

THE APOTHECARY IN LITERATURE.

BY EDWARD KREMERS.

24. APOTHECARY M'GRADY IN "HANDY ANDY." *

In "Handy Andy," Samuel Lover (1797-1868), artist, song-writer, novelist and composer, has given us a sympathetic pen picture of Irish life, with all its faults and foibles, it is true, but presented from the rosy point of view of the true Irishman in love with his country and its people, both high and low.

"Andy Rooney," the hero of the story, "was a fellow who had the most singularly ingenious knack of doing everything the wrong way; disappointment waited on all affairs in which he bore a part, and destruction was at his finger's end: so the nickname the neighbours stuck upon him was 'Handy Andy,' and the jeering jingle pleased them."

Thus the author's own characterization may suffice to introduce Handy Andy to the reader and at the same time pave the way to that incident in the story which makes the novel one of pharmaceutical interest. Attached to the household of Squire Egan, Handy Andy is sent by his master to Murtough Murphy, his lawyer, for some legal papers; and, as he had to pass through the village, Mrs. Egan desired him to call at the apothecary's for some medicine that had been prescribed for one of the children (p. 21). The legal papers Handy Andy was to fetch from the lawyer were a warrant to be served on Squire O'Grady against whom Squire Egan had worked up considerable feeling because of election differences. Refusing his lawyer's advice to be conciliatory, Squire Egan had repeatedly ejaculated "I'll blister him."

Now it so happened that Squire O'Grady was sick at the time and his physician had prescribed a blister as one of the several remedies for this unapproachable landlord, whose estate was going from bad to worse and who, for the sake of a hoped-for pension, had renounced his former benefactor and friend for the political opponent of Squire Egan.

True to his evil star, Handy Andy gets things mixed up at the apothecary's shop. As a result, Squire O'Grady, on the one hand, gets the warrant in place of the blister, and falls into a fit of rage and threatens to murder the nurse who is supposed to have smuggled this legal paper into the house which sheriffs did not dare venture to enter. On the other hand, Squire Egan gets the following note from his lawyer:

"My dear Squire: I send you the blister for O'Grady as you insisted on it; but I think you won't find it easy to serve him with it.

Your obedient and obliged

Murtough Murphy."

"The squire opened the cover, and when he saw a real, instead of a figurative, blister, grew crimson with rage." A horsewhipping for the lawyer follows, and this is followed by a duel.

"O'Grady, believing that M'Garry and the nurse-tender had combined to serve him with a writ, determined to wreak double vengeance on the apothecary,

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as the nurse had escaped him; and, notwithstanding all his illness and the appeals of his wife, he left his bed, and rode to the village to 'break every bone in M'Garry's skin.' When he entered his shop, the pharmacoplist was much surprised, and said, with a congratulatory grin at the great man, 'Dear me, Squire O'Grady, I'm delighted to see you.' "

"Are you, you scoundrel?" said the squire, making a blow of his cudgel at him, which was fended by an iron pestle the apothecary fortunately had in his hand. The enraged O'Grady made a rush behind the counter, which the apothecary nimbly jumped over, crying 'Murder!' as he made for the door, followed by his pursuer, who gave a back-handed slap at the window-bottles *en passant*, and produced the crash which astonished the widow, who now joined her screams to the general hue-and-cry; for an indiscriminate chase of all the ragamuffins in the town, with barking curs and screeching children, followed the flight of M'Garry and the pursuing squire."

Another scene that is enacted in the apothecary shop is that between the "widow" and the apothecary's boy. Squire Egan, having set out to administer a horsewhipping to Murtough Murphy, did not find him at home but in the street of the village in company with Tom Durfy and the widow. Addressing him with an "I'll blister you, my buck" (p. 27) he began a very smart horsewhipping of the attorney. As already stated, the upshot of it all was a challenge to a duel. This being an affair of men, in which women can have no part, the widow was sent to the apothecary shop to get something under her nose to revive her. She arrived just in time to see Squire O'Grady enter to administer the second horsewhipping in her presence, which ended in the flight of the apothecary pursued by the squire and the village crowd.

"The widow, in the meantime, had been left to the care of the apothecary's boy, whose tender attentions were now, for the first time in his life, demanded towards a fainting lady; for the poor, raw country lad, having to do with a sturdy peasantry in every day matters, had never before seen the capers cut by a lady who thinks it proper, and delicate, and becoming, to display her sensibility in a swoon, and truly her sobs, and small screeches, and little stampings and kickings, amazed young gallipot—smelling salts were applied—they were rather weak, so the widow inhaled the pleasing odour with a sigh, but did not recover. Sal volatile was next put in requisition—this was somewhat stronger, and made her wiggle on her chair, and throw her head about with sundry ohs! and ahs! The boy, beginning to be alarmed at the extent of the widow's syncope, bethought him of assafoetida, and taking down a goodly bottle of that sweet smelling stimulant, gave the widow the benefit of the whole jar under her nose. Scarcely had the stopper been withdrawn, when she gave a louder screech than she had yet executed, and, exclaiming "faugh!" with an expression of the most concentrated disgust opened her eyes fiercely upon the offender, and shut up her nose between her forefinger and thumb against the offence, and snuffled forth at the astonished boy, 'Get out o' that, you dirty cur! Can't you let a lady faint in peace and quietness? Gracious heavens! would you smother me, you nasty brute?' 'Oh, Tom, where are you?'—and she took to sobbing forth 'Tom! Tom!' and put her handkerchief to her eyes, to hide the tears that were not there, while from behind the corner of the cambric she kept a sharp eye on the street, and observed what was going on. She went on acting her

part very becomingly, until the moment Tom Durfy walked off with Murphy; but then she could feign no longer, and jumping up from her seat, with an exclamation of "The brute!" she ran to the door, and looked down the street after them. "The savage!" sobbed the widow, "the hard-hearted monster, to abandon me here to die—oh! to use me so—to leave me like a—" (the widow was fond of similies) "like an old shoe—like a dirty glove—like a—like I don't know what!" (the usual fate of similies). "Mister Durfy, I'll punish you for this—I will!" said the widow, with an energetic emphasis on the last word; and she marched out of the shop, boiling over with indignation, through which, nevertheless, a little bubble of love now and then rose to the surface; and by the time she reached her own door, love predominated, and she sighed as she laid her hand on the knocker, "After all, if the dear fellow should be killed, what would become of me?—oh!—and that wretch, Dick Dawson, too—two of them.—The worst of these merry devils is, they are always fighting!" "

Such was the nature of the extraordinary excitements of the little Irish village, the regular ones being badger fights and elections.

Pharmaceutically, the principal interest of the story lies in the delineation of the social status of the apothecary, the attorney and the tutor in comparison with the landed gentry. Compared with the doctor, the apothecary is but a professional half breed. Dr. Growling is the local physician, an educated man, but cynical in his intercourse with men. Both his friends and his enemies fear his keen satire. His worst enemy is his rival, "the licensed slaughterer Killanmaul" (p. 45). Possibly next in order is the "pharmacoplist" whose display of Latin and other knowledge constantly irritates him and causes him to take his revenge by drinking the apothecary under the table at a spread provided by the attorney after his fortunate duel.

With the doctor and the attorney, the apothecary belongs to the village society, but none of these are regarded as gentlemen by the landed gentry. Thus in his affair with Murphy, Squire Egan is reported as saying: "Why, if I went to horse-whip a gentleman, of course I should only shake my whip at him: but an attorney is another affair." And again when reproached by Tom Durfy for horsewhipping "a gentleman like a cart-horse," he replies: "A gentleman! an attorney, you mean" (p. 27).

The mercenary character of the apothecary as opposed to both what might be regarded as a true professional spirit and the inbred qualities of a gentleman, are brought out when "Mister Murphy," having frightened Squire O'Grady with legal consequences for his horsewhipping of M'Garry, approaches the apothecary with "a finer plaister than any he has in his shop for the cure of wounded honor."

"O'Grady was thoroughly frightened; and, strange as it may appear, did believe he could compromise for killing only a plebeian; and actually sent Murphy his note of hand for the sum demanded. Murtough posted off to M'Garry: he and his wife received him with shouts of indignation, and heaped reproaches on his head, for the trick he had played on the apothecary.

"Oh! Mister Murphy—never look me in the face again!" said Mrs. M'Garry who was ugly enough to make the request quite unnecessary. "To send my husband home to me a beast!"

"Striped like a tiger!" said M'Garry.

"Blacking and pickled cabbage, Mister Murphy," said the wife. "Oh, fie, sir!—I did not think you could be so low."

"Galvanism!" said M'Garry, furiously. "My professional honor wounded!"

"Whist, whist, man!" said Murphy. "There's a finer plaister than any in your shop for the cure of wounded honour. Look at that!"—and he handed him the note for two hundred—"There's galvanism for you!"

"What is this?" said M'Garry, in amazement.

"The result of last night's inquest," said Murphy. "You have got your damages without a trial; so pocket your money, and be thankful."

"The two hundred pounds at once changed the aspect of affairs. M'Garry vowed eternal gratitude, with protestations that Murphy was the cleverest attorney alive, and ought to be chief justice. The wife was equally vociferous in her acknowledgment, until Murtough, who, when he entered the house, was near falling a sacrifice to the claws of the apothecary's wife, was obliged to rush from the premises, to shun the more terrible consequences of her embraces."

Such are Lover's pen pictures of the professional, social and home life of the apothecary in an Irish village during the first half of the nineteenth century. Though he is not a professional man like Dr. Growling, yet he is not described as being of uncleanly habits as his superior in professional matters. If his notions of a gentleman are moderated by a two-hundred pound note, he at least does not have to subject himself daily to the indignities to which the tutor (p. 165) of Neck-or-Nothing-Hall meekly submits at the hands of Mrs. O'Grady, her brats, and consequently of the servants (p. 165). Being one of but few delineations of the Irish apothecary in literature this slight contribution to the general subject may not prove unwelcome.

WHAT A PRICE ADJUSTMENT MEASURE SHOULD DO AND SOME REASONS FOR SUCH NEED.

Independent retail stores insure fair competition which chain systems tend to destroy. The Capper-Kelly bill sanctions contracts between manufacturers and vendees which will make it possible to keep nationally advertised brands out of the hands of those who use them to defraud the consuming public. Superior merchandise, of established value, cannot be distributed to best advantages for long if used for unfair advertising purposes and to deceive the public.

"Practices cannot be regarded as fair which work the demoralization of the business, and practices cannot be regarded as unfair meth-

ods of competition if a manufacturer declines to sell to wholesalers who demoralize the legitimate market by selling at a price which those in the business regard as insufficient to enable the business to be conducted with reasonable profit."

THE DANIEL HANBURY PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTION.

The Daniel Hanbury pharmaceutical collection was presented to the Pharmaceutical Society in 1876 as reported in the *Chemist & Druggist* of that year for July 15th. The provisions under which the donation was made were that this collection was to be kept apart and labeled so as to show by whom it was formed and that careful regulation should be made to prevent injury or loss.