

## ELDER EEL. A SKETCH BY LORD BOLESKINE.

### PERSONS OF THE SKETCH.

MR. MEEK, the Minister.  
MR. DOSE, the Doctor.  
MR. BONES, the Butcher.  
MR. BUN, the Baker.  
MR. CHIPS, the Carpenter.  
MR. TONGS, the Tinker.  
MR. GRAB, the Grocer.  
MR. AWL, the Cobbler.  
Women, including JEANNIE MACKAY.  
ELDER EEL, the Exciseman,  
and

LILITH.

SCENE: The Market-place of the village of Houghmagandie.  
(*Enter L., Bones, Bun, Chips, Tongs, and Grab. All are dressed in the black shiny clothes conventional on Sundays in the provinces. They are followed by a number of women dressed with equal propriety, who enter the houses that surround the market-place, and disappear. One of them, Jeannie Mackay, walks apart, and as if ashamed of herself. The scene is one of characteristic Sabbath gloom. The men carry immense black Bibles. They walk very slowly and heavily.*)

BONES: A stirring discourse.

CHIPS: Ay! the meenister was juist gran'.

TONGS: Losh! But that was guid about the destruction o' Sennacherib.

BUN: Ay!

GRAB: D'ye ken what he meant?

ALL: Ay! Ay! Ay!

GRAB: D'ye ken what he meant?

BONES: Ay! the meenister's verra clear.

GRAB: Na! Na! but d'ye ken he was drivin' the arrow of the Wurr'd to oor ain hairts?

BONES: Ay! But what d'ye mean?

(*Enter R., Awl. He is a tall, sprightly man in a decent suit of tweeds, and he is smoking a pipe. All turn from him as if he were a leper.*)

AWL: A braw day the day!

GRAB: Is this a day to be ta'king o' days? (*All groan.*)

AWL: This is the Lord's day, and A'm thankin' Him for his guid gift o' tobacco.

GRAB: Ye dirty little Atheist! D'ye no ken this is the Sawbath? Awa wi' ye from the Lord's children!

BONES: An' dinna blaspheme!

GRAB: Beware, ye fausse loon! The judgement o' the Lord is nigh at han'.

CHIPS: The meenister preached o' the destruction o' Sennacherib.

AWL: An' wha's Sennacherib?

CHIPS: Juist sic anither as yoursel'. A fleein', flytin', floutin', sweerin' deevil like yoursel'!

AWL: Ah weel! puir bodies, ye don't know all! Guid job for you. (*He passes over and goes out, L.*)

BUN: The sculduddery wastrel!

BONES: The blaspheming loon!

CHIPS: The feckless child o' Satan!

TONGS: The rantin' roarin' lion!

GRAB: Ah! d'ye ken the noo wha the meenister meant by Sennacherib?

ALL: Ah!

GRAB: D'ye mind Sennacherib was King o' Babylon?

ALL: Ah!

GRAB: D'ye ken — Ah! here comes Elder Eel, the guid man. He'll tell t' 'e. He's seen wi' his ain een!

(*Enter L. Elder Eel is very tall and thin and lantern-jawed, more solemn and portentous than the others.*)

GRAB: The Blessin' o' the Lord be on ye, Elder. Will ye tell the fowk o' the terrible scandal in Houghmagandie?

EEL: The han' o' the Lord is heavy upon us for oor sins.

ALL: Ay! Ay!

GRAB: We are but puir sinners.

EEL: Ay! we deserve it. But our punishment is greater than we can bear.

ALL: Woe unto us!

EEL: Wi' these een hae I seen it! Alack the day! My brethren, d'ye ken wha's ta'en the lodging ower Awl's shop?

BONES: When?

EEL: Last nicht. The very eve o' the Blessed Sabbath! (*All groan.*)

CHIPS: Wha' then?

EEL: The 'Hoor o' Babylon!

ALL: The 'Hoor o' Babylon!

EEL: A wanton, forward wench! A Babylonish harlot!

BONES: The Lord ha' mercy on us!

EEL: An actress body!

ALL: The Lord ha' mercy on us!

CHIPS: Fra' Glasgie, I doot?

EEL: Waur!

ALL: Waur!

EEL: Waur!

BUN: No' fra' Lunnon, Elder? It's main impawisible!

EEL: Waur!

BONES: It canna be! It canna be!

EEL: Waur. Far waur!

TONGS: Hoots! but we maun ha' fallen into terrible sin.

BONES: Fra' whaur? In the Lord's name, mon, tell. We're fair distrachit.

EEL: Fra' Pairriss!

GRAB: Fra' the Hame o' the De'il!

BONES: Fra' Hell! Fra' the Bottomless Pit!

CHIPS: The 'Hoor o' Babylon! The Scarlet Wunman that rideth on the Beast wi' Seven Heads!

TONGS: Fra' the very hairt o' a' sculduddery an' wickedness!

BUN: O Lord! ha' mercy upon us!

EEL: Indeed, I ha' seen her at the window. Aboot nine o' the clock last nicht, when a' guid fowk suld be abed — and I mysel' was wa'king hame fra' the meenister's. And there she was at the window, wi' her lang hair down on her bare shou' ders.

ALL: A' weel! a' weel! 'T is a wicked wurrid!

EEL: D'ye ken she leanit oot, the Jezebel, wi' her painted face, an' — an' —

ALL: Weel!