

Glasgow Theatricals.

WHAT YOU PLEASE CLUB.

To those who ignorantly imagine, as certainly some do, that dramatic entertainments in Scotland are of modern origin, it will doubtless appear strange to learn, that perhaps nowhere in Christendom was acting more early introduced, or more regularly practised, either as a means of extending religious truths or of affording amusement to the populace, than where such a Cathedral as that of Glasgow was to be found, with its chapter of ecclesiastics and its accessories of monks and monasteries. The theatre sprung from the church; originally the subjects were Scriptural—the clergy the composers—the church the stage—and Sunday the time of exhibition. In the performance of the religious *mysteries* of early times, as these were called, through which the Saviour's history, and the leading traits of saints were palpably portrayed, we find that the people not only took the greatest delight, but would leave their homes, and hurry, at particular seasons, over the length and breadth of the land, to be present at any spot where a temporary stage was erected, either within doors or in the open air. Wherever, in fact, there were friars to enact the "Fall of Man," the "Judgment of Solomon," or the "Marriage of Cana in Galilee," there was no want of an attentive and enthusiastic audience.* Toward the commencement of the sixteenth century, the

* In the preface to the "*Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis*," we find that, during the early period in which the "Collegium Facultatis Artium" was located in the Rotterrow, about the year 1450, "the annual banquet of the Faculty was there celebrated,

on the Sunday or Feast next after the Translation of St Nicholas (9th May), when all the Masters, Licentiatees, Bachelors, and Students, after hearing matins in the Chapel of St Thomas the Martyr, rode in solemn and stately procession, bearing flowers and branches of

performance of even such sacred pieces, however, as those to which we have alluded, had begun to be undertaken by lay performers; and so common and popular had these entertainments become, particularly on the Sabbath-day, that every means was used by the early reformers of the Church to put them down. Previous, however, to any Church anathema having been issued, it also appears that these exhibitions had been extended from religious subjects to more mundane matters, called *moral plays* or *moralities*, and were given to the multitude in almost every town in Scotland, to which there was usually attached a place for the purpose, called the *Play-field*.*

Until the Reformation, matters continued in this condition; but immediately after that event the Church not only prohibited religious *mysteries*, but likewise all profane dramas; and the people, in the west of Scotland at least, at once obeyed the dictum of their eccle-

trees, through the public street, from the upper part of the town to the Cross, and so back to the College of the Faculty; and there, amid the joy of the feast, or as it is said in Latin, *cum letitia corporalis refectiois*, the Masters took counsel for the welfare of the Faculty, and gave their diligence to remove all discords and quarrels, that all, rejoicing in heart, might honour the Prince of Peace and Joy. After the banquet, the whole crowd of Masters and Students were directed to repair to a more fitting place of amusement, and there enact some interlude or other show to rejoice the people."

* In the Municipal Records of Edinburgh, we find the following entries:—

"15th January, 1554.—The Provost, Bailies, and Counsall ordaines the Thesaurer to pay the werkmen, merchandis, carteris, paynteris, and utheris that furniseth the graith to the convoy of the Moris to the Abbay, and of the plai maid thairat Saturday the tent day of Junii instant, the soume of £38 16s 2d."

"27th January, 1554.—Ordainis to pay to the Maister of Wark of the maker of the

Playing-place, the soume of £24, for compleiting thairrof, quhilk being payit sal be allowit."

"12th October, 1554.—Ordaines the Thesaurer to pay to Walter Bynnyng the soume of £5, for the making of the play-graith and paynting of the handscezne and the playaris faceis, providand alwyse that the said Walter mak the playgeir underwrittin furth cummand to the town quhen the haif ado thairwith, quhilkis he has now resavit, viz. 8 play-hattis, ane kingis crowne, ane myter, ane fulis hude, ane sceptour, ane pair angell wyngis, twa angell hair, ane chaplet of triumphe."

"28th Dec. 1554.—The counsall findis it necessar and expedient that the litill farsh and play maid be Wm. Lauder be playit afoir the Queenis grace."

"July 6, 1558.—25 marks to Walter Bynnyng, painter, for his painting and all his labouris takin be him, in the triumphe maid at our Sovereane Ladyis marriage, and 40 shillings to William Lauder for setting furth the play maid at the said marriage."

siastical leaders, and abandoned this formerly cherished pastime as a deadly sin.*

* The following are a few extracts anent plays, from the "Book of the Universel Kirk," printed by the Maitland Club:—

"11th August, 1574.—The General Assembly of the Kirk give commission to summon the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons of St Andrews to compare before them, and to try the cause why the Fast was not kept among them, according to the Acts of the said Assembly, and of the violation of the Sabbath-day by profane plays."

"1576.—Anent the supplication given in be the toun of Dumferling for liberty to be granted them to play, upon a Sunday afternoon, a certain play which is not made upon the canonical parts of the Scripture. The Assembly refuses to give liberty to the Bailzie of Dumferling to play on the Soneday afternoon, a certain play which is not made upon the canonical parts of the Scriptures, in respect of the act of the Assemblie past on the contrair, exhorting the Bailzie of Dumferling, procurator of the Bill, to request the toun to keep the ordinance of the Assemblie."

In 1578, the General Assembly ordains "that ane general fast be observed within this realme, to begin the first Sonday of June nixt to come, and to continue quill the next Sonday thereafter inclusive, with the accustomed exercise of doctrine and prayers, and that intimation be made heirof with the tyme and causes to the King and Counsell, together with a supplication to his Grace and Counsell to discharge be open proclamation all kynd of insolent playis, as King of May, Robin Hood, and sich uthers in the moneth of May, played either by bairnes at the schools or others."

In 1569 the following question by the Synodal Assembly of Lowthian was referred to the General Assembly and answered thus. Question—"What ought to be done to sick persons that, after admonition, will passe to May playis, and especially elders and deacons, and uther quha beares office in the Kirk?" "They ought not to be admittid

to the sacrament without satisfaction, in special elders and deacons."

In 1591, we find the following humble petition of the General Assembly of the Kirk, "cravat at His Majestie and Counsell, 'That the Acts of Parliament, made for suppressing the enormities following, may be put into execution:—1st, Against Jeusnits, and the reception of them, and of excommunicants, such as the Laird of Fintry and the Master of Angus: profainers of the Sacraments, provat men and wemen givers thereof, idolators, pilgrimagers, Papistical Magistrates: sayers and herrers of the Mass: givers of the Sacrament according to the Papistical form, and receivers of the samis: committers of apostasie, public merchants upon the Sabbath-day: violent invaders of ministers by striking of them or shedding of their blood: profainers of the Sabbath-day be Robin Hoodes playis: murderers and blood shedders, quhilk overflow the land.'"

In Tytler's History of Scotland, we are told, connected with this subject, that, "in 1599, when James VI. sent for Fletcher and Martin, with their company of comedians, from England, the Kirk became alarmed, and poured out a storm of ecclesiastical wrath on these gentlemen of the buskin; and the Magistrates of Edinburgh, acting under the Kirk's influence, prohibited the inhabitants, by a public act, from frequenting the theatre. But in this amusement the king was not to be defeated, and feeling, moreover, an interest in his old favourite Fletcher, who had been in Scotland in 1594, he called his Provost and Councillors before him, compelled them to rescind their act, and proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, not only that the comedians should continue their entertainments, but insisted that next Sunday the ministers should inform their flocks that no restraint or censure should be incurred by any of his good subjects who choose to recreate themselves by the said comedies and playis."

In consequence of this change in the opinions of the people, it is certainly true that for many years previous to the Revolution of 1688, there was no city in Scotland whose inhabitants were more imbued with religious fanaticism, or in which were to be found parties among whom the Solemn League and Covenant was more zealously looked upon as a test of faith and good citizenship than in Glasgow. For the cause of Protestantism, in contradistinction to Popery, several of her denizens had fearlessly suffered at the stake; and many more had risked their lives and fortunes on what was then deemed equally important, in standing forth as the determined defenders of what they accounted the purer portion of Protestantism, viz. Presbyterianism, against the then dominant power of Prelacy. It may be easily conceived, therefore, that anything which partook, in the slightest degree, of the outward characteristics of the abettors either of book and bell, or of surplice and liturgy, was most religiously and anxiously avoided. Religion, in fact, in the eyes of the worthies of the west, was only considered true and to be admired when seen stripped of its gaudy trappings and its established forms, and consequently was looked upon as being more and more pure as it appeared more severed from the mummerly of the mass, and the music of a chaunted ritual. In spirit and in conduct it may be truly affirmed, that from the days when Archbishop James Beaton was obliged to flee to Paris, carrying with him the archives and valuables belonging to his diocese, till nearly the middle of the last century, the citizens of Glasgow generally displayed not a few of those ascetic and morose characteristics which belonged to the purest cast of the Puritans; while, in the earlier days of their Protestant career, they made choice of the very antithesis of everything practised by other Christian communities.* In particular, they regarded Art, in her character of the handmaiden of Religion, as altogether sinful and detestable, and would have willingly followed to the letter the conduct of the other architectural spoliators in Scotland, had

* Beaton deposited the MSS. and other property belonging to the See of Glasgow, in the Scots College in the Carthusian Monastery at Paris.

they not been prevented, by the worthy craftsmen of the City, from pulling down the only Scottish Cathedral which still happily remains, in all its pristine beauty, as the best monument of the taste of our ancestors.

It will be easy to comprehend how anything in the least degree allied to the exhibitions once so universally practised in all Roman Catholic countries, first by monks and friars, and thereafter by laymen, would be at all tolerated by a people imbued with the moody and morose temperament which the ascetic and self-denying creed, then so generally adopted by Glasgow citizens, must have naturally engendered and maintained. The result, in fact, was, that such *Mysteries* as those of Coventry,* which at one time had been the delight of all whose habitations encircled an Episcopal or Archiepiscopal palace—as well as the later dramatic exhibitions of “Robin Hood”† and the “Abbot of Unreason,” and other more

* In the original MSS. of Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, is found the following passage upon the performance of the Coventry *Mysteries*, which has been since printed by the Shakespere Society:—

“Before the suppression of the Monasteries, the Colledge (Coventry) was very famous for the pageants that were played therein on Corpus Christi day. These pageants were acted with mighty state and reverence by the fryars of this house, and conteyned the story of the New Testament, which was composed into old English rime. The Theatres for the severall scenes were very large and high; and being placed upon wheels, were drawn to all the eminent places in the cittaye, for the better advantage of the spectators. In that incomparable Library, belonging to Sir Thomas Cotton, there is yet one of the bookes, which parteyned to this pageant, entitled ‘Ludus Corporis Christi’ or ‘Ludus Coventriae.’ I myself have spoken with some old people who had, in their younger years, been eye-witnesses of these pageants soe acted; from whom I have bin told that the confluence of people from farr and neare to see that show was extraordi-

nary great, and yielded noe small advantage to this cittaye.”

The “Coventry *Mysteries*,” as now printed, were written in a quarto volume, in the year 1468.

† The game of “Robin Hood” was celebrated in the month of May. The populace assembled previons to the celebration of this festival, and chose some respectable member of the Corporation to officiate in the character of *Robin Hood*, and another in that of *Little John* his squire. Upon the day appointed, which was a Sunday or holyday, the people assembled in military array and went to some adjoining field, where, either as actors or spectators, the whole inhabitants of the respective towns were convened. In this field they probably amused themselves with a representation of Robin Hood's predatory exploits, or of his encounters with the officers of justice. As numerous meetings for disorderly mirth are apt to engender tumult, when the minds of the people came to be agitated with religious controversy, it was found necessary to repress the game of “Robin Hood” by public statute. The populace were by no means willing to relinquish

mundane affairs, not only soon ceased—but what was more, the successors, the plays of Ben Johnson, Ford, and Shakspeare, were regarded as little less than an abomination and a sin. The truth is, that while in the sister kingdom the theatre had been long patronised and encouraged, not only by the Court but by the people, we find that in Scotland there were no regular stage-plays performed, even in the Scottish capital, during the Augustan age of Queen Anne. In short, it was not till after the turmoil occasioned by the Union and the Rebellion of 1715 had passed away, that players would be listened to in Scotland. We find, therefore, that the drama was not re-introduced into Edinburgh till about the year 1727, when it was first tried in the Tailors' Hall, Cowgate, and thereafter, in 1746, on the boards of the Canongate theatre.* In Glasgow, it appears, there was no effort made to re-introduce what Voltaire calls the "chef d'œuvre de la société," (if we except the itinerant performances attempted in Burrel's Hall, on the east side of upper High-street, in

their favourite amusement. Year after year, the Magistrates of Edinburgh were obliged to exert their authority in repressing this game, often ineffectually. In the year 1561, the mob were so enraged at being disappointed in making a *Robin Hood*, that they rose in mutiny, seized on the City gates, committed robberies upon strangers; and one of the ringleaders being condemned by the Magistrates to be hanged, the mob forced open the jail, set at liberty the criminal and all the prisoners, and broke in pieces the gibbet erected at the Cross for executing the malefactor. They next assaulted the Magistrates, who were sitting in the Council-chamber, and who fled to the Tolbooth for shelter, where the mob attacked them, battering the doors and pouring stones through the windows. Application was made to the Deacons of the Corporations to appease the tumult; remaining, however, unconcerned spectators, they made this answer, "*They will be Magistrates alone; let them rule the multitude alone.*" The Magistrates were kept in confinement till they made

proclamation be published, offering indemnity to the rioters upon laying down their arms. Still, however, so late as the year 1592, we find the General Assembly complaining of the profanation of the Sabbath by making of *Robin Hood plays*. The "Abbot of Unreason" is the person who in England was known by the name of "Abbot of Misrule," and after the Reformation by that of "Lord of Misrule." He presided over Christmas gambols with dictatorial authority; and, by an address or epilogue which he made, he closed these scenes of festivity. The Abbot of Unreason was also a farcical character in interludes. Under the garb of a dignified clergyman, he entertained a licentious rabble with his absurdities.—*Hugo Arnott's History of Edinburgh.*

* The Canongate theatre was the first playhouse to which a licence was given in Scotland, and it served Edinburgh as the only place for dramatic amusements till the erection of the building which yet exists in Shakspeare-square, which was opened on 14th November, 1768.

1750,)* till the year 1752, when a wooden theatre was erected within the precincts of the Castle-yard, and attached to the ruined walls of the Episcopal palace. Within this humble and miserable building, so unlike the gorgeous halls now dedicated to Thalia and Thespiis, had the then denizens of Glasgow an opportunity of first listening to a British drama, and of gazing on such celebrities of the day as Digges,† Love, Stamper, and Mrs Ward! The histrionic efforts of those persons, however, were unable to cope with the prejudices engendered by the Puritanical preaching of the period against all such pastimes, particularly among the lower orders of the people; and, moreover, as it happened that the celebrated George Whitefield had arrived about that time, and was holding forth in the immediate neighbourhood of what he designated the “temple of Satan,” a feeling was roused in the vulgar mind to such an extent against the erection, that the excited populace attacked it with stones and other missiles, if not to its destruction at least to its injury.‡

If such be an index to the feelings of the great mass of the inhabitants of Glasgow, with respect to the stage, in the year 1752, it appears that

* Burrel's Hall appears to have been the only place for amusements for a long time previous to 1750. The principal performer here was a Mr Lion. Mrs Lamp and Mrs Storer also sung there. The latter were afterwards drowned returning from America, having acquired a large fortune by their profession. It was occasionally visited by strolling players, singers, tumblers, and dancers. The following curious advertisement appears in the *Glasgow Courant* of 1751:—

“Being positively the last night of our performance in this City. For the benefit of Mr Dominique. At Mr Burrel's Hall above the Cross, this present Monday, being the 30th September, will be performed, a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Musick: Boxes and Pit, Two Shillings; Gallery, One Shilling. Between the two Parts of the Concert will be given (gratis), Rope Dancing and

Tumbling. Particularly, Mrs Garman will jump over the Garter forward and backward on the Stiff Rope, such as was never done in this City before. Likewise Walking on the Small Slack Wire, by the famous Russian Boy. Dancing, both Serious and Comic, by Mons. and Madam Granier. Likewise a new humorous Dance, called the Soldier and the Sailor, the Tinkler and the Tailor, and Bixome Joan of Deptford. To the great surprise of the spectators, Mr Dominique will fly over the Double Fountain. To conclude with a Pantomime Entertainment, called Harlequin Captive, or the Dutchman Bitt. The doors to be opened at five, and to begin exactly at six. Tickets to be had as usual.”

† Mr Digges leased the Edinburgh theatre in 1768 for £500 a-year.

‡ It is said that persons going and returning from the theatre required to be guarded to protect them from insult.

these had not materially altered ten years afterwards; for, although five of the leading gentlemen of the City then agreed to erect a theatre at their own expense, such was the prejudice then existing against the acted drama, that not a single individual who had ground within the Burgh would grant them a site.* They were obliged, in consequence, to go in search of one beyond the royalty; and having at last obtained a piece of ground in Alston-street, a theatre was erected thereon, and was ready to be opened in the spring of 1764. The proprietors thereupon entered into arrangements with the Edinburgh company, the opening night was fixed, and the celebrated Mrs Bellamy was announced for the occasion. Previous to the night of opening, however, the theatre was wilfully set fire to, through the preaching of a Methodist, who, among other things, told his hearers that he had dreamed, the preceding night, that he was in the infernal regions at a grand entertainment, where all the devils in hell were present—when Lucifer, their chief, gave for a toast the health of Mr Miller, who had sold his ground to build him a house upon!† While the infuriated fire-raisers, upon this instigation, fearlessly proceeded to carry into effect what they deemed a duty to Heaven, it was fortunate that they only partially succeeded in their project of destruction; the stage and the theatrical wardrobe being the chief loss sustained through the frantic and disgraceful arson.‡ In spite, however, of the destruction of these most important parts of the theatre, the manager made a bold effort to open his house on the day fixed; and having fortunately got a

* The five gentlemen were—W. McDowall of Garthland, William Bogle of Hamilton Farm, John Baird of Craigton, Robert Bogle of Shettleston, and James Dunlop of Garnkirk. Their shares of the expense amounted to £100, besides a subscription of £200. They sold it to the Directors of the Assemblies, who laid out £700 or £800 more, so that the whole building cost £1500.

† It is said that Mrs Bellamy lost, by the fire, a wardrobe and jewels which she valued at £900. Through the kindness of the ladies

of Glasgow and neighbourhood, she found herself in the possession of above “forty gowns on the night of her appearance, with under garments, and presents of all kinds.”—*Jackson's History of the Scottish Stage.*

‡ Mr Miller, besides owning a great deal of property in the Town, was proprietor of the Estate of Westerton, in Dumbartonshire. Miller-street was feued out by him, and he gave his own name to the street, which was long a fashionable locality.

temporary stage erected, the curtain rose for the play of the "Citizen," and the farce of the "Mock Doctor," in which Mrs Bellamy, Mr Reddoch, and Mr Aiken took the prominent parts.

From this period till 1780, this theatre was successively managed by Mr Ross, the lessee of the Edinburgh company, by a Mr Williams, and by Mr Wilkinson of York; and, just when it was about to be opened by Messrs Bland, Mills, and Jackson, it was burned to the ground. This unfortunate event took place on the 5th May, 1780, and it has always been alleged, and certainly not without very good reason, that it owed its destruction to design, and to the rancorous hatred that still lingered in the minds of a certain class of the people against the stage and its abettors. The proprietors of the ground on which the theatre stood, having stated that it was not their intention to rebuild it, Mr Jackson, who had been its lessee, at once decided on erecting one at his own cost and on his own responsibility; and, with that view, he purchased a site in Dunlop-street, and proceeded in making arrangements for the building. In this, however, he met with difficulties, arising from the prejudices of some of the proprietors in its immediate neighbourhood, and from the fear that such a building would injure the value of their adjoining tenements. But, although the objections urged showed the narrow-mindedness which then existed, they were found too futile to hinder him from going on with his undertaking. The consequence was, that the foundation-stone of the Dunlop-street theatre was laid on the 17th February, 1781, and the house was opened in January, 1782.*

From this time, whether from the altered opinions of the people, or from the judicious management of Mr Jackson, it appears that the theatre became more and more patronised; and well was it worthy of the support

* This theatre cost Mr Jackson £3000. From the following order from one of the Lords of Session, it appears that objections to building a theatre were raised by two of the then City Clergy:—"Edinburgh, 19th Feb., 1781.—Prohibits and discharges the be-

fore-mentioned Dr Gillies and Mr Porteous, and all others, from troubling or molesting the complainer in the free exercise of his property, and to be intimated.—(Signed) J.A. BURNET."

of every admirer of the dramatic and histrionic art. Never, perhaps, were the dramas of Shakspeare, the tragedies of Otway and Rowe, or the comedies of Cumberland and Sheridan, produced more effectively than on these boards, and never were the characters better sustained. When we mention that, many times and oft, Mrs Siddons,* the Kembles, and George Frederick Cooke, enacted the leading personages of the Tragic, while Mrs Jordan, Miss Farren, Miss Duncan, Mr King, Jack Bannister, Rock, and Irish Johnston, were the representatives of the Comic Muse, on the Dunlop-street stage, it will be readily conceived how so many in Glasgow were then found to acknowledge the truth of one of Thomson's "Winter" amusements, when he says:—

"Dread o'er the scene the ghost of Hamlet stalks,
Othello rages, poor Monimia mourns,
And Belvidera pours her soul in love;
Terror alarms the breast; the comely tear
Steals on the cheek; or else the comic muse
Holds to the world a picture of itself
And raises sly the fair impartial laugh." †

Although Mr Jackson, from time to time, endeavoured both to improve and enlarge the Dunlop-street theatre, it was found, soon after the commencement of the present century, to be altogether too small and paltry for the growing theatrical taste of Glasgow. The consequence was, that a subscription was opened for the erection of a more spacious house; and, in the course of a very short time, no less a sum than £7000 was raised for this purpose. Ground was at once feued from the Corporation, in

* Mrs Siddons commenced an engagement in Glasgow on the 12th August, 1785.

† Mr King and Miss Farren, the latter for the first time, appeared in Glasgow, 31st July, 1790, in the "School for Scandal;" and on 11th August, 1790, in "Much Ado About Nothing," the cast being as follows:—*Benedict*, Mr King; *Claudia*, Mr Wood; *Dogberry*, Mr Wilson; *Hero*, Mr Wood; and *Beatrice*, Miss Farren. The stock company, about the beginning of the century, at this theatre,

consisted of—Messrs Stephen Kemble, Wood, Young, Rock, Toms, Turpin, Lamash, Grant, Duncan, H. Siddons (then a youth), and Bew; and Mrs Stephen Kemble, Miss Kemble (afterwards Mrs Mason), Miss Walstein, Mrs Duncan, and Miss Duncan (afterwards Mrs Davidson); all of whom were most respectable at the time, and some of them became very eminent. Glasgow has never since had a company to equal that one.

Queen-street, for a site, at a cost of £2440, and an edifice was erected thereon, at an expense of £18,000, which, whether for exterior or interior elegance, was scarcely surpassed by any of the London theatres, and for which a patent was obtained from the Crown.* This house was opened by a most excellent company in 1804; and it is only just to say, that from the time when the curtain first rose till 1829—when it was shrivelled up amid the flames which consumed the house, and reduced all within to ashes—theatrical “stars” were not lacking to wake the feelings or rouse the laughter of those who visited it.† It was here that Kean ‡ first enunciated in Scotland, amid breathless silence, “Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer!”—that Miss O’Neil, as *Mrs Beverley*, roused the feelings to such a pitch, as nightly to cause ladies to be carried out insensible from the boxes—that Miss Stephens’ siren voice first charmed the Glasgow lovers of music—that John Sinclair aided her in the duets in “Rob Roy” and “Guy Mannering”—that Miss M. Tree drew forth a never-failing encore after her “Home, sweet home!”—and that Madame Catalani first, and many times afterwards, exhibited the powers of her unrivalled vocalisation, and excited that never-to-be-forgotten burst of

* The following is an excerpt from the petition, sent to Parliament by the Corporation, for a patent for the Queen-street theatre:—“7th February, 1803.—That the City of Glasgow has of late been much extended and enlarged and beautified, whereby the number of wealthy and opulent inhabitants has much increased; and it has become expedient to provide for their amusement and that of the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, a public theatre or playhouse, for acting tragedies, comedies, operas, and other performances of the stage, under proper rules and regulations; therefore pray that leave may be given to his Majesty to issue letters patent.”

† The celebrated Mrs Siddons commenced another engagement at Queen-street theatre, in 1805, in the character of *Jane Shore*; and on the succeeding night, she drew

tears from every eye in the character of *Belvidera*.

‡ We shall never forget the terrific squeeze we had in forcing ourselves into the pit on the evening of Mr Kean’s first appearance in Glasgow or in Scotland. The boxes had been all taken for weeks before, and even temporary boxes were erected on the stage for the chief devotees of the histrionic art. Professor Young, of Greek celebrity, occupied one of these; and never shall we forget his little portly figure on that occasion, with his eye peering through an opera-glass that he held in one hand, while he thumped on the box with the other. Francis Jeffrey, Dugald Stewart, and several of the Edinburgh literati were also present, Mr Kean, having, from some quarrel with the Edinburgh managers, refused to go at that time to the Scottish metropolis.

patriotic approbation, when pouring out, in triumphant notes, above band and chorus, "Britannia rule the waves!"

After the destruction of the theatre in Queen-street, the Dunlop-street theatre, which latterly afforded two places of amusement, was purchased by Mr J. H. Alexander, who, having also acquired the patent, commenced its improvement, and re-opened it on the 14th December, 1829.* The

* Mr John Henry Alexander was born in Dunbar, on the 31st July, 1796. He came from Edinburgh to Glasgow, with his father, about the year 1808; and was duly entered with his uncle, the late Mr Proudfoot, whose shop was at the foot of Candleriggs, with a view to his following the humble calling of a glover and hosier. In this situation he continued for more than twelve months; but, although he performed his work with sufficient diligence, his cleverness as a singer, his natural powers of mimicry, and his general histrionic talent were seeking vent in a different walk. He visited the theatre as often as he could. His reading was almost all dramatic. He soon became the leader of a band of private theatricals, who occasionally astonished the inhabitants of the small villages around Glasgow with their histrionic efforts. From this amateur practice, the transition to the theatrical profession was an easy and natural process; and, when he was only fifteen years of age, he made his first appearance on a regular stage, in the Queen-street theatre, then under the management of Messrs Bartly and Trueman. When only sixteen, he obtained a regular engagement from Harry Johnstone, and made his first appearance in Ayr as *Luertes*, in Shakespere's "Hamlet." From Ayr he returned to Glasgow, and made his debut in the Queen-street theatre, then under the management of Mr Macready, as *Frank Rochdale*, in "John Bull," and continued till the end of the season playing a variety of business. From Glasgow, he went with Macready to open the Newcastle theatre, and there continued for several seasons. After playing for a certain season at Carlisle and

Scarborough, he obtained an engagement from Mr Murray, at the Edinburgh theatre, where he became a favourite, in such characters as *Dandy Dimont*, *Pizarro*, *Moustache*, *Timour the Tartar*, &c. After ten years' success on the Scottish metropolitan stage, he went to Aberdeen; whence he rejoined Mr Murray's establishment, then in Glasgow. Leaving this, he undertook the management of the theatre of Newcastle, then leased by Mr Decamp, but whose engagements at the Haymarket kept him in London. While at Newcastle, he became the lessee of the Carlisle theatre, and opened it, in 1821, with Mr Decamp's company, and which he retained for twelve years. He took also the Dumfries theatre; and, after the first season, he made his first managerial essay in Glasgow, in the Summer of 1822. This was in the lower part of a comparatively insignificant building, on the site of the present elegant theatre, the upper floor being occupied by a company, under Mr Seymour. On the destruction of the Theatre Royal in Queen-street in 1829, Mr Alexander purchased the Dunlop-street theatre at a cost of £5000, and also the patent for £1000 more. From that hour he confined his labours exclusively to Glasgow, expending large sums in altering and re-decorating his house, which he wholly rebuilt no fewer than three times, rendering it, at last, one of the most handsome theatres in Great Britain. As an actor, his talents were both good and versatile, having assumed, in his day, almost every character in the histrionic calendar. It was in the delineation of Scottish peculiarities, however, that he shone most conspicuous, having, in such personations as *Dandy Dimont*, *Colb's*

following are one or two stanzas taken from the prologue, written for the occasion, by Mr William Anderson, of the *Glasgow Courier*:—

“And now the stage, too long upon the wane,
Here, where your fathers met, resumes its reign;
Here, Young and Kemble charm'd the admiring age;
Here, Siddons swept, like glory, o'er the stage.
Within these walls your fathers felt the mind.
That roused to rapture, and entranced mankind.”

The renewed taste which had gradually sprung up for the public stage, had also excited within the breasts of several of the citizens, at least the younger portion of them, a love for private theatricals. Although during the last century, there were few parents who even permitted their sons and daughters to enact the tragedy of “Douglas,” or the Scottish drama of the “Gentle Shepherd;” still, about the commencement of the present century, we remember several distinct bands of private performers who got up the “Miller of Mansfield” and the “Vintner in the Suds,” and even some of the plays of Shakspeare, in a very creditable manner, not forgetting all the adjuncts of scenery, foot-lights, and music. With the

Balderston. &c., scarcely a rival on the stage. As an able theatrical manager, he has rarely been equalled anywhere, and for energy, activity, and resource, never surpassed. In Glasgow he was, for many years, one of her greatest characters, and, in his own character of *Alick*, none was better known or more talked of. The theatrical profession preserve many racy anecdotes of his odd and striking sayings; but, in addition to his wit and humour, he had qualities of sterling worth. Though, in his dealings with others, he was by some accounted keen and parsimonious, he never swerved from the path of honour and honesty. Amid a difficult and arduous life, he still preserved a spotless moral character, redeemed four theatres from bankruptcy, and bequeathed to his family, as the result of nearly forty years of Herculean labour, a handsome competency. Mr Alexander died in December, 1851, and was buried in the Necropolis, where a handsome

monument, raised by his indefatigable and kind-hearted partner and mother of his children, marks the spot where his ashes are laid, and on which is inscribed the following true and touching epitaph, from the pen, we believe, of Mr James Hedderwick, Editor, of the *Glasgow Citizen*:—

“Fallen is the curtain! the last scene is o'er!
The favourite Actor treads life's stage no more!
Oft lavish plaudits from the crowd he drew,
And laughing eyes confess'd his humour true.
But let Thalia here her vigil keep,
And learn with sad Melpomene to weep:
No mimic woe now claims a fleeting tear—
The tragic end of all his toil's here.
Here fond Affection rears this sculptured stone,
For virtues not enacted but his own—
A constancy unshaken unto death,
A truth unswerving, and a Christian's faith.
Who new him best have cause to mourn him most:
Oh weep the Man more than the Actor lost!
Full many parts he played; yet, to the end,
His best were those of Husband, Father, Friend.”

progress of the century, the love for this pastime seems to have increased;* for we find that, in the year 1828, this species of entertainment—which was at one time so liberally patronised by the early sovereigns of England, and so fondly practised by its gay and gallant aristocracy—was successfully exhibited in the mansion of a gentleman living in the neighbourhood and intimately connected with Glasgow. We allude to a temporary stage which was tastefully erected in the dining-room of Craighend Castle, at that time possessed by Mr James Smith, and to the histrionic talents of a fashionable party of amateurs of the “sock and buskin,” who were assembled in that hospitable house, to enact “How to Shy Her;”† a five-act comedy, written for the occasion by Mr Alexander Dunlop of Clober, who, with the spirit of an Alfieri, played the hero of his own piece, and received as many plaudits from the gay group of listeners who crowded the boxes and pit of the elegant saloon, as had been bestowed on the poet of Asti by the pope, the princes, and cardinals who attended the private representation of “Saul.” The drama thus introduced into private society, created, at the time, no little gossip and some little squeamishness, upon the part of those who were accustomed to breathe a pure Calvinistic atmosphere; but, upon the whole, the practical result of introducing theatricals into the domestic circle, was felt to be productive of no more injury to public morals or private delicacy, than any other recreation incident to our social intercourse. To all lovers of the histrionic art, it must never be forgotten that, to a private theatre and to private actors,

* When scarcely fourteen years of age, we were connected with a private party of theatricals, who performed several pieces before select audiences. The theatre, which was fitted up in an empty house in Stockwell-street, had several scenes, such as a wood, a chamber, a street, a prison, &c. The late Mr Elias Gibb, in order to encourage our youthful histrionic endeavours, wrote an excellent prologue for our opening night, which took place about the end of the year 1809.

† The play of “How to Shy Her, or a Peep

at the Moors,” was printed in Glasgow in 1828. It indicates neither much originality nor talent, for while the author has been tolerably successful in the delineation of his low grotesque characters, speaking in the true Scottish vernacular, and generally in the whole dialogue: still, whenever he introduces verses, which he frequently does, these never rise beyond those of Sternhold and Hopkins, and would disgrace a boy without a beard.

the drama owes as much as to the public stage and to hired players. The Italian comedy might, perhaps, never have existed, had it not been fostered by the princes, the marquises, the counts, and even the cardinals of past ages. The French theatre, too, is equally indebted for its progress to the taste of its monarchs, and the passion of its nobility for private *spectacles*. While the British drama might very probably have remained in a state little removed from the mere pageantry of the mask, had not Thalia been welcomed at Windsor, and the Arundels, Cliffords, and Howards, of former days, been proud to "saw the air" as her votaries. Many of our earliest plays, indeed, were written for the temporary proscenium of some private mansion; and not a few of the latest successful efforts of the dramatic muse were first enacted by private performers.*

It was about the period when a better feeling towards the drama in Glasgow had sprung up—when the theatre had become a more popular place of resort than it had been, and was consequently patronised by the then more early dining notables of the City—and when, for these substantial reasons, it was the interest of the manager to bring from London a constant succession of all that was great on the Metropolitan stage, that there arose a Club, which, from the circumstance of its nightly board being open to the stars of the "sock and buskin," became at once, and continued long to be, one of the most celebrated and attractive of all the social conclaves in Glasgow. The CLUB to which we allude was known by the title of the WHAT-YOU-PLEASE, and commenced its sittings about the year 1798. We may truly say, of this wide-spread brotherhood, that it really boasted all the good qualities of the true English Club, stretching forth the hand of fellowship to every honest and respectable man, who had an idle

* Upon the revival of the stage in England, plays were introduced at Court. In the days of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I. the exhibitions were attended with great expense. The scenery and architecture of Ben Johnson's masques, were designed by Jnigo Jones. The actors were the house-

hold, and hence derived the title of "His Majesty's Servants." These persons had, according to *Cibber*, each ten yards of scarlet cloth, with a proper quantity of lace allowed them for liveries; and in their warrants from the Lord Chamberlain were styled "Gentlemen of the Great Chamber."

hour to spare, and grudged not to throw his mite of mirth into the general fund of merriment. It was a Club without any stringent laws, save the code which is imprinted on the heart of every gentleman, and free of every penalty save that which an extra draught of pleasure invariably will exact. It was a Club without any obligation on time or limit to enjoyment; and was, in a word, one which realised, in all its transactions and all its nightly conviviality, the truth of its well known appellation, the What-you-please.*

The originator of this once most social brotherhood was a Doctor Drumgold, who occupied, at that period, the situation of inspecting medical officer of the Glasgow recruiting district—a situation which, in those warlike days, was certainly no sinecure, though, from its being so, necessarily poured some supplementary cash into his pay-pocket. Busily employed, no doubt, as the Doctor must have been, in examining and passing his recruits during the forenoon, he naturally resolved to have the evenings to himself; and as he perhaps wisely judged that, for a bachelor, there was no better mode of obtaining the news and gossip of the town, than by a re-union of talkative companions round a comfortable board, with somewhat thereon to wash down the conversation, he, along with some of his brother officers of the recruiting corps, resolved to parade every night, as the clock struck eight, in a comfortable tavern, situated near the head of the west side of Saltmarket-street, which not long afterwards was exchanged for several others, and lastly was transferred to Henderson's Oyster-house, at the south end of the Candleriggs, then the most fashionable rendezvous for the lovers of *Pandores* and other shellfish.

Although this Club was at first wholly composed of military gentlemen,

* The leading law was, that any gentleman desirous of becoming a member must be proposed one night, and the next night, if found worthy, he was admitted; and scarcely in any case was a candidate refused membership. The next and most important law was, that no man was permitted to ring the

bell, if not ordered to do so by the president; and if infringed, a penalty of a bowl of punch was the consequence. From the impetuous love of bell-ringing exemplified by the members, there was thus occasionally more punch obtained from fines than what the members could well swallow at a sitting.

it was not long before it became patent to civilians, and, as we have already hinted, soon afterwards to the *stars* and leading performers of the theatre. Of the civilians who became, from time to time, members of this wide-spreading fraternity, we may only say that, while a few might be put in the category of sedate, sober-minded, married men, still the greater bulk of the brotherhood belonged to the class which the French call *garçons volages*—to that class, in fact, who really loved fun and frolic, jest and song, *gegger*y and gossip, and who, moreover, were bound neither by their conscience, nor their inclination, nor their domestic arrangements, to be at home at what was in those days still known as “elders’ hours.” It was a Club, too, which knew no *unlawful* days in the week; and, consequently, no obstacle was offered to any of the brotherhood meeting from June to January, or from January to June. But, perhaps, the most striking peculiarity attributable to the What-you-please conclave, was the varied hour at which special groups were in the habit of arriving at, or of leaving the Club-room. The more sedate were always at their post by eight; others belonging to the regular dining-out party did not arrive till ten. Theatrical gentlemen could not appear before the curtain had fallen; while the youthful “peep-of-day-boys” were looking in long after the chairman had risen and paid his *shot*, and a successor had assumed the seat of honour. In this Club, therefore, one was always sure to find a companion at any hour, and on any evening, before “the wee short hour ayont the twal.” From the Club-room having attained, in the course of time—certainly not at first—this continuous yet changeful character, it became ultimately patronised by all the *beaux esprits* of the town, who made it a sort of fashionable *finish* to each day’s pleasurable duties.

Of the father of the What-you-please, Doctor Drumgold, it may be truly affirmed, that never was an individual better calculated, from buoyancy of spirit, good temper, and unaffected loquacity, to become the nucleus of such a numerous and mixed fraternity, as this Club so speedily became. To many excellent social qualities, he added a strong love of

crambo, and had a salutation in rhyme, on every possible occasion, for all who ever came within the boundaries of the Club sanctum. The fact is, he seemed to have the rhyming dictionary at his tongue end, for never was he at a loss to find a couplet for the oddest names in the Directory. As a proof of this, he was wont to say—

“Pray, good Mr Milligan,
Take off your glass, and fill again;”

a call which the worthy member, we believe, rarely required to be made so broad as instantly to obey.

Among the early members of the What-you-please, was the well-known, and at that period much made of, Mr Lingham—a bluff, good-looking, English commercial traveller, since more celebrated for his love of eating than for his success in the calling in which he was ostensibly engaged.* Like the famous Italian priest who sent his servant before him to find out the best wine, and on doing so, to write on the house the cabalistic word “*Est*,” in order that he might really know where to stop, so as to drink freely and safely; so also did the gormandising Lingham, when trotting his steed over Scotland and the north of England, in search of customers, ever keep his eyes wide awake to any luxury which he might espy; and no sooner did he discover that something peculiarly nice could be had at this or that public-house, than he would at once pull up, send his horse to the stable, and delay his journey till his expectations were fully gratified. As a proof of this, it has been stated that his love, or rather mania, for sucking pig was so strong, that he absolutely remained at a country inn, where there was a litter just ready for the spit, ay and until he had finished the whole family of young porkers! When in Glasgow, he was a constant attender at the What-you-please, and it may be easily believed that his *pleasure* never showed itself by choosing the worst thing in the house. In the days when

* It appears that Mr Lingham was present at a grand dinner of the Club, in Mrs Porteous's tavern, on 23d September, 1808.

he carried a heavier purse than he latterly did, he showed a particular fondness for oysters, served up in every possible way; and to his culinary skill the gourmand owes the delicious *plat des huitres à la Lingham*,* which Henderson once called, and Glasgow in its present vulgate now designates, "Linghamed oysters." How many a board of Pandores has tickled the gullet of this prince of oyster-eaters! How many expiring *natives* found a ready grave in Lingham's stomach! But oysters, Heaven knows! are not for a poor man's every-day eating; and, consequently, when inattention to business had in a great measure deprived our over-gentlemanly bagman of being invited, as he was wont at one time to be, to the tables of many respectable persons in the City, and when the means of indulging in the expensive luxury of shellfish had failed, he had recourse to many strange modes for obtaining a dinner. When unsuccessful in his prandial dodge, which, latterly, was too often the case, he sought solace to his greedy appetite, by taking an early supper of tripe at the What-you-please, which, from the quantity he swallowed, proved, alas! for the poor laundlord, anything but a profit. If there be any truth in Phrenology, it may be truly affirmed of Lingham that there were but few men who could boast of a larger lump of *Alimentiveness* than he. To satisfy the craving which this bump excited, he had recourse, during the latter days of his career, to many expedients to raise means for its gratification; and, among others, he issued a proposal to publish a couple of volumes, under the title of "My Saddle-bags," which, however, never proceeded farther than the subscription paper, and the payment to himself of the money. With the proceeds, he contrived to eat on a little longer than he might otherwise have done, till at length poor Lingham got the cold shoulder at the Club, and no shoulder at home; and, in the course of a few years thereafter, he took his last journey, with his unwritten

* It is said that the Emperor Domitian, when talking of culinary matters, cried out, "Oh, my friends, there is really nothing like *petit patés!*" This exclamation has made that

dish immortal, and why should not "*des huitres à la Lingham*" render its author immortal too?

“Saddle-bags,” to that country from which “no traveller returns,” leaving, however, behind him a culinary fame which may keep his name longer in remembrance than the great mass of his more frugal, more active, and less gluttonous Club companions.*

During the long career of the What-you-please—a career which lasted at least from twenty-five to thirty years—there never was, perhaps, a Club established in Glasgow which more successfully fulfilled the objects of its formation. Within its magic circle,† attracting, as it did, so many of our gay

* The following curious minute of the Club is inserted in the records, dated 15th October, 1807:—“Messrs Lingham, Tait, Ewing, and M’Nair bet two bowls each that Wood gains his bet with Barelay. Messrs Boden, Dunlop, Campbell, and Boyd Dunlop, the contrary;” and by the minute of 17th October, we find “that it having been made public by the newspapers that Barelay had gained his bet, the losing party have agreed to pay their bet, but provided that there has been no collusion between the parties, in which case the winning party engage to refund the losers.” There is more ignorance than caution exhibited in this minute. The crown bowls of punch were accordingly paid by the losers on the evening of the 17th. By a minute dated 26th October, 1807, 12 o’clock P.M., we have some idea of the drinking powers of the members at that period:—“This evening, upon the bill being called in, it appeared that seven crown bowls had been discussed; and as five crown bowls and one-half appear to have been the amount of bets, there is a deficiency of one crown bowl and one-half, which falls upon the members present (the losers excepted) to discharge.” Lingham was both a glutton and an epicure. In the days when he had more invitations for one day than in after life he had for a twelvemonth, he sometimes, on going to a house where he found the dishes not quite *comme il faut*, unceremoniously rose from his chair and walked off to some more *recherché* board. During the latter days of his

life, he was often seen wandering about the piazzas in front of the Coffee-room, ready to accept from his old acquaintances any small gratuity. On one occasion he had raised about five shillings, and though at the time in great distress, unhesitatingly gave the whole away for a dish of green peas! It is believed that he died in a mean lodging-house in one of the wynds, having fairly eaten himself up!

† The following are a few of the leading members, in addition to the host of military honorary members, who regularly attended the Club from 1805 to 1809:—

- Mr Thomas Orr, afterwards of Tobago.
- “ John Murdoch Robertson.
 - “ Robert Marshall.
 - “ Hugh Moody.
 - “ David Pattison.
 - “ John Miller Ewing.
 - “ William Tait.
 - “ Robert Robertson.
 - “ M. B. Simpson.
 - “ George Foster.
 - “ Archibald Lamont of Robroyston.
 - “ Andrew Smith.
 - “ M. Lingham.
 - “ William Jaek.
 - “ Colin Currie.
 - “ Dr Richard Millar.
 - “ Thomas Arnot.
 - “ Robert Garden.
 - “ William Corbet.
 - “ Robert Mayne.
 - “ Bruce Dennistoun.

and gallant citizens, there was ever the best feeling maintained; for, although, in the wordy war of wit and humour, evoked by not unfrequent libations, which sometimes led to thoughtless passion, there were many combatants, still, such was the dominant spirit of the society, that there never existed a quarrel more than was easily soldered up by an additional glass of grog, or by a happy joke from the chairman. Perhaps this peculiarly peaceful attribute of the fraternity it owed to its early admixture of military men with civilians, and the necessarily useful control on the tongue, which at that time military etiquette happily enjoined. Even long after the period when Dr Drumgold was called away from Glasgow, to fulfil more important medical duties elsewhere, was this Club found a favourite rendezvous of the recruiting officers of the district, and also of the bachelor officers in the barracks; and hence there was always a gentlemanly spirit infused into the whole proceedings of the brotherhood, even up to the latest hour of the sederunt.*

Mr W. G. Park.

- “ Charles Todd.
- “ Thomas Hopkirk.
- “ James Haldane.
- “ Thomas Arthur.
- “ James Tassie.
- “ Wm. Robertson.
- “ John M’Nair.
- “ Robert Gray.
- “ John Brown, Yst.
- “ Adam Bald.
- “ William Shand.
- “ James Milligan.
- “ James Graham.
- “ Stewart Smith.
- “ Richard Gillespie.
- “ John Gillies.
- “ William Scott.
- “ John Austin.
- “ T. Hamilton, Jun.
- “ Archibald Lang.
- “ Andrew Ranken.
- “ Charles Foster.
- “ A. W. Shand.
- “ George Lawson.

Mr G. Hamilton, Jun.

- “ Boyd Dunlop.
- “ Robert Taylor.
- “ John London.
- “ John Aitken.
- “ John Wardlaw.
- “ John M’Lean.
- “ — Macbeth.
- “ John Melville.
- “ Hugh Hamilton.
- “ Robert Lindsay.
- “ J. Pattison, Jun.
- “ John Hinshaw.
- “ Mathew Buchanan.
- “ Alexander Garden.
- “ Alexander Muirhead.
- “ Archibald Hamilton.
- “ George Buchanan.
- “ Wm. Hamilton.
- “ — Boden.
- “ J. L. Reiss.
- “ Edward Gilchrist.
- &c. &c. &c.

* Among the hundreds of colonels, majors, captains, lieutenants, and surgeons of the

Of the opinions of the brotherhood, who thus assembled nightly to talk over the affairs of the country and city, it is perhaps enough to say, that although the generality were fully imbued with the dominant Tory feelings of the times, there were a few among their number who occasionally had the courage to dispute the wondrous "wisdom of our ancestors"—a doctrine at that time much in the ascendant. As a special example of their love for the Scottish Toryism of the day, it may be mentioned, that the Club, on hearing of the acquittal of Lord Melville, at once ordered the illumination of their Club-room, which was done in the most brilliant and effective manner. In this tallow-destroying expression of admiration and satisfaction, the Club appears to have frequently indulged, during the many years they met in Mrs Porteous's in the Saltmarket, in Mrs Elmslie's in King-street, and in Henderson's (opposite the Guard-house) in Candleriggs; and while, by doing so, they certainly pleased themselves and flattered their own vanity, they at the same time always succeeded in exciting the astonishment of the more juvenile portion of the public. There was one sentiment, however, in which all the members were agreed, and that was, a patriotic love of their country, united to a feeling of gratitude towards any one who had done the country service. From their minutes, we find that a pretty large sum was first subscribed towards the erection of the monument to Lord Nelson on the Green, and thereafter towards the iron railing which surrounds it. A handsome sum was also contributed by the brotherhood towards the statue of Sir John Moore, while

army elected honorary members of the Club, we find, from the following minute of 7th April, 1809, that the late able Convener of the County of Banff was admitted:—"Robert Mayne, Esq., proposed Harry Lumsden of Auchindoir an honorary member of the Club," who was unanimously admitted on the 10th April. The following historical minute also appears on the 31st July of the same year:—"This day the 3d and 5th Regiments of Lanarkshire Local Militia, lately the Anderson and Trades' Corps of Volunteers, com-

pleted their training by carting their field-officers through the streets of Glasgow in post-chaises drawn by men. Some of the carriages were stuck round by flambeaux, and his Majesty's colours were carried in front by armed men. The Duke of Montrose had the day before complimented these corps on their very soldierlike appearance." It is recorded also in the Club minutes that, "on the 30th May, 1809, the snow on the ground was six inches deep, yea, even on the streets."

their generosity was frequently shown in considerable donations to the Royal Infirmary.

In perusing the curious records of the What-you-please Club, while one cannot but be struck with the ever recurring evidence that a playful irony was the characteristic of their nightly meetings, he will, at the same time, find that even the chairman himself was not safe from the *gegery* to which all were subjected. It was when Mr Thomas Orr sat for some time as perpetual president—in the handsome chair which, with certain other pieces of furniture, had been specially made by Messrs Cleland & Jack for the use of the fraternity—that no little disturbance arose on that gentleman discovering that some unknown member had appended to his signature of the former night's minute the title of *Kilbuckie*. Although this waggish epithet was, so far as his face was concerned, practically applicable to the president, the Club testified their displeasure against the culprit, by fining him, “if ever discovered,” in two bowls of punch.* Mr Orr, apparently or willingly blind to the joke, placed on the minutes the following lines:—

“ Whoe'er wrote Kilbuckie under my name,
Does himself little credit, and I lose little fame;
Kilbuckie's a title I do not well know,
Reflects on your wisdom—like mine, 'tis so so.
I support a great title, the head of this Club,
The members themselves did me President dub;

* The waggish addition of the name of Kilbuckie to Mr Orr's name, arose from the similarity which his countenance bore to that of General Dickson of *Kilbucko*, who was a famous man in his day, not more distinguished for his gallantry in the field, than for his feats as a Bacchanalian, by which, and gambling, he squandered the most of his estate, originally a large one. As he long commanded the 42d, he was well known in Glasgow. It has been told of Kilbucko with truth, that, when on one occasion at the Court of George III, the king said to him, “Dickson, how much did the painting of

your face cost you?” alluding to his port-wine complexion—to which Kilbucko replied, “Please your majesty, I cannot say, it is not yet finished!” It is mentioned in Sir David Stewart of Garth's History of the Highland Regiments, that after returning from the Egyptian campaign, in which he had been wounded, Kilbucko happened to be marching through Peebles at the head of the 42d, on the eve of an election for a member of Parliament, and such was the enthusiasm of the electors for the soldier, that they spontaneously elected him M.P.

You're a member, 'tis true, but don't me attack,
 The title you gave me, recoils on your back :
 On your back, have I said ? it should have been on your head,
 For the censure you'll never get over till dead !”*

In addition to the excitement of the punch bowl and the tidbits from the kitchen, the Club-room offered likewise the sole use of two Glasgow newspapers, which were got for the special delectation of the members—the papers selected being the *Courier* and the *Journal*, at that time in the heyday of their popularity. It appears, also, that as a peculiar safeguard against any *ungentlemanlike* conduct, the Club, on the 11th May, 1809, purchased a pair of pistols, powder, and ball, which, so far as known, lay long quite undisturbed in the armoury, clearly testifying, that although many of the honorary members hailed from the Emerald Isle, none of them, fortunately, seemed to have inherited the ruling passion of Sir Lucius O'Trigger!

Among the many attractions already mentioned, which the What-you-please nightly presented to its numerous members, there was none, as we have hinted, so great as the occasional companionship of the gentlemen of the theatre. Here it was the invariable practice for those gentlemen, who elsewhere were chary of their talents, to cast aside all professional etiquette, and throw their mite into the treasury of the evening's hilarity, by at once volunteering some of their best and most racy songs. Many a time and oft, within the circle of this Club, has Jack Bannister raised the loud and uproarious guffaw; while Charles Incedon made each member's heart thrill with the music of “Black-eyed Susan,” or drew forth a tear with the tender notes of “Poor Tom Bowling.” Frequently, too, has John Sinclair here dashed off one or two of the melodies of the “Beggar's Opera;” while Mathews has made the roof ring with the horn of his famous “Mail Coach;” and though last, certainly not least, has Irish

* Mr Thomas Orr soon after went to Tobago. Previous to his leaving Glasgow, the brotherhood, on the 22d October, 1807, presented him with a charter to hold a What-

you-please-Club in that island, under the annual tribute of sending a turtle to the mother Club.

Johnston electrified his audience with "I was the boy for bewitching 'em." It was on such occasions, that the Club-room was ever found full to overflowing, and that the members invariably forgot either to look at their watches, or listen to the chimes of the clock. At such moments, no doubt, all present must have felt how true it is that—

"Time, like a pitiless master,
Cries, 'onward,' and spurs the gay hours:
Ah, never does Time travel faster
Than when his way lies among flowers!"

And, even when the parting bumper was quaffing, all agreed that

"The sweetness that pleasure has in it,
Is always so slow to come forth,
That seldom, alas! till the minute
It dies, do we know half its worth!"*

The What-you-please Club may be said to have attained its grand climacteric about the year 1810 or 1812, and continued to be well patronised for at least ten or fifteen years thereafter. About this time, Mr William Tait, of newspaper-printing and Lyceum notoriety, and who was better known by the sobriquet of *Billy Types*, was then looked upon as the load-star of the fraternity. Almost every night, when in Glasgow, did this anecdotal gentleman, about eight o' clock, take his accustomed chair at the board; and, by his bland and courteous demeanour, he did much to keep the more youthful and spirited members in order. He was a fellow, if not, like Yorick, of "infinite wit, and most excellent fancy," at least of good manners, and bung-full of innocent fun. He was a man replete with fine feelings and the gentlemanly bearing of the good old school of French society, before it had been seethed of its *politesse* by the Revolution. Mr Tait had, in fact, passed some of his early years in France and Holland; and, unlike most of his countrymen, had largely benefited by his foreign residence, returning home a more polished and a better

* By a minute, we find that Messrs Foote, Carleton, and Trueman, were present on the 12th January, 1809.

man than when he left his native City. In consequence of his polite and agreeable manners, he was, in his earlier days, a welcome visitor at many of the best tables of the town; but, latterly, from the loss of departed friends and accumulating years, he was enabled to devote more evenings to the Club than he was once able to afford. The fact is, that Club habits became more and more congenial to his taste, and he latterly felt it to be almost a sin to allow a night to close without visiting the What-you-please. Being a sworn bachelor, though by no means blind to the fascinations of the fair sex, his ambition was limited; for we have often heard him say, when, like many others more grasping, he was comfortably seated in the "wishing chair," that his highest desire was to have a one pound note placed every morning on his breakfast table!

From the circumstance of Mr Tait being for many years justly regarded as the nightly nucleus of the What-you-please, the Club in the course of time ran the risk of losing its original name. In honour of the chairman, some of the youthful supporters began to call it the "Tête-à-tête;" and some time afterwards it was dubbed the "Finish," and the "New." Under these various epithets, the Club struggled on for some time, but at length, like many other *aliases*, its good name became blighted. The older hands gradually became chary of their patronage, and the young ones almost instantly neglected their bantling for something more racy, till the What-you-please, which once boasted more members than any Club within the sound of St Mungo's bell, at length dwindled down to something less than a score, and after exchanging its nightly for a weekly meeting, finally gave up the ghost; which obliged more than one of its best supporters to seek refuge from ennui amid the fumes of rum toddy and tobacco in the "Cheap-and-Nasty."

Startle not, fastidious reader, at the designation of a Club, which first held its sittings in the forsaken kitchen of one who claimed an alliance, at least in name, with the valiant Montrose; for, know that the Cheap-and-Nasty, had for its supporters not only burgh dignitaries who had been *hatted* and *unhatted*, but justices and ex-justices, bailies and ex-bailies,

ay, even down to the very functionaries employed in drawing and executing a mittimus. Of such a mixed court of *Oyer and Terminer*, it might perhaps be deemed treason to say more than this, that, in spite of the name which it bore, there was no lack of wit and humour amid the puffing of cigars and the rattling of spittoons; and although the room was small and the roof low, still the rum which filled the crystals *timothies* was always found to be a part of Wallace or Kelly's double runnings, and the "soothing weed" the best that Cuba could furnish. For such luxuries, however, the landlord being content to accept of a *shop*, not a *tavern* price, it was discovered, ere many years had rolled over, that his trade was not a profitable one. The sale of what teetotalers denominate *poison* was consequently given up; the Club was set adrift; and the worthy Boniface, having asked and obtained from the Corporation the office of a church warden, commenced the lugubrious duty of interring a few of those who may have hastened their journey to the cemetery through such potations as he was wont to deal in, but far more that had been arrested in life's career through that agency which neither the vegetarian nor the water-drinker can control! One sentence more on the Cheap-and-Nasty, and we have done. Notwithstanding the opprobrious name, which it is believed was bestowed on this Club, not by its own members, but by those who had no great admiration for certain rather prominent legal individuals belonging to the conclave, it must not be forgotten that it was in the bosom of this fraternity that Heath and Hopkirk* received the first idea of the now scarce volume containing those clever west country caricatures

* Mr Heath came to Glasgow, from London, to paint two or three large panoramas, and while here, amused himself occasionally in caricaturing the leading follies of the day, as he had previously done in the Metropolis. At that period, lithography was in its infancy in Glasgow—the only press being that belonging to Mr Hopkirk in George-street, and which was successfully employed in printing the "Northern Looking-Glass." Mr Hopkirk was the representative of an old and most

respectable family, with rather a shattered fortune. He was endowed with an excellent heart and rare natural talents. He possessed a highly cultivated mind and considerable scientific acquirements. He was extensively acquainted with natural history, particularly with botany, and was one of the earliest promoters of the Glasgow Botanic Gardens. He spent the latter years of his life in Ireland, and died there on the 23d of August, 1841.

which, under the title of the "Northern Looking-Glass," for many months during the year 1825, kept the members of the Police Board in hot water and the citizens in roars of laughter, and contributed not a little by the cutting ridicule of its pictorial illustrations and its literary typography, to arrest the force of the pitiless *muck* which was at that moment running against the character of an excellent public functionary, and an old and respectable citizen.*

* The late Mr James Hardie of Lancefield.