

## Glasgow Loyalty.

G R O G C L U B.

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IT is a remarkable fact, that during the whole civil and foreign wars with which we have been afflicted since the Revolution, no City in Scotland has exhibited stronger proofs of loyalty and more devotion to the Protestant cause, or contributed more heartily to our national defences against aggression, than Glasgow. In 1715, when the Stuart's claim to the throne was attempted to be established by the Pretender, Glasgow at once took her side with the House of Hanover, and raised a battalion of six hundred men to aid the Duke of Argyll in quelling the insurrection. In 1745, when his son Charles Edward Stuart attempted to win the crown which his predecessor had forfeited, Glasgow was once more on the side of religious liberty, and on that occasion raised, for the service of the Government, two battalions, of four hundred and fifty men each, which, it is well known, suffered severely at the fight of Falkirk. On the breaking out of the American war in 1775, we have already seen that Provost Donald hastened to London, and offered to raise a regiment of a thousand men at the expense of the City. His offer was accepted, and the battalion was afterwards designated the Glasgow Regiment. Again, when the conflict consequent on the French Revolution commenced, the military spirit of the City was roused in support of the British Constitution and in defence of home.\* In April, 1794, a number of the most patriotic citizens

\* By a minute of the Council, dated 29th December, 1777, the Corporation "resolve to raise a Battalion of Infantry to aid the Government to put down the Rebellion in America, and obtain subscriptions for effect-

ing the same." This was accordingly done, and Provost Donald and Convener Niven were, as we have formerly seen, despatched to London to offer its services to George III. The King gratefully acknowledged the kind-

began to enrol themselves as volunteers, and by the following April the corps was ready for active service, under the command of Colonel Corbet, and then received the colours, under which they doubtless inwardly swore to fight to the death. In 1797 this battalion was increased to ten companies, amounting in all to seven hundred. A second battalion was also raised, and maintained at the cost of the citizens, consisting of five hundred men. A body of older citizens, known by the nickname of "the Ancients," or "Old Foggies," was likewise embodied; and, to complete the armament, a troop of volunteer cavalry was soon seen in full charge practice on the public Green, to the terror of the cows and the dismay of the town herd.\*

It was when the shrill note of the trumpet, and the reveillé rattle of the drum—those martial sounds which, during the last decade of the eighteenth century, but too frequently wakened the snoozing citizens from their morning slumbers, to summon some of the most handsome and the most active of their number to an early drill—that there arose a Club, all of whose members could boast of belonging to one or other of the volunteer corps who served without pay. The members were chiefly bachelors, and were for the most part in the heyday of manhood. They were found ever ready to throw a quoit against any opponent; and as to a match round the Green at the noble and manly game of golf—which, alas! in these degenerate days, is altogether abandoned—there was at least one

ness of Glasgow, and accepted the regiment, which was called "the Glasgow Regiment." By a minute dated 31st March, 1778, the Council agreed to pay the Provost and Conventer's expenses, in going to London, on the occasion in question, amounting to £162 18s 6d. Whether or not a "white bait" dinner was included in this rather large sum, there is now no trace; but considering the then value of money, it might have been well afforded!

\* The following piece of wit, connected with the volunteer mania, appears in the *Glasgow Courier* of 1797:—"At a meeting of the cows of the Green of Glasgow, in common

pasture assembled—the *bull* in the chair—a petition has been drawn up, unanimously adopted, and to be presented to Queen Charlotte by the *town-herd*, against the continual parading of *volunteers* on one of the best grass plots in Scotland, that has not been ploughed up since the Revolution—a lapse of time during which three million Glasgow people have been born or died, on a moderate computation." The cows were always admitted into the green on the 5th of June, the day after the celebration of the birth-day of George III. In those times the pasture in the Fleshers'-haugh was very rich, and usually about knee deep.

among the number who had challenged Scotland, and had gained the silver club.\* Like the generality of their military contemporaries, although they despised *Dutch* courage when on active service, they were not insensible to the fascination of swallowing a glass of "somewhat" when idly listening to the gossip of the town, or the more exciting news of the war. To talk or listen without having something before them was poor sport; and in this spirit the brotherhood were sure to encounter each other in that most comfortable of all taverns of the time, yeleft the "Black Boy," near the Gallowgate bridge, there to swig grog, and listen to the kindly *burr* and smart repartees of its clever and facetious landlady.†

The CLUB which we have just introduced to your notice, indulgent reader, was in fact called the GROG—an appellation which arose alto-

\* The game of golf is one of the oldest amusements in Scotland, and is still in great favour in Edinburgh and St Andrews. In Glasgow it was long a favourite pastime, and continued to be so till the improvements on the public Green took away all the *hazards*, without which there is no play. At the period when the Grog Club was meeting, the Golf Club was in its heyday; and some of our first-class citizens were frequently seen with club in hand following the balls that flew on every side over the then undulating park. Among the best players were Messrs James Spreull, Cunningham Corbett, John Craig, Laurence Craigie, David and James Connell, and the then editor of the *Courier*, James M'Nair, LL.D., who erected a villa on the summit of Woodlands, which, for its odd architecture, was best known by the title of *M'Nair's Folly*, and stood on the apex of the hill on which the square is being built connected with the West-end Park.

† Among the most regular members may be mentioned Messrs Alexander Dennistoun, Peter MacAdam, John Macleroy, John Strang, James Aitken, John Gilchrist (of singing notoriety), James Ramsay, John Telfer, John Gilson, John Gardner, Jun., George Buchanan, (better known by the nickname of Stocking Geordie), John MacGill, and William or

rather Billy M'Creicht. The "Black Boy" Tavern was on the north side of Gallowgate. Among the batch of members mentioned, perhaps John Macleroy, with his umbrella, lived longer than any of his compeers. He was latterly styled "Old Glory," and was a thick and thin supporter of Church and State, but withal a kind-hearted man. He was, as the song says, "fond fond o' shutting" but was a miserable bad shot. He used to exclaim, that upon the butt end of his fowling-piece the emphatic words of "thou shalt not kill" were engraven; and from our own experience, we know that its wielder made it too frequently keep its word! To fire at a "sleeping mawkin," as he called a hare in its seat, was his great delight. Here he sometimes showed that his aim was sufficient to fill his otherwise lank and gaping game-bag. Mr Macleroy lived at Craignestock, always retaining much of the hospitality of the "Old Glasgow Cork" or manufacturer. His usual coffee-room invitation to dinner was rather coarse, and calculated to make a stranger stare. "Will you come and tak' a slice of a stof's —?" but with the beefsteak there was always something else, and which was always followed by *galores* of cold punch or hot rum toddy.

gether from the practice of making this well-known beverage of the navy in a large *quaigh*, which was circulated regularly round the table; and as long as it contained a drop, was successively *mouthed* by each member of the fraternity. The Club, although it usually met late, sat but rarely to "the witching hour." The members, however, or at least the bachelor portion of them, generally continued to suck in as much grog and good humour, at even their shortest sitting, as to return home with a song on their tongue and a sedative in their stomach. How long this jovial-hearted brotherhood might have continued to assemble, had its Club-room remained under the same kind superintendence which it first enjoyed, it is impossible to say; but all we positively know is, that no sooner had the bustling hostess of the "Black Boy" doffed her widow's garb, and entered again into the bonds of matrimony, than the Club became defunct. The goodly quaigh, alas! was lined no more with grog, and, dry and deserted, it was borne away to the "Buck's Head" hotel, where it became as guiltless of its primeval usefulness as did the helmet of that beau-ideal of chivalry, Don Quixote de la Mancha.

Of the many animating topics connected with "the turf," "the sod," and "the ring," all of which peculiarly characterised the jovial sittings of the Grog Club, none excited the tongues of the members so easily as the one connected with the deeds of the army, and particularly with the doings of their own volunteers.\* How many roars of laughter were produced by the recital of an awkward fall, or an odd collision during the hours of

\* At this period, a very general interest was taken in horse-racing, which was greatly encouraged by the patronage bestowed on it by the Duke of Hamilton, and in the annual races which took place in that nobleman's park. At that time the Duke and Mr Baird of Newbyth were leading men on the turf; and in 1791 the famous match betwixt these two celebrated individuals was run over the course at Hamilton. Cock-fighting, also, was much encouraged by many of the leading citizens, and numerous *mains* were fought under most aristocratic patronage. And as

to "the noble science of self-defence," as pugilism was denominated, it is certain, from the many advertisements which appear in the newspapers of the period, that this *sport* was looked upon with considerable favour. Fawtrell and Partner frequently sparred with great encouragement in Hemming's great hall in 1791. In the same year Big Sam twice exhibited his powers in the same hotel, and Daniel Mendoza also wielded the gloves against Fawtrell, while in training for his famous contest with Ward.

drill; how many strange tales about mistaken words of command, and the many mishaps which these necessarily had led to; how many wry faces were talked of, that might have appeared more happy, if the evening potations had been but shortened! But among these and many other military exploits, the two certainly which created the greatest noise, and called for the greatest circulation of the quaigh, was the expedition connected with bringing up the French prisoners from Greenock,\* and the never-to-be-forgotten *Battle of Garscube*. As the circumstances of the latter conflict were communicated to us many long years ago, by one of the brotherhood, and one, too, who himself was in active service on the occasion, we then imagined it would be a sad misfortune if such a volunteer victory should be for ever lost for want of a chronicler. Impressed with this idea, and full of the facts furnished by this Grog Club eye witness, we quietly sat down, some five-and-twenty years ago, and presented a sketch, as a humble tribute of respect towards the manes of a Club which had been, even then, so long dissolved, and as a small token of love for the memory of a long departed member who had been our kind informant and quondam counsellor.†

\* The French prisoners, above alluded to, were captured off the Irish coast, and were brought to Glasgow about the close of the year 1796. An immense number witnessed their entrance and procession through the City. The officers were lodged in the Tontine, and the men in the old correction house.

† For the *Battle of Garscube*, see APPENDIX. This paper was originally printed in the "Englishman's Magazine," published in Lon-

don in 1831. It was afterwards transferred, without the author's knowledge, full of errors, to a collection of "Original and Selected Papers," published in four volumes at Glasgow. It again appeared in "The Picnic Papers," under the editorship of Dickens, for the benefit of the widow of Mr Macrone, bookseller; and, in the Appendix to this volume, it now appears with the last corrections of the writer.