

From the year 1750 to 1780, the streets were exceedingly ill lighted, and ill paved. The shop windows, too, were extremely small, and emitted very little light, from the small cruise that burned on the counter. The street lamps were very clumsy things, of a square shape, and the cruise within ill calculated to throw light on the street. In fact, a person a few yards distant appeared just the same as if seen through a mist; and if any rubbish was thrown out, or stones laid down for building, people ran the risk of getting their bones broken, as there was no protection provided against such accidents. The lamp-lighters were just as clumsy as the lamps; and were to be seen in the evenings moving about at a very slow pace, bearing on their shoulders a huge ladder, like a trap up to a hay loft, with a lanthorn and candle slung to their sides by a belt. By the time they got their ladders fixed, the candle taken from the lanthorn and again replaced, any one may judge what a time was consumed in lighting a single lamp. Besides the dreary appearance of the streets during the fore part of the night, by eleven o'clock they were frequently in total darkness.

At that time the streets were infested with gangs of thieves, who prowled about, entering shops, lifting shop windows, and picking up every thing they could lay their hands upon. Amongst these there was one gang headed by Gibby Gray, a resolute fellow, who boldly committed street robberies, and soon became a terror to the inhabitants. Parties of his gang would station themselves in closes, and pounce upon any person who happened to be passing by. They had a lump of lead with a hole in it, by which one end of a cord was fastened, and the other end made fast to the wrist; this proved a dangerous weapon when flung with force at a person's forehead. By this means their victims were knocked down before they could see who assailed them. For years the streets were infested with this gang, and some others, and much mischief was done; Gibbie was at length apprehended, tried, and convicted, and after a very long confinement in irons in the laigh iron house, sent out of the country. Another leader of a gang, who had long committed many depredations, by breaking into houses and laying hands on whatever he could find, besides attacking people on the street, was at

length apprehended. This fellow was known by the appellation of Pirnie Peter. After being convicted, he lay a long time in the laigh iron house before he was transported; whence he has returned within these five years. He died of the cholera at the time it was raging in Perth.

At a former period, numbers of boys were employed by pye-bakers, who went through the streets with boxes containing halfpenny pies, each of them larger than a penny one at present. In this way one lad would sometimes sell a half-dozen of dozens in an evening, by calling at public houses; but this system was the means of making many of them arrant thieves, by traversing the streets, and going into people's houses, and carrying off whatever came in their way.

Shortly after the year 1782, the old system of lamp-lighting was given up, crystal globes were substituted for the clumsy lamps, and nearly double the number lighted. The bridge, too, at this time was lighted up. A Mr Bell, an Englishman, contracted for supplying the lamps with oil, and lighting them; the unweildy ladder and lanthorn were thrown aside, and he was to be seen with the light ladder and torch, flying about in double quick time. This system continued until the globes were superseded by the elegant gas lamps which at the present day shine with so much splendour. At the period above stated, although the lights were a little improved, there still was no police, and frequently it was found necessary to mount a strong guard of inhabitants in the Council-room every night, who sent out parties each half-hour to patrol the streets. At these guards many laughable circumstances occurred: numbers occasionally got supremely drunk, and made themselves very ridiculous.

Besides the inconveniences arising from want of light at night, the streets during the day were in a most deplorable plight with filth.—At all hours the contents of dunghills, &c., were wheeled out on the streets, and there left, perhaps until next day, waiting the convenience of the farmers to drive them away. Every housewife emptied her soil-buckets whenever she took a fancy, so that the streets exhibited a most unseemly appearance. From morning to night the celebrated metropolitan custom of "*Gaw-de-loo*" was universally practised: hence it was no uncommon thing for a person to be overwhelmed with a deluge of this abomination. The streets got a kind of a sweep by a few worn-out old men, who were quite incapable of performing their duty with effect. A load of street or ash-pit dung was sold for sixpence, and cow or horse manure, at eightpence; so little was dung in request, that the town manure in the South-inch, which was then the depot for it, lay sometimes for years unsold. This system continued until the year 1819, when the streets were let to a number of contractors. From the year 1803, when

the dearth produced such an alteration in agricultural operations, the rise in the price of dung was immense. Some years the tacksmen sold a dunghill as high as six guineas, and occasionally even much higher. Some of the farmers who had good horses, would have driven away one of these dunghills at sixteen loads. Much of this dung was driven ten miles, and a couple of tolls paid, which made the price very high. Even private ash-pits were sold in loads to the farmers at five shillings per load, and byre manure at six; but the introduction of bone dust, and the bringing down of byre refuse from London, in the ships that went up with potatoes, has reduced the dung-hill produce from 30s to 40s each. Since the establishment of the police, all dung-hills must be removed, and all filth and ashes laid out under certain regulations—which has put an end to the abominable custom of laying out filth on the Sabbath mornings, which formerly rendered the streets a disgusting sight throughout the Sabbath day.

DIVERSIONS.

Foot-ball was frequently played on the Inch, the matches at which generally were the married against the single men, for a small bet or prize. The foot-ball at Scone was so famous for the reckless character of the sport, that it became a common proverb, "A's fair at the ha' o' Scone." At this game many legs and arms were broken; and, it is asserted, that during the sport, the opportunity was often taken to avenge old quarrels.

The Shinty or Club, used to be played in all weathers on the Inch; and frequently on the streets, by large assemblies of stout apprentices and boys. This game was also played on the ice by large parties, particularly by skaters, when there was usually a keen contest.

Archery appears to have been a very ancient game; but was nearly worn out by the middle of the last century. Many still alive will remember the bow butt on the lower end of the South Inch, which stood a little north from the circle of trees in the south alley. The shot was between this stone and the scholars' knoll, situated a little in front of Marshall Place.

The Golf is likewise a very ancient game, and has long been practised here, by the merchants and men of business. After the close of last century, this game fell off considerably; but, within these few years, it has been revived, and is now become highly fashionable. A society was recently constituted by royal charter, under the denomination of "The Royal Perth Golfing Society," with president, vice-president, and other office-bearers, annually elected. On the day of election, the society dine together; and as it is now joined by many of the most influential of

the county gentlemen, there is generally a good turn-out. Two prizes are played for in the spring and autumn—the one a silver club, the other a gold medal.

Curling used to be much played during the winter. For this game they had frequently excellent ice on the Tay, but almost constantly, whilst the frost lasted, at the back of the Muirton, before the mound was thrown across the bog; as well as at Balhousie orchard; and on the pools in the South Inch; but these places are either filled up, or the fishers lay hold of the ice the moment it is formed: this has driven the game to the country. Some good matches are still played at Scone, Methven, and other places.

Quoits were a game much esteemed by the merchants here at one time. In the evening, parties were to be seen, in various quarters, playing at the quoits, for a small sum, which was uniformly expended in hilarity. This game is now rarely to be seen.

The Ball and Nine Holes was another game frequently played. Nine holes were formed; the one in the centre counted nine when the ball was put into it; each of the others counted as they were numbered, from one to eight; the party won who first gained the number fixed on.

The Hand-ball was much played, for which there were some very fine situations. One of them between Dr Hossack's house and the Lady's Pend. At that time the ground was so low at that place, that there was a descent into the Inch by a flight of at least twelve steps. Here parties were engaged from morning till night at this game; and there was often a struggle to get possession of the ground. But the best place was the south side of the square of Gowrie-house. In that wing the windows faced the south, whilst on the north side, they were all built up. There was then a spacious square, with a wall about 40 feet high. The artillery, who had but little duty to perform, frequently took a game at the ball, and always allowed any respectable party to join them. In fact, the company of artillery were so seldom changed, that they became quite domesticated, and were much respected by the inhabitants. Another station for the game was the porch of the West Church door, then open. This was chiefly occupied by the youths and young tradesmen; here the game was played by doubling the ball on both sides.

The Ball Paces was formerly much played; but is now almost extinct. In this game a square was formed; and each angle was a station where one of the party having the innings was posted. A hole was dug in the ground, sufficient to hold the ball, which was placed on a bit of wood, rising about six inches above the ball. The person at the hole struck the point of this with a bat, when the ball rose; and in its descent was

struck with the bat to as great a distance as possible. Before the ball was caught and thrown into the batsman's station, each man at the four angles ran from one point to another; and every point counted one in the game.

Leap Frog was sometimes played, and frequently afforded much sport, particularly to the juvenile portion of the population.

Cricket was never much practised in Scotland, though much esteemed by the English. It was lately introduced here; several cricket clubs established; and is now becoming popular.

For in-door amusements, various games were resorted to. A billiard-table was some time ago set up here, but only resorted to by a few of the first class of society. Balls and assemblies during the winter months were frequent. The first class of society had monthly assemblies, to which the ladies turned out in the richest dresses. The teachers of dancing had balls every month, and a practising every fortnight, to which the parents usually went; and before the ball was over the old folks joined in reels and country dances. Card parties and evening card assemblies were very frequent.

Music was formerly at a great discount in Perth. A great many of our old Scotch songs were sung, chiefly picked up by the ear from the maids at the wheel; but there was scarcely such a thing as teaching singing, until about the year 1780, when some teachers came round for a few months, and introduced this branch. Mr Smith, who was appointed precentor for the East Church, opened a school for singing. He also published a large volume of the best of our Scotch songs, set to music, which was very much admired. Pianos began to be introduced, instead of the spinnets, which were played by a very few ladies; and teachers for the piano became numerous. Backgammon was much played by private parties; and in the Coffee-room, which was then in a wooden house where Mr Myles' shop now is. So much was this game the rage with the merchants in their back shops, and even on the counter, that many of them hurt their business by it;—customers declining to enter those shops which were continually full of loungers engaged in this game.

Tod and Lamb Board was another game here, which was played on a board formed by four intersected squares of lines, three rows of holes in each square, in all 32 holes—for which there were 15 small pins placed on one side, and in the centre a large one, the tod; the small ones were the lambs. Between the holes diagonal lines were drawn which the lambs were allowed to traverse; the tod at same time moving in a similar direction: the object was to hem in the tod.

Cards were played by parties of tradesmen at home, and in public houses over a bottle of ale; as the game was uniformly catch the ten, and played merely for pastime, the thing was allowed by respectable houses, and thought quite innocent. By times the drinking of gills superseded the good old custom of a bottle of ale, and persons of very loose morals took the opportunity of introducing various games at cards; and the dice, for gain, which frequently ended in quarrels. The keepers of respectable taverns began to see that allowing such games to be played in their houses, laid them open to the admission of the very worst of company, and wisely prohibited this species of gambling. At the present time few respectable innkeepers will allow any thing of the kind.

Another in-door amusement during the winter evenings was the telling of stories, which were chiefly of the horrible kind. About fifty years ago, "Satan's Invisible World Discovered," a book consisting entirely of relations of ghosts of murdered persons, witches, warlocks, and fairies, was in universal circulation. This book was read in the presence of children, and followed up by tales of the same description, until the youngsters were afraid to turn round for fear of being grasped by the Old One! So strong was the impression, that even grown up people would not have ventured through fear into another room, or down a stair, after nightfall.

THE GHAIST OF MAUSE was a favourite story of this class, combining, as it did, the requisites of horrible, superstitious, and romantic. The tradition went, that a traveller had been robbed and cruelly murdered, and the body concealed in a wood at Rochallie. The misfortune of being robbed and murdered might have been submitted to in pious resignation, but to be excluded from Christian burial was what no ghost of proper feeling could endure. The ghost accordingly, after waiting till its patience was exhausted, informed a devout elder of the kirk of what had occurred; entreating that the bones might be removed to consecrated ground.—The fear of ridicule deterred the elder from immediately complying with the injunction, but the nightly appearance of his supernatural visitant soon operated so powerfully that he was constrained to lay the case before the session for advice; when it was agreed to comply with the solemn request; but in performing the ceremony, having omitted to remove the skull, the whole process had to be gone over again before the unhappy ghost could find rest in its grave. This story, which for years horrified the younger section of the community in that quarter, had its rise in a very simple affair, of which the following is an account, extracted from *Perthshire Advertiser* of 3d February 1831.—

“ When a boy, I herded cows in the wood of Rochallie, and often have I trembled to pass the spot where it is said the celebrated ghost directed the bones to be lifted. One night in particular, being obliged to pass by the place on my way home, I got a sad fright. The darkness was scarcely penetrated, by here and there a wreath of snow that had not yet yielded to the thaw in the first of March. The wind was up; and the wood of Rochallie moaning to the passing gale, conspired to heighten the terror of the time. This is a dreary place, said I to myself, and oh! this is a dismal night; should the ghost appear to me, I am sure I would die on the spot. Just as I uttered these words, a rustling among some withered branches behind me, made my head crouch down between my shoulders, and my hair stand on end; and as I ventured a glance towards the place, oh! horrible! a thing like a dog was just ready to leap upon my back. I screamed aloud, Mercy! mercy! and fled with the utmost precipitation; but the object of my terror still kept close at my heels, until I reached my father's house,—where the innocent prattle of my sister's, “ Eh, Geordy, whar did ye get Colly, for he's been awa a' day,” scarcely prevented me from fainting, while it half convinced me that what I had been so much afraid of was nothing more than my father's old dog, which had gone into the wood that day after a hare. “ Where's my father?” enquired I, rather hastily. “ Ben the house wi' a stranger man,” was the reply. Accordingly, I went ben, when my father seeing me so much agitated, asked what was the matter, and very Scotsman-like answered his own question, by saying, “ Ho, ho, you've been fear'd coming through the wood.” “ What made you afraid, my man,” said the stranger. “ Naething,” said I, sheepishly. “ O, he's been fear'd for the ghaist,” said my father. “ What ghaist?” said the stranger, “ O, by the bye, the Ghaist of Manse; I recollect now; weel that was a well played game; is that story still believed real?” “ Real!” said my father, “ aye as real as I believe you to be Charlie M'Intosh; and, although I'm no fear'd for it mysel', I do believe it to be true.” “ It was just as much a ghaist as I'm ane,” said Charlie, giving proof that he was no spirit, by swallowing a glass of ‘mountain dew,’ that graced the table, in company with a wooden trencher, well replenished with bannocks and cheese. “ I'll tell you the true story, (continued he, setting down his glass,)—The old Laird of Rochallie was a merry fellow, as you well know, and one of the servant girls had a bairn to him, of which he was very fond, and was also anxious to have it christened; and although it was a bastard, he was so intimate with the minister, (Mr L.)—for many a glass they had together—that he thought there would be little danger of sorting things, as he called it; but to his confusion and disappointment, a Wm. Soutar, who was a staunch member of

the Church, withstood his claim, and vowed he would make the case known to the Presbytery if it was done. This so operated upon the Minister and the Session, that the laird was told that unless he made satisfaction, the child could not be baptised; and as the Minister carried the voice of the Session to him, he at the same time told him that it was Soutar that had knocked the thing on the head. This intelligence so enraged the laird (who a short time before had come between Soutar and ruin, by taking him by the hand when his creditors were just going to rousp him to the door) that from that time forward he determined to vex him. The laird had a man who was fou o' tricks, to whom he told the story, and proposed to give Soutar a fright. So next time Soutar was in Blairgowrie attending the Session, the laird's man waylaid him at a lone place above the Bridge of Lornty, and having fitted two or three sheeps' skins to his body, and got upon all fours, appeared somewhat like a dog; and by barking and howling, he succeeded in frightening poor Soutar almost out of his wits. Next day it was spread through the whole country side, that Wm. Soutar the elder had seen a ghaist, in the shape of a big dog, which had barked at him, and spoken to him, and threatened to appear to him again. Prayer-meetings were set up in Soutar's house, and every means tried that could be thought upon, to lay the spirit; but the man continued to visit him in the same way; till at length getting wearied of so many nightly excursions, he said to his master that it would be necessary to bring the business to an end,—and as he recollected a spot where a dead calf had been buried many years before, after having out off its head, in order to terrify an old woman with it, he proposed to make Soutar believe its bones to be that of a murdered man, and to cause him to lift and bury them in the kirk-yard. The laird approved of this plan, and the fellow again appeared to Soutar, and told him that he was the ghost of a man that had murdered another man, and that he must come along with him, and he would show him where he had buried the body, and that if he would lift the bones and bury them in consecrated ground, he would trouble him no more. Soutar at first refused, but after the ghost had made several appearances, and threatenings of vengeance, he at last suffered himself to be led at the dead hour of midnight to the calf's grave,—where the ghaist, after again renewing his charge anent the lifting of the bones, vanished with a hideous howl into a hazel bush, while poor Soutar groped his way back from his horrible situation, the best way he could.

“Next day the minister, the elders, and nearly the whole country side, turned out to the lifting of the bones, and both the laird and his man were present, and heard what passed. All the bones except the shanks were

decayed, having been buried upwards of thirty years. The minister said, "he had been a strong man;" and added, "but the strongest may be overcome." "I wonder," said one of the elders, "how the skull is not to be seen, for I have known the skull to be quite whole when no other bone was to the fore; surely his head has been made away with." "No," said William Soutar, "for the ghaist told me that he was brought down by help of a dog, and then murdered with a stick." The murmurings for want of a skull, raised in the minds of the laird and his man a fear lest the whole should be discovered; and to prevent this, they procured from the nearest kirk-yard a skull, which they flung down near the place whence the bones of the calf had been lifted, and the ghaist again appeared to Soutar that night, and told him that he had left a bone which he must go back and find, or else he would get no peace. Accordingly, the next day the skull was found; and after it and the shank bones had been waked, (which was done with all due solemnity,) they were conveyed to the church-yard of Blairgowrie, where almost the whole parish assembled to witness and perform the funeral obsequies of a calf."

"When Charlie had finished, my father exclaimed, "Weel than, if that be true, there's mony ane been frightened for naething," "There's nae fear of it being true," said Charlie, "for Sandy Rory, the laird's own man, told it to my uncle, who told it to me before I went to Germany with the 42d; and where could ye hear it better than from the ghost himself?"

"Such is the account which honest Charlie Macintosh gave of the matter. On talking over the story with him some time since, he told me that his uncle had likewise spoke to him of a drover, who, failing in the world, gathered in what gear he could, and set off, nobody knew where, and was never heard tell of after, and that this was the person who was generally supposed to have been murdered. Be this as it may, I can vouch for Charlie's veracity, that he would not have eked a single sentence to what he had heard; and the whole country-side, through which he occasionally directed his wanderings, can testify that he was a modest old pensioner, and one who was a *stickler for truth*."

THE BRIDGEND GHOST likewise created an awful panic among the single-minded folks of Perth, by making an incessant racket in an old tenement in Bridgend. By night and by day the mysterious presence was thus manifested to crowds of gaping petrified listeners, who did not fail to magnify its terrors, till its fame rivalled even that of Mause.—The Bridgend Ghost was singular in this respect, that it never deigned to make itself visible, or condescended to reveal the cause of its displea-

sure. The panic, however, was no way diminished on that account; and some of the more learned and zealous ministers of the place tried, though unsuccessfully, their skill in exorcising it; but the ceremony was more creditable to their piety and faith, than their knowledge of acoustics, for the ghost was neither laid, nor the cause of the noise explained. A similar case occurred lately at Manchester—and it is probable that the explanation of the one may throw some light on the nature of the other. The good folks of Manchester being thrown into a state of perturbation by a variety of inexplicable sounds, which proceeded from a vacant house, a number of unbelievers instituted a minute investigation, when it was discovered that the flooring of a large room in an adjoining public house was continued through the wall, and thus transmitted, with increased intensity, into the haunted room, every sound which was made on the floor of the public house.

The absurd practice of mothers and nurses threatening children with the appearance of bogles, was almost universal. This had such an effect on the young mind, that it required a strong effort of reason in after life to throw off these impressions. We have known several instances where individuals have been rendered idiots for life by this absurd practice.

SHOWS AND SPECTACLES.

In the early part of the last century, it was common for bullies to come round and challenge any individual to fight in the town, offering to forfeit such a sum as he named, to the individual who would take him up and beat him. The last instance of this description was before the year 1740. One of these individuals, after advertising himself, erected his stage on a Friday in the High-street, when an immense crowd assembled. The usual mode of procedure was to beat a drum, and challenge any person to come and break the head of it, which was considered accepting the challenge. This ceremony having been performed, the bully had not waited long when a stout fellow ascended the scaffold, and kicked in the head of the drum. The battle commenced with great fury, and continued for a considerable time. The odds soon appeared against the bully, who at last received a blow which put an end to the battle and the fellow's life. This was the last instance of this barbarous spectacle heard of in Scotland. The hero's name was John Burt.—His son, John Burt, was for more than half a century a teacher in Perth, and died only a few years ago.

Stage doctors frequently paid us a visit, and were much followed after. They always exhibited on the Fridays, on a stage erected in the

High-street. Operations commenced by twelve o'clock ; and they would have kept the multitude together until six or seven o'clock in the evening. The one of greatest note in the country was a Doctor Green, whose grandfather and father had been long known in the country in the same line, and were all highly respected for their skill in surgery. This gentleman kept his carriage and a couple of servants. He had a few prizes, the head one a large silver cup. Each individual threw up a shilling, for which, besides the chance of the prize, he got a packet of medicine, and a small bottle of British oil, famous for burns. The Doctor was accompanied by a merryman with an infinite fund of humour : besides a tumbler, and sometimes a rope-dancer. On one occasion the rope-dancer announced that next day he would walk on a rope across the street from a chimney head to a garret window, when a very great multitude assembled to witness this daring feat. He walked from the window to the chimney top in perfect safety, but on returning to the window lost his balance and fell. Fortunately an Irish soldier happened to be near the spot, who seeing him in his descent, had the presence of mind to rush forward, and give him a violent push aside, which broke the force of the fall, and thus saved his life. Green was the last of these stage doctors who appeared here, in the least respectable. He died at Newcastle during the time his company were last performing in Perth, which then broke up.

The people used to be very fond of shows and processions ; of these we had a number, and they were sure to attract much attention. In the month of July the Gardeners made a splendid turn out, and walked through the streets, when everything the gardens could furnish was displayed. The Weavers followed in August. There were three societies, each having a beautiful flag, with a loom, and other insignia of the trade. Besides, they had a very ancient flag of beautiful needlework, done by the unfortunate Queen Mary, and presented to the Corporation of Weavers in Perth. Crispin's day, the 25th October, was at a rare time honoured by a splendid and numerous procession of King Crispin and his court. The first turn out they had in our remembrance, was graced by the presence of the whole of the company of artillery, which greatly enlivened the scene. In the month of October, the Brewers, then a numerous body, had servants to the amount of seventy or eighty, who had a procession at Michaelmas in the evening with torches ; and a supper and ball in the Guild Hall. In the month of December, the different Mason Lodges had processions. The Royal Arch in the evening, with a brilliant display of flambeaux.

A great number of shows came round, exhibiting ground and lofty tumbling, and legerdemain, with many optical illusions, which received

much attention; these exhibitions were generally in a room engaged for the purpose. Caravans were not known at that time.

There is a certain clergyman in Perth among the Dissenters who has outlived many of his prejudices. In early life he denounced plays and shows as the works of the Devil, and threatened those of his flock who frequented such sights with an appearance before the session. Happening to be on a visit in a house in the High-street, at the time Mr Punch was performing his gambols with his wife Judy, within sight of the window, but not so near as to allow the clergyman to get a proper view of the *show*, the servant was sent out to the showman to request him to come below the windows of her master's house, that the clergyman and his wife might enjoy the sight. This was accordingly complied with; and Mr Punch appeared in all his glory, in presence of the clergyman, who enjoyed the fun exceedingly. The session, however, got word of what had occurred; in consequence of which the reverend gentleman was severely censured.

Another species of amusement, or rather superstition, was resorting to fortune-tellers. It is almost inconceivable the extent to which this credulity prevailed. Numbers of young women resorted to persons of this description to get their fortunes read; and if any article was stolen, these gentry were applied to for information. Of this tribe Black Jean, who resided in the Meal-vennel, was for many years the most conspicuous; and astonishing confidence was placed in her. Incredible as it may appear, the writer has known young women travel the distance of thirty miles, to get this old hag's opinion about the choice of a husband.

DISEASES.

The Plague—A couple of centuries ago, this pestilence raged in Perth, sweeping whole families away with the most fearful rapidity. It was observed that individuals who had recovered from the disease, were exempt from farther attack; and on these was devolved the duty of attending the sick, and burying the dead. The latter melancholy duty was performed by a cart going round at certain hours with a bell, and wherever there was a dead body it was brought out by the cleansers, till the cart was full, when it was driven to the Grey Friars, where the dead were buried in a mass. During the prevalence of the plague, business was totally arrested, and the town had the appearance of being completely deserted. When a family died out, the cleansers claimed whatever had belonged to it; and in this way they became possessed of much property, which many of their descendants hold to this day.

Ague.—Prior to the year 1780, when the farmers began to drain and improve the land, agues were frequent and severe. This malady prevailed every season, and when an individual was once affected, every recurrence was of greater severity. Although seldom fatal in itself, those attacked rarely recovered their former health. It was also the means of inducing other diseases of a more virulent character, such as bloody fluxes, having much of the malignant character of cholera, and nearly as infectious. The improved condition of the land, by draining and cultivation—and habits of cleanliness, and more comfortable style of living among the people—have now almost extirpated these dreadful disorders.

Consumption.—During last century, this insidious enemy of our race made dreadful havoc among the young of both sexes, more especially between the ages of 18 and 30. In every street—in almost every dwelling, this vampire seized upon its prey; the sinking victims, while sufficient life remained to drag along their enfeebled limbs, still flattering themselves they were daily getting better. At that period, numerous friendly societies were formed in Perth, which were all ruined by the overwhelming number of sick members. It had been feared in the commencement of these institutions, that they would sink under the weight of their aged members; but it never entered into the calculations, that they were to be swallowed up by the young; and the evil was only discovered when it was too late to apply a remedy. Owing, probably, to the increased comforts of life, one case of consumption does not at present exist for twenty which occurred 50 years ago.

Small-pox.—This remorseless scourge was extremely fatal, and remarkably infectious; and the virulence of the disease was greatly aggravated by the unskilful manner of treating it. Overpowering dozes of spirits were administered to set the eruption “out from the heart;” and while in a consequent state of fever and distress, the utmost care was taken to exclude every breath of cool and uncorrupted air. When mortification ensued, the reprehensible custom of allowing the sick room to be filled with visitors, and the practice of *waking* the corpse, was an infallible method of spreading the disease. Between 1770 and 1780, inoculation was introduced, but met with violent opposition, especially among the lower orders, and a set of fanatics, who denounced it as an impious temptation of the Almighty to bring on distress, which they sagaciously observed, “came soon enough of will.” Many of the clergy endeavoured to impress their hearers with the advantages of inoculation; the fatalists, however, maintained that the duration of the life of each individual was already decreed; and, therefore, neither inoculation, nor any other means, could prevent the fulfilment of that which had been ordained to come to pass. To this

it was replied, that even admitting this to be the case, still inoculation was a benefit, as it evidently alleviated the severity of this fearful malady, in which the head of the agonised patient was occasionally swelled to twice the natural size,—the skin became black as soot, and the whole body one disgusting putrifying mass. The admonitions of the clergy were seconded by example in the inoculation of their families ; but, although a milder form of the disease was thus induced, the artificial method made but little progress till the discovery of the *Cow-pox*, by the celebrated Dr Jenner ; after which, inoculation was rapidly adopted, and proved almost universally successful. A few cases of small-pox having occurred after inoculation for the cow-pox, has led to the opinion, that in order to render the latter an effectual protection against the former disease, frequent recurrence ought to be had to the cow, for a renewal of the virus ; and a more rigid attention given to the state of those children from whom others are inoculated.

Measles frequently followed the small-pox, carrying off many whom the latter disease had spared ; even when not fatal, they often undermined the constitution, and laid the foundation of much future distress.

Chincough was also much more prevalent than at present, and many children sank under this disease, after a lingering illness.

Worms in the Stomach, were very prevalent amongst children, often inducing nervous disorders, and occasionally proving fatal. As the disorder is not now half so prevalent as formerly, the change may possibly be greatly owing to the alteration in the system of diet, now adopted.—Much may also be attributed to the custom, then universal among the children, of eating quantities of brambles, and other wild fruit which abounded in the neighbouring woods and waste lands ; the young having then more time to ramble in quest of these things, not being set to any employment until 14 or 15 years of age.

Broken-out Heads.—This disgusting disease also chiefly selected its victims among the young, and occurred to a fearful extent. In any school of a hundred scholars, ten or twelve children might be found affected with the eruption, which was both painful to the sufferer, and loathsome to the person who had to dress the parts. This obdurate malady has now also given way before the increasing knowledge and cleanliness of the day.

The Scotch Fiddle.—It is said to have been a sage London maxim, when a Scotsman entered a house there, to put a stick and a knife into his hands, to afford him occupation. Whether this had any connection with the opinion of the Highlandman that all luxuries were merely comparative, and, in this point of view, that nothing was equal to a seasonable

scratch,—certain it is, about fifty years ago, the fiddle was in such general repute, that few allowed themselves to be absolutely idle,—the fiddlers devoting all their spare moments to this agreeable pastime. It is only those who have come through the trying ordeal and searching purifications necessary to overcome this insidious disease, that can fully appreciate the advancement which society has since made, and emphatically thank God their hands are clean.

Cruels, or *King's Evil* was at one time awfully prevalent. We are told in Sacred Writ, that the sins of the parents are visited on the children. As this hereditary and incurable disease is fast disappearing, or become greatly modified in its character, it may be held as evidence of a more virtuous and higher moral condition of the people.

Iliac Passion and *violent Cholics* were also very frequent; and carried many suddenly off. The quantity of greens and watery diet consumed by the common people, and the too free indulgence in new made ale, was by many ascribed as an exciting cause of this complaint.

Palsy and *Apoplexy*.—While we may congratulate ourselves on deliverance from many of the evils which afflicted our forefathers, there are others which have increased upon us. Palsy and apoplexy now occur much more frequently than formerly.

Fevers.—This scourge also holds its sway; but now generally assumes a milder form, and is not characterized by the sweeping contagion which formerly marked its progress. Much of the evil still arises from the imprudent practice of acquaintances crowding into the chambers of the sick, and the pernicious custom of sitting in the same apartment with the corpse prior to interment.

Insanity.—This most distressing and hopeless of all the evils of Pandora's box, formerly prevailed to a great extent. Objects of mental weakness or derangement, were continually to be seen: some of them silly, harmless, wandering creatures, covered with rags, filth, and vermin: others, who on the least provocation, were rendered dangerous, or furiously mad. Happily the arrangements now made for keeping these wretched beings in safety and comfort, have at least removed this sad spectacle from the public streets.

Cholera.—In the year 1832, when this awful scourge was making dreadful havoc in the country, the leading inhabitants of Perth bestirred themselves to ward off the disease, or to modify its virulence. A thorough inspection of every cranny in the town took place, followed by rigid purification, wherever ledgments of soil were discovered or suspected. Pigstyes were demolished, and the inmates doomed to slaughter, or banished to the country. Dunghills were detected in cellars, and in

dwellings, where for years the fever had constantly prevailed; but which, after a thorough cleansing, became immediately as healthy as other houses. A soup kitchen was also established, where the poorer portion of the inhabitants received daily a good substantial meal; and every exertion was made to promote personal cleanliness. The salutary effects of these endeavours were demonstrated by the fact, that during the prevalence of the cholera in Perth, the gross mortality was less than during ordinary seasons! Of those who were attacked, its first victims were selected from among those whose constitutions might be supposed to be shattered by dissipation, or enfeebled by meagre living; but as the disease advanced, it became more indiscriminate in its attacks. On the whole, however, Perth escaped wonderfully, compared with other places; which certainly must have been greatly owing to the excellent preventive measures adopted. A cholera hospital was fitted up, but, unfortunately, the rapid course of the disease afforded little ground of hope of relief from this measure; and in point of fact, it is questionable if a single recovery from the true disease occurred in it. Of course, it soon became unpopular; patients expressed an unwillingness to be removed from their own houses—and the institution became inoperative.

Obesity.—It may be a matter of doubt with some whether the sturdy subjects of this complexion ought to be placed upon the sick list; or whether the tun-bellied knights ought not rather to be considered as high specimens of health, indicating an originally sound and vigorous constitution. Owing to some difference in the animal health, or to superior mental energy—the collision of intellect, and activity of mind of the inhabitants of the present day, keeping the body in abeyance—there is now hardly a remnant of this once numerous class of worthies. Dr Wolcott says, “fat ties ideas by the legs and wings;” and certainly to observe a couple of these substantial burghers moving off to take their *eleven hours*, with double chin resting on their breast, a paunch hanging down to their thighs, and faces radiant with expectation, it was evident they were untroubled by care, except it might be for the untoward encounter of a cart in a narrow street—an evil they had no way of avoiding, except by turning back, or wedging themselves into an entry till the cart moved past. Every thing is liable to change, and there is now scarcely a *presence* remaining; there is not half a dozen men in Perth but can see their feet and tie their shoes! In extreme cases it might be questioned whether the belly belonged to the man, or the man to the belly; if size determined the point, the belly was the man! This state of lusty life was not peculiar to the gentlemen, many of the fair sex even

outrivalled their husbands. Two sisters who resided in the Kirkgate, each weighing 24 stone, having occasion to visit Glasgow, no coach could be got to convey them, and they were constrained to go by the carrier, who charged them so much the hundred weight.

At the period alluded to, 1780, the town enjoyed the services of two doctors and one surgeon. Doctor Wood, or old Rob Wood, as he was usually styled, had his shop in the Watergate, and Dr Robertson had his in the north end of the School-vennel. Matthew Davidson, surgeon, had his shop at the Parliament-close, and Dr Johnston, the apothecary, had a very fine one first door east below the Guild-hall. There was a laboratory, chiefly for the sale of herbs, kept in the premises now occupied by Messrs R. & J. Greig, by a person of the name of Steedman, who was not regularly bred to the profession. These gentlemen had the assistance of Dr Nisbet, who was for upwards of forty years stationed here with the artillery. This gentleman's services were always ready to the poor gratis; he also often gave away medicine. At this Mrs Nisbet would grumble; and to prevent her complaints, he would slip a piece of money into their hands, that they might make a pretence of paying for what they got. When any poor convalescent whom he had attended came to ask his charge, he would tell them in a serious tone that the bill would be very heavy, and that they must go home and work hard, for it would be long before they would be able to make it up: and thus the bill was paid. This generous friend to the poor died about the year 1803, in a good old age, universally regretted. At his funeral there was an immense assemblage; and the Gentlemen Volunteers, then embodied, attended to pay all the respect to his memory in their power, and buried him with military honours. Dr Wood was esteemed a man of much skill, but of a rough and forward disposition. Dr Robertson was quite the reverse, being of a quiet reserved character. Dr Davidson was a good natured man, something akin to Dr Nisbet: he attended chiefly to the disorders of children. Medical charges were extremely moderate at this period. At the conclusion of the American war, the medical fraternity was considerably extended; since which period the increase of their numbers has kept pace with the augmentation of their fees.

Some time ago, Dr Brown, an aged native of the city, bequeathed £500 towards building a Fever Ward. This has been followed up by a general subscription for building an Infirmary. The sum of £6,000, required before proceeding with the building, is at present filled up, so that the work will likely be soon commenced.