

Progress of Liberal Opinion in Glasgow.

SMA' WEFT CLUB.

OF all the cities in the British empire, no one perhaps ever surpassed Glasgow in its loyalty to the Sovereign, or in its love for the old constitution of Church and State. As has already been hinted, Toryism of the purest water, for many long years, and particularly during the protracted war with France, was held in the highest favour. And although there were occasional manifestations of political displeasure towards certain of the rulers in high places, during the progress of the first French Revolution, and in times of commercial distress, still the vast majority continued either the zealous advocates or the passive supporters of things as they were. The City may be justly said to have been the very beau ideal of Conservatism, whether the thing to be *conserved* was in itself good or bad. When, however, the anxieties and the turmoil which had been created and kept alive by the incessant din of war were ended, and when peace had afforded time to men to turn some attention to their own social and political condition, a new era commenced in respect of the political opinions of Glasgow. Liberalism, as it is now called, during the closing years of the last and the opening years of the present century, was generally scouted, or at least eschewed by the generality of the wealthy classes, and the few respectable advocates of "the rights of the people" were limited to the small knot who annually assembled under the banner of the Fox Club. No sooner, however, had the fears of foreign invasion been dispelled, by the overthrow of Napoleon at Waterloo, than the Whig

knot was seen to expand, and Whig opinions were more frequently enunciated at the tables of the intellectual and the wealthy. The citizens began to show less sympathy with the antiquated doctrines maintained in the old *water-gruel* newspapers of a foregone age, and yearned for some better exponent of their feelings. To meet this desideratum, the *Glasgow Chronicle* was established,* the first devoted advocate of liberal opinions in the west of Scotland. From the hour that this reforming organ appeared, it may be said that a powerful political party began to be formed, which State circumstances no doubt promptly tended to increase. The ceaseless efforts made by Lord Archibald Hamilton, then Member for the County of Lanark, in favour of Scottish Burgh Reform, gained many friends to the cause, particularly among the young and unprejudiced, whose sympathies with the Liberal projects then promulgated, had been excited by the powerful and popular pleadings of the *Edinburgh Review*. The fact is, that men now began to feel that there was some truth in the political degradation of Glasgow, as shown in the fact of a City counting a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants—and these, too, making unparalleled progress in commerce and manufactures—being placed as to Parliamentary representation in a worse position than the rottenest burgh in England; and this sentiment was not confined to those of the more advanced politicians, but was participated by even many of those who still, in other respects, worshipped the wisdom of their ancestors. The establishment of a popularly-elected Police Board, whose discussions were open to the public press, as seen in juxtaposition with the hole-and-corner self-elective system of the Town Council, began also to excite public attention; and, ere long, many began to regard the procedure of the

* The *Glasgow Chronicle* was established, through a joint-stock company, in the year 1811, and was four-and-twenty years conducted by Mr David Prentice, with an ability and political consistency not often surpassed. His services to the cause of freedom were unquestionable; but his fate, like that of

many others who have conscientiously laboured for the public weal, was in the end a hard one. His quondam friends started a rival journal, which ultimately led to Mr Prentice losing the editorship of the *Chronicle*; and soon after this event he died, in somewhat straitened circumstances.

latter as little better than a farce and an absurdity in a free country. The Green Bag, and the spy-administration of Castlereagh and Sidmouth, threw another petard into the ranks of the old Tory phalanx, and sent over many proselytes to those of their Whig adversaries. The appearance of Brougham and Denman at a public dinner, in the Assembly-rooms, given to those great advocates of Reform, soon after Queen Caroline's damaging trial, gave an additional stimulus to the Liberal movement, and fixed many new friends in their new political faith. Emboldened as the Liberal party was by the success of the many public political meetings, which had only commenced a few years before, and at which the Whigs were heartily backed by the working-classes, it was not long before the mighty power of Toryism began to totter. Of all the local deeds, however, which hastened its downfall in Glasgow, was the attempt made by the Corporation to extend the rotten system of self-election over the partially-built district of Blythswood. Against this aggressive power, which was sought under the guise of a mere police extension, a most fearful turmoil was excited among all classes of the citizens, and which even entered into the Trades' House—a body, of all others, who had hitherto abetted everything sanctioned by the City Corporation. This false step was adroitly taken advantage of by the Liberal party; and they having now obtained many an additional and willing ear to listen to what was generally felt to be the truth, the movement progressed accordingly. Reformers, strange to say, began to appear even at the Council Board; attempts were now made by certain members to publish the debates; and from these it became evident that there were now traitors to Toryism in the Tory camp. While these things were going on, an effort was made by the Whig party to obtain the command of the Merchants' House. This was the very strongest citadel of Toryism in the City, and here it was that the great battle of Reform was fought. No opportunity was lost, however, on the part of the assailants to raise topics for the attack; and, after a few rather sharp onsets, the Liberals gained

the mastery, and forced that close Corporation to petition in favour of both Parliamentary and Burgh Reform.

Some time previous to this event, two new and powerful accessories to the Liberal cause had appeared, in the shape of the *Free Press* and the *Scots Times*—a couple of newspapers, from the manner in which they were conducted, that contributed not a little to prepare the way for the further efforts of the Liberal leaders, who were now eager to ascend the political platform in support of progressive reform. In the broad and bold principles advocated in the *Free Press*, the more advanced politicians found sufficient pabulum; while in the sharp and cutting broadsides of the *Scots Times*, directed chiefly against burgh mismanagement and self-election, the less advanced quidnuncs found potent matter for invigorating the cause of freedom. It was in the latter print, in particular, where that most powerful of all weapons, the shaft of ridicule, was most pitilessly wielded, and which, when used in the manner it was there hebdomadally done, proved altogether irresistible.*

In the midst of those political changes and municipal agitations, which ultimately resulted in a Municipal and Parliamentary Act that gave to Glasgow a freely elected Town Council and two freely elected Members of Parliament, there assembled a Club, which, from the peculiar prying nature of the individuals who composed it, gained not only considerable notoriety on its own account, but was perhaps made more remarkable from its imaginary sittings furnishing the medium through which an attack could be best made on the political and municipal grievances of the day.

* The *Free Press* was edited by Mr W. J. Northouse, and the *Scots Times* by Mr Robert Malcolm. Mr Northouse did not long continue to edit the *Free Press*, or to reside in Glasgow. Mr Malcolm died here in 1850. We knew the latter gentleman well. His information and literary acquirements were most extensive—his taste was correct and fastidious to a fault—his judgment and

generous feeling were conspicuous, and highly and deservedly appreciated; and hence the *Scots Times*, of which he was the proprietor as well as editor, was often selected by writers of eminence, both in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as a desirable vehicle for the publication of their contributions to the political or general literature of the day.

Of the flesh-and-blood members who constituted this redoubtable and sharp-nosed fraternity, it is enough to say, that they were men who, in common parlance, knew the world well, and, in particular, the concerns of the whole community of Glasgow somewhat better, at least in their own estimation, than anybody else. It is quite certain that nowhere could a person gain a better insight into the affairs or the feelings of the citizens than at the SMA' WEFT CLUB. The peculiar *knack* which each individual member had of drawing aside the countinghouse or the family curtain, and by that means permitting his companions to have a peep at all that was acting behind, was absolutely marvellous. At every meeting of that brotherhood there seemed, in fact, a little Asmodeus imprisoned in every glass, whether of ale or whisky, that stood on the table of their *sanctum*;—and the world knows that never one of these little imps refused to mount his crutches! The knowing look—the expressive silence—the negative shake of the head, so characteristic of each member of this inquisitive brotherhood, spoke always volumes to the initiated, and often prognosticated to the uninitiated, imaginary evils, and which, alas! sometimes turned out fearful realities. What words, indeed, can express the vast and wondrous information which might have been gathered within the circle of this bachelor divan! There, for instance, was ever to be found the charming inuendo, the delightful satire, the choice irony, the dark foreboding, the gloomy fear, the intimate acquaintanceship with the *warp and weft* of every manufacturer's web, the accurate knowledge of the debit and credit side of each merchant's ledger, and the precise and minute account of each individual *ménage* in the City. Who, in fact, that wished to become acquainted with a man's credit, would have thought of applying to a banker about such a ticklish and delicate matter, if he could only be introduced into the mysteries of the *Sma' Weft*? Who that liked to dine abroad and well, but had few days to spare, would have thought of running the risk of swallowing kitchen wines, when at the petty expense of a solitary *timothy* in the *Sma' Weft* Club-room, he could obtain a *binn-book* of every man's cellar, and could calculate for a cer-

tainty where he might sip Hock and bolt Burgundy? In truth, amid this notable coterie, was to be found the concentrated gossip of the whole town, *soured* and *seasoned* to the taste of the most fastidious quidnunc, and served up with a hilarity and gusto which seemed to bespeak, on the part of the relators and listeners, that the pleasure rather lay amid the misfortunes than the successes of mankind! The nightly appearance of the Club may be best described in the following doggrel lines:—

“ With tumbler and with *timothy*, each member sat
 Ripe for a toast, a story, or a song;
 But that which came on every ear most *pat*
 Was some sly hint of neighbours going wrong.”

Its usual occupation was *fishing* out the faults of the community and of those who were attempting to govern them; while, at every successive martyrdom of the victims thus laid upon the table,

“ Each sharp-faced member's nose
 Seem'd sharper and more keen
 Than any sharp-faced nose
 That ever yet was seen!”

A wink from one and a nod from another gave the *coup-de-grace*; and thus a credit or a reputation died!

It has remained until this hour a moot point whether the banner under which this select band of kindred spirits nightly met to quaff their *nipperkin* of ale, or sip their *timothy* of toddy, was one that was bestowed on the fraternity by brother Clubbists, or was made choice of by themselves; all that may be said on this subject is, that the notable brotherhood, whose tastes and peculiarities we have attempted to record, did meet for a considerable time, previous to the year 1830, in one of the snuggest parlours of that most comfortable of Salmarket taverns—the *Shakspeare*—in which, through the good cheer of its staid and *soft-speaking* landlady, and the untiring attentions of her two pretty *Anne Pages*, various most respectable knots of gentlemen nightly congregated; but, while many such applicants were but too frequently refused admittance for want of room, the Sma' Weft Club-room was always kept ready and comfortable

for those who had the liberty of access to it.* Notwithstanding the advantage which the members of this Club possessed over the other frequenters of the then well-patronised "Shakspeare," they nevertheless were not content, for we find that, about the time when reform politics ran high, and when angry discussions, connected therewith, were even found penetrating into the domestic circle, the Sma' West exchanged Mrs Kerr's well painted and papered parlour in the Saltmarket for a dark and dingy room at the entrance to Dunlop Street, which, however, was at that period kept by a very respectable and attentive host. It was in this quiet and unseen locality, that the Club assembled for many years,—each member acting either the part of a Paul Pry or a bitter scrutineer of all public and private matters; and here they continued to toss off their *timothis* till, like the members of similar fraternities, they were tossed from the crust into the core of this earth, which, however, did not fully come to pass till several years after the passing of the Reform and Municipal Acts.

Of the ideal personages who figured as members in the *Noctes Sma' Westianæ*, which, as literary *jeu d'esprit*, appeared for the first time on the 3d October, 1829, in the *Scots Times*—a newspaper that, during the Parliamentary and Burgh Reform agitation, exercised no small influence on the opinions of the West of Scotland,—it is, perhaps, enough to say that, while the public thought fit to assign to each character therein

* Among the many taverns in the Saltmarket, that kept by Mrs Anderson at the sign of the "Sun" may be mentioned. It was situated a little way below the entrance to London-street, on the east side of the street. The house was a quiet, clean house, in the old style, and was the occasional haunt of William Motherwell and other literary acquaintances. In one of the apartments, many odd things were concocted, connected with the City; among these, the proposal to erect a monument to Sir William Wallace was first started in 1818; and subsequently the famous "Harvie's Dyke Case" was commenced,

and which was so successfully gained by the public in the Jury Court, and thereafter in the House of Lords. At an earlier period, there met in the same close a social Club, called the "Pap-in," which arose from the common appellation of the tippie used by the members. This was composed of whisky, small beer, and a little oatmeal sprinkled on the top, and was drank out of wooden bickers or quaiqhs. A rather apocraphal story goes, that through the rather copious libations of this drouthy fraternity, an outside stair in the close was undermined.

portrayed the name of a real and well-known personage belonging to the Sma' West fraternity, the writers of these ideal colloquies had really no such beings in their eye. The *dramatis personæ* in the *Noctes* were as purely fictitious characters as ever came from the brain of Sir Walter Scott, although, from their well-sustained individuality or idiosyncrasy, they certainly became as well known as if they had been imprisoned in a mortal coil. The fact is that, by those who lived during the Reform Bill agitation, the vulgar but sound sayings of *Sir Peter Blueskin*, the alkaline acumen of *Dr Scantocreech*, the pyroligneous acidity of the *Sour Ploom*, the vocalization of the little fat fodge *Fozie*, the Juvenal satire and attic wit of the *Aide-de-Camp*, and the garrulous and egotistical pleasantries of *Bailie Peacod*, are, we suspect, much better remembered than even many of the living actors in that active and eventful drama; just in the same way as the sayings of Bailie Nicol Jarvie are now daily repeated, when the astute remarks of the wisest Bailie who ever adorned the *Chaumer*, during the days of *Rob Roy*, are as utterly forgotten as himself!

As it is now upwards of twenty-five years since the real Club was closed, and since the ideal colloquies were presented to a gaping world; and as, amid the present happy political calm of Glasgow, it is scarcely possible for those who now enjoy it to comprehend the excitement which then prevailed, and the pleasure with which a successful hit against any of the opposing leaders was enjoyed, we, at the hazard of being stigmatised for personalities, which from our heart we abhor and deprecate, would, notwithstanding, now cull one or two of the less bitter burlesques from the *Sma' Westiana*, for the purpose of at once illustrating the Sma' West Club itself, and the times in which it assembled. In presenting these, however, we are well aware that time has already done much to deprive many of the allusions of their point, as is ever the case in productions of this nature, nothing being more fleeting and ephemeral than local satire. The first extract is one which will recall the last struggle made against the Reform Bill in the Merchants' House. It is introduced in the following ludicrous way by *Fozie*, who, on recounting the fiddling

facilities and faculties of Paganini, concluded his oration with a perhaps not unjust diatribe on the Italian's well-known cupidity, and his utter guiltlessness of having ever left a trifle to the poor of any people who had poured money into his gaping pockets:—

"They're mair fules that did sac," said Blueskin, sarcastically. "Sic like elanjamptry will get nane o' my siller, I warrant ye. Na, na, these are no times to gi'e seven shillings and saxpence to see a gutsraper shaking his elbow and laughing in his sleeve at folk's folly."

"But you would have heard him do what never man did before on the violin," said Fozie, evidently nettled; "an' that, too, for five shillings. The imitation of shrill chanticleer was well worth all the money."

"He'll craw gae an' crouse on his Cremona when he gets a crown frae me for what I'm deaved wi' ilka morning. It's nae great music *that*, let me tell ye. A crown to hear a cock-a-leerie-law!"

"Why, Sir Peter, that is too severe," said the Aide-de-Camp; "you like your timothy, and I like my tankard. You know the Latin proverb, *Sua cuique voluptyas*."

"Come, come," said the Sour Plum, "I beg you wont remind us of the Grammar-school and the *taes*. It is well enough for those who have no arguments, to make use of what Gutty Wilson whipped into them on the dolt form. Leave Latin quotations to the Tory amendment-makers in the Merchants' House. If they do not convince, they at least astonish those who have long ago forgotten their Rudiments and Cordery."

Blueskin.—Od! they say the old Tory stagers glow'rd as eagerly for a translation as the Whigs did for its application. Od! I aye recollect the glorious Greek imitation o' Dicky Sheridan in the House of Commons; and I jalouse if some gash chiel had followed his example in a *Hawthornden* stanza o' his ain in the Town Ha', it would ha'e tauld equally weel on the booted and spurred frae the kintra.

"Booted and spurred!" cried Dr Scantocreesch, sarcastically. "Nobody surely parades in that guise to the Merchants' House. I have heard of members wearing masks there, but I never heard of them sporting *persuaders*."

Blueskin.—Od! to tell ye the truth, it is no that common to see folk booted and spurred, and jauped up to the middle in glaur in the Town Ha'; but there were reasons for't ye ken that day.

Scantocreesch (fishingly).—Reasons for it! what do you mean? I have been out of town for a week, and have heard not a syllable of news of any kind.

Fozie (chuckling).—Od man! have ye no heard of the Tory rally in the Merchants' House, and how the Whigs were nearly set to the right about wi' their address to the king on their back?

Scantocreesch.—It must have been by a manœuvre, if that had occurred. I'll bet ten timothies to one, that if the whole members were polled to-morrow, upon any question touching Reform, that there would appear four to one in favour of "the Bill."

Fozie.—To be sure it was a manœuvre, and a very clever one indeed. My sang! had it only ended as it began, I'm thinking some folks would have looked rather queer.

Blueskin.—Od! they say that the Reformers looked gae an' glum at the outset, and the Tories unco gash.

Fozie.—Nae wonder, eighty-eight strange faces *anti-ing*, were enough to mak folk wary in bragging muckle on Reform.

Scantocreesch.—Eighty-eight! Do you mean to tell me that there were eighty-eight intelligent men belonging to the Merchants' House of Glasgow who vot'd on the *Conservative* side, as it is designated. I could pledge my existence, that among all the Corporations of England,

Scotland, and Ireland, no such proportion could be elsewhere found. This fact is really a psychological curiosity. It speaks but little for the march of intellect about St Vincent-street.

Blueskin.—It's nae curiosity at a' man. The folks wha voted wi' the amendment, though they hae na the face to deny the necessity o' some Reform, would, in fact, rather hae name at a'. Reform, they ken, is gaen to put a stop to a' monopolies baith at hame and abroad, and the want o' thae maybe would be sooner seen on the folk that deal in sugar and *timmer* than is thocht o'.

Scantocreesh.—But where in all the world could so many Conservatives be found? It must have cost no little labour to bring them together.

Blueskin.—Od! they say the counties o' Lanark, Renfrew, and Dumbarton were a' scoured for that purpose; and that there were men in the Town Ha' that day that had not been there for thirty years.

Fozie.—That's no to be dooted, I believe; but did ye hear that there were a wheen auld fules who actually paid ten guineas in the morning to give their votes at noon? It is an unco thing to pay siller and be defeated. Nae wonder that some o' them looked a wee crusty on their way westward. But to put a copestone on this matter, a friend of mine, just as I came here, put into my hand what he calls a "Merchants' House Melody," which, with your permission, I'll either read or sing to you.

Omnes.—Sing! sing! sing!

Fozie (emptying his glass and clearing his voice).—I may tell you, however, before I begin, it is an imitation of Lord Byron's "Destruction of Sennacherib," and is called

"THE DESTRUCTION OF TORYISM.

"The old Tories came down like sly wolves on the fold,
In the pomp of the Indies, the pride of their gold;
While their sternness of look, and the glance of each eye,
Proclaim'd that 'REFORM' was by them doom'd to die.

Like the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
That host with their leaders at *mid-day* were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest, when autumn hath blown,
That host before *two* were all wither'd and floun.

For the Angel of Freedom spread his wings on the blast,
And roused every friend of Reform as he pass'd;
While 'fore the Whig conclave, Tory eyes wax'd chill
Ere their tongues bellow'd 'Question,' then for ever were still!

At the vote, stood the Stagers, with nostrils all wide,
But through them no more roll'd the breath of their pride;
While amid the huzza that loud rang through the room
Were commingled the groans of the Tories' sad doom.

In the *SIDE-ROOM* they stood, all dejected and pale,
With the sweat on each brow and a pan at each tail,
While adown the back-stair all murky they sped,
Bearing on their 'ADDRESS' to the tomb of the dead.

And the *Courier* and *Herald* are loud in their wail
At the utter defeat of the abettors of Baal;
While the might of the Tories hath melted away,
Like snow 'fore the sun, in the glance of *LORD GREY!*"

When the shouts had ceased which followed this song, and the timothies and tankards were replenished, the *Aide-de-Camp* pursed up his mouth, and said—"But, gentlemen, *audi alteram partem*. I can assure you the Tories are not so much discomfited as the lyrist imagines; and if you have any doubt upon the matter, only peruse this (pulling a paper out of his pocket), which I have just now picked up at the foot of the stair that leads to the *Courier* office. It is the scroll of an address to the King upon the present emergency, which that party is at this hour busy in getting signed."

Omnès.—Pray read; it will doubtless be a curiosity.

The *Aide-de-Camp* having moistened his throat, and cleared his eyes, read as follows:—

"We, your Majesty's loyal subjects, the *Conservative* members of the Merchants' House of Glasgow, beg leave to approach your Majesty at this crisis of public affairs, when the Constitution under which we have so long happily lived is threatened by the machinations of individuals, mis-named Reformers, imploring you, as you value the principles which placed your ancestors on the throne, to support the Constitutional view that has lately been taken by a majority of the House of Lords, with respect to the ill-digested Reform Bill lately introduced—to banish from your Councils your rash and revolutionary Ministers—to transfer immediately your countenance to those who boldly and wisely declared that the representation of the people in the Commons' House of Parliament was perfect, in order that the dangerous doctrines, now promulgating by those calling themselves the friends of liberty, may be instantly and for ever put down—that the vested rights of Families and Corporations may be protected from the levelling power of Democracy—that the important interests of commercial individuals, mis-named Monopolies, may be upheld—that the welfare of our West Indian and North American Colonies may be supported against the ignorant clamour of Free Trade abettors—that places, pensions, and honours may continue to be conferred upon and confined to those who, under the deathless Pilot, steered the ship of the State through the tempest of the French Revolution—and, in fine, that the venerable fabric of our glorious Constitution in Church and in State—a Constitution matured by the wisdom of our ancestors, and the envy and admiration of surrounding nations, may be preserved whole and entire, and transmitted to our children's children as their invaluable and inalienable birth-right."

The next and last extract is taken from the concluding number of the *Sma' Weft's* imaginary sittings, and was written immediately after the passing of the Municipal Reform Act for Scotland. The fate of the *Old Lady of Self-Election*, as the *Scots Times* had happily designated the Corporation of Glasgow, had been sealed, and the day was fast approaching when a new era of things was about to commence. Let us listen to what the *Sma' Weft Club* said upon this important matter:—

Fozie.—The *Old Lady*, you know, is under sentence of death, and is to be executed on the fifth of November. There were a good many underhand tricks tried, and some Corporation cash expended, to obtain a year's reprieve for her, but it would not do. Jeffrey was determined that the witch should be burned as soon as possible, and so to the stake she must go. That's fixed.

Aide-de-Camp (sarcasically).—Not without the benefit of clergy, I hope.

Blueskin.—Ou, I jalouse that the Doctor, wha is mair interested in the auld Beldame's fate than you, Tory though you be, will tak care to get her remembered in prayer.

Sour Plum.—I can't say as to that, Sir Peter; but one thing is certain—he has at least prepared the programme of the procession and the toasts which are to be drunk at the dredgie. See, here they are in black and white (holding up a scroll).

Omnes.—The programme!—capital! Let us hear it.

Sour Plum (after swallowing a glass of toddy and clearing his throat) read as follows:—

“Programme of the procession which is to take place at the burning of the Old Lady of Self-Election, on the 5th November, 1833, at the Cross of Glasgow. The public bodies, and individuals connected with the procession, will meet at the Court-house at eleven o'clock. The present Magistrates, Council, Clerks, and official attendants to be dressed in deep mourning, with broad weepers; the other public bodies and the assisting citizens to be attired in blue coats, white vests, and blue trousers. After a Lament, written for the occasion by W. Motherwell, Esq., has been sung by Lithgow's band, to the tune of the *Auld wife ayont the fire*, the procession will move from the front of the Court-house in the following order:—

The Captain of Police, mounted.

Band of Music, playing ‘Dead March in Saul.’

City Officers, with halberts reversed, each grasping an onion in his right hand.

Mute, bearing a banner, on which is inscribed, ‘Our doom is written.’

Trades' Councillors, with broad black silk scarfs, two and two.

Dr Cleland, carrying the plans of the Jail, the Horsepath, the Cow-lane, the St David's Market and Crypt, the George's Church, Court-houses, &c., &c., supported on the right and left by two ex-Trades' Bailies, with long crape hat-bands.

Mute, bearing banner, on which is inscribed, ‘We have been weigh'd and found wanting.’

Merchant Councillors, with black crape scarfs, two and two.

The City Treasurer, bearing a large empty bag.

Mute, bearing banner, on which is inscribed, ‘Ichabod.’

Bailies, with green scarfs, emblematical of grief, two and two.

Officer, with truncheon covered with crape.

The Lord Provost in a velvet court-dress, with a silk and crape scarf crossed, on which is inscribed, in gold letters, ‘Hodie mihi, eras tibi!’

The City Clerks, carrying copies of the original Annexation Bill, the Statute Labour Bill, the Dumbarton Job Bill, &c., &c., followed by their deputies, bearing gumphions.

Mute, bearing a lighted torch.

A member of the Royal Commission, bearing the Burgh Reform Act.

The Executioner.

The Old Lady of Self-Election, borne on a hurdle, and surrounded by the Officers of Justice.

The Editor of the *Courier* (W. Motherwell), dressed as a Renfrewshire Yeomanry sergeant, with a crape scarf, and without his sword, riding on a *Reporter*, followed by the Stewards of the proposed Conservative dinner blind-folded, and led by an individual personating the ‘Wisdom of our Ancestors.’

Band of Music, playing ‘The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre.’

Mute, with banner, on which is inscribed, ‘We are free!’

The Electors of Glasgow, six and six.

On arriving at the place of execution, the procession will open up to allow the hurdle to advance. The Executioner will then take the Old Lady and place her upon the pile, while the Mute carrying the torch will set fire to it. Amid the blazing of the fire, the Provost and Bailies will toss their cocked hats, the Doctor his plans, and the Clerks their bills—the Bands playing ‘Gude nicht an' joy be wi' ye a,’ while the Electors will give three distinct and loud huzzas.”

Omnes.—Excellent! excellent!

Aide-de-Camp.—Ay—*Munus* Sour-Ploomine dignum.

Blueskin (to *Aide*).—Can ye no speak your ain mither tongue, man? Siccan havers do vera weel for those who want to astonish Bailies and Deacons, but they are quite out o' place here. You have surely been made unco weel acquainted with the *taws* in your youth?

Aide-de-Camp.—Don't be out of humour, Sir Peter; I was merely saying that the programme was worthy of its author, and you may find him out if you please.

Scantocreesh.—Come, come, gentlemen;—the thing is very well done. But are we not to have the *dredgie*?

Fozie.—Ay, where is the dredgie? Don't forget the dredgie of all things.

Blueskin (sarcastically).—Do you think there will be any Conservative venison at it?

Scantocreesh.—Leave that to be looked after by the Editor of the *Courier*, who has lately become the Meg Dods of public dinners. But, in the first place, let's hear the toasts.

Sour Ploom.—That I am scarcely prepared to do. They have not all been concocted yet; but I have heard a few that are decided upon.

Omnes.—Let us hear them by all means.

Sour Ploom.—The first after "The King," &c., is, of course, "The Immortal Memory of the Old Lady."

Blueskin.—Has Cunningham given a tune for it?

Sour Ploom.—No; but the Editor of the *Minstrelsy* has written a Lament, which is to be sung on that occasion. Here it is:—

Och hon a rie! och hon a rie!
 Gone are our days of place and pride,
 And wither'd is our stately tree!
 Our cock'd hats and our golden chains,
 May cover'd be with cobwebs o'er;
 For not one ray of hope remains
 That we shall ever wear them more!
 The mystic mother powerless lies,
 Around whose shrine in dark divan,
 We felt our torpid spirits rise,
 As round we sent the boozing can.
 The fools without might dream that we
 For their advantage labour plied,
 While high upborn by sparkling glee,
 We every earthly care defied.
 More dark the hapless blind man's case,
 Who hears the world go rattling on,—
 We envy Masonry her place,
 Who mourn our greater mummery gone!
 Och hon a rie! och hon a rie!
 Our mother's paid the kane to h—l,
 A lot we a' ere lang may dree!"

Fozie (after a loud guffaw).—Well, and what is next?

Sour Ploom.—"The ex-Member of Parliament,* who would support, oppose, or stand neuter, as a 'dear Lord' should determine. Air—*Auld Langsyne.*"

* The late Archibald Campbell, Esq. of Blythswood, who was long Member for the Glasgow district of Burghs, and who perhaps possessed more influence than any one who has since represented Glasgow.

Fozie (sarcastically).—Entitled to everlasting recollection, for supporting the Old Lady against the whole community in the Annexation Bill.

Sour Ploom.—The next toasts are—"The Trade of Clyde, and the immortal Projectors of the Quay on the south side of the River. Tune—*Dumbarton Drums*."

"The Heroes of the Hutcheson Horsepath. Tune—*Down, derry down*."*

"The grand Gravedigger of the Jail,† Air—*We're wearing awa*."

"The never-to-be-forgotten Hero of Corporation Abuses."

"The Baron of Mearns."‡

Blueskin.—The Baron o' Mearns! Wha's he?

Sour Ploom.—Wha's he! Why, who should it be but the redoubtable Editor of the *Courier*.

Blueskin.—Indeed! And what tune do they gie to him?

Sour Ploom.—No tune; but there's a song written for him—and here it is:—

"THE BARON O' MEARNS.

"The Baron o' Mearns has no factory here,
The Baron he deals not in wine or sma' beer;
Neither tradesman nor merchant the Baron has been,
Yet he finds that the money comes rattling in.
Come list to my riddle, ye Gallowgate bairns!
Come tell me the craft o' the Baron o' Mearns.

* No subject occupied the evening seditious of the ideal Sma' Weft Club and the *Scots Times* more than the absurd proposal, which was at first adopted, of making Hutcheson Bridge six feet narrower than it now is, and which gained for it the epithet of the *Hutcheson Horsepath*. The following are a few verses of a song which appeared on the subject:—

"The Glasgow authorities all met in divan
To think of a bridge and to fix on a plan;
But instead of a bridge their ideas all ran
Upon making a horse-path—

A neat little horse-path,
Fal lal lal la,
A neat little horse-path.

Said the *Prin* to the *Pro*, the *Dean* to the *Do*, (a)

"Twill take no great sum to make such a small path;

Though our funds are but low, the feus as you know,
Will soon pay a horse-path'—

A neat little horse path, &c.

'If the bridge is built so,' said the *Dean* to the *Do*,

'We may very well laugh at the Refrewshire
Jaird's wrath;

(a) We suspect the author of this song attempts here to intimate Birmingham Hattoff, of abbreviating memory, whom Ryley the itinerant says never made use of more than the first syllable of a word. For instance,

We shall manage the toll without their control,
And soon pay a horse-path'—

A neat little horse-path, &c.

* * * * *

The Divan all at one, then fixed on a plan,
And contracted with Stedman to build a neat stone path;

Then retiring content, to the public they went,
To puff up the horse-path—

The neat little horse path, &c.

When the feuars found out, from the *Scots Times*' loud shout,

That the *Dock* had officiously fixed on a horse-path,
They vow'd they'd refuse to pay higher feus,
If they built a mere horse path—

A poor patry horse-path, &c."

* * * * *

† The late Dr Cleland, who, from the mal-engineering of the Hutcheson's Bridge, was obliged to raise the street next the Jail so high as absolutely to bury the lower portion of the building, which drew forth serious complaints from the representatives of Mr Starke, the architect of the Public Offices, as injuring his beautiful façade, and consequently his memory.

‡ The late William Motherwell, Esq.

were he speaking of a provost, he would call him a *Pro*; or of a doctor, he'd call him a *Do*. The above line is a happy specimen of Hattoff's abbreviations.

The stont Laird o' Bl——d came swaggering in pride,
 And his pawkie e'e took in the lads on each side;
 The sly for his bribes, and the fools for his dinners,
 The Laird could weel cuttle baith classes o' sinners;
 Yet each Council-man wha true merit discerns,
 Mair couthily follow'd the Baron o' Mearns.

The Baron o' Mearns was ne'er belted a knight,
 Though his song be so sweet and his wit be so bright;
 The Baron o' Mearns, though no chieftain I ween,
 Has ere now with a *tail o' stout porters* been seen: *
 And the richest West Indian will courteously greet
 The Baron o' Mearns, when they meet on the street.

The Baron is wilful—the Baron is wild,
 For his heart and his head are both those of a child,
 And though often provoked by his *gooseish* goose-quill,
 We cannot help liking the bold Baron still.
 Then let each fill his can, without wrangling or strife,
 And drink to his Baronship's health and long life!"

Fozie.—Huzza! Well, that might do for the grand Conservative holiday of humbug, at which the Duke of Gordon is to act the part of grand carver.

Blueskin.—Od! they say that a' the guests who intend to be there are to have their heads shaved.

Scantocreesh.—Is that to show to a wondering world the immense development of their bumps of absurdity?

Sour Ploom.—Heaven knows;—but listen to the next toast:—

“Baillie ——, the glorious Representative of all past Police Functionaries.”

Fozie.—Od! I have written a song that will do for that toast, and I will take care to send it, so as the Baillie may learn it before the day of the dredgie.

Omnes.—Sing it! sing it, man!

Fozie (clearing his voice).—Here goes:

“My heart's in my cock'd hat! my heart is not here!
 My heart's in my cock'd hat, e'en close to my *dear!*
 In the church, at the club, in the street, at my home,—
 My heart's in my cock'd hat wherever I roam!
 Farewell to my cock'd hat! farewell to my chain!
 Those symbols of wisdom I'll ne'er wear again;
 But whither I wander, or whither I rove,
 My heart's in that hat I so fondly did love!

Farewell to the Chaumer—the Circuit-Court glare—
 To the Michaelmas dinner—the feed at the Fair!
 Farewell to the men with halberts so bright,
 Whom I follow'd with pride and with look of delight!

* This alludes to the circumstance of Black Bull Ball-room on the occasion of a Motherwell heading a band of hired porters to prevent the Whigs from entering the Conservative gathering against Reform.

My heart's in my cock'd hat! my heart is not here!
My heart's in my cock'd hat, e'en when drinking my beer!
E'en when quaffing my ale, and eating my dinner,
My heart's in my cock'd hat,—as I am a sinner! ”

The guffaws and encores which followed Fozie's song, made the roof ring and the timothies dance upon the table. The little punchy vocalist was himself so tickled, that for the life of him he could not proceed; and before his throat could be once more cleared, or silence again restored, our friend Asmodeus had flourished his wand, and curtained from our view the redoubted Sma' Weft.
