them two blind shepherds down stairs, and over ditches, that I am afraid you will tumble all in a ditch together. This raised such an indignation in the bishops' breasts, that they desired no more of George's company nor conversation.

One time after this, George being in the country, about twenty miles distant from London, and on his way homeward a fine gilded coach came up after him, which George being informed, belonged to the bishop of Canterbury, and was going to London for his Lordship. George addresses himself to the coachman to have a passage with him in the coach for London. So he bargained with the coachman for two dollars to carry him to the Bell-inn on London-bridge; the one he gave him in hand as he entered the coach, and the other he was to give him as soon as ever he would see him come out at the coach door; so away the

30 THE WITTY EXPLOITS  
coachman drives for London in all haste, in which time  
George wrote the following MOTTO.

Here sits the bishop of Canterbury,  
Who at the schools disdain'd to tarry,  
Far better skill'd in games than preaching,  
And yet he lives by others teaching.  
Blind, leaders of the blind indeed,  
'Tis blind and lame that chariots need.  
Sic brutes with eyes this brute do carry,  
I mean the Bishop of Caunterbury.  
My feet being lame, I gave a dollar,  
To be drove in state like you a scholar.  
For which myself I do abhor,  
Shame caus'd me make another door.

These lines George battered upon the inside of the coach, and when he came within a mile of London, took a knife and cut a great hole in the backside of the coach, where he came out: and to make his promise good to the coachman, that he was to give him the other dollar as soon as ever he saw him come out at the coach door. The poor coachman drove on till he came to the foresaid Inn, where he alighted; and opened the door to let out his passenger; but seeing the coach empty, and a great hole in the backside of it, he cried out, He believed he had had the devil in the coach, and that he had taken away the backside of it with him. The people of the Inn came all flocking about to see what was done; and then perceiving the lines on the inside of the coach, which the bishop came and read himself, they all concluded it to be done by George, but could make nothing of it; for the bishop said, to pursue him might well make it worse, but no better.

George was invited one day by a great lawyer to come and see a new building, which he had lately built of fine free stone and marble, he desired George to guess what it was built with. George answers, do you think that I do not know what it is built with? No, you do not, says the lawyer. Yes I do, says George, It cannot stand long, for malice and hatred is the mortar of it, and the stones are the heads of foolish people, polished over with the tongue of an ass: What! says the lawyer, do you compare me to an ass. O! Sir, do not you remember, than an ass was made an advocate, and spoke against Balaam? The lawyer to this

would give no answer, but took good-night of George.

Three merchant pedlars (as they professed to be) came with a pack of goods to put a trick upon a widow woman, who kept an Inn upon the high way side; after they had drunk very hearty, they desired the woman to lay up the pack securely, and charged her strictly before witnesses, to deliver it to none of them, unless they came altogether for it again. And in about three weeks thereafter, two of them returned, and desired the woman to give them the pack; telling her, That the other man was gone to such a fair with another pack, where they were all to meet; and that they were fellow-travellers, conjunct in trade, and how they had all a right to the pack alike: Whereupon, the poor simple woman, not dreading any further harm, gave them the pack. So, in a few days thereafter, the other man comes and demands the pack; the honest woman told him plainly, that the other two men had been there before, and had got it away; then he began to demonstrate to the woman what great danger she was in, and forthwith raised a process against her by law, which cost the poor woman a vast sum of money to defend, as the plea continued more than two full years; and a great court being one day to sit upon the process to decide it, which would undoubtedly have been done in favour of the pursuer, the proof being so clear, and the woman herself not denying what the bargain was, when she got the pack to keep.

The poor woman being in great straits, her purse being turned empty, her attorney told her plainly, as her money was done, he could no longer defend her; the woman once more pluckt up her heart, and went to London to employ a new attorney to speak for her; but for want of gold, she could get none to undertake it. George being in a house, where he heard the poor woman making a mournful complaint to one of her attorneys, who gave her no comfort nor satisfaction; for when she told him she had no money to spend, or give in defence of it, the attorney went away, and would hear no more of the woman's grievous complaint, which made George laugh very heartily; while the poor widow sat weeping like one in distraction. Poor woman, says George, You need not think that man will speak a word for you, or any else, unless you had brought him a purse of gold to loose his tongue; but as I

have got a scheme of the matter, you may go home, and have patience until the time come, and then my life for yours, poor woman, that I shall send you an attorney, that will do your business for nothing.

He gave the poor woman more courage than any she had spoke with in London; for every one told her that all the attornies in the world could not free her. So accordingly at the day appointed, George dressed himself like an attorney with his gown, and every thing as he had really been so.

The court being fenced, and the process read over, expences and value of the pack, having amounted to above seven hundred pounds, was ordered to be put in a decret against the poor widow, which every one was bemoaning, but could give her no relief. Now George kept himself silent, hearing them all with great patience, until the very nick of time, he thought proper to address himself to the judges as followeth, 'My lords judges, and gentleman of this honourable court and company, I have come from London gratis, out of pure pity to speak a word or two in favour of this poor woman, who hath exhausted all her means in defence of a false accusation charged against her; and now when her money is gone, her speakers are dumb, and I saw none to plead the cause of this poor widow. Now, when sentence is upon the tapis to be pronounced against her, I earnestly desire this court to modify and drop the expences altogether. It is enough when the poor woman has the pack to pay; for you all know the woman was no way enriched by it, when the other two men got it away.'

Then the pursuers attorney made answer, as follows: 'Sir, I would have thought that you who have come from London and profess to be a doctor of law, should know better things; know ye not, that he who gains the plea, gains his expences as well as the sum, or be what it will?' Yes, it must and shall be so, said the judges. Then said George, 'This is all I want;' which set the whole court a-laughing, thinking he was a fool, and become an adversary to the poor woman: 'Give over sport, gentlemen,' says George, 'I have not done yet.'

'My lords judges, you will hear me in this, if the poor woman made a bargain with this merchant and other two who were with him, for to keep that pack safely, and to deliver it to none of them, until they were all three pre-



sent; now, let that man who is here at the time, go and seek the other two, and they shall have their pack, for she has the pack safe enough; but she will keep by her first bargain. So I refer to you judges and gentlemen, if this poor woman be not in the right.' This made the judges look one to another: and the whole court with one voice, declared the woman to be in the right, and ordered the pursuer to go and seek his two companions: No, no,' says George, 'The poor woman must have her expences, or surety for it.' Then the judges caused the pursuer to be arrested at the bar, until the woman got satisfaction for all her trouble and expences. So George returned to London unknown but for an advocate, whose fame was spread over all England; which caused many who had lawsuits, to search through London for him, but none could ever find him who gained the widow's law plea.

George being one day in the country, and coming thro' a village, there came a great mastiff-dog, and gripped him by the leg, until the blood followed his long teeth. George, with one stroke of his cane, came over his eyes, until he fell down and died upon the spot: It is well for thee, says George, that I kill'd thee, before thou wast brought to justice, for thou hadst certainly been hanged for what thou hast done, and thy master severely fined for keeping thee. The owner of the dog hearing George say so, went off without speaking a word to George, for fear it had been so.

A country gentleman came one time, and enquired at George, what he thought was the reason he lost every law suit or plea he set his face to, tho' never so just a claim, the law went still against him, George asked him, Who he employed? He told him, That he was one of the best and ablest attorneys in England. 'Yes, says George I believe he may be so: But when you go to law again, if you have a mind to win it, when you give your own attorney one guinea, give your adversary's two; for these attorneys are much after the nature of an ass, they will not speak right, if you do not throw a multitude of angels before them; (meaning pieces of English money, called angels by name.) The gentleman returned in a few weeks thereafter, and heartily thanked George for his good advice, for he was not afraid now, but he could gain any plea he took in hand, whether it was just or not.

Two drunken fellows one day fell abeating one another, on the streets of London, which caused a great croud of people throng together to see what it was; a taylor, being at work up in a garret, about three or four stories high, and he hearing the noise in the street, looked over the window but could not well see them; he began to stretch himself, making a long neck, until he fell down out of the window, and alighted upon an old man who was walking on the street; the poor taylor was more afraid than hurt, but the man he fell on died directly. His son caused the taylor to be apprehended, and tried for the murder of his father; the jury could not bring it in as wilful murder, neither could they altogether free the taylor; the jury gave it over to the judges, and the judges to the King. The King asked George's advice in this hard matter. Why, says George, I will give you my opinion in a minute; you must cause the taylor to stand on the street, in the place where the old gentleman was when he was killed by the taylor, and then let the old gentleman's son, the taylor's adversary, go up to the window from whence the taylor fell, and jump down, and so kill the taylor as he did his father: for I can make no more of it. You see it was a great mercy for the taylor he had the old gentleman below him, else he had been killed on the spot, and that it was the old gentleman's lot or misfortune to die there. The taylor's adversary hearing this sentence past, he would not venture to jump over the window, and so the taylor got clear off.

## P A R T VI.

**G**EORGE, being one night in company with some English noblemen in presence of the King, they began to demonstrate such a fine place as England was, both for beautiful buildings and fruitful fields; one gentleman said, he knew a place in England, tho' they should crop the grass even with the ground at night, and lay down a crown on it before a hundred witnesses, that against to-morrow, you would not know where to find it. That may seem very strange to some, says George, but it is no mystery to me; knowing there would be enough of them who saw the crown piece laid down, ready enough to come and take it up before to-morrow. But, says George, I know

a place in the west of Scotland, where, if you will tether a horse at night, against the next morning you will not see him. What a pox will take him away, says the Englishman? Only such people, says George, as will take away your crown-piece. O says the English nobleman, You know what I mean.

Then says George, You talk much of towns you have in England, I know three towns in poor Scotland, for properties you have none such. Pray, says the gentleman, What are these properties? Why, says George, I know one town where there are a hundred bone-bridges in it; another town, where there are fifty draw-bridges in it; another town, tho' a man commits murder, treason, or owes ever so much money, if he runs to that town, and gets in below a stair, no law nor justice can harm him. The nobleman offered immediately to stake a hundred pounds, that there were no such towns in Europe, besides in Scotland. They desired George to tell him the names of these towns, for they would find them out, and know whether he was a liar or not. So he told their names, and two men were sent to Scotland to see them; the first was Duddingston near Edinburgh, where they came and asked for the bone-bridges there; the people shewed them steps almost between every door, of the skulls of sheep-heads, which they used as stepping-stones. The second was a little country village, between Stirling and Perth, called Auchterarder, where there is a large strand which runs thro' the middle of the town; and almost at every door there is a long stock, or stone, laid over the strand, whereupon they pass to their opposite neighbours, and when a flood comes, they lift their wooden bridges in case they should be taken away, and these they call their draw-bridges. The third was a village near Stirling called Cambusbarron, which they pass thro' from one end to the other, but there was not a stair in it all; so they returned to England, and told what manner of bone and draw-bridges they were, and how there was not a stair in all that place, therefore no man could run below it.

As George was on the road travelling to London, the weather being very rainy and cold, he alighted at an inn to refresh and warm himself, but the fire-side being so surrounded with people he could scarce see the fire; George finding this to be the case, calls to the hostler, and orders

30 **THE WITTY EXPLOITS, &c.**  
him to give his horse, at the door, half a peck of oysters: You mean oats, Sir: No, no, says George, it is oysters and base is that horse that will not eat oysters. The people, at the fire hearing this, all started up and ran to the door to see the horse eating oysters; the moment they left their seats, George took the opportunity to plant himself before the fire, with a table and cloth beside him. In a little they came back again one by one, saying, This horse will eat no oysters: Well, well, says George, he is either too full or too faucy; so you may bring them in, and I will eat them myself.

Now George being old, and highly advanced in years; finding his natural strength, and state of health daily decaying, he petitioned King James to let him return to Scotland, for to visit his friends, and the land of his nativity; which he most willingly granted? (not thinking his design was never to return,) for George had a great design to resign his soul and breath in that place of the world where he received them; and that his body and bones might be laid amongst his ancestors, which was counted a great honour in former ages.

So accordingly George came to the parish of Killearn, in the west of Scotland, where he visited all his friends and relations before his death, during which time the King sent several messages for him to return, in all the haste he could; but he absolutely refused, telling him, That he would never see him again; which grieved the King very much to hear him express himself in that manner. After this the King sent him a letter, threatening him very sharply, if he did not appear in London in the space of twenty days, he would send his Lyon-heralds with a party, who would bring him to London, whether he would or not. Unto which, as an answer, George sent him a famous letter of admonition, both anent the government of his kingdoms, and the well-being of his soul, which caused the King weep very bitterly when he read it over; with the following verse,

My honour'd Leige and Sovereign King,  
Of your boasting great, I dread nothing:  
On your feud and favour I'll fairly venture;  
E'er that day I'LL BE, where few Kings will enter.