THE LITERARY CLUBS AND SOCIETIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SCOTLAND,
and their influence on the literary productions of
the period from 1700 to 1800.

Written by D. D. McElroy
1951 - 1952
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>PAGE NUMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. importance of the subject.</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. need for a systematic treatment.</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. sources of material.</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER ONE - DEFINITIONS

| a. comparison of eighteenth-century clubs and societies with those of the present day. | 1 |
| b. two questions regarding their differences. | 2 |
| c. the ascendency of the "scientific" spirit. | 3 |
| d. the resulting "Division of Labour" in intellectual affairs. | 4 |
| e. eighteenth-century preoccupation with the problem of form. | 5 |
| f. characteristics of eighteenth-century literary societies. | 7 |
| g. definitions of the three terms "association", "club", and "society". | 8 |
| h. characteristics of each of the three types of organisations defined above. | 9 |

## CHAPTER TWO - THE AGE OF IMPROVEMENT

| a. situation of the Lowlands at the beginning of the century. | 12 |
| b. national resolution to "improve". | 14 |
| c. early "improvement" societies:- | 15 |
|   i. The Society for the Reformation of Manners. | |
|   ii. The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. | |
| d. The Honourable the Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland - the first of the"improving" agricultural and manufacturing societies. | 19 |
| e. other societies for the improvement of agriculture etc.:- | 21 |
|   i. at Oraiston. | |
|   ii. in Ayrshire. | |
|   iii. Edinburgh Select Society. | |
|   iv. at Coupar. | |
|   v. at Dunfermline. | |
|   vi. at Buchan. | |
|   vii. Dumfries and Galloway Society. | |
|   viii. Dumfries and Kircudbright Society. | |
|   ix. Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. | |
f. aims of the "gentlemen improvers". 22
  g. "improvement" a pervading idea in all fields of
      Scottish endeavour. 23
  h. the resolution to accept English examples. 24
  i. the appropriateness of the term "The Age of
      Improvement". 24
  j. the three periods in the Age of Improvement:
     1. the period of preparation.
     2. the period of achievement.
     3. the period of recognition.
  k. the types of literary societies active in each
     of these periods. 28

CHAPTER THREE - THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION: 1700 - 1745.
  a. the influence of The Tatler and The Spectator
     in Scotland. 31
  b. the Easy Club and Allan Ramsay. 33
  c. letter from the Secretary of the Easy Club to
     The Spectator. 34
  d. Journal of the Easy Club. 36
  e. the Easy Club not "Jacobite" nor were Ruddiman
     and Pitcairn members as is commonly believed. 38
  f. the members and the activities of the Easy Club. 40
  g. address from the Easy Club to the King requesting
     dissolution of the Act of Union. 44
  h. letter from the Secretary of the Easy Club to an
     absent member. 47
  i. Allan Ramsay as Poet Laureat of the Club. 48
  j. other attempts to write English poetry. 49
  k. the Athenian Society of Edinburgh. 50
  l. the Fair Intellectual Club of Edinburgh. 51
  m. an account of the Fair Intellectual Club in a
     letter to a member of the Athenian Society containing
     a description of the Society, the rules, etc. 52
  n. speeches delivered by members of the Fair
     Intellectual Club. 56
  o. a collection of poems prepared and published by
     the Fair Intellectual Club. 58
  p. two societies which have become thoroughly confused:
     1. Ruddiman's "Society for Improving in
        Classical Studies". 62
     2. the Rankenian Club.
  q. three known facts concerning the two societies. 64
  r. the vexing problem of Lord Kames's membership in
     the Rankenian. 65
  s. a description of the Rankenian Club. 68
  t. list of members of the Rankenian Club. 69
  u. anecdote regarding members of the Rankenian Club
     and Bishop Berkeley. 70
v. Ruddiman's "Society for Improving in Classical Studies".

w. description of the Society.

x. members of the Society.

y. relative importance of the Rankenian Club and Ruddiman's Society.

z. a society of "associated critics."

aa. their endeavours to discredit Ruddiman's edition of Buchanan's History.

ab. a Dutch edition of Buchanan's works anticipates the projects of the "associated critics."

ac. a "Society for the Improvement of Medical Knowledge".

ad. the publications of this Society.

ae. the Society becomes the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.

af. letters from Colin Maclaurin regarding the development of the Philosophical Society.

ag. causes of the reorganization of the Medical Society.

ah. the Political Economy Club of Glasgow.

ai. Scotland as a leader in the institution of "improving" societies.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE PERIOD OF ACHIEVEMENT 1745 - 1770.

a. hiatus caused by the Rebellion of 1745.

b. renewed activities of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh.

c. David Hume joint editor of the first volume of the Society's Essays and Observations.

d. contributions to the Philosophical Society's Essays and Observations.

e. contributors to the Essays and Observations who resided outside Scotland.

f. Hume's preface to the Essays and Observations.

g. Lord Kames as a leader in the Philosophical Society.

h. other members of the Society.

i. organization of the Society.

j. William Cullen introduces a new function into the Society's proceedings.

k. friendly atmosphere which prevailed in the Society and an incident which illustrates it.

l. similar societies in Glasgow and Aberdeen at this period.

m. Cochran's Political Economy Club in Glasgow still active.

n. Adam Smith and other members of Cochran's Club.

o. subjects of discussion in the Political Economy Club.

p. the Literary Society of Glasgow.

q. early meetings of the Society.
PAGE NUMBERS.

r. laws of the Society. 121
s. discourses read before the Society in 1764 - 1765. 124
t. questions discussed in the Society in 1765. 125.
u. evaluation of the influence of the Literary Society of Glasgow. 126
v. the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen. 128
w. description of the Society. 129
x. members of the Society. 131
y. moderation of the Society in the matter of liquid refreshments. 133
z. David Hume and the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen - an anecdote. 134
aa. friendly attitude of the Scottish literati illustrated. 136
ab. relative importance of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen as intellectual centers. 137
ac. the Select Society of Edinburgh founded by Allan Ramsay, junior. 138
ad. founding members and their first meetings. 139
ae. rapid growth of the Society. 140
af. laws of the Select Society. 141
ag. resolutions of the Select Society to raise a fund and erect a society for "Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture." 144
ah. origin of the idea for such a society traced to Dublin and then back to Scotland and the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland. 150
ai. "Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, etc." 152
aj. relationship between the Select Society and the Edinburgh Society. 153
ak. questions debated in the Edinburgh Society. 154
al. premiums offered by the Edinburgh Society. 155
am. literary prizes offered by the Select Society. 158
an. both societies attack the problem of servant's "vails". 161
ao. outcome of the problem of the "vails". 165
ap. the problem of writing and speaking the Southern English dialect in Scotland. 166
aq. two anecdotes which illustrate the problem stated above. 167
ar. Thomas Sheridan gives lectures in Edinburgh on the English tongue. 169
as. Select Society organizes the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland. 172
at. regulations of the new Society. 172
au. crisis in the affairs of the Select Society and its subsidiary societies. 176
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE NUMBERS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>causes of the failure of the Select Society and its subsidiary societies examined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early symptoms of a decline in the Select Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close of the Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influence of the Select Society evaluated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. first Edinburgh Review published soon after its institution and by its members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. support offered John Home's Douglas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic influence of the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, etc., evaluated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluation of the influence of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>societies which were organized after the example of the Select Society - the Belles Lettres Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special features in the organization of the Belles Lettres Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>success of the Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Lothian's address to Lord Greville on his admission to the Society as an ordinary member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Theological Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluation of the work done by the Belles Lettres and the Theological Societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Newtonian Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784 a fatal year for Scottish literary societies - next flurry of activity not until 1770.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER FIVE - THE PERIOD OF RECOGNITION 1770 - 1800.**

| a. European recognition of Scottish intellectual achievement. | 213 |
| b. Edinburgh a "hot-bed of genius". | 215 |
| c. the rise and the significance of the incorporated societies. | 220 |
| d. more "progeny" of the Select Society - the Speculative Society of Dundee. | 223 |
| e. admission of women to the meetings of this Society. | 226 |
| f. the Robinhood Society of Edinburgh. | 226 |
| g. becomes the Pantheon Society. | 228 |
| h. nature of the Pantheon Society. | 230 |
| i. controversy over the value of public disputes. | 231 |
| j. description of the Pantheon Society. | 234 |
| k. public interest in Pantheon debates. | 235 |
| l. decline of the Pantheon Society. | 237 |
| m. Pantheon debates in verse. | 239 |
| n. the Canongate Debating Society. | 242 |
| o. the Mirror Club - developed from the "Feast of Tabernacles". | 244 |
| p. description and members of the "Feast of Tabernacles". | 245 |
| q. members of the Mirror Club. | 246 |
Mirror Club resolves to publish a periodical paper - The Mirror and The Lounger. 248
Henry Mackenzie as editor of both papers. 250
previous attempts at periodical papers in Scotland. 251
success of The Mirror. 253
The Mirror's "Enquiry into the Causes of the Scarcity of Humorous Writers in Scotland." 256
relative merits of The Mirror and The Lounger. 261
Mackenzie's review of Burns's poems in Lounger No. 97. 264
Burn's Bachelor's Club of Tarbolton. 265
"History of the Rise, Proceedings, and Regulations of the Bachelor's Club." 266
Robert and Gilbert Burns and the Mauchline Club. 269
letter from Gilbert Burns defending the literary activities of the Club. 270
effect on Burns of his club activities. 273
interest in reading clubs and circulating libraries stimulated by the political events of the latter half of the century. 273
first efforts to establish a public library in Aberdeen. 274
other circulating libraries and reading clubs. 278
a letter from Robert Burns to Sir John Sinclair regarding a book club which Burns had organized under the title of the Monkland Friendly Society. 280
John Galt, the Public Library of Greenock, and the French Revolution. 282
the appearance of a new type of intellectual organization - the specialized society. 285
the Juridical Society of Edinburgh. 285
founding members and a description of the Society. 286
the Juridical Society compiles a "system of Styles." 289
the Society's fluctuating fortunes. 290
union of the Juridical and the Logical Society. 292
an account of the Logical Society. 292
reasons for the union. 294
the rules of the joint society a reflection of the need for a more general appeal. 295
the Philalethic Society - more evidence of the need for a society with general interests. 297
rules of the Philalethic Society. 298
members of the Philalethic Society until 1800. 301
an increase of scientific societies organized along specialized lines. 301
their failure to achieve a lasting success and their eventual absorption into the Royal Physical Society. 302
the Royal Physical Society. 302
the smaller societies which eventually became amalgamated with the Royal Physical Society. 304
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ay.</td>
<td>the Chirurgo-Physical Society.</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>az.</td>
<td>the American Physical Society.</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba.</td>
<td>the Hibernian Medical Society.</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb.</td>
<td>an early Chemical Society.</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bc.</td>
<td>the Chemical Society which joined with the Royal Physical Society in 1812.</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bd.</td>
<td>the Natural History Society.</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be.</td>
<td>a volume of the Society's Transactions.</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bg.</td>
<td>members of the Society.</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bh.</td>
<td>a new variety of professional-convivial society - the Harveian, the Celsian, and the Aesculapian.</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bl.</td>
<td>the Harveian and the Aesculapian Societies.</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bj.</td>
<td>prize essays sponsored by the Harveian and the Aesculapian Societies.</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bk.</td>
<td>the incorporated societies proper - the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bl.</td>
<td>the antiquarian interests of the Scots.</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bm.</td>
<td>an antiquarian joke, the fabulous wig of the Wig Club.</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn.</td>
<td>the joke explained.</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bo.</td>
<td>events leading up to the organization of the Society of Antiquaries.</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bp.</td>
<td>Lord Buchan's &quot;Discourse&quot; in which the projected Society is outlined.</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bq.</td>
<td>early meetings of the Society.</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>br.</td>
<td>Society of Antiquaries undertakes the type of national survey afterwards conducted so successfully by Sir John Sinclair.</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bs.</td>
<td>the personality and intellect of Lord Buchan.</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bt.</td>
<td>the Society of Antiquaries petition for a Royal Charter, and are opposed by the Professors of the University, the Philosophical Society, and the Curators of the Advocates' Library.</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu.</td>
<td>the Royal Society is projected in opposition to the petition of the Society of Antiquaries.</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bv.</td>
<td>petty jealousies existing between the literati and Lord Buchan's group of amateurs.</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bw.</td>
<td>renewed activities of the Philosophical Society.</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bx.</td>
<td>the Newtonian Club, description, members, and laws.</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by.</td>
<td>Royal Society of Edinburgh a descendant of the Philosophical Society.</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bz.</td>
<td>the European pattern of the Royal Society.</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca.</td>
<td>like the Philosophical Society the Royal Society has two classes - i.e. Physical and Literary.</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch.</td>
<td>activities of the Literary Class.</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc.</td>
<td>biographies prepared for outstanding members.</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cd.</td>
<td>a &quot;lost&quot; ode recovered, (Collins's &quot;Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands&quot;).</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ce. Mackenzie's paper on "the German Theatre." 343
cf. the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. 344
cg. importance of the union of the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland. 345
ch. earlier societies devoted to the interests of the Highlands and the Highlanders. 346
ci. the Highland Society's resolve "to pay proper attention to the preservation of the language, poetry, and music of the Highlands." 347
cj. the Highland Society and the Ossian controversy. 348
ck. other societies in Scotland devoted to antiquities and/or "improvement". 351
ci. the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth. 352
cm. latter development of these societies a proper subject for a similar survey of the nineteenth century. 353

CHAPTER SIX - STUDENT CLUBS AND SOCIETIES. 354
a. Scottish Universities as centers of eighteenth-century "Enlightenment." 354
b. special factors in Scottish national background which made debating clubs popular with students. 355
c. convivial clubs also thought well of by Scottish students - the Collegium Butterense of Aberdeen. 359
d. the Nine Tumbler Club at St. Andrews. 360
e. more serious matters - "the first Theological Club in Marischal College." 361
f. the Aberdeen Medical Society. 361

g. but Edinburgh supplies most examples of student's organizations. 362
h. historical background of Edinburgh student societies. 362
i. "a society...among students of natural philosophy." 363
j. the Medical, later the Royal Medical Society. 365
k. why classified as a student's society. 364
l. its origin. 365
m. acquisition of a library and meeting hall. 367
n. attempts to gain a Town-Charter fail, but the Society later obtains a Royal Charter. 369
o. other activities of the Royal Medical Society. 371
p. members of literary interest:-- 375
   i. Oliver Goldsmith. 375
   ii. Mark Akenside. 375
   iii. others. 375
q. the Brunonian controversy. 374
r. duels between members of opposing factions lead to serious criticism of the Society. 376
s. a debating society in which William Robertson and many of the Edinburgh literati were active while students at the University. 377
t. the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. 378
ix

PAGE NUMBERS

u. its student origin. 379
v. acquires a meeting hall within the College. 381
w. highlights of the Society's activities up to 1800. 382
x. the high calibre of its members and their praise of
the Society. 384
y. the Theological Society. 387
z. the Dialectic Society. 387
aa. rules of the Society. 388
ab. the Juvenile Literary Society. 390
ac. the Literary Society. 392
ad. the Academy of Physics. 393
ae. rules and extracts from minutes of meetings. 394
af. Glasgow as a scene of student's clubs and
societies. 397
ag. first signs of trouble which continues inter-
mittently throughout the century. 398
ah. the Triumphherian or Trinampherian Club. 402
ai. the Sophacardian Club and the Anticapadqian Club. 403
aj. clubs attended by Alexander Carlyle. 404
ak. more trouble - the General Society and the
Parliament of Oceana. 406
al. a peaceful period - the Eclectic, the Dialectic,
and the Academic Societies. 407
am. another protest - Francis Jeffrey and the Elocution
Society. 408
an. the Historical and Critical Society. 409
ao. the Discursive Society. 410
ap. the Juridical Society of Glasgow. 411
aq. a tribute to Scottish student organizations. 412

CHAPTER SEVEN - ACADEMIES OF ART. 411
a. an explanation as to why these organizations are
included. 411
b. common errors respecting eighteenth-century
Academies of Art. 412
c. the Academy of St. Luke. 413
d. an "Academy of Drawing" granted the use of rooms
in the College of Edinburgh in 1731. 415
e. defense of Robert Foulis's "whimsical" plan. 416
f. practicality of the plan for the Academy. 420
g. details of the plan. 423
h. account of the Foulis Academy. 425
i. notable visitors to the Academy. 427
j. Robert Foulis's account of his endeavours to
promote the fine arts in Scotland. 428
k. a disastrous auction winds up the affairs of the
Academy. 431
l. an appreciation of the efforts of Robert Foulis. 433
m. other academies of art in Glasgow. 435
n. the Edinburgh Trustee's Academy. 436
p. did not become an academy of fine arts until late in the century. 436
q. the appointment of John Graham and his extension of the activities of the Academy. 437
r. an appreciation of Graham's work. 438
s. a Society for National Improvement in the Fine Arts. 439
t. the objections of Edinburgh merchants and manufacturers against the transformation of their school of crafts into an academy of fine arts. 440
u. their objections ignored. 440

CHAPTER EIGHT - FICTITIOUS CLUBS AND SOCIETIES.

a. significance of fictional clubs and societies. 441
b. connection between fictitious clubs and the periodicals of the period. 442
c. three types of fictional societies:
   i. those which appeared in periodical papers or were used as the pretext for an essay.
   ii. those which appeared in works of fiction.
   iii. those which were "invented" to establish matters of fact.
d. the Critical Club, and the Letters of the Critical Club. 444
e. "a small club of lovers" - the Cupid's Supper Club. 446
f. a Glasgow Cupid's Club, (a parody of the above). 447
g. societies used as a pretext for pointing a moral in the Addisonian manner - the Inexorable Order of Pinchers. 450
h. "a society of gentlemen", being theatrical critics writing in the Scots Magazine. 452
i. the Witling Club. 454
j. the Sentimental Society in Aberdeen. 455
k. the Female Chearful Society. 457
l. the Potations Club. 459
m. the Society of Essences and Perfumes. 459
n. a fictitious "Improving Club." 461
o. fictitious political organizations appearing at the time of the French Revolution. 462
p. another type of fictitious political club used to disguise reports of Parliamentary debates. 465
q. the "Political Club" in the Scots Magazine. 466
r. the Robinhood Society. 468
s. fictitious societies as publishers of periodicals and other works. 469
t. the "society of gentlemen" who produced the first Encyclopedia Britannica. 470
u. the "society of gentlemen" who produced the Medical and Philosophical Commentaries. 471
v. the staff of the Edinburgh Magazine and Review not a "Society" properly so-called. 472
w. an anecdote in which David Hume suffers at the hands of the "society of gentlemen" responsible for the Edinburgh Magazine and Review. 473
x. other examples of periodicals whose staff went under the title of "a society of gentlemen." 475
y. an anecdote involving the poet Campbell and Dr. John Leyden. 477
z. clubs in fiction - Sir Walter Scott. 478
aa. the Pauperwhillery Club in Waverly. 478
ab. Pleydell's "High-Jinks" in Guy Mannering. 480
ac. the question of the identity of Pleydell briefly examined. 483
ad. clubs in The Antiquary. 484
ae. more clubs in Scott's novels. 485
af. John Galt and his fictional clubs. 487
ag. Robert Louis Stevenson a worthy successor of Scott and Galt in the matter of fictitious clubs. 488
ah. a fictitious society which appears in a Johnsonian anecdote. 489
ai. the "inventions" of Robert Chambers. 490
aj. defense of Chambers as a writer of pleasant fiction. 493

CHAPTER NINE - NON-LITERARY CLUBS AND SOCIETIES OF LITERARY INTEREST. 494 - 557
a. eighteenth-century conviviality. 494
b. importance of convivial organizations. 496
c. club literature - the Royal Society of Archers. 497
d. the Caledonian Hunt - patrons of Robert Burns. 499
e. the Worthy Club. 501
f. the Whinbush Club. 505
g. an examination of the credibility of "Hell-Fire" clubs. 503
h. the Revolution Club. 507
i. the Griskin Club and Home's Douglas. 509
j. an anecdote of considerable literary interest. 510
k. Boswell and Scottish literary organizations. 512
l. Boswell's Soaping Club. 513
m. the Poker Club. 516
n. vulgar errors regarding this interesting organization. 518
o. the true nature of the Poker Club. 521
p. extracts from the MS. Minutes of the Poker Club. 527
q. the Antigalican Society. 527
r. its connection with the Poker Club. 528
s. dual nature of the Poker Club. 529
t. the Younger Poker Club. 530
u. the Cape Club. 531
v. literary activities of the Cape Club. 552
w. origin of the Club's name. 534
### PAGE NUMBERS

| x. Cape Club ritual                          | 555 |
| y. Cape Club confused with the Poker Club.  | 537 |
| z. Robert Fergusson as a member of the Cape Club. | 538 |
| a. provincial Cape Clubs.                   | 539 |
| ab. the Crochallan Fencibles.               | 540 |
| ac. Burns joins the Club.                   | 542 |
| ad. the Oyster Club.                        | 545 |
| ae. Sir Walter Scott's clubs – The Mountain.| 547 |
| af. The Club.                               | 548 |
| ag. John Strang and the Glasgow Clubs.     | 549 |
| ah. the Hodge Podge Club.                   | 550 |
| ai. Simson's Anderston Club.                | 552 |
| aj. the Glasgow Cape Club.                  | 552 |
| ak. My Lord Ross's Club.                    | 554 |
| al. the Accidental Club.                    | 554 |
| am. the Grog Club.                          | 555 |
| an. a Hell-Fire Club in earnest.            | 556 |

### CHAPTER TEN – CONCLUSION

| a. rapidity of change in the eighteenth century. | 558 |
| b. the significance of the Highland frontier and of the Lowland's efforts to civilize the Highlands. | 558 |
| c. the achievements of the century.             | 559 |
| d. the "commercial" literary interests of the Scottish literati. | 560 |
| e. distinctive qualities of the Scottish literati. | 561 |
| f. the reasons for these qualities.             | 562 |
| g. a comparison of the literary circles of London and Edinburgh. | 563 |
| h. the importance of literary clubs and societies in the intellectual development of Scotland. | 564 |
| i. their effects upon the works of literature produced by their members. | 565 |
| j. the growth of the scientific ideal.          | 566 |
| k. the literary-debating society the most significant type of eighteenth-century literary society. | 567 |
| l. the attitude of the men of the eighteenth century toward these societies illustrated. | 568 |
| m. membership in a literary society an act of faith. | 569 |
| n. the moral of this thesis drawn with a heavy hand for the reader. | 570 |

### APPENDIXES

| A'   | "Membership of the Literary Society of Glasgow." | 571 |
| B'   | "Philosophical Society of Aberdeen."            | 572 |
| C'   | "List of Members of the Select Society, 1754-63." | 573 |
APPENDIXES. PAGE NUMBERS.

"List of Members of the Select Society, 1759." 589
"List of Members of the St. Giles Society, 1765." 592

'D' - "Questions to be Debated in the Select Society." 594

'E' - "Discourses and Questions Debated in the Belles Lettres Society." 602

'F' - "A List of Members and Visitors to the Belles Lettres Society." 618

'G' - "Contents of a Volume Described in the National Library of Scotland Catalogue of Manuscripts as 'Notes and Speeches on Questions Debated in the Belles Lettres Society.'" 628

'H' - "On Disputing Societies in general, the Pantheon and Medical Society of Edinburgh, with a proposal for remedying certain inconveniencies to which all disputing societies must be subject." 635

'I' - "Pantheon Debates." 659

'J' - "Minutes of the Meetings of the Academy of Physics." 646

'K' - "List of Members of the Poker Club, 1768," 651
"List of Members of the Poker Club, 1776." 652

'L' - "Speech delivered by the Presses of a Literary Society in the North Country, upon adjourning their Meeting for some time." 655

'M' - "A Discourse delivered at the first opening of the Perth Miscellaneous Club." 658

'N' - "Of Society in general, and Polemical Society in particular." 661

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 670 - 697.

i. Printed Books. 670
ii. Supplementary List of Printed Books. 686
iii. Pamphlets and Manuscripts. 689
iv. Articles and Periodicals. 695
INTRODUCTION.

The importance of clubs and societies in the social, economic, political, and literary history of the eighteenth century has been pointed out by nearly every observer and every student of the period. It is rarely, in fact, that one finds such unanimity of opinion among authors. Alexander Carlyle, Henry Cockburn, Thomas Somerville, Henry Buckle, John Gibson Lockhart, Sir Henry Craik, Henry Gray Graham, and Harold W. Thompson, to name only a few, have all made particular mention of the role played by the organizations which form the subject of this thesis. The final reference to these varied and interesting

1. "In the eighteenth century the progress of knowledge became so remarkable, that the new principle of intellectual superiority made rapid encroachments on the old principle of aristocratic superiority. As soon as these encroachments had reached a certain point, they gave rise to an institution suited to them; and thus it was that there were first established clubs, in which all the educated classes could assemble, without regard to those other differences which, in the preceding period, kept them separate. The peculiarity of this was, that, for mere purposes of social enjoyment, men were brought into contact, who, according to the aristocratic scheme, had nothing in common, but who were now placed on the same footing in so far as they belonged to the same establishment, conformed to the same rules, and reaped the same advantages. It was, however, expected that the members, though varying in many other respects, were to be all, in some degree, educated; and in this way society first distinctly recognized a classification previously unknown; the division between noble and ignoble being succeeded by another division between educated and uneducated. The rise and growth of clubs is, therefore, to the philosophic observer, a question of immense importance...." (Buckle: History of Civilization, Vol. 2, page 415.) "The Scottish Universities were noted for their debating and literary societies.... These clubs, perhaps the most characteristic and valuable feature in Scottish education, were sometimes conducted with such vigour as to need admonition...."
organizations rightfully belongs to Gregory Smith who, after a plea for "a comprehensive account" of Scotland's (that is to say Edinburgh's) "crowded talent," suggests that "the historian of these literary activities finds an easy approach through the membership of the more representative clubs."

When the weight of this evidence is considered, one can only be amazed or surprised that no systematic survey of Scotland's clubs and societies has been undertaken heretofore. Abundant material is available, for a great deal has been written about Scottish clubs and societies, particularly about those which were in existence during the period to be covered by this thesis. But the fragmentary and scattered nature of this material makes the task of becoming acquainted with it a truly formidable one for anybody except one who, like myself, has set out with the deliberate intent of discovering all that is known about these eighteenth-century organizations.

When I first became interested in these matters, it was only after

(Thompson: Scottish Man of Feeling, page 61.) "From the earliest years of the century, when the universities were acquiring greater influence and further expansion by the substitution of the professorial for the tutorial system, a custom sprang up which had important results in stimulating intellectual activity. This was the formation of clubs, beginning amongst the students, but developing into associations of men of mature years and busy lives." (Craik: Century of Scots History, Vol. 1, page 451.) "If we wish to seek for the beginnings of Scottish literature, we shall find it in the clubs of gentlemen that met in dingy taverns, in dark wynds of Edinburgh. There they had their gatherings over ale and claret, where they would discuss politics, books, and ballads,..." (Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 7.) See also: Cockburn: Memorials of His Time, page 24 and 67; Somerville: Life and Times, page 59; Lockhart: Life of Scott, Vol. 1, page 74; and Carlyle: Autobiography, passim.

Many other testimonies to the same effect will appear in the pages which follow.

considerable searching that I was able to find a satisfactory account of an organization, the Select Society, which had among its members such famous men as David Hume, Adam Smith, William Robertson, Hugh Blair, and James Boswell. This state of affairs suggested at once that there was sufficient need for a survey which would gather together the available information concerning the Scottish clubs and societies which were active during this period. This opinion was soon confirmed when I discovered that there was a great deal of manuscript material which had been only superficially examined, or had been altogether neglected. The issue seemed quite clear. If opinion as to the significance and importance of these organizations was unanimous, and if there was a lack of a survey which looked steadily and wholly at this single subject, then there was a need for such a survey, and I determined to do my best to supply it.

In the fulfillment of this resolve, I have set for myself three objectives: first, to accumulate the available information regarding

---

1. There has been considerable lamentation in the past that the records of Scottish clubs and societies were not available. "It cannot be sufficiently deplored that the minutes of the social clubs of Edinburgh ... have been lost." (Nolan: Franklin in Scotland, page 85. See also Book of the Old Edinburgh Clubs, Vol. 1, page 8, "Report of the First Annual Meeting," Appended to Vol. 1.) As the reader may discover for himself, I have found ample material for my purpose. The libraries of Edinburgh, the National Library of Scotland, the Edinburgh Room of the Public Library, and the University Library, have many items of interest besides those which I have found pertinent to my subject. The impression that there were many organizations for which records no longer exist is largely an illusory one. It is due, in large part, to the fictions of Robert Chambers which he propagated in his charming but unreliable Traditions of Edinburgh. Chamber's book, which has become the bible of Scottish antiquities, creates the impression that the city was teeming with clubs and societies which probably had no real existence outside his fertile imagination. I have examined this matter in Chapter 8, page 460 f.
the clubs and societies of the period from 1700 to 1800; secondly, to investigate the influence of these clubs and societies on the national life and thought during that period; and thirdly, to supply biographical and background material for other investigators, students, and writers concerned with the period. In accomplishing these objectives, I have taken my material from the histories, biographies, diaries, collections of anecdotes, private correspondence, and the numerous periodicals of the period. While there is no question of my having exhausted this material—I have not had time, for example, to examine unpublished correspondence—still I feel that I have accumulated sufficient information to form a solid foundation for the erection of a more comprehensive work on the subject, should such a work ever be undertaken by a future scholar. In compiling the information which my research has availed me, I have been guided throughout by a desire to set before the reader as much original material as possible. This may be criticised as having made my thesis excessively long, but I have felt that future biographers would find the work of greater value because of this detailed information.

Regarding the many sources of material which I have examined, there is one final word I would like to say. It has frequently been lamented that eighteenth-century Scotland has been too much neglected. While I do not pretend to judge this matter, I do feel that the country, its people, and the men who have written about them, deserve

as much attention as one is able to give. It may or may not be unusual, but I have found that my interest in the period has never flagged. A great deal of the vitality and charm of the age is still evident in its literary remains; and this is particularly noticeable in the freedom, the friendliness, and the community of mind and spirit, which were such marked features of the clubs and societies of that century of tremendous achievement.

And, or "literary society", it is not difficult to accommodate that the organisations to which the term was applied in the eighteenth century differed greatly from those of the present day. In the eighteenth century, a literary society was an organisation of learned men who combined for the purpose of exchanging ideas on any subject which was of interest to themselves, to the other members, or described at large. When we speak of literary clubs and societies today, however, we may be referring to a number of types which were actually prominent in the eighteenth century. Indeed, these unknown types, which list the clubs which have been formed to celebrate the anniversary of a favorite author, and perhaps in read and discuss his works, though this latter activity is, by no means regarded as a necessity of such an organization. Such are the Burns Clubs, the Scott Societies, the Stevenson Clubs, and so on. Another new type of literary society has been noted on the scientific learned societies which were so successful during the nineteenth century. These societies, which have organized for the purpose of facilitating and supporting the specialized work in a narrow field, did not exist in the eighteenth century in the manner, or in the form, in which they exist in the present day. In fact, it is only when we refer to ancient
DEFINITIONS.

Although it is not easy to give an adequate definition of the terms "literary club", or "literary society", it is not difficult to demonstrate that the organizations to which the terms were applied in the eighteenth century differed greatly from those of the present day. In the eighteenth century, a literary society was an organization of learned men who combined for the purpose of exchanging ideas on any subject which was of interest to themselves, to the other members, or to mankind at large. When we speak of literary clubs and societies today, however, we may be referring to a number of types which were totally unknown in the eighteenth century. Among these unknown types, we can list the clubs which have been formed to celebrate the anniversary of a favourite author, and perhaps to read and discuss his works, though this latter activity is by no means regarded as a necessary part of such an organization. Such are the Burns Clubs, the Scott Clubs, the Stevenson Clubs, and so on. Another new type of literary society has been modelled on the scientific learned societies which were so successful during the nineteenth century. These societies, which are organized for the purpose of facilitating and supporting highly specialized work in a narrow field, did not exist in the eighteenth century in the numbers, or in the form, in which they exist at the present day. In fact, it is only when we refer to student
societies that we have a true connection with the past, for the student literary societies of two centuries ago were very similar to those which are active today, and it is significant that a number of them have been in existence continuously since that time. Student societies, however, are in a special category, and must be treated separately. The fact that they have not altered appreciably in over two hundred years is reason enough for this, and proof that the interests and needs of Scottish students have remained fairly constant for at least two centuries.

But not only do we find that a number of types of twentieth-century literary societies were unknown in the eighteenth-century, a complete list of Scottish literary organizations existing today reveals how completely the general type of eighteenth-century literary society has been forgotten. This fact raises the vital question as to the essential differences between our literary organizations and those which existed two centuries ago. These differences, which are important, must be clearly understood before we progress any further, because it would be a grave mistake to think of the eighteenth-century organizations in terms which are appropriate only to present-day literary societies.

We can ask ourselves two questions concerning this matter: first, "What are the essential differences between the eighteenth- and twentieth-century literary societies?"; and, secondly, "How did they come about?" The answer to the last question has already been given above,

1. The Speculative Society, the Dialectic Society, and the Royal Medical Society. For a description of these societies, see Chapter 6.
for nearly all the changes which have occurred in the organization and
the methods of work of literary societies are a result of the ascend-
ancy of science, and the ensuing domination of the "scientific"
approach in nearly all intellectual endeavours. This is too well
known to need a great deal of description, and a brief passage from a
nineteenth century study of British learned societies will provide us
with the essential facts. This passage, taken from a work by the Rev.
Abraham Hume, reads as follows:

On referring to the names and objects of the societies, ... we
are naturally impressed with the variety of forms under which
Science appears, while literature exists barely in name. In-
deed, the modern and extended use of the term "science" in part
accounts for this; for we apply it now to almost any subject
which is or may be followed out upon fixed principles: it is
less ambiguous to say, therefore, that science is extensively
cultivated, and literature scarcely at all.... Many societies
are established upon a comprehensive basis, and nominally in-
clude literature as well as philosophy or science; but in too
many cases it is only nominally, as not a single literary pa-
per is read in some of them for years, and in others every
question of a social or miscellaneous character is called
literary! In the Royal Society of Edinburgh there was former-
ly a literary section as well as a scientific one: the com-
 munications, however, became few in number on the former subject,
though some of them were far from unimportant; and at length
the division was abandoned.... A few years ago, the importance
of philology and the researches upon that subject by continen-
tal scholars, led to the formation of the Philological Society,
yet even such an unpretending auxiliary as this, literature
will not be permitted to retain unquestioned, as it is now
called the science of philology.

This passage is interesting not only for the information which it con-
tains, but also as evidence that Hume's attitude toward literary mat-
ters was completely under the spell of the "scientific" method of which
he complains. This attitude is revealed, for example, in the surprise

1. Abraham Hume: Learned Societies, page 47.
with which he observes that in some societies "every question of a social or miscellaneous character is called literary!" In the literary societies of the eighteenth century, such a procedure was accepted without question. It was only after the intellectual "Division of Labour" which occurred during the nineteenth century that an attitude such as Hume's could have developed, before that it had been universally assumed, and correctly so, that though men had widely differing interests, they could still derive considerable intellectual stimulation as well as instruction through their associations with one another, and through a general exchange of information.

It is interesting to observe that although Hume is unaware of the influence which it has had upon his own thought, he fully understands the change which occurred between the eighteenth century and his own day. This understanding is revealed in the following passage:

The extent to which "Division of Labour" has been carried in scientific inquiry, is truly astonishing. In the mental as in the physical world, mankind seems anxious to manufacture for the wholesale trade; and each narrows the range of his inquiries and investigations to a point, that his ideas may be more permanently concentrated upon it. In former times, it was thought sufficient if Literature and Science were persecuted generally; now, division has only suggested further subdivision. There are separate societies for astronomy, chemistry, geography, and geology; there is a separate one for the microscope; and almost every branch of natural history is represented by a peculiar class of inquirers....

The essential difference between the eighteenth and the twentieth

century literary society is a direct result of this change. In the eighteenth century, a literary society was composed of historians, scientists, political economists, agriculturalists, medical men, artists, orators, philosophers, and any other individuals whose interests were intellectual. In the twentieth century, we are so accustomed to seeing a separate organization for the historian, for the scientist, for the political economist, and for each of the others, that we are quite unaware that a different arrangement has ever existed. The most striking thing about the eighteenth-century literary organization is its inclusiveness, and the most remarkable characteristic of the members of such organizations was the patience with which they sat through lengthy discussions of biology, geology, chemistry, economics, poetry, surgery, botany, history, philosophy, physics, and so on. But merely to observe that such a state of affairs has previously existed does not give the reason for it. What was it that these eighteenth-century thinkers found in common?

The explanation may lie in the differences which existed between the intellectual tempers of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The eighteenth, with its bias to classicism, was primarily concerned with effecting as perfect a unity as possible of matter with form. The nineteenth century, with its rough and ready test of utility, its intoxication with the deceptive promises implicit in the chaos of romanticism, and its satisfaction with the rapid movement which gave it the illusion of progress, was prone to neglect considerations of

1. For the supreme example of this inclusiveness, see the description of the Glasgow Literary Society, Chapter 4, page 119 f.
form so long as the mere substance of intellectual inquiry was so rewarding. In other words, it was their consideration of the problem of form which compelled the men of the eighteenth century to organize their composite "literary" societies, and it was a disregard of form, and an intense preoccupation with subject-matter which led the men of the nineteenth to effect the "Division of Labour" which has so fragmented the learned world. It was the consideration of form, for example, which was the common ground upon which learned men of the eighteenth century could meet with mutual benefit, irrespective of their primary interests. When the consideration of form was subordinated to the frantic desire to accumulate the facts and the data which comprise the raw material of knowledge, this common ground no longer existed, and as each worker could no longer see anything to interest him outside his own field, his intellectual world shrank to the dimensions of his chosen subject.

A consideration for form, then, was a marked characteristic of the eighteenth-century literary society. Subject-matter, however, was not neglected, as we shall have many occasions to observe in later chapters. But subject-matter was regarded as merely the material upon which the ingenuity of man could work, and it was the result of this imposition of form which men combined to judge. Lawyers, doctors, scientists, historians, political economists, and men representative of all the intellectual pursuits of man, believed in the necessity of making themselves intelligible, and when they judged one another's

---

1. See, for example, the "Charge to Lord Greville on his Entry into the Belles Lettres Society, Chapter 4, pages 203 - 205.
efforts, they did not pretend to a mastery of the subject which they did not have, but were willing to accept the facts if they were presented with a configuration which showed that skill and care had been taken in assembling them.

A typical eighteenth-century literary society, therefore, provided a forum for the free discussion of a limitless variety of subjects, and in these discussions, matters of fact were not as important as matters of form. Such societies provided a discriminating and intelligent audience upon which a nervous author could try the effect of his latest essay. In such a company, extravagance or eccentricity received short shrift, and only the responsible and competent literary craftsman could rely upon a patient and attentive hearing. The results of the strict discipline under which nearly all literary composition was carried out seems to have justified the pains that were taken, for the eighteenth century undoubtedly produced a higher percentage of readable books than any other period in English literature.

The period during which the eighteenth-century type of literary society was most active was the hundred years from 1745 to 1845. But these dates mark merely the period during which the type flourished, and they do not cover, for example, the period during which the type was developed. Further, from 1800 onwards, the eighteenth-century type of literary society was so firmly established, that succeeding organizations from that date onward are distinguishable only by the varying degrees in which they drew away from the old and inclined to the new types with which we are familiar today. The dates which I have chosen to mark the beginning and the end of the period I
intend to cover, therefore, have been chosen to cover the rise and
development of the eighteenth-century literary society, and to avoid
needless repetition after this development has reached its height.
I have chosen, therefore, to deal with the eighteenth-century type of
literary society as it developed and as it finally appeared between
the years 1700 and 1800.

So far I have said nothing concerning literary clubs and associ¬
atations, as distinct from literary societies, and before I do, it is
necessary to examine the three terms, 'association', 'club', and
'society', in the light of their eighteenth-century usage. The first
thing to be observed about these three words is that in the eighteenth-
century, as to-day, there was very little distinction made between
them in common usage. There was, or so I believe, a general feeling
that an association was usually a more businesslike affair than either
a club or a society; and there was probably a further inclination to
regard a society as being a slightly more sedate and purposeful or¬
ganization than those which one familiarly referred to as a "club".
Such distinctions were, in fact, a reflection of the true state of
affairs, for the clubs, literary and otherwise, generally met in tav¬
erns, and they were characterized by a convivial disregard for formal¬
ity which has been caught for all time in the scene in which counsellor Pleydell appeared at "High-Jinks" in Scott's novel Guy Mannering.
By way of contrast, most of the organizations which bore the title of
"society" or "association" had a more sober purpose, a more business¬
like procedure, and a more formal method of choosing candidates for
admission. These distinctions, however, should not be taken as rigid
and mutually exclusive, for informality was a characteristic of nearly all types of organizations, as the word-picture drawn by Samuel Rogers of Adam Smith soundly sleeping at a meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh after a hearty meal at the Oyster Club so charmingly convinces us. The true distinction between eighteenth-century literary organizations lay not in the names they gave themselves, but in the purpose for which they were organized. The Rankenian Club, for example, which met for improvement in composition and to discuss literary and philosophical problems, was more nearly the type of eighteenth-century literary society than was the famous Select Society which was really not much more than a debating club. These fine distinctions, however, can be made much more effectively when the individual organizations are under examination.

In my discussion of this subject I have assumed throughout that a club was an informal organization which met primarily for convivial reasons. The term society, on the other hand, I have understood to mean an organization which, though it certainly did not rule out the pleasures of the table, had a somewhat more formal purpose and procedure. This distinction also applies to those few organizations known as "associations", though there may be some justification for adding the further distinction that an association usually has a narrower range of interests than the type of literary society which predominated during our period. Whenever the problem of the title of an organization arises, it should be borne in mind that many times the nature of an institution may change while the title remains unaltered. Or, to

add further confusion, it appears that many times the word which
should indicate with some degree of precision the type of organization
which has been adopted, is chosen for some completely irrelevant rea-
son such as its euphony or alliteration with the other words of the
title, or because of an imagined or real connection with another or-
ganization which may, or may not, have been organized for a similar
purpose. In this way it seems certain that the Select Society, to
which Alexander Carlyle often perversely refers to as the Select Club,
chose its title for its excellent alliterative qualities; and though
it may have been imagined by the inaugurators of the Speculative So-
ciety of Aberdeen that they were carrying on the work begun by the
much more famous Speculative Society of the University of Edinburgh,
it is impossible to imagine two organizations whose whole tone, mem-
bership, and purpose were so utterly different.

Despite the difficulties that must always remain in using three
terms with such strong tendencies to masquerade as each other, I hope
that the reader will find my few preliminary suggestions helpful.
There is one hint that may prove more helpful than all the rest, and
that is to keep always in mind that the title of an organization is
not always a good description of its type and purpose. The purpose
for which it has been organized must be accepted as the true designa-
tion of each club, society, or association which we examine, for or-
ganizations of the same type, with a similar purpose, and frequently
of the same origin, may have very dissimilar titles. It is always

1. For the Speculative Society of Aberdeen, see Chapter 5, page 223.
For the Speculative Society of the University of Edinburgh, see
Chapter 6, page 378.
important, in other words, to get to the substance of our subject, and not to allow ourselves to be led astray by the empty promise of some high-sounding title, or by a title more modest than the result.

CHAPTER III

The situation of Ireland in the early part of the first half of the eighteenth century is well known. Caught, as she was, between two mighty powers, and oppressed with the task of defending herself against the heavy invasions of the rejected Continent, as well as the more genuine depredations of bands of Highland barbarians; and after decades of plodding and interminable religious strife, of military occupation, of poverty, disease, ignorance, and superstition, the nation, in 1770, was reeling under the recent calamity of the failure at Antrim, and the disorder of repeated bad harvests. This:

The situation of Ireland in the early part of the first half of the eighteenth century is well known. Caught, as she was, between two mighty powers, and oppressed with the task of defending herself against the heavy invasions of the rejected Continent, as well as the more genuine depredations of bands of Highland barbarians; and after decades of plodding and interminable religious strife, of military occupation, of poverty, disease, ignorance, and superstition, the nation, in 1770, was reeling under the recent calamity of the failure at Antrim, and the disorder of repeated bad harvests.
CHAPTER TWO

THE AGE OF IMPROVEMENT.

The situation of lowland Scotland in the early part of the eighteenth century is well known. Caught, as she was, between two frontiers, and oppressed with the task of defending herself against the largely imagined threats of the detested Southrons, as well as the more genuine depredations of bands of Highland barbarians; and after decades of bloody and internecine religious strife, of military occupation, of poverty, disease, ignorance, and superstition, Scotland, in 1700, was reeling under the recent calamity of the failure at Darien, and the disaster of repeated bad harvests. This

1. "England was always the 'auld enemy' to be feared, watched, opposed. Until the Union of the Crowns in the sixteenth century, or perhaps one had better say the Union of the Parliaments in the eighteenth century, England was always endeavouring to annex Scotland, and Scotland was persistently refusing." (Watson: The Scot of the 18th Century, page 27.)

2. For a discussion of the Highland frontier, and of the threat of the last remaining "White barbarians" to the peace and prosperity of the Lowlands, see Toynbee: A Study of History, Vol. 1, page 237; Macleod: The American Indian Frontier, Chapter XIII, "Celt and Indian: Britain's Old World Frontier in Relation to the New," page 152 f.; Buckle: History of Civilization, Vol. 3, page 152; Hume Brown: History of Scotland, Vol. 3, pages 130, 224, and 287; Baert: Tableau de la Grand-Bretagne, Vol. 1, page 145; and Trevylan: History of England, page 538. Most of these works treat the problem as a social and political one. Hume Brown, however, gives some indication of the economic aspects of the raids which were made upon the Lowlands out of this Northern "Afghanistan." "A remarkable computation made at the close of the rebellion of 1745 sums up as follows the annual losses
nation, many of whose citizens regarded themselves as among God's "elect", appears to the unbigoted observer as being a nation which God had forgotten: forgotten, that is, unless it is possible to regard the impending Act of Union as a sign of divine Grace, a proposition which, though it has everything to recommend it, has never been popular north of the Tweed.

As a nation, however, Scotland was not unaware that the general increase of material prosperity and the intellectual achievement of her neighbours were in sharp contrast to her own abject poverty in both these spheres. She was, in fact, acutely aware of her "backward" state and, prompted by pride and a desire to share in the good things of life, she resolved to "improve" herself, and to bring herself abreast of the times by imitating and emulating her

sustained by the Lowlanders from Highland creaghgs: value of cattle-lifting, 5000 pounds Sterling; cost of attempts to recover them, 2000 pounds Sterling; expenses for guarding against theft, 10,000 pounds Sterling; blackmail, 5000 pounds Sterling; loss arising from understocking the ground from fear of plunder, 15,000 pounds Sterling; total, 37,000 pounds Sterling."

(Northern Rural Life, pages 196 - 197, quoted in Hume Brown; History of Scotland, Volume 3, pages 207 - 208.) It is also interesting to compare the description given by Bailie Jarvie in Scott's Rob Roy to those contained in the above works. The entire episode of the small party's visit "across the line" is reminiscent of Cooper's tales of the American frontier. Before 1745, a visitor to the Highlands had to be well known, or well armed. For a general description of Scotland's economic plight, as well as her intellectual backwardness, see the works of Fletcher of Saltoun, (Political Works, Volume 2.), H. G. Graham, (Social Life in Scotland, passim.), and Hume Brown; (History of Scotland, Volume 3, passim.)
traditional enemy, the English. In following the example of her more prosperous neighbour, Scotland had much to gain and very little to lose. What little treasure there had been, had been squandered in the desperate gamble of Darien, and the shattering of that last pleasant dream of an independently won prosperity brought the harsh reality of Scotland's need for the protection of the English fleet, and of the other economic and political sanctions by means of which the English held their empire. Alone, Scotland could do nothing. Her historical predicament demanded that she gain powerful allies, and that she open her southern border to the invasion of new ideas, new techniques, and a new language. If this meant some sacrifice of a cherished independence, it was paid, no matter how reluctantly, as the price of national salvation, for there was no real alternative. The impulse to follow the Southern example is forcefully described by J. Y. T. Greig in his biography of David Hume. In speaking of Hume, he makes the following observation:

... with most Scotsmen of his day, David wished to anglicize his mother country, in her speech and literature at any rate. In the circumstances, he was right. It was Scotland's only hope, as events proved. If Scotland could be called civilized

1. If this sounds altogether too much like the present-day cant of "progress", I hasten to assure the reader that it is phrased in the language of the period under examination. It should not surprise us that a previous age would speak, when attempting to do much the same things as ourselves, in the same language. Asia has merely replaced Scotland as one of the backward areas which are in need of "improvement".


in 1780, it was mainly due to English influence, which the Union fostered. Imagination boggles at the thought of Scotland in the XVIIIth century without the Union. Despite the rather lurid quality of Greig's treatment of this aspect of Scottish development, I must agree with his last statement, for I do find it impossible to imagine the Scotland of Hume's day without the Union.

The Union of 1707 came as the first historical milestone in a process which, for our purposes, can be regarded as beginning in 1700. In the first year of the eighteenth century, an event took place which stands as a sign of things to come. This event, though not important in itself, serves admirably as a symbol of three important themes. The first of these has already been mentioned, and that is the Scottish nation's aspirations for prosperity through "improvement". The second, which has also been mentioned, is the acceptance of the English as models for imitation. And the third thing, which is new, is the emergence of the voluntary association as a device for furthering these national aspirations and for promoting the wider acceptance of the English models.

The event to which I have referred was the organization in Edinburgh of a Society for the Reformation of Manners. From a pamphlet which appeared shortly before the organization of this society, we learn that the success of such societies in England and Ireland had excited the desire among some Scots to follow their example. The pertinent part of the pamphlet reads as follows:

1. A Letter from ***** A Magistrate, to his Freind ***** in the Country. See also the pamphlet entitled A Discourse of Suppressing Vice &c., page 64. The latter contains a sermon on the subject by William Wishart, senior.
13 June, 1700. The Commissioners appointed by the late General Assembly of this National Church, considering how much Immorality and Vice do still abound in this Nation, through the neglect of the due Execution of the Laws against Prophaneness, and it being recommended to them by the said Assembly, to assist and encourage any Proposals that should be made to them, for the more effectual Suppressing of the same, And being likewise informed, that the Christian Endeavours of such as have entered into Societies for Reformation of Manners both in England and Ireland, have through the Blessing of God proven very effectual for curbing and punishing Vice, and advancing Sobriety and Virtue, and some of the said Commissioners having seen and perused a Treatise written upon that Subject, Entitled an Account of the Societys For Reformation of Manners with a perswasive &c. And most of them having seen and perused the Abstract thereof, they are so well satisfied with the purpose and great and main design thereof, (as very proper for exciting persons of all Ranks to a more through Reformation in their own Lives, and Advancement thereof among others,) that as they Reckon themselves obliged to Bless God, who hath put it into the Hearts of others to go before them in so Laudable an Example, and their duty to imitate the same in their own Persons; So likewise to Recommend it to all Ministers and Elders to peruse the said Book and its Abstract, and Study to induce all Piously disposed Persons, to imitate the Laudable zeal of these worthy Societys & their methods so far as may be suitable to the Circumstances and Laws of this Nation, and the Constitutions of this Church, for Compassing so Glorious an End, and so absolutely necessarie to the Prosperity and welfare both of Church and State....

Here we see the desire for national improvement expressed as a reformation of manners which is described as being a "Glorious End, and so absolutely necessarie to the Prosperity and welfare both of Church and State". The example to be followed is that of the English, and the means of effecting this "Glorious End", is to organize an association for the purpose of bringing about the desired "Reformation of Manners."

The establishment of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, however, was not the only English example which was followed in Scotland at this time. The English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which had been established in London in 1701, was the model
for a similar organization which was incorporated in Scotland in 1709.

The activities which led to the organization of the Scottish society, however, began soon after the establishment of the English Society, and many of the leaders in the newly-formed Society for the Reformation of Manners in Scotland were active in this new endeavour. The motives for the new institution, as given by Maitland in his *History of Edinburgh*, demonstrate once again that national improvement through reformation was uppermost in the minds of these Scottish patriots.

In the Year 1701, divers Men in Edinburgh, concerned in the Reformation of Manners, reflecting on the gross Ignorance, Atheism, Popery and Impiety wherewith the Highlands and Islands of Scotland abounded, which was chiefly owing to the Poverty of the People, whereby they were rendered unable to get their Children instructed in the Principles of Religion and Virtue; which these Reformers comisserating, they endeavoured to remove the melancholy and unhappy Scene, by attempting to bring about a Reformation in those Parts, for which Purpose they entered into a voluntary Subscription to raise Money for obtaining so good and desirable an End. The first Attempt they made was at Abertarf, in the Shire of Inverness, where Popery and Irreligion greatly abounded:...

Although this initial effort resulted in failure, the project was not given up, and Maitland goes on to explain how the movement grew, and how it finally gave rise to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge.

Though the worthy Undertakers were not discouraged... yet, in their private Capacity found they were unable to carry on so great and extensive a Work; wherefore they endeavoured to find out Means whereby Funds might be settled, and so many Persons concerned as were equal to the Design; and to that End applied

---

to divers Members of the General Assembly of the Church, to

obtain the Concourse and Assistance of that Convention in so
great and good a Work. Which being laid before them and taken
into Consideration by the said Assembly in the Year 1706, rec-
mended the same to their Commission, who, after divers Con-
ferences with the Undertakers, published Proposals for a Sub-
scription, for propagating Christian Knowledge, not only in
the Highlands and Islands of Scotland but in foreign Parts, to
which was annexed an Obligation, to be subscribed by such as
were willing to promote such laudable work: ... The Society for the Reformation of Manners in Scotland and the

Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge are the first
indications of a deep desire among the Scottish people to improve
their nation through voluntary co-operative effort. As Maitland has
pointed out in the passage quoted above, the realisation that little
could be done by individuals in the great task of educating the High-
landers led to the formation of a society through which support could
be given by all who had the means and the inclination. At the time
when these two societies were organized, however, the impulse which
gave rise to them had not yet acquired the concentration which it
afterwards displayed, nor had it developed the characteristic impulse
which enables us to describe it as a national movement. By 1723,
however, the urge toward improvement had become so pronounced that it
is possible to delineate it by the judicious selection of one of its
favourite terms, a term which appears with convincing constancy in
the titles of clubs and societies, and in the economic, political,
and patriotic literature of the period. The term to which I refer is
that of "improvement", for the movement with which we must deal here
is best described as the "movement for national improvement." The
appropriateness of this term can best be demonstrated by giving ex-
amples of those associations which were a direct result of the movement.

In 1723 there was organized an agricultural association which bore the title of The Honourable the Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland. This association, which was suggested by "the Duke of Athole and other persons of great distinction", held its first meeting on the 13th of July, 1725, and very soon its membership of 300 included "some of the most eminent Scotsmen of the time... The baronetage, Knightage, and gentry of the country were largely represented." Under the direction of a committee chosen from among this illustrious membership, the technique of improvement, at least as it was practised in agriculture, soon became fully developed, and the example of these Scottish "Improvers" became so widely and so enthusiastically imitated that there is some justification for describing the resulting activities as a "craze" which brought nearly as much derision as it did praise to its instigators. However, if it is possible to derive some amusement from their excesses, the success and the lasting benefit brought to their country by these same "Improvers" is proof enough that their activities were in keeping with the needs and the inclination of the time. The following announcement of the purpose of the newly-formed association, could, with the exchange of an occasional word, be taken as a manifesto of the entire movement for national improvement:-

The Noblemen and Gentlemen mentioned, considering in how low a State the Manufactures in Scotland are, and how much the right husbandry and Improvement of Ground is neglected, partly through the want of Skill in those who make Profession thereof, and partly through the want of due encouragement for making proper experiments of the several Improvements that the different Soils in this country are capable of: Therefore, being willing and desirous to contribute to the Advancement of so great a Benefit as may be reaped from the two Articles mentioned, they do resolve to meet once in every fourteen Days of the Months of June and July, November, December, January, and February; and to have under their consideration such Measures as may be proper for advancing the foresaid Ends; and the first Meeting to be on the first Friday of July next where each Member is desired to be present, in order to the framing of such Rules as may be proper for the future Management of so laudable an Undertaking.

Although the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland has been described as the first agricultural association ever to be organized in Great Britain, the impulse behind it was the same as that which caused the formation of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, and the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland. In writing of the economic condition of Scotland, Robert Maxwell, one-time secretary to the association and editor of the Society's Transactions, makes the following statement:—

If our Agriculture and Manufactures were improved and carried on to the Height they could bear, we might be near as easy and convenient in our circumstances, as even the People of our Sister Kingdom of England; seeing neither our Soil nor our Climate is unfriendly, and since we enjoy the same Privileges of Trade with them.... If we are far behind, we ought to follow the faster.

Once again we have traced the three main tendencies of this period, the impulse toward improvement, the acceptance of English examples, and the formation of associations and societies to carry

the necessary work forward. And the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture was only the first of such institutions. On the suggestion of this association, the government of the day established the important Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries in Scotland. In 1737 there appeared a notice of a Society for the Improvement and Promoting of Agriculture and Manufactures at Ormiston. This society, so Robert Maxwell informs us, was formed in imitation of the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture which was organized, as I have already noted, in 1723. In 1748, notice is given in the Scots Magazine of a Society for Improving of Agriculture and Manufactures in the Shire of Ayr, and in 1755, the Select Society of Edinburgh organized the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Art, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture in Scotland. Throughout the rest of the century, similar associations were formed. In 1759, there appears the Society of Improvers at Coupar; in 1760, the Chicken Pye Club of the Parish of

1. Ibid, page 308 f. We shall meet with the Board of Trustees again in Chapter 7, page 435 f.
2. Caledonian Mercury, Monday, January 10, 1737.

Note: For other examples of eighteenth-century "improving" agricultural societies, see Sinclair: Statistical Account of Scotland, 21 volumes, 1791 - 1799. These societies are listed in the Subject Index under "Farming Societies."
Dunfermline, "an association of landed proprietors", was active; and in 1769, the Buchan's Farmer's Society was formed for "the improvement of agriculture." A Dumfries and Galloway Society was organized in 1772 for the purpose of encouraging stock-raising and the cultivation of turnips. In 1776, a Society for the Improvement of Agriculture in the Counties of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright was formed, and in 1783, the most famous Society of "Improvers" of all, the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, was formed at Edinburgh. Now all these societies followed a general pattern, and their members were drawn primarily from one class, that of the landed proprietors. The most fitting description for such associations, therefore, is that they were the meeting places of the "gentlemen Improvers" of Scotland.

But the "gentlemen Improvers", as the title of some of the societies given above suggests, did not confine their interests to "stock-raising and the cultivation of turnips." The most ambitious of the "improvement" societies undertook to encourage "Art, Sciences,

5. Ibid, page 45 f.

Note: For other examples of eighteenth-century "improving" agricultural societies, see Sinclair: Statistical Account of Scotland, 21 volumes, 1791-1799. These societies are listed in the Subject Index under "Farming Societies."
and Manufactures" as well as agriculture. And it is significant of the pervading spirit of "improvement" that this association, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Art, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, was organized by the Select Society, a debating society which had originally been formed for "the mutual improvement in the art of speaking of its members." And the Select Society was not the first literary society to exhibit the improving spirit. Far from it: as we shall soon have ample cause to remark, the movement for national improvement which was so strongly felt in agriculture was paralleled by similar efforts in literature and science. And in these fields, the three elements we have noticed previously, those of the desire for improvement, of the acceptance of English models, and of the organization of co-operative associations as a means for accomplishing both, are equally plain. The term "improvement", therefore, was much more than an economic slogan, for it represented a national attitude of mind which recognized Scotland's true situation and embodied, in that recognition, the resolve to equal, if not to exceed, the accomplishments of her more prosperous and more productive neighbours. The success which followed this resolve is well known. In science and in literature, as well as in husbandry, trade, and manufacturing, Scotland improved herself to the point where she became the model for others to follow.

The source of Scotland's inspiration for her literary improvement has been ably traced by a Scottish author who himself experienced the changes which he has described so eloquently for us.

1. For a description of the Select Society, see Chapter 4, page 158 f.
In writing of the Union and its effects on Scottish literature, Ramsay of Ochtertyre observes the following:

The union of the kingdoms in the year 1707 produced great though not immediate revolutions in the sentiments and tastes of our ingenious countrymen. Indeed that memorable event hath led to consequences, good and bad, which were not foreseen by its able promoters or opponents. These, however, were the natural fruits of a free and constant intercourse between the Scots and the wealthy nation which had already attained to a high pitch of eminence in letters, arts, and arms. In those circumstances, it is not surprising that the former should gradually drop their national prejudices, when thus surrendering them in whole or in part was connected with their interest or their fame. Whether in our other deviations from the modes and manners of our forefathers, we have always acted with discretion, may admit of some doubt; but the most zealous admirers of ancient times must confess that to our old rivals we are in some measure indebted for the great progress which our countrymen have made in the belles lettres and authorship.

In view of all that has been said, I would like to suggest that the most appropriate title which can be given the eighteenth century in Scotland is the "Age of Improvement", and if it is allowed that the "Age of Improvement" is an appropriate title for the period 1700 to 1800, and that its main characteristics have been correctly analyzed and described, then we have made the first positive step toward placing the literary societies of the period in their proper perspective. But it is only the first step, for though the title may be applied significantly to the whole of the century, the progress which was made by the movement for national improvement permits certain divisions to be made. There came a time, after sufficient progress had been made, when the emphasis was shifted from the preparation for the tasks in hand to the performance of them. And this, in turn, was

followed by a period during which recognition of Scottish accomplishments became general in England and on the continent. Thus it is possible, by signifying the special quality of each of these periods, to divide the century into three periods which corresponded to certain phases in the general movement for national improvement. To the first of these periods, "the Period of Preparation", I have assigned the dates 1700 to 1745. For the second, "the Period of Achievement", the dates 1745 to 1770 seem most appropriate, since during those years Scottish men of letters performed the intellectual tasks which were to make Scotland famous throughout the Western world. From 1770 to the end of the century, came the "Period of Recognition". It was during these years that all the learned men in Europe recognized and celebrated Scotland's reputation and cultural prestige. In actual fact, the two later periods overlap to a great extent, for recognition of Scottish genius frequently followed hard upon the publication of significant works. The histories of Hume and Robertson, for example, were outstanding successes, and both men were firmly established in the world of letters long before the year 1770. And as early as 1764, Voltaire paid the Scots an ambiguous compliment for their effusive genius. In an article in the Gazette littéraire de l'Europe, in which he reviewed Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism, Voltaire wrote of Kames and of Scotland as follows:

1. Gazette littéraire de l'Europe, avril, 1764, page 93. There is a different version of the passage I have quoted which appears in Les Voyageurs Français en Écosse (1770 - 1830) et Leurs curiosités intellectuelles: par Margaret I. Bain, page 16-17. Bain's version reads: "C'est un effet admirable des progrès de l'esprit humain qu'aujourd'hui il nous vienne d'Écosse des règles
M. Home porte ainsi sur tous les Arts des jugemens qui pourroient nous paroître extraordinaires. C'est un effet admirable des progrès de l'esprit humain, qu'aujourd'hui il nous vienne d'Écosse des règles de goût dans tous les Arts, depuis le Poème Épique jusqu'au Jardinage. Il est vrai qu'on aimerait mieux encore voir de grands Artistes dans ces Pays-là que de grand raisonneurs sur les Arts; on trouvera toujours plus d'Ecrivains en état de faire des Éléments de Critique, comme Milord Kaim, qu'une bonne Histoire, comme ses compatriotes M. Hume & M. Robertson.

Although this is rather grudging admiration, it is admiration none the less, and Voltaire's preference for the Scottish artist over the Scottish critic was soon to be gratified, for at the very time he was writing his article, James Macpherson's Ossian was being accepted in Europe with unquestioning approval.

de goût dans tous les arts, depuis le poème épique jusqu'au jardinage. L'esprit humain s'étend tous les jours et nous ne devons pas désespérer de recevoir bientôt des poétiques et des rhétoriques des îles Orcades. Il est vrai qu'on aimerait mieux encore voir de grands artistes dans ce pays-là que de grands raisonneurs sur les arts." The reference to this passage is the same as I have given above, but the words I have underlined do not appear in the Gazette littéraire.

A further note on this passage may not be without interest. David Hume, who was in Paris at the time, endeavoured, in his amiable way, to stop the article which treated Lord Kames rather roughly. "Our Friend," wrote Hume to Dr. Hugh Blair, "I mean your friend, Lord Kaim had much provoked Voltaire (Kames, in his Elements of Criticism, passed several strictures on Voltaire as a writer; with the result here stated by Hume. In later editions Kames inserted a footnote apologizing.) who never forgives, & never thinks any Enemy below his Notice. He has accordingly sent to the Gazette Litteraire an Article with regard to the Elements of Criticism, which turns that Book extremely into Ridicule, with a good deal of Wit. I try'd to have it suppress'd before it was printed; but the Authors of that Gazette told me, that they durst neither suppress nor alter any thing that came from Voltaire. I suppose his Lordship holds that satiric Wit as cheap as he does all the rest of the human Race, and will not be in the least mortify'd by his Censure." (Greig: Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 436, letter number 237 from Hume to Dr. Hugh Blair, dated Paris, 26 April, 1764.)

1. "The words were ironically meant, but they point to what was an indisputable fact - the remarkable intellectual activity of
Despite his sarcasm, it will be noted that the French satirist spoke with respect of David Hume and William Robertson. Hume, who had recently been in France, had been enthusiastically received and universally admired. In France, at least, he was recognized to be a man of genius, and, when he returned to settle permanently in Edinburgh in 1769, his reputation brought an additional lustre to the northern capital. The fact that Hume chose to return to Edinburgh, despite his previous resolution to remain in Paris, is an indication of something more than national sentiment. Edinburgh offered what could be found in no other city in Europe, a circle of men of genius confined in a small space. When Hume joined the intimate circle of the Edinburgh literati, his presence confirmed the opinion of many that the city was, as Matthew Bramble words had described it, a "hot-bed of genius." By 1770, therefore, Edinburgh had become generally recognized as one of the intellectual centres of Europe.

1. Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 48 f. See also Greig: David Hume; Mossner: The Forgotten David Hume; and Laing: Life of Hume.
3. That sentiment was not a strong compulsion with Hume in deciding him to return to Edinburgh we know from a letter which he wrote in 1772 to Benjamin Franklin. (This note is continued on next page.)
In each of the three periods we have been considering, there appeared a number of new literary societies which were evidence of the three stages of progress which had been reached by those active in the movement for national improvement. In the first period, the Period of Preparation, these societies consisted of groups of individuals who sought to improve themselves in the arts of composition and public speaking, or who gathered together to exchange information on the many subjects which were deemed ripe for improvement. In the second period, a subtle change in the existing literary societies, and in those which were newly established, placed the emphasis on achievement. Publication of the work done by members became an established practice, and many societies were organized in such a way that it was an obligation of membership that a certain amount of finished material be contributed by each member during a set period. In the third period, literary societies became chartered corporations through which the honour of membership could be conferred upon those individuals who had made, or seemed likely to make, valuable contributions to human knowledge. In this threefold change, we can trace the progress of the single ideal of national betterment throughout the century which I have chosen to entitle the Age of Improvement.

"I really believe, with the French author of whom you have favoured me with an extract, that the circumstance of my being a Scotchman has been a considerable objection to me. So factious is this country! I expected, in entering on my literary course, that all the Christians, all the Whigs, and all the Tories, should be my enemies. But it is hard that all the English, Irish and Welsh, should be also against me. The Scotch likewise cannot be much my friends, as no man is a prophet in his own country. However, it is some consolation that I can bear up my head under all this prejudice. I fancy that I must have recourse to America for
Literary societies which began as organizations for the improvement of the techniques of science or literature, became forums in which essays were read, criticized, amended, and prepared for publication to the world. Still later, a number of the later type of societies became, through the granting of a Royal Charter, an incorporated body very similar to the Royal Society in London, and the privilege of membership in this society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, became regarded as conferring nearly as great an honour as that of the older and more famous English Society. It was just in this way, that the Medical Society which was established in 1731, "for the improvement of medical knowledge", became, in 1737, the Society for Improving Arts, Sciences, and still later, the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. The Philosophical Society continued active until 1783, at which time it provided the nucleus upon which the Royal Society of Edinburgh was erected. At each successive

justice. You told me, I think, that your countrymen in that part of the world intended to do me the honour of giving an edition of my writings, and you promised that you should recommend to them to follow the last edition, which is in the press. I now use the freedom of reminding you of it." (Greig: Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 237, letter number 469, to Benjamin Franklin, dated Edinburgh, 7 February, 1772.) It is interesting to note that Hume's "fancy" that he must have "recourse to America for justice" has been, rather belatedly, it must be admitted, fully justified. In his The Forgotten Hume, the American scholar, Ernest Campbell Mossner, has made an interesting re-evaluation of Hume as a man of letters. "In sober truth it must be put on record that, with a single important exception, Johnson's imposing literary production did not equal Hume's, whether in quality, in scope, or in influence. The exception was the Dictionary." (Mossner: The Forgotten Hume, page 195.

1. For the Medical Society, see Chapter 3, page 82 f.

2. For the later development of the Philosophical Society, see Chapter 4, page 98 f., and Chapter 5, page 334 f.
reorganization of the society it is possible to trace the shift of
emphasis which I have outlined in the three periods of the Age of Improvement.

---

The Period of Preparation 1700-1745

These events mark the beginning of the Scottish impulse toward
Improvemeat. The first of these, which took place in 1700
the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of Hymn
Moral, which began in 1701, was the first national attempt at
moving civilization to the Highlands through education, an attempt
largely due to the erection of the important Society for Propagating
Literature, Anderson, and the third, which was, indeed, the culminating
phase, and by far the most significant event to occur
During the first half of the eighteenth century, was the
Parliament which took place in 1707.

The influence of the rising desire for national im-
provement, so far as it was reflected in the formation of literary
societies, did not appear in the realm of literature until
1706 but the first indication of the course which Scot-
tish men were to pursue came with the wide acceptance and
interest in the works of Addison and Steele. In speaking of the
Influence of The Tatler and The Spectator in Scot-
land, Graham writes as follows:

In a recent volume of Letters, page 4,
CHAPTER THREE.

THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION 1700 - 1745.

Three events mark the beginning of the Scottish impulse toward national improvement. The first of these, which took place in 1700, was the establishment of the Society for the Reformation of Manners; the second, which began in 1701, was the first rational attempt at bringing civilization to the Highlands through education, an attempt which led to the erection of the important Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; and the third, which was, indeed, the culmination of this first phase, and by far the most significant event to occur in Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century, was the Union of the Parliaments which took place in 1707.

Evidence of the influence of the rising desire for national improvement, in so far as it was reflected in the formation of literary clubs and societies, did not appear in the realm of literature until after the Union; but the first indication of the course which Scottish literary men were to pursue came with the wide acceptance and admiration of the works of Addison and Steele. In speaking of the Union and of the influence of The Tatler and The Spectator in Scotland, Henry Grey Graham writes as follows:

Certainly the Union had a great effect in stimulating Scottish

intellectual interest and widening the literary taste. Scots gentry who went as members of Parliament to Westminster would bring back books from London, and in various ways literature penetrated to remote rural mansions as to city life, conveyed in cadger's creels. Thus to young ladies were borne the echoes of far-away gay London life, of fashions, and follies, and intrigues they should never share. By the firesides they would read aloud the adventures of Orindas and Millamons, or of Sir Roger de Coverly, in accents whose broad Scots would have amazed the heroes and heroines of whom they read - an uncouth, incomprehensible tongue, which would have made Will Honeycomb roar with laughter, and Sir Roger utter gentlemanly oaths of exasperation as he listened.

The effect of English periodical papers on Scottish literature is elegantly traced for us by Tytler in his invaluable biography of Henry Home, afterwards the celebrated Lord Kames. After giving a distressing picture of the condition of Scottish culture, Tytler informs his readers:

A taste for polite literature, had, however, begun gradually to diffuse itself in Scotland, even from the time of the publication of the Tatlers, Spectators, and Guardians; and, as in England, the effect of those writings, and more particularly of the papers of Addison, was conspicuous in substituting an ease and elegance of composition as a more engaging vehicle for subjects of taste, in the room of the dry scholastic style in which they had hitherto been treated: so, in Scotland, the attention of our youth, fresh from their academical studies, which yet retained a strong tincture of the antient school dialectics, was insensibly attracted to the more pleasing topics of criticism and the belles lettres. The cultivation of style became an object of study; and in a few attempts at that lighter species of essay-writing, of which Addison had furnished a model, we see the dawning of a better taste in composition than had hitherto appeared in any publication from the Scottish Press.

One further quotation concerning the influence of the work of Addison and Steele will serve as an indication of the relationship of

2. For a discussion of early Scottish attempts to imitate the English publications, see Chapter 5, page 251 f.
the English periodical papers to the literary societies which form the
subject of this thesis. The quotation to which I refer reads as
follows:—

The periodical papers published by Steele, Addison, and their
associates in England, appear to have first awakened a taste
for refinement of composition and for critical disquisition on
the north of the Tweed. Other causes contributed to quicken
and foster this taste, among which were the various literary
and philosophical associations formed at Edinburgh....

For further proof of the revolutionary effect of the English per¬
iodical papers on Scottish attitudes and in reviving and refreshing
interest in style among Scottish literary men, we need only examine the
circumstances which led to the establishment of the Easy Club to which
Allan Ramsay belonged, and of which he wrote, in such a delightful

strain:—

1 love ye well - O let me be
One of your blythe society,
And, like yourselves, I'll strive to be
Aye humourous and easy.

One of the provisions of the Easy Club was that the members should
take a pseudonym "from some eminent person". Allan Ramsay chose the
name of Isaac Bickerstaff, and when the club resolved, three months
after its institution, "that one Specktator be Read at every meeting
till all be Read," Ramsay, as was appropriate to his chosen role as
Bickerstaff, was appointed to provide the first volume.

4. Ibid, page 49.
Any further doubts as to the relationship of the Easy Club to the success of The Tatler and The Spectator in Scotland, must certainly be dispelled by the following letter which was written by the secretary of the Scottish club to the authors of The Spectator:-

Edinburgh, August 15, 1712.

Sir,
Did I think it a pardonable fault to praise a man to his face, I could with a great deal of satisfaction discover my judgment of your writings. However, allow me for once to tell you that your happy talent for raising such handsome thoughts from subjects which to men of an ordinary capacity would seem altogether barren, makes me hope you may perhaps find something in what I presume to trouble you with, which will not be altogether disagreeable.

I am a member of a civil society which goes under the name of the Easy Club. The main reason of our assuming this name is because none of an empty, conceited, quarrelling temper can have the privilege of being a member, for we allow all the little merry freedoms among ourselves, rallying one another at our meetings without the least appearance of spleen upon account of whatever we discover to be amiss or weak in any circumstance of our conversation, which produces rather love than dislike, being well persuaded of the esteem each of us hath for his fellow, and his design to see no blemish in his character.

Our Club consists just now of eight members, all of us within some months of either side of twenty-one, unmarried, and resolved not inconsiderately to rush into a state of life even the wisest cannot foresee whether it shall be more happy or miserable, without making the tryall, and whether to be the luck good or bad there is no disengaging. I confess a married life has many tempting advantages, but I am affrighted when I see so many daily instances of these being overballanced by a greater number of inconveniences which attend that state, and to which nothing but death alone can put a period. Therefore we are resolved as much as possible to subject every passion to the pleasure of freedom, each of us knowing how to live upon our own without the help of a well promised ill pay'd portion.

Tho' our humours be sympathetically united, yet there are several pleasant varieties in our qualifications, or rather in what we discover ourselves to be admirers of in others. Every member at meeting is called by the name of whatever author he

hath the greatest esteem for. Our Wit goes by the name of Lord Rochester; our Mathematician, Sir Isaac Newton; our Merchant, Sir Roger L'Estrange; the grave Poet, Sir Richard Blackmore; our Historian, George Buchanan; the Merchant, Robert Collinson; the Humorist, Thomas Brown, and the Censor of the Club, Isaac Bickerstaff.

The first thing that induc'd us to join in a Society was the reading of your Spectators, where it is frequently recommended, and the better to make us acquainted with such fine thought, we have observed as one of our fundamental laws that one, two or more of the Spectators shall be read at every meeting. That in case any passage or sentence occur we have any scruples or doubts about, every one may give his thoughts out, and thus (as the rubbing of two hard bodies together will smooth both) we have all been satisfied about the thing, each of us by ourselves could not be convinced of. Consider, Sir, we are but young, and have need of advice; and seeing you are the fittest person can do it, I earnestly beg you'll lay down the best methods and rules to be observed in a Society of our constitution, and to say something in vindication of Societies in general and this in particular from the implacable hatred of some here who have professed themselves irreconcilable enemies to us and all such who attack the forsaking of vice and aiming at virtue. Hoping in some issue you'll answer the expectation of him who has a profound respect for you, and your incomparable writings, I subscribe myself your admirer.

— G. Buchanan.¹

¹ "His real name was John Fergus, as is proved by a stitched manuscript of twenty leaves, in the handwriting of 'Buchanan,' that is now in our possession. Its title page reads partly thus: 'Discourse of George Castriot, King of Albany (by the turks called Scanderbeg) to his Captains, Written in french by Mr. De Scudery. Translated September 5, 1709.' On the third page is written: 'Edinburgh July 20, 1715 Mr Geo: Buchanan dedicate.' On the fourth page is written: 'This Translation being ye work of some leisure hours when I was a student of the French Language is humbly Dedicate to my fellows the gentlemen of the Easy Club. Geo: Buchanan, July 20, 1715.' And on the title-page, below 'Translated September 5, 1709,' appear the words 'By John Fergus'—words which were obviously added by 'Buchanan' when he wrote the dedicatory matter in 1715." Gibbon: New Light on Allan Ramsay, page 56. Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, vol. 2, page 257, identifies 'Buchanan' as "John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, afterwards Sir John Clerk, Bart., and a member of the Privy Council." Rogers is very unreliable in these matters, and, I believe, he was completely mistaken in his identification of "George Buchanan" as John Clerk. There is absolutely no evidence that John Clerk, younger of Penicuik, was even a member of the Easy Club.
But the significance of the appearance of the Easy Club goes much deeper than merely reflecting the popular success of the English periodical papers in Scotland. The introduction to the club's "Journal" clearly exhibits the three essential elements of that movement which I have described as the movement for national improvement, for in the Easy Club we have the first important example of a co-operative literary organization which was devoted to the improvement of Scottish cultural life through the study of English examples. The introduction to which I have made reference reads as follows:

Journal of the Easy club, established in Edinburgh May 1712.

The Gentlemen who Compose this Society Considering how much ye immaturity of years want of knowing ye world and Experience of living therein Exposes them to ye Danger of Being Drawn away by unprofitable Company To the waste of the most valuable part of their time Have Resolved at sometimes to Retire from all other Business and Company and Meet in a Society By themselves in order that by a Mutual improvement in Conversation they may become more adapted for fellowship with the politer part of mankind and Learn also from one anothers happy observations ... On ye second day of their Meeting after some deliberation it was unanimously determined their Society should go under the name of the Easy Club designing thereby that their denomination should be a Check to all unruly and disturbing behaviour among their Members. To prevent which also each of them are stil'd with a particular name taken from some eminent person whose Character tho' they are sensible of their own insufficiency fully to Maintain yet every One knowing something of his patrons history have him before them as an example which as the wise say is more prevalent in Reformation than precept. And each member being always call'd by his Patrons Name at the meeting makes it impossible he should forget to Copy what is Laudable in him and what is not so to Reject.1

A list of the "Patrons" reveals at once the strong southern influence which was felt at this time. I have already stated that Allan Ramsay chose the name of Isaac Bickerstaff; other members chose as their


It is now generally recognized that a great deal of nonsense has been written about the Easy Club, and particularly about Allan Ramsay's connection with it. Until the appearance of a very unusual work by Andrew Gibson, little was actually known about the organization, though much had been guessed, and a great deal more had been "discovered" by those literary crystal-gazers whose efforts have made many Scottish works so attractive, so readable, and so completely unreliable.

Andrew Gibson, with the aid of the manuscript "Journal of the Easy Club," which he obtained in 1907, revealed the factual barrenness of nearly all the "biographies" which were written about Allan Ramsay up to the time his work appeared in 1927. If we tend to regard with some dismay his method of attack, which has the effect of devaluing the literary reputations of a number of highly respected, if not revered, Scottish authors, his fault is expiated by his service to truth; and I, for one, am grateful to him for the fine demonstration he has given of the value of the records of literary clubs and societies, and for displaying so expertly how they may be most effectively used.

1. See the letter from "Geo: Buchanan," quoted on page 35 and 47.
3. Gibson demonstrates conclusively that Robert Chambers, Oliphant Smeaton, and Alexander Fraser Tytler, were writing fiction rather than biography. Only George Chalmers, of all the biographers of Ramsay that Gibson has examined, escapes with some credit.
Perhaps the most valuable of Gibson's services to Allan Ramsay's reputation, and to that of the Easy Club which has been so closely identified with him, was his conclusive demonstration that the Easy Club was not a "Jacobite" organization, as had been generally assumed, and that neither Dr. Pitcairn, the physician, nor Thomas Ruddiman, the grammarian, were among its members.

The inclusion of Dr. Archibald Pitcairn among the youthful members of the Easy Club was, as Gibson has demonstrated, a sign of biographical wishful-thinking. In order for the "Dr. Pitcairn" of the Easy Club to have been the original Scottish physician and author of Latin verse, two things would have been necessary. First, there would have had to be an exception made to the Club's otherwise invariable rule that each member should always be "call'd by his Patron's name." Second, Dr. Pitcairn's presence at the meetings where his name was mentioned would have been a startling phenomenon, for he had died in 1713, the year before his name first appeared in the Club's records. As for Thomas Ruddiman, there is absolutely

1. "Mr. Gibson is very probably correct in scouting the old suggestion that the Easy Club was suppressed after the Rebellion of 1715 because of its Jacobite sympathies. The same writer has conferred another service by his proof that Ruddiman and Pitcairn were not members of the club...." (Burns Martin: Allan Ramsay, page 26.)

2. "A claim that had been made to enhance Ramsay's reputation." (Ibid, page 26.)

3. The records of the Easy Club reveal clearly how impossible it was for Pitcairn to have been a member. "That Member hitherto call'd Mr. Colinson (formerly Sir Thomas Heywood) objected against his name saying he had never formally chosen that Author for his patron and Crav'd he might be allowed to choose, which was granted wereupon he Chose the Dead Dr. Pitcairn (a man of
no indication that he was ever a member of the club, but to the biographers who were simple-minded enough to include Dr. Pitcairn, this was apparently no valid objection.

The matter of spurious membership is relatively easy to disprove, but the task of dispelling the illusion that the Easy Club was a "Jacobite" organization is a far more formidable task, so strongly is the legend established in the literary tradition of Scotland's past. And the task is rendered more difficult by the confusion which is bound to exist when the sentiments of the members are confused with the functions of the organization. That Allan Ramsay and some of his cohorts had Jacobite sympathies must have been true, it is so widely believed. But I beg to remind the reader that this did not necessarily make the Easy Club a "Jacobite" club, if we understand by that term that the association was the equivalent, say, of the Revolution Club of Edinburgh which met to celebrate the Revolution of 1688 and the Hanoverian Succession. There is a strong element of sentiment admixed with the methodical insistence that every organization of this period, 1700 to 1745, must necessarily have been Jacobite. The attitude which this sentiment has fostered shows a certain amount of naivete in assuming that the Jacobites were something in the nature of a political party temporarily out of office. Jacobitism, if I under-

great parts and of ye humour of this Society) for his patron at the same time subscribed the laws by his Name." (Journal of the Easy Club, meeting of December 15, 1714.) Although Dr. Pitcairn, by virtue of his age and his position, was not eligible for membership in the Easy Club, we know from a remark made by Wodrow that he had his own literary coterie. Wodrow tells us that he has heard "that the Modest Apology for Mr. M'Millan is writ by a club, The Lady C., once a sweet singer, her son, with Doctor Pitcairn, and Arniston, were the composers of it." (Analecta, Vol. 1, page 278, year 1710.)
stand the situation correctly, was a treasonable matter, and if the "Jacobite" organizations of which one hears so much had conducted their affairs as openly as the Easy Club, the members of them would have been instantly proscribed. If any "Jacobite" club was bold enough to keep written records, I haven't come across them, though I have heard rumours enough that such clubs existed. But rumours do not make facts, and what evidence we do have of the Easy Club's activities is not of a nature to instill any great confidence in the hitherto general assumption that it was active in the "Jacobite" cause.

The Easy Club was established on May 12, 1712, at which time it consisted of six young men, including Allan Ramsay, who was known, for the purposes of the club, as "Isaac Bickerstaff." The others were James Stewart, who took the name of "Lord Rochester"; an unidentified member who is known to us only by his pseudonym of "Tom Brown"; a Mr. Edgar, known as "Sir Roger Le Estrange"; an unidentified member who took the name of "Sir Isaac Newton"; and, finally, another unidentified member who took the name of "Sir Thomas Heywood." These six friends were joined on the twelfth of June, 1712, by a member who chose the name of "Sir Richard Blackmore," and on the twenty-seventh of June, 1712, by John Fergus, who, as "George Buchannan," became their Secretary and Clerk Register.

Thus constituted, the club continued to meet until April, 1713, when its meetings were suspended for some unknown reason until November fifth of the same year, at which time meetings were resumed although

2. Ibid, pages 53-55, and notes.
There were only four members then residing in Edinburgh. At the first meeting of the new session there was evidence of a change in the attitude of the members which indicated that the club was being reconstituted rather than merely being resumed after a period of inactivity.

From the records of the club we copy the following interesting minutes:

Sr. Richd. Blackmore Isaac Bickerstaff Mr. Geo. Buchaman and Tom Brown accidentally fell a talking of the Club and finding themselves a quorum and that there were no more members for ye time at Edinbh Resolved their meeting into the Easy Club and Chose Isaac Bickerstaff praeses. Then proceeded to Consider the state of the Club and the Reason of their so long Vacance (which was much Regreted by them) and beginning to Concert new Regulations and Methods for the Better uniting the society One and all of them Expressd a sincere Regard to the Constitution of ye club and hearty Resolution to adhere to and pursue all ye approvable designs of the establishment after which Mr. George Buchaman Representing what Scotland has suffered what we now in a More inglorious manner do are like to suffer by the Perfidy, pride, and hatred of England and how great an affront was put upon ye Scots Nation by Contemning our own Countrey and Choosing English men for our Patrons he said if they continued in this he had Reason to fear their esainess would dwindle into stupidity and Concluded declaring That he thought it would be an honourable article in the Constitution of a Club of Scots men (who have Resolved to be called by other names than their own) To pay a dutifull Respect to the heroes and authors of their own Nation by Choosing them for their patrons, And proposed it might be an Article in ye fundamental Constitution of this Society - as a Mean to Maintain in us Love to our Native Countrey which we see dayly decaying and animate us to projects for her interest.

Scots Blood was fire and flaming fir'd itself
In other Breasts which kindly took ye Blaze.
All took ye hint and it was Unanimously Resolv'd in warm expressions by each that none of this Club shall have english but Scots Patrons. So immediately Renouncing their former deliberate upon ye Choice of new patrons and that Member formerly nam'd Isaac Bickerstaff did choose Gawayn Douglas sometime bishop of Dunkeld and a famous old Scots poet for which he is chosen by that member. Tom Brown is now Samuell Colvill a Scots poet and humorist Sr. Richd. Blackmore choose Blind Harry an old Scots poet author of ye Epique poem on Wallace.
Mr. Geo: Buchaman continues the same.

These resolutions were cast into appropriate laws by the Secretary, George Buchannan, and were approved and written into the club's records at the next meeting on the twelfth of November, 1713. In the words of George Chalmers, the Easy Club was "affecting great independence" in thus resolving "to adopt Scotish patrons in place of English names."

Although the Easy Club was not too happy at first with its new constitution, for it held only seven meetings in the new session that began in November 1713, after an interval of almost a year it began to meet once more and continued with a meeting every Wednesday evening until the last week in June, 1715. During this time additional members were admitted until the maximum of twelve was reached. In these meetings, evidence of the member's dissatisfaction with the Union became plainer, and on the second of February, 1715, the following entry appears in the "Journal":

Gawin Douglas demanded his Patent as Poet Laureat to ye club who being all acquaint with his Naturall abilities for poetry and some of his performances it was unanimously agreed he should be honoured with ye Character of Poet Laureat to ye Easy club upon qch ye Secretary was appointed to give him one extract of this Act as an evidence of their favour and his dignity - and to expede his patent in due form as soon as possible - after which Mr. Easy with advice of ye Club desired of him that a poem upon Ease might by his first performance - After some discourse on Public affairs and ye Ruined Circumstances of Scotland by the late Union it was Resolv'd the Club should Address ye King for ye Dissolution of it - upon which Mr. Easy appointed L. Beilhaven, Jon. Barclay, H: Boece and Geo: Buchannan each of them to form an address against ye next meeting. Then after some conversation qr in it was Resolv'd the Club should next meeting partake of ye Diversion of the

2. Ibid, page 56.
times in an easy imitation of party humour.... ye club adjourn'd.

From the minute of the meeting held on the ninth of February, 1715, we learn of the results of the resolution to present an address to the King.

Wednesday feby 9 all The Ten Members now at Edinburgh being Conven'd - Hector Boece chosen præses Rolls call'd and Minutes of last Sederunt Read.... Then the Club proceeded to elect a Member to Represent them in Parliament to Maintain ye fundamental Laws honours and privileges of the Society if impugn'd there and after a little imitation of Party struggle chose Mr. George Buchanan who after returning The Club Thanks for the honour Conferr'd upon him assur'd them he was of no party at all But would Study in this Employ to Behave as an easy fellow and Then as Secretary he produced a Poem upon ease compos'd by G: Douglas at the Desire of ye Last Meeting - which was Read, approven the Author Thanked and Ordered to be Recorded - after which he also presented 3 addresses drawn in obedience to order of ye last Meeting two of them by himself one of which was approven he was ordered to present to ye King as parliament Man and appointed to be Recorded. After 2 hours easy Diversion with Politicks without any ill humour it was Enacted that the Club shall never be actors or intermedlers in politicks as a Society which was ordered to be Registrate as an act of Sederunt. Then after a dram to ye health of ye 2 absent members we walk't out of our Dome and it Being Moon Light, Mr. Easy, L: B: B: H: D: L: G: D: and G: B: Convoyed Z: Boyd half way to Leith Returning in good humour and very Blyth ye Praeses.

The change in the attitude of the members toward the Union may have been a result of the growing Jacobite feeling in Scotland which came to a climax in the rebellion of 1715, but it was not necessary to be a Jacobite to feel dissatisfaction with the Union. As is well known, the prosperity which had been promised as a result of the joining of the Scottish and the English Parliaments was slow to develop, and the immediate result of the Union was disastrous for

1. The "Mr. Easy" referred to in the passage quoted above is the member who was chosen to preside. (Gibson: New Light, page 39, note.)

2. Ibid, page 57.
Scotland. But whatever the individual sentiments of the members were, the letter which was framed by "George Buchannan" and approved by the Club is a model of loyal devotion to the existing monarch. This letter, which I have quoted below, appears to me to be a very strong indication that the Easy Club was not indulging in any treasonable traffic. The sentiment which it expresses of "Patrial love" and of "Loyalty" may have been dissimulation, but if so, it was dissimulation without purpose. There is no indication that the letter was ever sent, and although there may be possibly be those who suspect it to be a blind to cover up the real purposes of the organization, such a strained explanation is far less convincing than that which accepts the letter for what it purports itself to be, the grievous complaint of loyal and loving subjects. The letter in question reads as follows:

Address to the King for ye Dissolution of the Union
Drawn by G: Buchannan approven by the Club and ordered to be sent. Sign'd in ye club feby 9, 1715. 3

Sir,
Allow us your Majesties subjects of the Easy Club Natives of the Most Ancient Kingdom of Scotland to Address your Majestie

1. "The beneficial results of the Union were slow of being felt, and for some twenty years the people saw less of the advantages than of the hardships it entailed - heavier taxes, more duties, vexatious restrictions, and dangerous competition with the trade of England, and a lost trade with France." (Graham: Social Life in Scotland, pages 513-514.) See also Hume Brown: History of Scotland, Vol. 3, passim.


3. For the minute of the meeting at which this letter was read, approved, and signed, see page 45, above.
as a Society full of Patrial love and acted by principles truly
calculated for ye benefit of mankind which cannot be better
and more fully expressed than by our Name. Though we are
Restricted by our Constitution from Concerning or Declaring
ourselves in Publick affairs and Nationall politicks (being of
no party) Yet when our Countreys grievances are proclaim'd by
all factions we allow our Selves to appear and as true Sons
of Fergusia have Courage to own our sentiments and adhere to
our first Resolution of Contributing all our powers for ye
advancement of ye Interest of our Countrey - And there being
now an Unhappy Occasion for our Appearance As we pray Almighty
God to Deliver us, and preserve our posterity from the Miseries
Scotland now groans under So we hope to Receive the Mercy by
your Majesties hands which brings us to The Throne at this
time to Expose the Cause of ye Lamentable declining Condition
of our Countrey under all ye Ruining Discouragements imaginable.
And to plead - Which we are the more encouraged to do as the
Antiquity of the Royall line of Scotland is ye most Splendid
Jewell in Your Majesties Crown Bright and blazing with heroes
and Saints attracting and Commanding Respect from all the
Princes of Christendom as a Dutifull Acknowledgement of Cadets
to their Common Chief and as your Subjects of Scotland have been
Remarkably Loyall and faithfull to your Royall predecessors by
a dutifull adherence in ye worst of times which with their own
Heroick Valour and Conduct under ye favour of providence has
kept a Scepter in their hands these 2000 years which few nations
or families can Boast of. The Consideration of which we hope
will determine your Majestie to do all possible for ye interest
of a people you are so much Concern'd in and Maintaining that
Naturall Love and Loyalty we have always express'd to your
Royall Family and as our interest cannot be effectually promoted,
our Love maintain'd and our Loyalty secur'd But by your Majestie's
dsolving our late Union with England the first cause and
fountain of all the greatest ills Scotland Suffers or fears
We earnestly Beg with all ye Concern a sense of the greatest
Evil can be imagined to affect us with You will Employ your
Sovereign Power and influence to do as soon as possible and
Restore to us that Freedom and independency we so long Enjoyed
under the fatherly Administration of your Royall ancestors By
doing this your Majestie will declare yourself the descendent
and truly worthy ye Offspring of the great Fergusi who first
founded the Scots Monarchy and after Restor'd it from ye worst
of Circumstances Your Memory will be truly glorious and your
Reign a bright Exemplar of ye Love and duty of a Scots monarch.
We shall not determine who is to blame for this greatest
Misfortune ever happen'd to Scotia Your Royall Wisdom can best
Judge of it But we hope there were few thinking Men in England
but will grant (now after tryal) that peace and friendship with
all their advantages may be better establishd and secur'd
between Scotland and England otherways than by this Union which
will certainly maintain Eternal discord and discontent to ye
prejudice of Both which may be put to an end and a solid peace
and good Understanding setled and secured by a federacy between ye parliaments of ye 2 Kingdoms Beggin your Majesties pardon for our importunity we Beg Leave only to add this which we are assur'd of from many sad proofs - That if this Union be not speedily dissolv'd Scotland will be Ruin'd ye name of Scots men which was life and soul to armies and Confederacies will be furled and ye glory of ye Best of Royall families must fall hoping your majestie will hear us and graciously hasten to Relieve and Redress us we are May it please &c.

If the reader will accept the evidence of the extant records of the Easy Club, and reject the wild surmises of the host of literary muddlers who have thoroughly clouded the issue in the past, I submit to him that this letter, which was the culmination of the political activities of the Club, such as they were, is conclusive proof of the corporate loyalty of that organization, and that in so far as the Club was concerned, irrespective of the individual attitude of its members, the letter alone is sufficient reason for rejecting the charge of Jacobitism which has so unfairly, and so unreasonably been brought against them. In addition to the letter, however, there is the corroborative evidence of the club records which, after the letter itself had been framed and approved, record the Club’s resolution to exclude politics forever. And the enactment "that the Club shall never be acters or intermedlers in politics as a Society," was apparently made in good faith, for from this point on political matters disappear from the Club’s records.

Having forsaken politics, at the meeting of Wednesday June 29, 1715, the members discussed "Friendship". This discussion, which may have had some connection with Ramsay’s poem "On Friendship",

1. See the minute of the meeting of February 9, 1715, quoted on page 43, above.

led to a resolution to correspond with an absent member. This member, Mr. Edgar, or "Sir Roger L'Estrange", had left for Leyden at the end of April in the year 1713 "to prosecute his study of the law." In accordance with the Club's resolution, a letter was written to Mr. Edgar, who had been given the new name of Michael Scott in absentia. This letter, which provides us with a very lively and engaging picture of the Club's activities, reads as follows:

To Michael Scott,

Last Wednesday The Subject of our Conversation in The Easy club was Friendship we had not long discours'd of it and considered our selves as engaged to one another by that nearest Relation till we found we are Justly Blameable for being so much wanting to our selves and unfaithfull to our obligations to you as a friend and fellow Member of this Society By so long neglecting epistolary Correspondence Upon which I was appointed to write you as I here do without any ceremonie That we excuse you as not knowing whether ye club yet subsisted and frankly acknowledge our selves in the wrong But we hope that your good humour and aggreeable easy temper will easily pardon this neglect.

To make some amends I shall give you a short account of the state of the club for these 2 last years We had no meeting for 6 months after you left this place Then we had about 2 months session In which we made some improvements upon our Constitution We Rejected english patrons and Chose Scots authors or heroes, Roch is now Ld. Napier Is Bick is Gaw Douglas Rich, Blackmore is Blind Harry, Heywood is Dr. Pitcairn, Tom Brown chose Samuell Colvil But he is now ejected and extruded the Club I continue the same We have added Zach Boyd Sir Wm. Wallace L. Beilhaven Davie Lindsay Beck Boethius and John Barclay, all of your acquaintance We call you By the name of Mich: Scot if you are not pleased you have the liberty of choice.

During this session there was a poetick war between Gawin and Ld. Napier we were often amused with Letters and Poems and spent many evenings very agreeably After this we had 10 months vacance till the 6th of Decr. last from which time we have not failed to meet once a week.

The Corporating spirit gains upon us and we grow every day more Sociable & as a proof of it by a special act have appointed the 12th day of May being the day this our Societie first met and was constituted An Anniversary Feast to be observ'd in all time coming By the Club and accordingly spent ye 12th of last month in Countrey Diversions mirth and Jollity and ended it as true gallick Juice inspir'd we Remembred you frequently that day.

Our Correspondence and friendship is so settled and secured that we now meet in a hall or Dome of our own where we enjoy our selves at large free from tavern noise and the Slavish obligations of drinking contrary to our inclinations. Here we are in no fear of being overheard By such who are Ready to misconstrucc our innocent Mirth But have all the advantage of a private Retreat.

Our Conversation is as free of party as ever But upon all other subjects we express our selves with a great deal of freedom.

George Buchannan.

The account contained in this letter is valuable for the reason that it helps us to place the Easy Club in its proper classification.

From "Buchannan's" description of the activities of the organization, of its lack of formality, its conviviality, and its "poetic war", it is obvious that the Easy Club belongs to that class of literary assemblies which I have designated literary clubs, and it is worthwhile to observe at this point that the Easy Club is not only the first of such clubs, but that it may also be taken, for the purposes of this study, as a model for the many similar institutions which came after it. For one thing, it was the custom in the Easy Club to elect at each meeting a "praeses", whom the members addressed as "Master Easy".

We shall have cause to notice that this organizational device was adopted by many famous literary clubs, and that it was common to many literary societies as well. A second feature of the Easy Club which it will be well to keep in mind is that the members formed, in effect, a select and sympathetic audience upon which the Poet Laureat, Allan
Ramsay, could try his poetic gifts, and "it was probably under the patronage of the Easy Club that Ramsay made his bow to the world at large as a poet."

It may have occurred to some readers that the Scots poetry of Allan Ramsay is hardly convincing evidence of a tendency for Scottish authors to imitate English examples. But even if this argument is allowed, and there are those who have found flaws in it, Ramsay was not the only poet who was active in Scotland at this period. From Ramsay of Ochtertyre, we learn that there were young persons in Scotland who had "bethought themselves of writing English poetry."

Although Ramsay of Ochtertyre was apparently unaware of the fact, the young persons to whom he referred were of both sexes. This circumstance, which excites little interest today, was of a sufficient rareness in Ramsay's day to have warranted his comment had he been aware of it. The laird of Ochtertyre, however, still has much of interest to tell us:

Whilst Allan Ramsay was high in request, some of his countrymen bethought them of writing English poetry. Who were the earliest promoters of this seemingly romantic undertaking,

2. "The introduction of southern English as the standard form of speech after the union of the crowns, and still more after the union of the parliaments, gradually modified the characteristic language of Scotland, till most of its distinctive features disappeared, while a literary jargon was developed which was neither pure Scotch nor pure English, and which has been happily termed "fancy" Scotch. The first notable poet who wrote in this mongrel dialect was Allan Ramsay (1686 - 1758)." (The Americana Encyclopedia, Vol. 13, article on Scotland - this work has no pagination.)
4. Ibid.
it would be idle now to enquire, but in the year 1719 there is written evidence that there were societies at Edinburgh, consisting partly of poetical men. If their first essays in compositions did not bespeak first-rate genius, the very attempt deserved praise. By drawing the attention of their countrymen to English poetry, they called forth the latent powers of persons to whom Nature had been more liberal in her gifts, though their modesty hindered them to break the ice by any vigorous effort. Those would be wits would hardly have been mentioned here had they not been the precursors of men whose works have been admitted into the canon of English poetry. Thomson and Mallet, the most eminent of them, commenced their career at Edinburgh nearly about the same time: and though very different men in all respects, their friendship continued without interruption to the last.

The societies of "would be wits" to which Ramsay of Ochtertyre referred are not known, with the exception of the Athenian Society of Edinburgh which he mentioned in his note to the passage quoted above. However, very little is known of this society, but it

1. At this point, Ramsay adds a long note. "In the year 1719 five translations of Horace's 'Epistle to Nero' were printed at Edinburgh, with a rambling dedication, written by one who styles himself a member of the Athenian Society. Four of them are written by Scotsmen. The first by a Mr. Stewart, to the Duke of Marlborough; the second by a Mr. Boyd, to Mr. Rowe, poet laureate; the third by a Mr. Cunningham, to Bishop Hoadley; and the fourth by Mr. Joseph Mitchell, to a Lady in favour of a lover. Of the three first nothing, even their Christian names, is known at present; only they seem to have been men of some fashion, and are greatly praised by the dedication for their taste and proficiency in the belles lettres. Mitchell, who was an author by profession, published a small volume of poems, which were little thought of at the time. Ramsay says he had written a tragedy. Of the translations it is needless to say much, as they are below mediocrity. Mr. Abercromby told me that Callender of Craigforth, father to the late John Callender, Mr. Robert Symson, and Mr. Duncan, minister of Tillicoultry, were members of Mitchell's club. Of the first of these three, Richard Dundas of Blair (no poetical man) spoke slightly, as a flimsy, affected lad. He died young. Mr. Symson was afterwards travelling governor to Lord Brooke, latterly Earl of Warwick. Mr. Abercromby and I supped in his house at London in March 1758, when he appeared to be a lively, learned, pleasant man. Mr. Duncan was a man of much wit and genius, and very amiable in his manners, a great friend of Mr. Abercromby and his lady. (This note is continued on the next page.)"

2. See note #1 directly above.
seems likely that it was modelled on the Athenian Society of London. But if Ochtertyre had mentioned that there was a society of young ladies active in the movement to promote English poetry, we should have known at once that he was referring to the Fair Intellectual Club of Edinburgh.

The Fair Intellectual Club was a society which was founded by three young women in May 1717. The names of the founders are unknown, but there is an excellent account of their club contained in their Account of the Fair Intellectual Club in Edinburgh: In a Letter to an Honourable Member of an Athenian Society there, which was published as a pamphlet in 1720 by James M’Euen, an Edinburgh bookseller.

He got his death by travelling on a tempestuous winter day to preach at Norriestown. Mitchell, who afterwards went to London, and became a ministerial writer, published, in conjunction with associates, a work entitled the "Scots Miscellany," which is now very rare. The poems are in general but indifferent; the best one by Mallet, then a very young man, and a very poor one by Craigforth. In December 1762 I saw, in Mrs. Walker's Inn at Dunfermline, a small volume of poems by that class of people. I remember neither the title nor contents, but I was struck with many verses by the author of the 'Night Thoughts', to these juvenile poets, praising them for their generous attempt to introduce the English muses into Scotland. I wished, on my return to that country, to have got hold of this literary relic; but Mrs. Walker was dead, and everything sold or dispersed." (Ramsay of Ochtertyre: Scotsland and Scotsmen of the 18th Century, Vol. 1, pages 22-23, note.)

1. For the Athenian Society see The Athenian Gazette: or Casuistical Mercury, resolving all the most nice and curious questions proposed by the ingenious, etc. London: 1691. Also the Athenian Oracle, being an entire collection of all the valuable questions and answers in the old Athenian Mercuries, and a supplement to the Athenian Oracle... To which is prefixed The History of the Athenian Society, and an Essay upon learning By a member of the Athenian Society. London: 1705, 1710, and 1728.

In a letter to M'Euen which appeared as a preface to the pamphlet, an anonymous member of the Athenian Club related how the account of the Fair Intellectual Club came to be published:

Mr. James M'Euen, October 16, 1719.

Sir,

We have at length, through the Interest and Means of the Honourable C. C____n, Esquire, prevailed with the Ladies of the Fair Intellectual Club, to publish their Secretary's Letter, written to him some Months ago. Accordingly I have the Authority and Pleasure to convey the Manuscript, faithfully transcribed to your Hand; that so rare a Pattern and Example of Female Excellence may be no longer conceal'd, but set out to the View and Imitation of the less polite Part of that delicate Sex. Believe me to be with much Respect,

Sir,

Your, etc.,

The letter to "the Honourable Member of the Athenian Society" which contains the account of the Fair Intellectual Club reads as follows:

Sir;

The Intreaties of that Honourable Society whereof you are so deservedly a Member, have, with difficulty, prevail'd on our Club, to let you into the Secret of its Original and present Constitution. Accordingly, I am honoured by my Sisters, to entertain you, with a brief detail of the most considerable circumstances, in our History....

In the Month of May 1717, three young Ladies happened to divert our selves by walking in Heriot's Gardens, where one of us took Occasion to propose that we should enter into a Society, for Improvement of one another in the Study and Practice of such Things, as might contribute most effectually to our Accomplishment. This Overture she enforc'd with a great deal of Reasoning, that dispos'd the other two cheerfully to comply with it. The Honour of our Sex in general, as well as our particular Interest, was intended, when we made that Agreement. We thought it a great Pity, that Women, who excell a great many others in Birth and Fortune, should not also be more eminent in Virtue and good Sense, which we might attain unto, if we were as industrious to cultivate our Minds, as we are to adorn our Bodies.

1. Account of the Fair Intellectual Club etc., preface.
2. This may have been the "Mr. Cunningham" mentioned by Ramsay of Ochtertyre. See note #1 on pages 50-51, above.
3. Account of the Fair Intellectual Club etc., page 1 f.
In writing to you, I flatter my self, it is needless to insist in proving we are capable of a great many Arts and Virtues, that we too much neglect to Study and practise; neither need I mention the Reasons that determin’d us to make such a Transaction. The Hints already offered are sufficient to let an intelligent Person see, we neither go out of our Sphere, nor have acted inconsiderately in what we have done: And more to the same purpose may fall in naturally hereafter. In the mean time, I shall proceed to tell you, That, according to our Paccion, we resolved to meet in my Chamber on another Day, when, after deliberation, we might concert Measures jointly for the Establishment of our Club. When the appointed Time came, we met, and delivered by Turns, the Sentiments we had prepared before hand by our selves. After much serious Conference, ’twas concluded, That, neither a lesser nor greater Number than Nine should make up what we were to Name, The FAIR INTELLECTUAL-CLUB. We were apprehensive it would not be easy to find out other Six, whose Humours and Qualifications would render them every way fit and agreeable Companions, in that Relation. However, we resolves’d to spare no Pains in making a prudent Choice. And in Order to maintain our wished for Harmony and Order, we immedi-
ately proceeded to adjust some Things among our selves, ere any more were invited to join us. But finding it a Matter of great Importance to our Club, to have it well established, we judged it expedient to adjourn our Meeting yet some Days further, and, in the Interval have our Thoughts busied, concerning what might be most proper to be gone into, at our Meeting. Each of us gave in a written Scheme of what we thought most expedient to be agreed on, for the Regulation of the Club. We reasoned on every Article proposed, and recorded, in a separate Paper, whatsover we gave mutual Assent unto. Thus rejecting all the Over-
tures made by any of us, that were not approven and received by us all, we fixed on a few Articles, to which we unanimously agreed, on that Occasion. Yet because we were conscious of the Importance of the Transaction, it was judged requisite to ad-
journ till another Day, that we might be the more disposed to subscribe to what was concluded before.

You must have the Charity, Sir, to believe we were very serious and deliberate in our Retirements, while we endeavoured to be fully satisfied in our own Minds concerning the Reasonableness and Expediency of what we were to do. The more Time we spent in thinking and conferring together upon the Measures we had laid down, we were the more cheerfully disposed to adhere to them; in so much that, when the Time of Meeting came, we were all ready to accomplish our Design, with the greatest Hope of Success and Expressions of mutual Love and Friendship.

The Original of our Club being this so fairly represented to you, Sir, it will not be thought unnatural in the next place, to deliver the Contents of the Paper which we subscribed, upon the first Thursday of June, and which I here transcribe from the Original it self; as follows.

We, whose Names are underwritten, being sensible of the Disadvantages that our Sex in General and we in particular labour under, for want of an established Order and Method in our Conversation; And being ambitious to imitate the laudable Example of some of our Brethren, that make the greatest Figure in the learn'd polite World, in so far as we are capable and may reasonably be allowed, by entering into a mutual Compact and Agreement, to act for the Interest and Improvement of one another, in our Meetings; have resolved to establish a Club called, The Fair-Intellectual-Club; and hereby declare our Assent, and Purpose to observe, (whilst we are alive and unmarried) The Rules and Constitutions, which follow;

1. That we shall maintain a sincere and constant mutual Friendship, while we live; and never directly nor indirectly reveal or make known, without Consent of the whole Club asked and given, the Names of the Members, or Nature of the Club.

2. That none shall be invited or admitted into the Club before her Name be proposed in it, and her Merits considered, and Allowance given by all the Members to have her introduced.

3. That none shall be declared a Member of our Club, before she hath, in our Presence, subscribed her Name to the Rules and Constitutions thereof.

4. That we shall never admit more than Nine into our Club, of which Five shall be counted a Quorum sufficient to act in Absence of the rest, as if the Number was compleat.

5. That none shall be invited or admitted into our Club before she be fifteen Years of Age, nor after her twentieth Year is expired.

6. That altho' different Principles and Politicks shall be no Hindrance to the Admission of Members into our Club, being Protestants: yet none shall presume to urge these directly or indirectly in our Meetings on Pain of Censure.

7. That altho' we may, on proper Occasions, make Excursions in Commendation of the Genius and Conduct of other People; yet none shall be guilty of practising the willy Arts of Censure and Ridicule, on Pain of Censure.

8. That every Person at her first admission into the Club, shall entertain the Club with a written Harangue, and deliver the Sum of Ten Shillings Sterling, for the Use of the Poor, as we shall direct.
9. That one shall be chosen at the Beginning of each Quarter of the Year, in our Meetings, to whom we shall address our- selves when we speak, by the Name of Mistress Speaker, and pay all the due Respect to her that becometh us to owe, whom we impow'r to determine Differences, silence Debates, censure Transgressors, state Votes; and in a Word, to per- form all the Offices that one in the Character of Preses may reasonably be allowed to do.

10. That Mistress Speaker shall entertain the Club with a written Speech of her own Composure, immediately before the Election of one to succeed her in the Chair.

11. That we shall elect a Secretary to the Club, at the Begin¬ ning of each Quarter, immediately after the Choice of Mrs Speaker; and that she shall record in a Book, and have the Custody of the Minutes of our Management, as of all other Papers presented to the Club.

12. That Mrs Secretary shall read over the Minutes of all that pass'd in the Club during her Quarter, immediately before the Election of one to succeed her.

13. That we shall punctually attend on all the Meetings of our Club, which for ordinary are to be once a Week; and that Absents shall be censured, unless their Excuses be found to be good.

14. That whosoever refuses to submit to the Command and Rebukes of the Club pronounced by Mrs Speaker, shall be expelled from it, if sober Reasoning can't prevail.

15. That when Death, Marriage, or other important Occurrences shall in the Course of Providence, remove any Member from our Club, Care shall be taken to make a speedy Supply of her Room, lest the Club suffer, or go to nothing.

16. That we shall not be limited by our Subscriptions from making new Regulations, Additions or Alterations, for our greater Good and Improvement, from Time to Time, as we shall see Cause.

These Articles above mentioned were subscrib'd by us three, that compos'd them, before any were invited to join us. Two Weeks pass'd ere we cou'd agree in the Choice of one to be a Member; We thought we cou'd not be too cautious of admitting others into our Club, which we designed for such noble Purposes. We were ambitious of a rational and select Conversation, compos'd of Persons who have the Talent of pleasing with Delicacy of Sentiments flowing from Habitual Chastity of Thought; We were eager to keep out Pretenders to Mirth and Gallantry, and all such who with constrain'd, obscene and painful Witticisms,
pester People in mix'd Companies. At Length we unanimously
pitch'd on Three, whose Genius and Conduct were most agreeable.
These we endeavoured by several honest Means to gain. The
six met, according to a Paction, in my Chamber, where I in
Name of my Sisters, inform'd them of the Nature of our Club,
and read over the Rules and Constitutions of it in their
Hearing, to which they cheerfully subscribed. Now we had a
sufficient Quorum, and were capable to act, according to our
Rules, as we judg'd expedient. A Day was appointed for our
Meeting, when we were also to chuse a Speaker and Secretary.
But ere the Time came, we found a seventh Member to our
unspeakable Satisfaction. Out of the Seven Mrs. Speaker and
Mrs. Secretary were chosen. You need not doubt, Sir, but we
made a prudent Choice of Mrs. Speaker. As for me, who had
the Honour to be made Secretary, I shall not be so proud as
to appear sneakingly Modest, by running down my own Abilities
for the second Post in our Club, which consisted merely in a
greater Dexterity in Writing than the rest pretended to. Mrs.
Speaker being plac'd in her Chair, and I at the Table, with
proper Materials for the Discharge of my Duty, the Club agreed
that we should adjourn our Meeting till the first Thursday of
July, and in the Interval seek out other two Ladies qualified
to join us, and make our Number complete. As also, Mrs. Speaker
was required to prepare a Speech to be delivered by her at the
opening of our grand Assembly. It happened very luckily, that
before the first Thursday of July came, our Club was made up;
Thus gradually are great Affairs brought to perfection.

In her speech to the members of the Fair Intellectual Club at
the opening of their "Grand Assembly", Mrs. Speaker, after holding
forth at some length on their duties in the matter of cultivating morals
and in the practice of Christian behaviour, suggested measures to be
taken "to improve our Minds in useful knowledge, and render us exemplary
11
to all who observe our Conduct!":

'Tis requisite we should also, with due Dependance on the
divine Blessing, read proper Books in our respective Abodes.
The Circumstances of Life make these less our Study, than
of the Male Sex, yet the Propensity we find in our Natures to
read, and the Improvements some of our Kind have made by
Study, may satisfy us that it is an Injustice to deprive us
of those Means of Knowledge. Now else shall we express our
Fondness to have our Natures reformed and refute these
scandalous Aspersions cast upon our Sex, that we are made

1. Account of the Fair Intellectual Club etc., page 17.
up of Pride, Affectation, Inconstancy, Falsehood, Treachery, Tyranny, Lust, Ambition, Wantonness, Levity, Disguise, Coquetry, and the like ill things, so often in the mouths and Writings of Men? For my Part, Ladies, I think the safest and surest Way of Gainsaying such light Accounts of our Sex, is to think them all Truths, till we can work up our own Minds and Practice to such a Pitch of Greatness, as we may look down on Pity on the vulgar Mistakes concerning us. Let us endeavour to attain such Habits and Dispositions of Soul, as cannot be justly censured; till we arrive that Length, I don't see how we can be secured from Raillery, or yet offended at it. Accordingly our Studies shou'd chiefly be such, as lead to Rectitude of Mind and Life: And if I were to name proper Books for that Purpose, I cou'd not make a better Choice than, I believe, all of you have already done in reading The Whole Duty of Man, Bishop Tillotson's Sermons, Charity on Wisdom, The Tatler, Spectator, Guardian, Lady's Library, Hallifax's Advice to a Daughter, Reflections on Ridicule, The Gentleman Instructed, Lucas on Happiness, and the like. These are of constant and universal Use to form the Mind, and direct us in all the Relations of Life that do now, or may possibly concern us, as Women and Christians. And how useful and entertaining will it be for us frequently to converse in our Meetings, on Subjects concerning which we have read in our Retirements!

The same speech contains, besides these admonitions to improvement, certain compliments to the lady members for their accomplishments:

I believe I carry the Commenation no further than it should be, when I say, that by your Diligence you understand History, Geography, Arithmetick and such like Business, so useful in Life, as well as any of your Sex. Nor do you confine your Studies so much, as to neglect the French and Italian languages, which are accounted so polite and fashionable in this Age. But when I consider the Improvements all of you have made in the English language, I can never cease to admire your Judgment and Application. As nothing less than a right Taste of the Excellency and Beauty of Writing and Speaking well, could determine you to be at such Pains to attain them; so, without great Industry and Application, it had been impossible for you to have become Mistress of the English Language in such Perfection; especially considering, how difficult it is for our Country People to acquire it."

There is further proof that the Fair Intellectual Club was active in promoting interest in English literary models. The Club was


2. For a discussion of the efforts of the Scots to learn English, see Chapter 4, page 166 f.
responsible for the publication of a Collection of poems under the title of the Edinburgh Miscellany. This Miscellany is of considerable interest, because in addition to contributions from the members of the Fair Intellectual Club, it also contains "the earliest productions of Thomson, Home, and Mallet." In a preface to the collection,


2. Some of the more interesting pieces in the collection are:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a very boring and Speculative Gentleman, by Mr. Hume. (Home?)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a certain dull Beau at the Play-House, by the same hand.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ode xxiii of Anacreon, English'd by the same hand.</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Song, by the same hand.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epithalamium On the Marriage of My Lord _____ with Lady _____. By a young Lady of the Fair Intellectual Club, present at the Marriage. (Initial) H.</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Song by the same hand.</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pastoral Elegy, Sacred to the Memory of her deceased Lover. By a young Lady, a member of the Fair Intellectual Club. (Initial) H.</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Countess of ____ Concerning the Present State of Love and Poetry. By a member of the Fair Intellectual Club. (Initial) C.</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
one of the members of the Fair Intellectual Club explained the purpose and the motives behind their efforts.

The Publishers of this Miscellany have the Pleasure to entertain their Country, and particularly this good Town, with a variety of Poems, that had either never been compos'd, or never seen the Light without it. There are indeed several Performances Scattered throughout this Volume that have formerly appear'd in print, and would have got no Place here, if the Nature of a Miscellany had not require'd their Presence, or if People cou'd have had the Patience to peruse them with all the Disadvantages that bad Paper and Types afforded elsewhere. Most of the Pieces that are new, or were never published before, have the initial Letter of their Author's Name subscribed to them, as they were convey'd to us. We don't pretend to know every one whose Productions we have judg'd tolerable, and worthy of a Place in this Collection. But, if we guess right, the best of 'em are done by young People, at School or College. This we reckon, is so far from being a reproach to the Miscellany, that it shou'd recommend it, and give a promising Idea of our rising Generation. And we own it, we have ventur'd to publish several juvenile Poems, where the Dawings (sic) of a good Genius appear'd, merely to encourage the Authors, and raise a generous Emulation amongst their Companions. Perhaps our Fondness to cherish the sprightly Youth, has occasion'd some blunders here and there in this Volume, which we would not have indulg'd in the Performances of more grown People. Yet, we are confident, there are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of a Country Life, by a Student in the University.</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon Happiness, by the same hand.</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verses On receiving a Flower from his Mistress, by the same hand.</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horace, Book I. By James Arbuckle.</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pastoral Inscrib'd to Mr. M____l, by a Youth in his Fifteenth Year. (initials) D. M. (David Mallet?)</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II of Solomon’s Song, by the same hand.</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grove or Interview, by the same hand.</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epithalamium on The Marriage of a Friend, by a boy in his Fifteenth Year. D. N.</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The Edinburgh Miscellany, preface.
fewer Faults in their Productions, than may be found in the
Poems formerly printed in the Scots Miscellany and other Papers,
published by Men of Character. As for the Ladies, who have
generously contributed to make up this Work, we are proud to
declare, that, tho' they have sent us few of their Compositions,
they have sent nothing that is refuse. And therefore, while
we publickly thank them for the Assistance already receiv'd,
we beg they will continue to shine like the brighter constella-
tions amongst Luminaries of a dimmer Aspect. The rest of that
delicate Sex, will excuse us, tho' we particularly thank the
Fair Intellectual Club for the Poems they have been pleas'd to
favour us with for publick use. And we presume the ingenious
Readers of their Performances will allow us to intertreat them
to send more to bespangle the second volume.

Tho' the snarling Part of Mankind may easily find Matter to
work on here; tho' they may censure, very justly, a great
many Poems taken separately; yet there are also Pieces against
which Malice it self can find no Exception, for the sake of
which the rest may be allowed to pass Scot-free (to use our
own Idiom) in a work of this Sort. If the Refuse were
judiciously separated from the good stuff, in many English
collections of Poetry, we would have fewer, at least less
bulky ones at present. But 'tis not our Design to curry
Favour to our selves, or to obviate the Objections that may be
rais'd against the following Miscellany, from a Flea of Error
in the Undertakings and Performances of others. As we are
conscious of the integrity and Generosity of our Endeavours
for the Honour of our Country and the Improvement of the
Youth, so we dread not the Fury of those who think 'tis modish
and witty to Censure. We reckon we are secure enough against
the Arms of Envy, yet freely allow others to think and speak
as they please concerning Poetry and this particular Collection;
Tho' we can't help putting the Readers in mind, that since
they are not solemnly invited to the Entertainment, but come
accidentally, they ought to be contented with what they find.
And pray what have they to complain of, but too great variety?
Where, tho' some of the Pishes (as a certain Author writes)
be not served in the exactest Order and Politeness, but hash'd
up in haste, there are a great many accommodated to every
particular Palate. To like every thing shows too little
Delicacy; and to like nothing, too much Difficulty. So great
is the Variety of this Collection, that the Reader who is never
pleased will appear as monstrous, as he that is always so.
Amongst such different Hands and Arguments it cannot be expected
that they, should all be equally finished; neither, if they
were so, would they be so esteem'd be Readers of different
Palates. The worst Poem here may please somebody. To please
every one would be a new thing, as to write to nobody's satis-
faction would also be prodigious. And the same Poem that
pleases not a Reader's Humour and Taste at one time, may at
another.
We shall conclude, when we have advis'd the Readers to pass over what suits not their Humour, since the shortness of the Poems and their various Subjects cannot but afford something in one Place or another of the Volume that may be entertaining. Our Book-seller desires we should add, that, since there are none of our own Compositions here, the second Volume (which may succeed this very soon) shall contain a considerable Number of them.

W. C.

Although the second volume did not make its appearance, the 

Edinburgh Miscellany apparently achieved some success as a second edition was called for. And although nothing further is known regarding this club of young women, it is obvious that the fair sex of Edinburgh did not neglect the cultivation of English literary models, and it is interesting to observe that like their male counterparts, they chose to do this in the fashionable form of a literary association. But I suppose that there will be those who will regard the Fair Intellectual Club, especially in view of the notorious fondness of Scottish ladies for their Bonny Prince, as nothing less than a group of female Jacobites who were as deeply involved in plots for the restoration of the Stuart's as were the masculine conspirators of the Easy Club.

With the aid of the records which have survived of the activities and organization of the Easy Club and of the Fair Intellectual Society, it has been possible for me to give a detailed and relatively straightforward account of those organizations. We shall realize just how important such records are when we are confronted with the task of presenting the separate details of two

1. "In this second edition there appears to be a leaf wanting being pages 93 & 94. - This has been occasioned by a substitution of David's Elegy p. 95 for two poems which occur in the first edition, which have apparently given offence, named 'Str____s' Farwell to
very similar associations which have, during the intervening years, become so inextricably confused that they appear at first sight to be one organization. The two societies are the Rankenian Club, established in 1717, and a "Society for Improving in Classical Lore" established by Thomas Ruddiman the grammarian in 1718. Of the two societies, it may be said that though little is known of the one established by Thomas Ruddiman, the tradition which has survived of the Rankenian Club's activities is of sufficient importance to make the disappearance of its records, if any were kept, a very real loss to the history of Scottish literature. An article in the Scots Magazine for May, 1771, for example, contained the following evaluation of this literary society:

In 1717 a society, called, The Rankenian Club, from the master of the tavern at which it met, being instituted, at Edinburgh, by some young gentlemen of the first abilities in those days, Dr. Wallace was one of its original Fellows; and the deceased Dr. Wishart, Principal of the College, the celebrated Mr. Maclaurin, Professor of Mathematics; the late Sir Andrew Mitchel, Knight of the Bath, Dr. Young, author of an admirable treatise on opium, and others, of whom several are still alive, were numbered among its members. Its object was mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational inquiry; its influence, however, was not confined to the individuals of whom it consisted. It is well known, that the Rankenians were highly instrumental in disseminating through Scotland freedom of thought, boldness of disquisition, liberality of sentiment, accuracy of reasoning, correctness of taste, and attention to composition; and that the exalted rank which Scotsmen hold at present in the republic of letters, is greatly owing to the manner and the spirit begun by that Society...
When dealing with such an important organization, it is disappointing indeed to have to rely on mere hearsay, or on the fallible evidence which the memory of individual members provides. Such evidence, however, is certainly better than nothing, though, as shall presently be abundantly clear, it can be very confusing.

Despite the lack of precise knowledge, however, a great deal has been written about both the Rankenian Club and the society established by Thomas Ruddiman. When these accounts are compared, three facts appear to be well established. The first of these is, as has already been mentioned, that there were actually two separate literary organizations, instead of one, though they may have met in the same tavern. The second fact is that the first of these organizations, the Rankenian Club, was established in 1717. It is very important to observe that Henry Home, afterwards Lord Kames, and Thomas Ruddiman were almost


certainly not among its members. The significance of this seemingly irrelevant fact will appear in a moment. The third fact is that a second society, "for the improvement in classical learning", was established by Thomas Ruddiman in 1718, and we know that soon after its establishment the society was joined by Henry Home.

Of these three facts, the uncertainty concerning the membership of Lord Kames and of Thomas Ruddiman in the Rankenian Club is a most vexing issue. Despite the definite statement of John Ramsay of Ochtertyer that Kames was not a member; that Ruddiman, according to his biographer George Chalmers, left positive evidence that he was not a member; and that neither appeared in the only reliable list we have of the members of this society, Kames himself, in a conversation with James Boswell, made a statement which implied that he was a member of the Rankenian. But not only does Lord Kames make his statement that he was a member of the club, he makes the same claim for Thomas Ruddiman. And this perplexing contradiction to all that was known heretofore comes in a most dangerous form, for Kames's statement is included in the Malahide papers of James Boswell. I have said the most dangerous form, because the Malahide papers were truly the find of the century, and I believe that until we become a little more used to the wonder of them, there will naturally

---

See the arguments set forth on pages 65 - 67.


"Whatever was the reason, he (Lord Kames) was not a member of the Rankenian club," (Ramsay of Ochtertyre: Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century, Vol. I, page 196, note.)

For the evidence that Ruddiman was not a member of the club see pages 67 and 72, below.
be a strong predisposition to accept them as the final authority. But if I may be allowed to pour a little cold water on the heat of their sensational reputation, I would like to point out that the Malahide papers, as wonderful as they are, must be evaluated on the same basis as any similar documents. Even the magic name of James Boswell cannot make facts out of fiction.

The episode which led Kames's implication that he was a member of the Rankenian Club began when Sir Alexander Dick of Prestonfield sent James Boswell a few remarks for use in preparing a biography of Lord Kames, a work which Boswell was then seriously considering. Sir Alexander's remarks read as follows:

Anecdotes From Sir Alexander Dick for Mr. Boswell's use Relative to Lord Kaims. Feb. 12, 1780.

19. Sir Alexander thinks it was about the year 1722 or 23 that he first came acquainted with Mr. Henry Home, advocate, now Lord Kaims, when he was initiated in a club which met every Wednesday evening to hold discourses and disputations upon various subjects, chiefly of Philosophy and Law. Questions in Religion, he thinks, were not allowed, tho' sometimes they were slyly introduced. The Father of the Club was the very learned old Mr. Thomas Rudiman, a Printer, and Keeper of the Advocates' Library.... and I think this was called the Rankenian Club, (from one Rankin who kept the house,) if my memory does not fail me.

On the following day, Boswell took Sir Alexander Dick's account to Lord Kames, and he records a number of somewhat caustic observations made by his Lordship under the date of February 13, 1780. These remarks follow:

Told me (by Lord Kaims) 13 February 1780, written Down next day.

He said Sir Alexander Dick was quite mistaken as to the Origin of the Rankinian Club - that Religion was excluded. On the contrary, their topics were chiefly Religious, and the only property they had in common was a Bible... Ranken's house was at the head of Kennedy's Close. My lord could go to it yet. The club was very cheap, only twopence apiece.

If we test this direct evidence, which was given, significantly enough, some sixty years after the event, by the touchstone of our three facts, the results are truly disconcerting. If Thomas Ruddiman was "the Father of the Club," it cannot have been the Rankenian at all, but must have been the Society for Classical Studies which Ruddiman formed in 1718. It will be noted, however, that Sir Alexander Dick's statement regarding the name of the organization to which both accounts refer is conjectural. "I think this was called the Rankinian Club," writes Sir Alexander, "if my memory does not fail me." We have evidence which indicates that Sir Alexander Dick was himself a member of the Rankenian, and though it is nowhere stated that he was also a member of Ruddiman's society as well, I am certain that he must have been, how else could he have remembered a club in which Ruddiman took part. In the long interval which intervened between his activities in those organizations and his account of one of them sixty years later, the two clubs must have become thoroughly confused in his mind.

In his statement, Lord Kames apparently made the same mistake as Sir Alexander Dick in assuming that the club of which Thomas Ruddiman was "the father" was the Rankenian. It would be very convenient if I could accept Lord Kames's statement as being correct and admit him as a member of the Rankenian Club, especially as it is of that

1. See the list of members on page 69.
circumstantial nature which is very convincing. He has, for example, indicated that he had a very clear memory of the tavern in which the club met. Judged by the facts which I have found it necessary to accept, however, Kames's statement must be disallowed. There is the documentary proof, which I have described in detail on page 72, below, which definitely states that Ruddiman was a member of only two clubs, neither of which was the Rankenian. There is John Ramsey of Ochtertyre's statement that Kames was not a member of the Rankenian. And the only list of members which has been handed down by a member of the Rankenian Club, which I have given in full on page 69, does not bear the name of either Lord Kames or of Thomas Ruddiman. Despite the evidence contained in the Malahide papers, therefore, it would be, in my opinion, a serious error to admit that Sir Alexander Dick and Lord Kames were actually describing the Rankenian Club as they believed. And on the basis of this opinion, I have regarded both their accounts as applying to the society of which Ruddiman was actually the founder, the Society for the Improvement of Classical Studies.

It will be seen, from what has just gone before, that I have not exaggerated the inconvenience which a lack of proper records for the important Rankenian Club entails. Some information, however, has been provided by various authors who have written of the earlier half of

---

1. A part of the difficulty could be gotten over if it could be proved that both the Rankenian and the Society for Improving Classical Studies met in Ranken's tavern. That Ruddiman's society met in a tavern seems very likely, for that was the custom of the day. But, unfortunately, there is no positive evidence to indicate the place of meeting. We may only assume that Ranken's tavern, if it was suitable for the meetings of the one group, would have been suitable for the other. But this leaves the matter in as uncertain a state as before.
the century, and though we must be cautious in accepting any particular statement of fact, the general picture of the organization, I believe, can be traced with sufficient accuracy to make it well worth our while to examine the details which have been given us.

The most concise description of the Rankenian Club appears in Bower's *History of the University of Edinburgh*. After pointing out that the Rankenian was one of a type of associations formed for the purpose of imitating "the example which had been given in England", Bower goes on to explain the activities of the Club as follows:

The gentlemen who composed it spent their hours of meeting in literary conversation, making critical remarks of any new works of merit that were published; or on the style, sentiment, or manner of authors of established reputation. One of their number was appointed to deliver an essay upon some prescribed subject at each meeting; concerning the merits of which, every member was requested to give his opinion.

It is worth noting that the practice of hearing "an essay upon some prescribed subject at each meeting" was adopted by nearly every literary society which was organized after the Rankenian. This is further proof of the fact to which I have already drawn the reader's attention, that a preoccupation with matters of form and style was a characteristic of the Scottish literary societies of this period.

In Tytler's *Life of Henry Home, Lord Kames*, we are provided with a list of members which was compiled by "George Wallace, Esq., Advocate, one of the last surviving members of the Rankenian."

2. See Chapter 1, page 5 f.
1. The Reverend William Wishart, D. D., one of the Ministers of Edinburgh, and Principal of the University.
2. Archibald Murray of Murrayfield, Esq; Advocate.
6. Mr. John Stevenson, Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh.
7. The Reverend George Turnbull, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the Marischal College, Aberdeen, author of Principles of Moral Philosophy, and various other works.
8. Colin Maclaurin, A. M., Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, author of A System of Fluxions, Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy, and various other works.
9. George Young, M. D., Physician in Edinburgh.
10. John Smibert, a painter of reputation.
11. Mr. Charles Mackay, Advocate, Professor of Civil History in the University of Edinburgh.
12. The Reverend William Hepburn, Minister of Inverkeilor, in Angus.
14. The Reverend George Wishart, D. D., Minister of the Tron Church, Edinburgh, Principal Clerk to the Church of Scotland.
16. Sir John Pringle, Baronet, M. D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, Physician to their Majesties, and President of the Royal Society of London.
17. Charles Maitland of Pitrichie, Esq: Advocate, Member of Parliament.
18. Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, one of the Lords of Session.

After the Club had subsisted above forty years, and its attending members were much diminished by death and accidental separation, it was resolved, that the sons of the original members should be invited to become associates. In consequence of this resolution, the following gentlemen were added to its number:

20. Thomas Young, M. D., Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh.
22. John Maclaurin of Dreghorn, one of the Lords of Session, author of a Collection of Criminal Trials; Observations on
some Points of Law, Etc.

20. Alexander Murray of Henderland, one of the Lords of Session.

In the Winter of 1771, a few months after the death of Dr. Wallace, the Rankenian Club resolved to discontinue their regular weekly meetings; and a few occasional meetings were afterwards held, down to the year 1774, from which time it ceased altogether.

The literary discussion which took place in the Rankenian Club was, in keeping with the fashion of the day, predominantly metaphysical. There is, indeed, a pretty legend that the club entered into a correspondence with Bishop Berkeley, who, after some correspondence with its members, is said to have stated that though they pushed his theories to "amazing lengths," that his reasoning "had nowhere been better understood than by this club of young Scotsmen." So impressed was the good Bishop, or so goes the story, "that he wished to have carried them to Bermuda, where he proposed to found a college for the Americans." The young men, however, did not accept his invitation. According to one author, they refused because they were "too much attached to their native country to accept of the Doctor's offer"; according to another, because they thought his project "visionary". An attractive story, certainly, but there must be sober doubts about it, for the biographer of Bishop Berkeley reports that he "failed to find any documentary record of this interesting incident."

5. Fraser: Life and Letters of Bishop Berkeley, page 224, note.
When we turn to the literary society which was established by Thomas Ruddiman approximately a year later, we find that there is even less information available to us. But what little there is appears to be of a higher accuracy than that which has just been examined in connection with the Rankenian Club. There is, for example, an excellent description of the organization in an article which appeared in Hogg's Instructor for 1852.

In the year subsequent to the institution of the Rankenian Club, another association was established at Edinburgh, the object of which was mutual improvement in the classical literature of Greece and Rome. This is the second literary society which appears from any authentic documents, to have statutorily assembled in Scotland. It was a fundamental rule of the Society, that it was not to meddle with affairs of church and state—a very wise provision; for literary men, whose sentiments may differ on political and ecclesiastical questions, may, with perfect good feeling, meet each other in intellectual discussion on many subjects which crowd the vast field of literature. The original members of the society were the famous Thomas Ruddiman, its founder, and the master of the High School of Edinburgh. Among others who afterwards joined it, were Dr. George Wishart, formerly referred to, and several advocates including Henry Home, better known as Lord Kames, whose insatiable thirst for knowledge of every kind made him extremely zealous in the support of institutions for intellectual improvement. The time was employed in conversation, and in reading dissertations, composed by the members; but none of the fruits of the labours of this institution appear to have been given to the world, nor is it known how long it continued to exist.

The documentary evidence to which this author refers is very insignificant. In Dr. Chalmers biography of Thomas Ruddiman, the "authentic document" is described. "I found an account of this society," writes Chalmers, "in a manuscript note, of the handwriting of Ruddiman, at the end of the pamphlet entitled Furius." Chalmers has quoted a part of this note which reads as follows:

3. Ibid, page 275, note, "A MS. note on Furius, dated the 16th of May, 1755."
He (Ruddiman) never was concerned in any (societies) but two; the one, which was set up many years before he was engaged in it, and consisted of gentlemen of considerable rank, such as Sir Thomas Moncrief, and Sir William Scott, of doctors of physic, and of episcopal ministers; the other was set up by schoolmasters, who were joined by persons of greater consequence, for improving themselves in useful learning, without meddling with church, or state.

The resolve not to meddle "with church or state" is a constant theme in these accounts, and it is interesting to compare this with Lord Kames's own testimony that the discussions were "chiefly religious." It may well be possible that both recollections are correct. It strikes me that in a philosophical discussion it is perfectly feasible to introduce the subject of religion without "meddling" with the affairs of the church, and to talk of political theories without particular reference to existing institutions. Sir Alexander Dick was undoubtedly correct when he observed that although "questions of religion were not allowed, sometimes they were slyly introduced." We need not assume, however, that the constitution of the society remained for ever unchanged. What may have begun as a society "for the cultivation of classical literature," could easily have developed into an organization in which all could join for the purpose, as Ruddiman himself stated it, of "improving themselves in useful learning". Four years after the institution of this society, at the time of which Sir Alexander Dick wrote, a step already had been taken toward greater freedom of discussion; and it need not disturb us that Lord Kames remembered that religion

1. See the quotation from the Boswell Papers on page 65, above.
2. Ibid., page 65, above.
was the main topic of conversation, for his memories of the society may have been a reflection of activities which took place at an even later period. And this change in the character of this society is not unusual, for it is the nature of literary societies to reflect changes in the interests of their members. A rigid and immutable definition of subject-matter was not a feature of the eighteenth-century literary society. On the contrary, there was a decided tendency to include an ever increasing range of subjects. Any seeming contradiction in the accounts which have been handed down concerning this society, therefore, may be taken as evidence of such a development.

At a time when the society was concerned with classical studies, its membership reflected the predominant interest. Alexander Bower, in his History of the University of Edinburgh, gives us the following picture of the club at this period:—

Several of the members of that association were accurate scholars; and afterwards gave proofs of their acuteness as critics in philosophy, and the ardour with which they prosecuted their favourite studies. Besides Ruddinn, Mr John Love, one of the masters of the high-school, who afterwards removed to Dalkeith, was an eminent classical scholar. His review of Trotter's Latin Grammar is a masterly performance, and may still be perused with profit, though the treatise which gave occasion to it has long sunk into oblivion. The notorious Lauder was also a member, who, whatever may be affirmed of his morals, was undoubtedly a good linguist, which even his absurd and wicked attempt to prove Milton guilty of plagiarism sufficiently shewed. These and others were speedily joined by Mr Home, afterwards Lord Kames, who was not as yet called to the bar; but feeling the effects of having neglected the cultivation of classical learning he began about this time to study, with his accustomed ardour, those ancient monuments of elegant composition. Mr Archibald Murray, Mr James Cochran, and some other members of the Faculty of Advocates, together with Mr George Wishart, afterwards one of the ministers of Edinburgh, considered themselves as honoured by being admitted as members.

From the pen of Sir Alexander Dick we have the following account of
the society at a time when it was joined by young Henry Home:-

The Father of the Club was the very learned old Mr. Thomas
Rudman, a Printer, and Keeper of the Advocates' Library.
A Nonjuror Clergyman, likewise a very learned man, whose name
was Mr. Gullin, was next in imminence, and they two, Sir
Alexander, (then Mr. Cunningham, a student of Medicine,)
imagined were the contrivers of this meeting. Being keen
Jacobites both, they thought it was a good opportunity of
Assembling first, young Gentlemen, whose Parents were well
inclined to the old cause; Edly, Gradually to bring in young
Presbyterian Clergymen, Students of Divinity, Law, and Physic,
to hear the disputations, which often tended to keep alive
the Spirit of Jacobitism, or rather the interest of the
Family of Stewart, which the late Civil War, seven years before,
had almost extinguished. Mr. Henry Home was then one of them
that gave regular attendance every Wednesday evening (at 6
o'clock); ... Mr. John Mene, a Writer of Whigish principles,
very shrewd (i.e. shrewd) and fond of disputation, a man about
thirty, took a considerable Share in the disputes which occurred.

Mr. George Wishart, then, I think, a minister of Edinburgh, Mr.
Campbell of Sussor, Mr. Ogilvy, (Lord Finlatter's Brother,) a
Lawer, Mr. Archibald Murray, a lawer of some standing, and Mr.
Hume, a Clergyman from the Horse, - These Gentlemen, with about
a dozen more whose names I have forgot, were the first who
received Questions that were laid before them, which they
discus'd with great Warmth after having chosen a Preses.

Mr. Boswell, then of Auchinleck, your worthy Father, came in
sometime afterwards, and many more Lawers. This was held the
best place to acquire the power of Public speaking, and Sir
Alexander could observe by degrees had greatly improved our
old friend Lord Ka(ims) in his powers of Disputation and public
speaking, as it did Mr. Og(ly), who became a real Orator,
but (he) died unluckily before his fortune was established.
Had he lived, by his powers and connexions, (his father having
been Chancellor) he must have been made President of the Court
after Old Dalrymple's death, and would have been a infinite
service to Kaims, as they lived together like Brothers. I must
not forget (and Lord Kaims knows it very well) there was one
Michael Ramsay, a very debauched, licentious Creature, who took
pleasure in corrupting all the youth of families that came in
his way, by carrying them to lewd women, drunken companions who
like himself neither feared God nor Man. This Wretch Sir
Alexander well remembers to have help'd to corrupt Mr. Ogilvy,
Kaims, and Willy Hamilton, and would brag (of) such a thing.


2. George Wishart and Archibald Murray were also members of the
Rankenian Club. See the list of members on page 69, above.
This explains the 300 pounds of debt contracted, which was (li)ke a millstone upon Kain's neck. Sir Alexander had always a detestations at that fellow, and in his own mind called him "Michael the Arch Devil."

Henry Home himself, who was then the famous Lord Kames, made a number of observations concerning individual members which are not without interest. His remarks, which follow, reveal his proclivity for intellectual mischiefmaking, and his primary concern with metaphysics and religion as topics for discussion:

(The society) consisted mostly of Students of Divinity. Lord Kames, Ogilvie, and Campbell of Glamis went into it to puzzle and make mischief, and they succeeded but too well with many, making them Deists. My Lord had to speak to them to be decent. Michael Ramsey was a harmless creature, and Sir Alexander Dick misunderstood his character. They used to attack Jacobitism too severely to Mr. Thomas Ruddiman who was no reasoner. Bishop Gulbin was a dull man. Not probable he was even the compiler of Carnwath's Memoirs, for they are in the Careless style of a Gentleman not accustomed to write.

In regards to the relative importance of the Rankenian Club as compared with that of Ruddiman's Society for Improving in Classical Studies, the unknown author of an article in Hogg's Instructor observes the following:

Of these two societies, the Rankenian Club was doubtless the most important. Not that it is meant to depreciate the cultivation of Grecian and Roman literature, to the revival of which, in the fifteenth century, Europe is indebted for her intellectual superiority to the other divisions of the globe, and by the aid of which, the most gifted poets, orators, historians, theologians, and philosophers, whom Britain has ever produced, have had their genius invigorated, their views enlarged, and their taste purified. But the cultivation of the English language was of much greater consequence. The

2. It is interesting to observe that none of the men mentioned by Lord Kames are listed as being members of the Rankenian Club. See the list of members on page 59, above.
probability that it would become the vernacular tongue throughout Scotland - the state of perfection to which it had been brought, rendering it one of the best instruments of thought and vehicles of communication - the incomparably rich and ever-advancing literature of which it was the depository, rivalling, or surpassing, the most admired productions of Greece and Rome; all these circumstances lent their weight in establishing the importance of cultivating the English language and English literature. At one period of our history, our learned countrymen, who carried the passion for the study of the classic learning of antiquity to excess, preferred the Latin tongue to their own as the medium of communicating their thoughts through the press, and when it is considered, not only that their Latin writings would have the advantage of being read by the learned in every nation, but that from its superior polish and greater copiousness, the Latin language gave fuller scope to their genius, and expressed their ideas with greater elegance, vigour, and even perspicuity than their own, in its then rude and unformed state, there is no reason to wonder at the preference. But a taste for the acquisition of a classic English style was now beginning to appear; and, though feeble at first, and far from being widely diffused, it was, in the middle of the century, to become a passion similar to that which existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for the requisition of skill in the Latin tongue. It was in the highest degree desirable that this taste should be cherished and invigorated, and to give an impulse in the right direction, was the meritorious object aimed at by the Rankenian Club.

Because it regards Ruddiman's society as being strictly for the purpose of classical studies only, this evaluation is undoubtedly unfair. But the emphasis it places on the importance at this period of the study of English literary models and in mastering the English language is in keeping with the temper of the age. The study of form, however, be it of Latin or of English examples, was an important concern of both these "improving" societies. And it is this concern with form which serves to remind us that both of the literary societies we have been discussing belonged to an age when the first phase of the movement for national improvement was at its height.

Not all the societies which appeared at this period, however, were so perfectly in keeping with the predominant spirit of the age. The strength, as well as the historical necessity, of the movement
for national improvement is demonstrated in the unproductive career of a society of "associated critics" which was organized for the purpose of vindicating Buchanan, "that incomparably learned and pious author from the calumnies of Mr. Thomas Ruddiman." The vindication of Buchanan, however, was only to be the first step; for Wodrow, in writing of the same society, informs us that "a larger and more important subject they have before them: and that is, a Vindication of our Reformations and Reformers from the objections by Popish and pretended Protestant writers, which they will fall about after they have brought their designs as to Buchanan to some bearing. Particularly Knox, Murray, and Morton, are to be vindicat, and our Reformation by Presbiters. This Society, if continued, will certainly be of very great use."  

Despite Wodrow's optimism, however, the endeavours of the "associated critics" came to nothing. Though they promised an entirely new edition of Buchanan's works, complete with a new life of the author, such a work never appeared. And, having failed thus to bring "their designs as to Buchanan to some bearing," their plans for a vindication of Knox, Murray, and Morton could never have been seriously considered. Their greatest failure, however, is implicit in the exclusively Scottish interests which they attempted to cultivate. When all eyes and all interests were fixed on the English example of economic prosperity and literary elegance, there were precious few in Scotland who had the time or the patience to spare for the ill-contrived ill-writ, and ill-mannered diatribes of a society of literary diehards.

If the reader has any doubts as to the validity of this observation, and if he is a Scotsman he may possibly feel that the situation has been inaccurately described, the comments of a Scottish author of some merit should convince him that the associated critics had not exactly found the certain road to a popular success. After examining the Society's manuscript quarto volume entitled Notts to vindicate the Truth and clear off the Aspersions by, or in, Mr. Thomas Rudeman's preface to Mr. Robert Freebairn's edition of George Buchanan's History from a malignant spirit: or Mr. James Anderson Antiquary and others their Vindication of Buchanan, Chalmers makes the following observation:

A short preface sufficiently instructs the reader as to the contents of this elaborate volume. "This contains an apologie for publishing a new and correct edition of the illustrious George Buchanan's works intended by some eminent and learned men anno 1717, as a most critical and just vindication of that incomparably learned and pious author, from the aspersions and calumnys of Mr. Thomas Rudeman, in Mr. Robert Freebairn's edition of Buchanan's works, anno 1715." As these profound scholars could not write vulgar English, Adam Watt, the professor of the Roman language, at Edinburgh, had the charity to cloth their nakedness with a Roman Dress. Animated by the kindness of Watt, they proceeded to stuff eighty pages with Notts upon the Annotations of Ruddiman. The reader is wearied, and confounded; but, he is neither convinced, nor informed. Considering Buchanan as infallible, the critics only laboured to demonstrate, how easily prejudice may convert falsehoods into facts, and ungrateful scandals into fair reports.

Chalmers continues in the same vein when he considers the "critics:

About the Life of Buchanan, the associated editors showed still more zealous anxiety. They criticized the critic most unmercifully. But they did not instruct the reader. They did not reveal then what had not been revealed before.

1. Chalmers: Life of Ruddiman, pages 75-76.
2. Ibid, pages 76-77.
They had not sent to St. Andrews, and to Paris, in order to ascertain the dates of Buchanan's literary honours. They had not searched the records for the successive epochs of his political preferments. They had not ransacked the state papers for anecdotes, which had more clearly illustrated his genuine character. They only laboured, with the powers of impotence, to criminate his editor. These days, however, are past, when writers, who have only their captiousness to recommend them, can hope to find a reader, even among the abettors of faction.

The "eminent and learned men" who met in 1717 as the "associated critics" are listed by Chalmers as follows:

This incomparably learned and pious society consisted of the following persons: Mr. James Anderson, (the) famous antiquary; the reverend and erudite professors, Hamilton and Smith; Charles Macky, the professor of History; (Sir) Robert Stewart, the professor of Natural Philosophy; the Rev. George Logan; (Sir) Archibald Stewart (Denham), the advocate; with many others of inferior note.

In 1724, these men invited Robert Wodrow to join in their circle. At this period, Wodrow informs us, the "critics" had before them "proposals from Holland", where Langerak, the bookseller of Leyden, was making plans for reprinting Buchanan's works in two quartos, with a preface by Burman of Leyden. The reaction of the "critics" to this anticipation of their own promised publication is interestingly related by Wodrow:

Burman had wrote over to Mr. Charles M'ky, who was with us, to know if any helps to that new Edition might be expected from Scotland? The Society considered the danger of spreading Ruddiman's Edition of Buchanan, with his praeface and notes, which are so unfavourable to Buchanan, and to our Reformation and civil liberty, and therfore agreed to take all means to prevent the Dutch edition, till a remedy was provided at least to go along with the disease, and an antidote with the poison; and desired Mr. M'ky to signify to Professor Burman that ther war some gentlemen in Scotland, upon giving a new Edition of Buchanan, with a refutation of Mr. Ruddiman's praeface and notes, and several other things, and had materials ready, and would, as soon as possible, publishe it here, (for the Society

had no hopes of a correct edition in Holland,) and if they would delay their impression in Holland till this were ready, it would be much for their own advantage. That the Society designed to print no more copies than were subscribed for, and would bear the charges of the work, and if they would go on in Holland, they desired Mr. M'kie would signify that it was in our power to prevent the sale of their edition, by publishing an advertisement in the Forraigne Journalls of what was designed here. The proposed Dutch edition evidently had the effect of stimulating the laggard activities of the "critics", as it had been seven years since their original proposal to rectify the errors committed by Ruddiman. This new frenzy of activities, however, serves merely to illustrate how ineffectual their previous efforts had been, and we see in Wodrow's description of them all the marks of a new undertaking:—

The Society had before them a list of books and MSS, to be made use of as materials for the answer to Mr. Ruddiman; and as they meet on Tuesday every fourteenth-night, so they parcel out the subject to be considered to the different members, and order them to bring in extracts and remarks upon that subject against the next meeting. They agreed to read Mr. Ruddiman's preface, and bring remarks on it to the next meeting.

This episode, which certainly could have done little to advance the reputation of Scottish scholars abroad, ended with a well-deserved rebuke to the "associated critics." The reaction of the Dutch literary men is described for us by Chalmers as follows:—

With the impatience of a bookseller, who has advanced his money, Langerak urged Burman to proceed; alleging, as his preface told the readers, "that the boastings of the favourers of Buchanan, in Scotland, were perhaps idle and vain." Being thus disappointed, by their frivolousness, Burman published his edition of Buchanan's words, in 1725, with Ruddiman's Preface and Notes as they were ....

---

At a later period, the "associated critics" were involved in a controversy which was occasioned by the appearance of Jebb's *Vita et Rebus Gestis Mariae Scotorum Reginae*. According to Chalmers, "the confederacy was mortified to see two folio volumes, which represented Mary, and her cause, in a favourable light." "In this distress the confederacy summoned James Anderson to give a counter-publication.... And he came out into the world, in 1727, and 1728, with four volumes of *Collections relating to the History of Mary Queen of Scotland*." This work, so Chalmers informs us, was greeted with "the censures of the critics," and "the frowns of the public." Chalmers' evaluation of the reception given Anderson's work, however, may have been coloured by his own prejudices in the matter. In the controversy which has surrounded the vexed question of the Martyr Queen, neither side has deserved many compliments for unimpassioned reasoning or for fairness of mind.

But we are in danger of losing ourselves in this insignificant and unessential literary squabbling. It is sufficient, for the purpose of this thesis, to point out once more that the literary countermarch attempted by the "associated critics" merely indicates the strength and direction of the main stream of literary development.

2. Robert Chambers, for example, describes Anderson as "a man of no small merit as an editor of historical muniments." (Chambers: *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, Vol. 3, page 488.) But even Chambers is shrewd enough to recognize that this society "for cultivating historical literature" was "not destined to make any great permanent mark on the age." (Ibid, page 477.)
George Chalmers, whose criticism of this organization was so outspoken, was an example of the type of man of letters which this development tended to produce, and this goes a long way toward explaining his sympathy for Thomas Ruddiman who was one of his literary ancestors. Both Chalmers and Ruddiman gave every indication of their awareness that the values of the "associated critics" were antithetical to their own. But it is time to return to the more profitable task of examining those societies which, in contrast to the backward-looking defenders of the "incomparably learned and pious society" of critics, were preparing Scotland for her brilliant future.

The next literary society to appear in Scotland is of particular interest, as its development, over a period of fifty years, is a reflection of succeeding stages made in the movement for national improvement. The organization to which I refer is the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. Before I begin a description of the Philosophical Society, however, it will be necessary to give an account of an earlier society out of which the Philosophical developed. In later chapters, we shall discover how the Philosophical Society led to the establishment in its turn of still another important society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In 1731, a society "for the improvement of medical knowledge" was instituted in Edinburgh. An account of this society, which is generally referred to as the Medical Society, appears in a biographical sketch of Dr. Alexander Monro, primus, who was the first Professor of

2. Not to be confused with the Royal Medical Society, which was a student's organization at the University of Edinburgh. For this Society see page 363 f., Chapter 6.
anatomy at the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Monro, as will be learned from the following quotation, was largely instrumental in making a success of the society's resolve to publish interesting medical cases and important medical speculations:

When patients were received into the infirmary, and a regular register kept of all their cases, it was reasonably expected, that many histories worth publishing might be extracted from that register, and might assist to form volumes of medical observations or essays, which it was proposed should be published from time to time. With this view, the professors of physic associated with Doctors Drummond sen., Francis Pringle, Lewis, Clerk, Cochran, Porterfield, Dundas, and Mr. Macgill, surgeon, Professor Monro was appointed their secretary, and directed the register kept of the weather.

During the first year, the members attended the meetings of their society regularly, and made remarks on the papers presented to them; but, after the publication of their first volume in 1732, they grew remiss in their attendance, and very soon the whole care of this collection fell upon the secretary; so that no other member so much as saw any of the papers except what they were authors of, till printed copies of them were sent to them by the bookseller.

In each of the six volumes this society published, the name of our author (i.e. Monro) is prefixed to several papers; besides which, he wrote all the anonymous papers, one or two excepted, and the account of new medical books and improvements published in the different countries of Europe; and he had likewise the trouble of collecting and arranging the materials of many of the other papers, which were transmitted to him in letters, not properly digested.

These volumes of medical essays and observations have undergone various editions; and have been translated into the French, Dutch, and German languages. A very excellent judge, Dr. Haller, is pleased to observe that they are such, that no physician can well be without them....

The success of the publications of the Medical Society brought great credit to the Medical school of the University of Edinburgh, and, as a result, "many foreigners repaired to Edinburgh; and British subjects, instead of going abroad, gave the preference to the schools of their
These publications consisted of five volumes of medical essays entitled, Medical Essays and Observation Published by a Society in Edinburgh. Between 1732 and 1739, the Society published four volumes of essays. A fifth volume, in two parts, appeared in 1742 and 1744 under the auspices of the newly formed Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge, or, as it is better known, the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. The Medical Essays themselves deserve some comment because of their wide distribution and their influence on the development of medical knowledge. As has already been stated, the society's publications underwent "several Editions", five to be exact, and were translated into several foreign languages. The method employed in the presentation of the essays seemed, from the outset, destined to be popular. The function and intent of the Medical Essays was explained in a preface to the first volume:

No Complaint is more general among those who apply to the Study of any liberal Science, than their being under a Necessity of perusing such Numbers of Books as are wrote on the several Parts of each of them: A Labour that can have no End, since one Book serves only as an Introduction to another, while a few Pages might contain all that is new or valuable in most of them. It must however be confessed, that many good and useful Remarks and Discoveries are lost, by the Unwillingness of some ingenious Men to appear in Print, and by others having neither Time nor Inclination to compose a sizable Treatise, who would communicate necessary and beneficial Observations to the World, if they had a proper Opportunity to do it in a Sheet or two.


2. The first volume is dated 1733, though it is said to have appeared in 1752. The practice of predating new publications was common at this period. "It being an ordinary circumstance with booksellers and printers, towards the close of a year, to date publications as if printed in the subsequent year," (Kerr: Life of Smellie, Vol. 1, page 29.)

The Society proposed "one probable solution" to the problem as follows:

One probable Method of remedying these two Discouragements to Learning is, to publish Collections of small Treatises, submitted to the Examination of a Society of such who had particularly studied the Science which is the Subject of each Tract; and who should give some short Account of the most remarkable and useful Discoveries and Improvements made by the contemporary Authors in their own Profession: By which we would soon have more Authors, and fewer Books, to the great Advancement of Learning, and abridging of our Studies.

After examining the examples set by the publications of the Royal Society of London, the Acadamie Royale des Sciences at Paris, the Academia Scientiarum Imperialis at Petersburgh, and the Academia Naturae Curiosorum in Germany, the Medical Society resolved that their publications should include the following items:

I. A Register of the Height of the Barometer, Degrees of the Thermometer and Hydroscope, the Quantity of Rain that falls, the Direction and Force of the Wind, and State of the Weather at Edinburgh for Twelve Months; compared with Observations of the same kind, communicated by Correspondents.

II. An Account of the Diseases which have been epidemic or most universal in Edinburgh, in the several Seasons of the preceding Year, with an Extract from the Records of Burials; which shall also be compared with any Accounts of the same Nature sent from other Places.


IV. Figures necessary to explain Instruments, Operations, Descriptions, etc., in any of the foregoing Tracts.

2. Ibid, page xiv f.
V. Discoveries or Improvements made anywhere else in the several Branches of Medicine.

VI. An alphabetical Index of the Contents.

The part to be played by the society in all this is also described in the preface to their first volume. Their intentions in this matter are laid down as follows:

We are to revise all the particular Observations and Essays transmitted to us, and to reduce them to the most convenient Order, publishing each in the Author's own Words; only we beg to be excused, if we delay to insert any Paper which appears to us deficient in Facts, or not so methodical, till these Circumstances, of which we shall inform the Author, are cleared up. We do not however pretend by this Power to reject Observations, tho' some Circumstances are omitted, if they are otherwise useful, nor to suppress Essays that are ingenious, tho' the Propositions they contain are contrary to our Way of thinking. All we propose by reserving this Choice of Papers, is to acquaint the Author of such Omissions or Objections as might be taken Notice of, that, by supplying and correcting them, the Work may be made more acceptable to the Publick; and therefore we persuade ourselves, that this Part of our Labour will prove one of the greatest Encouragements to procure us Correspondents.

The policy outlined in the preface to the first volume was followed in the preparation of the first four volumes of Medical Essays and Observations. In the first part of a fifth volume the following notice announced a change in the organization which had been responsible for the previous publications:

A Society being formed in this Place for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge, in which all the Branches of Medicine are included; and the Members of our Society being adopted into this new one, the Design of publishing more Volumes of Medical Papers was dropt some Time ago.

It is now at the Desire of the Gentlemen of this new Society that we cause this fifth Volume to be printed, which was so much enlarged by the Papers which they generously furnished us from their Repository, that we are obliged to divide it into two Parts....

The development of the Medical Society into the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, however, brings us once more into the realm of the eighteenth-century literary society. The Philosophical Society, with its inclusive intellectual interests, was the very type of that class of societies which dominated the intellectual scene in the eighteenth century, and which has so completely disappeared in the intervening years.

In the transactions of the Philosophical Society, which appeared under the title of *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary*, the following account is given of the development of the Medical Society into the Society for Improving Arts and Sciences:

After the medical society of Edinburgh had published those volumes of essays, which have met with so favourable a reception from the public, a proposal was made them to enlarge their plan, and to carry their disquisitions into other parts of medicine. All the sciences are remarked to have a close connection together; but none more than those of medicine and natural philosophy. And the Society soon observed, that should it turn its inquiries into more general knowledge, it could reap the advantage of preserving all its old members; and needed but open its door to gentlemen of other professions, who might enrich it with their observations and discoveries.

It has often been stated that the suggestion to expand the interests of the Medical Society came from Colin Maclaurin, who was then Professor of Mathematics at the University and "one of the most brilliant disciples of Newton." In his own account of the origin of the society, however, Maclaurin states that the plan came from "some gentlemen" but he does not give their names. In two letters to Dr. Johnston, Professor of

---

1. *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary*, Preface. See also, for a reprint of the same, the *Scots Magazine*, April, 1754, pages 184-185.
Medicine in the University of Glasgow, Maclaurin gives a number of interesting details concerning the newly-formed society:-

Dear Sir,

June 9th, 1737.

I was moving my family out of town last week, and had not time to write you an account of what passed on Wednesday. There met 21 in number; Lord Lauderdale, Aberdour, Clerk, Hope, St. Clair, Sir John Clerk, Drs. Clerk, Stevenson, Pringle, Plummer, Porterfield, Boswell, Alston; Messrs. Craw, Monro, Wallace, Gray, Short, Lynn, St. Clair, and I. A plan that had been formed by some gentlemen was read, and, after some alterations, was approved. Lord Lauderdale was chosen to preside at that time. It was agreed the number should not exceed 42, at least for some time. There were several named who had accepted, but were not present, as Lord Minto, Sir James Dalrymple, Mr. Fullarton of Fullarton, Mr. Scott of Scotstarvet, Drs. St. Clair, Rutherford, Simpson, and Martin at St. Andrews. There were some who had not been spoke to as yet, being at a distance, but had been named from the first; as Lord Advocate, Lord Elphingston, Mr. James Stirling, and some others I cannot just now recollect.

It was thought necessary to distinguish the number into ordinary, and extraordinary; the latter not to exceed 18 of the 42. The former are, in their turn, to give in a paper at the meetings of the society, which are only to be monthly, September and October, being excepted. The obligation returns only in about 2 years and a half. This was thought necessary, that they might always be sure of something at each meeting. Lord Aberdour, Clerk, and some others of distinction, listed as ordinary members, to encourage the design.

They expressed much satisfaction on my acquainting them you had accepted, and left it to your choice under which class you should be; though it would be more agreeable and encouraging if you would be of those that engage to furnish something in their turn. There are already 22 of this class; and they drew by lot what day each should give in his paper. If you accept, it will not come to your turn till 1740; for the course of those papers begins only in December next. Mr. R. Simpson declined accepting, for reasons I do not fully comprehend: I make the best apology for him I could, by reading that passage in his letter where he excuses himself. I was somewhat out of countenance, as he was one of those I had proposed, and I could not entirely justify his reasons. I have no orders to desire it, but I wish you would prevail on him before December, when the numbers are to be filled up.

1. Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany, June 1804, pages 421-423. "Two original Letters from Professor Maclaurin to his friend Dr. Johnston, Professor of Medicine in the University of Glasgow, giving an account of the Institution of the Physical Society of Edinburgh, in 1737-8."
That the meetings of the society may be employed about those things which relate to the design of their institution, a council was chosen of 13 for the management. A president, two vice presidents, two secretaries, and a treasurer were chosen. In the election of those, regard was had to such as live in or near the town, for a considerable part of the year. One of the secretaries has, in his province, the general parts, geometry, astronomy, mechanics, optics, etc. The other chemistry, anatomy, botany, etc.; and what is of a more particular nature, Lord Aberdour was chosen president, Sir John Clerk, and Dr. Clark, vice presidents, Dr. Plummer and I secretaries, Mr. Lynn, treasurer. The members pay a guinea annually for the expenses, making experiments, etc.; but such as reside at a distance are to be exempt from payments. A new election is to be the first Tuesday of December annually. Next meeting is to be the first Tuesday of June; I am to find some materials against that meeting. There is to be another meeting the first Tuesday of August, and another the first Tuesday of November, before the regular course of the papers begins. We shall be much obliged to any who will help us to any materials for these diets. If you would send me anything to be communicated, with your name, or without it, as you please, short or long, it will be acceptable.

Lord Hope has made the society a present of a brass quadrant, 3 foot radius, that cost at least 40 guineas when it was new. This is a good beginning, and there seems to be a good deal of spirit for this design at present. I hope it will continue and have good effects.

As all the gentlemen have a particular esteem for you if you would take the trouble to recommend any thing with relation to the plan; or if you knew any member you think proper to be associated, there will be great regard shewn to it. I think I have mentioned to you what was most material. I proposed to those who first formed the plan, that my two colleagues, Mr. J. Gregory, and Mr. Stewart, should be of the number, and their professions seemed to require it; however, for reasons I cannot describe, this was delayed till December, though I urged it might be sooner.

I am, Dear Sir, Your most obedient, Most Humble Servant, Colin Mac-Laurin.

Dear Sir

May 9th, 1738.

If I had not been much hurried, I would have sent you some account of what has passed at the society. I wrote to you that Dr. Plummer gave us a paper on menstrums in January, Dr. Pringle on a specific for the dysentery in February. It was my turn in March. I gave two papers; the first one was on the figure of the earth; when I shewed how to deduce the ratio.
of the diameter from observations accurately, and applied it
to the Jamaica experiment, and the late mensuration of the
Polar circle by the French. The second was an account of a
set of experiments I had made concerning the quality of the
(blank) by which it rarifies flame; and a project for measuring
the variations of this quality with a diary I had kept for a
month. In April, Dr. Stevenson gave us a paper on animal heat,
when he argued against its proceeding from attrition. I can
only give you hints of these papers. In May, Dr. Porterfield
read us a case of the hydrophobia. These were the papers that
were given in regularly, according to lots that had been
drawn last June. There were several papers besides these; some
mechanical, some relating to the antiquities of the country;
some I gave that related to astronomy, and some giving an
account of experiments that had been made, particularly to shew,
that, in a cylinder level pipe the water presses with very great
force on the sides of the pipe. It is Mr. Craw's turn in
June, who is one of the best acquainted with mechanics I have
met with in this country. If my fluxions were out of my
hands, I design to apply more closely to the business of the
society. May we not some day expect something from you? I assure
you it would be well received.

I am, With particular respect, Dear Sir,
Your Most obedient, Most humble servant,
Colin Mac-Laurin.

Whether Maclaurin can be credited with the suggestion for the
reorganization of the Medical Society or not, it is certain that he
was one of the leading men in the new association. He performed the
duties of secretary, and the society, in his death in 1746, paid
him the following tribute:

We met with an irreparable loss in the death of Mr. Maclaurin,
one of our secretaries. The great talents of that gentleman
are generally known and highly esteemed in the literary world;
but the society have also particular reason to regret in him
the loss of those qualities which form an excellent academician.
Indefatigable himself, he was a perpetual spur to the industry
of others; and was highly pleased with the promotion of knowledge,
from whatever hands it came. At the time of his death, a number
of discoveries, sufficient to have formed a volume, had been
communicated to him; but, being mingled with his other papers,
have been dissipated by various accidents; and the society
could recover but few of them.

1. Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary, Preface.
As interesting as it is to speculate on the identity of the person who was immediately responsible for the erection of the Philosophical Society, the motives which lay behind the success of that organization are even more interesting. In his *History of Edinburgh*, Maitland, who gives the most circumstantial account of the Society, describes the situation which gave rise to it as follows:

Many Advantages having accrued to the Publick from the Studies and Labours of learned and ingenious Men, who having, in divers Parts of Europe, erected themselves into Societies for the Improvement of Arts and Sciences, by experimental Philosophy and other Discoveries, both in Art and Nature, which have excited a generous Emulation among the Literati, who, on this Occasion, vie to excel in discovering the most occult Secrets of Nature, for the Benefit of Mankind.

That Edinburgh, at this Time, might not be wanting to contribute its Assistance in so Laudable and commendable an Affair, divers learned Gentlemen, about the Beginning of the Year 1737, began to think of erecting themselves into a Society in this City; and for the better attaining their desirable and valuable Purposes, resolved to communicate their Design to certain of the Nobility, Gentry, and others best qualified to assist them in their intended Undertaking.

Maitland goes on to give an account of the steps by which the Medical Society became the Society for Improving Arts and Sciences:

Pursuant to this Revolution, they applied to a small Society for their Advice and Assistance; that Fellowship, which some Time before had published divers Volumes of Essays and Observations, intitled *Medical Essays*, were not only ready and willing to promote the design, but the other Gentlemen to whom it was likewise proposed, were very zealous to advance and encourage the honourable and praise-worthy enterprise.

Thus encouraged, a general Meeting of the Undertakers was appointed to be held on the first Day of June, in the aforesaid Year; preparatory to which, a Plan was ordered to be made, and

laid before the said Meeting, for the good Regulation of the intended Society.

This Fellowship, which assumed the Name of The Society for Improving Arts and Sciences, and particularly Natural Knowledge, at first consisted of forty-five Members; but that Number, since, has been augmented to fifty-two, who are distinguished into ordinary and extraordinary; the former, by turn, are to supply the Society with Experiments and Discoveries in Nature, Art, and other curious Remarkables, to be read at their Meetings, and published in their Transactions; and the latter, or extraordinary Members, to promote Inquiries, and occasionally assist in carrying on the Designs of the Society.

Besides the ordinary and extraordinary Members, the Society has admitted divers learned and ingenious Gentlemen, in several Parts of Europe, as Members and Correspondents in Foreign Parts.

The ordinary Meetings of the Society are on the first Thursday of every Month, except those of September and October; and on the first Thursday of October; and on the first Thursday of December yearly; the Society, by Ballot, elect thirteen of the Number for a Council, whereof, in the same Manner, are chosen a President, two Vice-presidents, two Secretaries, and a Treasurer.

Whenever a Vacancy happens in the Society, or in a Meeting where two thirds of the Members agree to augment their Number; a List of Candidates is prepared and balotted for to fill up the Vacancy, and complete the intended Augmentation.

At the annual Meeting for the Election of Officers, or new Members, a certain Sum of Money is agreed to be raised by the Members to purchase Instruments and defray the other necessary Expences of the Society.

By the late unhappy Rebellion the Meetings of the Society were interrupted for a considerable Time, but being renewed again, meet as formerly, and prosecuting the Ends of their Institution, we may in a short Time expect some of the Fruits of their Labours.

The first president of the new Society was James, Earl of Morton, afterwards President of the Royal Society of London; its vice-presidents, Sir John Clerk of Pennycuik, one of the Barons of Exchequer, and Dr. John Clerk; its secretaries, Colin Maclaurin and Dr. Plummer; and its ordinary members, some of the most distinguished men of
letters in Scotland at the time. In fact, in the words of another author, "soon after its establishment," the Philosophical Society "could boast of possessing all the eminent literati of Scotland."

In 1742, soon after the appearance of the first part of the fifth and final volume of the Medical Essays and Observations, the Philosophical Society made overtures for contributions from "all Gentlemen, of whatever nation, who have experiments or observations relating to natural knowledge to communicate." A notice which appeared in the Scots Magazine for February, 1742, provides us with some interesting details.

A Society being formed at Edinburgh some years ago for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge, in which all the branches of Medicine are included; and the members of the society by whom the Medical Essays were revised and published being adopted into that new one, they have dropt their design of continuing the publication of more volumes of that work. The first part of the fifth volume was lately published, and the second part, which will finish their collection, is in the press. In the preface to what is last published, tho', from the demand for this book at home, and the translations of it published in different parts of Europe, they flatter themselves they have not been uselessly employed; yet they express their hopes, that the labors of the new society will prove of as much greater advantage to mankind than theirs as their plan is more extensive. To them they therefore cheerfully yield their place, and in their name invite the correspondence of all Gentlemen, of whatever nation, who have experiments or observations relating to Natural Knowledge to communicate, or who please to propose useful investigations or experiments to be made by the society. The letters designed for them are to be addressed to their two Secretaries, Mr. Colin Maclaurin, Professor of Mathemetics, Dr. Andrew Plummer, Professor of Medicine, in the university of Edinburgh.

From the tenor of this announcement, it appears likely that the projectors of the Philosophical Society had in view, at least for a secondary objective, the accumulation of material for, and the publication of, a new series of Essays. This ambition, however, was prevented from reaching its fulfillment by the rebellion of 1745, and the first volume of the projected publication did not appear until 1754.

Another plan which was projected by the Society in 1743 was also forestalled by the disturbance of the '45. Notice of this scheme appeared in the Scots Magazine, and in the August issue for the year 1743 we find the following announcement:

The society established at Edinburgh for promoting natural knowledge, judging it agreeable to the design of their institution, and of general advantage to the country, to encourage the searching for the various kinds of minerals which it produces, have published an advertisement, inviting all those who discover any unusual kinds of earths, stones, bitumens, saline or vitrific substances, marcasites, ores of metals, and other native fossils, whose use and properties they may not have opportunity of inquiring into by themselves, to send sufficient samples of them, and a short account of the places where, and the manner in which they are found, directed to the Secretary of the Philosophical Society, Edinburgh; and they undertake to make proper trials, at the charge of the society, for discovering the nature and uses of the minerals, and to return an answer to the persons by whom the samples are so sent, if they are judged to be of any use, or can be wrought to advantage.

The Philosophical Society will appear in the next chapter when its activities, which were resumed after the rebellion of 1745, will be discussed at some length. At this point, however, we may observe that although its fortunes were to rise, and its membership to grow in influence and in intellectual dignity, even the early career of this, the first of the eighteenth-century type of literary societies,

is very significant. We have seen how the original Medical Society, with its narrow concern with "improving medical knowledge," was incorporated in a society which had expanded its interests until they took in the whole of natural knowledge, and included, indeed, all subjects except those of theology, morals, and politics. This expansion of interests, it will be recognized, is the exact reverse of the process of narrowing interests which has been going on since sometime in the middle of the nineteenth century. And, as has previously been pointed out, it is the inclusiveness of interests which was a marked characteristic of many eighteenth-century literary societies.

But, of course, not all the societies of this period were as inclusive in their interests as was the Philosophical Society. One organization which had only a single purpose, however, is interesting in that it reveals a growing interest in a new subject. The Political Economy Club which was founded in Glasgow by Provost Cochrane about 1743, though it had only the narrow interest of economic matters, was a direct result of the increasing commercial activities of the city, and of the appearance of new intellectual interests as well. In this connection, it is interesting to recall that the most influential single work to come out of Scotland in the eighteenth century was

1. Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary, Preface. This Preface also appeared in the Scots Magazine for May, 1754, page 186 f.
2. See Chapter 1, page 4.
3. See Chapter 1, page 5 f.
undoubtedly Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and the Scottish founder
of the science of political economy was a member of this organization
which "met once a week all the thirteen years Smith resided in Glasgow."

The first account of the Glasgow Political Economy Club, or the
Merchant's Club as it was sometimes called, is given by Dr. Alexander
Carlyle in his charming *Autobiography*. Writing of the year 1743, Dr.

Carlyle gives us the following information:—

Few of (the Glasgow merchants) could be called learned merchants;
yet there was a weekly club, of which a Provost Cochrane was
the founder and a leading member, in which their express design
was to inquire into the nature and principles of trade in
all its branches, and to communicate their knowledge and views
on that subject to each other. I was not acquainted with
Provost Cochrane at the time, but I observed that the members
of this society had the highest admiration of his knowledge
and talents. I became well acquainted with him twenty years
afterwards, when Drs. Smith and Wight were members of the club,
and was made sensible that too much could not be said of his
accurate and extensive knowledge, of his agreeable manners,
and colloquial eloquence. Dr. Smith acknowledged his obligations
to this gentleman's information, when he was collecting materials
for his *Wealth of Nations*; and the junior merchants who have
flourished since his time, and extended their commerce far be¬
yond what was then dreamt of, confess, with respectful remem¬
brance, that it was Andrew Cochrane who first opened and en¬
larged their views.

One of Adam Smith's biographers, John Rae, has pointed out that this

*was probably the first political-economy club in the world.* If
this is so, then Scotland must be given the credit for the innovation
of two very interesting and influential types of economic organizations,
Besides the Political Economy Club of Glasgow, it is claimed that the
Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture of
Edinburgh was the first agricultural society to be established in Great

1. Rae: *Life of Adam Smith*, page 92.
Britain. Very early in the period which I have called the Age of Improvement, therefore, we find that in the organization of corporate societies, Scotland was leading the world. In the next chapter we shall see how this lead was transferred from the organization of the societies themselves, to the achievements which their members made in the sciences and arts which they undertook to improve. When intellectual activity was resumed after the rebellion of 1745, the emphasis shifted from preparation to achievement. The young men who had spent their formative years in the discussions of the Rankenian Club, and in Ruddiman's Society for Improving in Classical Studies, and who had given evidence of increasing intellectual vigour in the formation of the more substantial Philosophical Society, were now at the height of their powers, and were soon to claim the attention of the learned world, for with the resumption of peace, Scotsmen were to demonstrate those powers which they had been so industriously cultivating during the years from 1700 to 1745. It is in the next chapter, therefore, that we must examine the ultimate result of these "improving" societies on those literary and scientific works by means of which Scotsmen captured the attention and the admiration of the Western world.

1. "Two types, mutual aid and study of technical problems. The latter is the British type which was formed in Scotland in 1723, in Ireland in 1731, one in the west of England in 1777, and one in London in 1793." (Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences; ed. by Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson, "Agricultural Societies.") The Irish society was established in imitation of the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture. (Maxwell: Select Transactions, page ix.)
CHAPTER FOUR

THE PERIOD OF ACHIEVEMENT 1745 - 1770.

Whatever the Rebellion of 1745 may have been (and it has been variously described as "the last struggle of barbarism against civilization," as a "trifling insurrection," as "Charles Edward's astonishing adventure in Britain," as "the extinction of the last relics of feudalism in Scotland," and, finally, as "a blessing in disguise") it disrupted for a considerable period the development of Scottish literary societies. It was not until 1752 that the Philosophical Society renewed its activities, and this was the first sign that a corporate intellectual life had been resumed. From our point of view, therefore, the seven-years hiatus in the work done by the Philosophical Society represents seven years of lost opportunity.

These seven years, however, had not been altogether wasted, for when the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh again became active it had grown considerably in importance and its membership, although the

illustrious Colin Maclaurin was dead, was of a considerably higher intellectual level than it had been previous to the long interruption in its career. The new secretaries, for example, who were appointed in 1752, were Alexander Monro, secundus, and David Hume. At the same time as they received this appointment, the secretaries were "directed to arrange, and superintend the printing of such papers as had been declared worthy of public attention." And the new officers were not idle, for we find that three volumes of "worthy" papers made their appearance; the first volume in 1754, the second in 1756, and the third in 1771. These transactions, which appeared under the title of Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary, when they are compared with the Medical Essays and Observations of the Medical Society, show at once through their broader scope, their increased intellectual weight, and their greater influence on the thought of the period, that a spirit of proud achievement had replaced the humbler mood which had prevailed during the Period of Preparation.

1. When Maclaurin died on May 14, 1746, a number of the papers which had been collected for the Society's published transactions were mixed with his papers, and, having been transmitted to London, were lost. This delayed the publication of a volume of essays until others could be assembled. (Bower: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, page 338.)


4. See page 84, Chapter 3. A number of the essays from the Essays and Observations were reprinted in the Scots Magazine during 1754. (See Scots Magazine for May, page 235 f.; June, page 287 f.; July, page 334 f.; and August, page 375 f.) Benjamin Franklin, then in London, received "the proceedings of the Edinburgh Philosophical Society" as a gift from his friends in Scotland. (Nolan: Franklin in Scotland, page 100.)
The first essay in volume one was entitled *Of the Laws of Motion*. This essay was written "by the Honourable Henry Home, one of the Senators of the College of Justice," a man who is more familiarly known by his judicial title of Lord Kames. In volume three, Lord Kames again contributed to the *Essays*, this time with two very dissimilar efforts, one being *Observations upon the Paper Concerning Shallow Ploughing*, and the other being *On Evaporation*. These essays, while not particularly important in themselves, are of considerable interest as early evidence of the versatility of Kames's intellect. The Essay on the *Laws of Motion* also reveals his appetite for metaphysics. This taste for philosophical inquiry led to the composition and publication of the *Elements of Criticism* which won for the author a European reputation.

1. The second article was *Some Remarks on the Laws of Motion*, by John Stewart, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. In this essay Professor Stewart "severely criticises Kames, and Periodically refers in a somewhat slighting manner to Hume's Treatise and Philosophical Essays." In a very characteristic letter, David Hume gently chides Stewart for his bad manners, and recommends that for the future he avoid "all raillery... both because it is unphilosophic and because it cannot but be offensive." For this letter see Creig: *Letters of David Hume*, Vol. 1, pp. 185 - 188, ltr. #91, and notes.

2. The paper upon which Lord Kames made his "observations" (Article III, page 68 and f.) "Read before the Society in the year 1761" was *The Advantages of Shallow Ploughing*, by Mr. George Clark, (Article II, page 56 and f.). *On Evaporation* appeared as Article IV, page 80 and f.

3. For Voltaire's sarcastic comments on the *Elements of Criticism*, see page 25, above. Lord Kames had not only a "thirst for knowledge of every kind," but wrote on most subjects which were of particular interest in his day. A list of his publications follows:

1728. *Remarkable Decisions of the Court of Session.*
1732. *Essays on Several Subjects.*
1741. *Decisions of the Court of Session.*
Lord Karnes, however, was not the only contributor to reach fame.

The Essays also contain articles written by Colin Maclaurin; by Alexander Monro, secundus, then a student of medicine in the University of Edinburgh; and by his father, Alexander Monro, primus, who was Professor of Anatomy in the University. Two other contributors of

1747. Essays on British Antiquities.
1757. The Statute Law of Scotland Abridged.
1759. Historical Law Tracts.
1760. The Principles of Equity.
1761. Introduction to the Art of Thinking.
1762. Elements of Criticism.
1766. Remarkable Decisions of the Court of Session.
1772. The Gentleman Farmer.
1773. Sketches of a History of Man.
1777. Elucidations Respecting the Common or Statute Law of Scotland.
1780. Select Decisions of the Court of Session.
1781. Loose Hints Upon Education, Chiefly Concerning the Culture of the Heart.

(This list of publications was taken from a pamphlet by Sir David Dalrymple, entitled A Catalogue of the Lords of Session.) Karnes's advice, when Sir Gilbert Elliot appealed to him on an obscure point of political economy, was in keeping with his practice. Karnes advised Sir Gilbert to "go and write a book upon it if you want to understand it." (Tytler: Life of Lord Karnes, Vol. 1, page 61.)

Lord Monboddo (James Burnett) was heard to complain that Karnes wrote "a great deal faster than I am able to read." (Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 181.)


of repute were William Cullen, then Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, and Joseph Black, the discoverer of the principles of latent heat.

1. Of the Cold Produced by Evaporating Fluids, and of some other Means of Producing Cold, Article VII, Vol. 2, page 159 f., read May 1, 1755. "This is the only chemical essay he ever published; and evidently shows what might have been expected from him, if his genius had not strongly drawn him to the cultivation of medicine. Was it this short essay that was the more immediate occasion of his favourite pupil, Dr. Black, directing his attention so peculiarly to heat? or was Black 'the young gentleman, one of his pupils,' to whom he alludes in the paper." (Bower: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, page 353.) "In the end of the year 1755, Dr. William Cullen transmitted to the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh a paper entitled 'Some Reflections on the Study of Chemistry, an essay towards ascertaining the different species of Salts, being part of a letter addressed to Dr. John Clerk, etc.' This paper, intended to afford a specimen of an Elementary work on Chemistry, which he proposed to publish, contains more extensive and precise information, with regard to the general properties and relations of the different species of salts, than is to be found in any chemical work of the time. In particular, the distinctive characters and peculiar compounds of Soda — a substance at that time not generally admitted in this country (Scotland) to differ specifically from potash, but which had always been treated as such by Dr. Cullen in his lectures, — are described with a minuteness and accuracy which evince how intimately he was acquainted with the progress of discovery in Chemistry." (The paper did not appear in the Essays and Observations.)

"The following letter from Dr. Black affords some notion of the different lights in which this paper was viewed by the members of Edinburgh Philosophical Society, before which it was read.

'Dear Doctor,

Edinburgh, January 1745 (misprint for 1754.)

I did indeed trust to Dr. David Clerk's giving you an account of the reception of your paper on the different species of Salt, but I find he wants to have some chat with Dr. Plummer in private before he writes to you. Mr. Russell (Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh) tells me it was read and approved of, but that no particular observations were made upon it. Lord Kames afterwards took notice that there were some errors in the composition, which you were not used to fall into, and offered to undertake the correction of it himself, and I believe would have printed it immediately; but I thought it most proper to send it back (this note is continued at the foot of the next page).

2. Experiments upon Magnesia Alba, Quicklime, and some other Alkaline Substances, Article VII, Vol. 2, page 172 f., read June 5, 1755.
For the first time, medical men residing beyond the borders of Scotland played a considerable part in supplying articles for a publication undertaken by a Scottish literary society. The fact that a respectable number of contributions to the *Assays and Observations* came from abroad is an indication of the growing reputation of the Edinburgh Medical School and of the success of Scotland's efforts in science and medicine. From London came articles written by Donald Monro, Physician to Saint George's Hospital and from James Grainger, the Physician and poet; from Jamaica came a paper on the Anthelmintic Virtue of the Bark of the Bulge-water Tree, by Peter Duguid, surgeon; from America came contributions from Benjamin Franklin, Dr. John Lining, "Physician at Charleston in South Carolina," and Dr. Alexander Garden, also of Charleston, who was a member of the Society.

1. Dr. Gordon was a frequent contributor. He was responsible for the following articles:— (this note is continued at the foot of the next page.)

2. Article XV, Vol. 2, page 290 f., "by the late Mr. Peter Duguid, Surgeon in Jamaica, in a letter to Alexander Monro senior, M. D."


4. Article XIV, Vol. 1, page 456 f., *Of the Anthelmintic Virtue of the Indian Pink*, "in a letter to Dr. Robert Whytt, Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh."
The fact that not one of the papers in the three volumes of *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary* appears to be in any way "literary" does not seem to have caused any embarrassment to the editors. But this merely emphasizes the observation, which has already been made several times, that to the eighteenth-century eye, many things appeared to be literary which do not seem so to us. Lord Kames's essays on *Motion* and *Evaporation*, for example, were undoubtedly regarded as literary, as the one was philosophical, and the other was largely speculative. And even his Lordship's strictures on *Shallow Ploughing*, which came as a criticism of a previous article, would have been considered as inclining more toward the "literary" than to the "physical", for agriculture was still regarded as an art, and it was not until much later that it came to be regarded as a science.

The kinship which existed, in the eighteenth-century mind, between "natural philosophy" and "literature", is suggested in the Preface to the first volume of *Essays and Observations*. In discussing the origin and purpose of the new society, the editors wrote the following:

---

1. In 1730, a regular chair of Agriculture was established in the University of Edinburgh by William Pultney, Esq., who "mortified the sum of one thousand two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, as a fund for the payment of a salary of fifty pounds per annum." (Hente: *Prospects and Observations*, page 359).

2. "The Preface is almost certainly Hume's. It bears all the marks of his hand..." (Greig: *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol. 1, page 185, note #7.)

3. *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary*, preface. The preface was also reprinted in the *Scots Magazine*, April, 1754, page 184 f.
The object of this society is the same with that of other acad¬
emies which have been established in different parts of Europe,
the promoting of natural philosophy, and of literature, by com¬
municating to the public such dissertations as shall be trans¬
mited to them, either by their own members, or by others.
'Tis allowed, that these two branches of learning, especially
the former, are more promoted by the observation of facts, than
by the most ingenions reasonings and disputations.

But not only are the "two branches of learning" to be "promoted by the
observations of facts", the author, or authors, of the Preface goes on
to explain that it is in the very nature of a society to "correct and
confirm", to excite emulation, and to assist men to arrive at "general
truths." The Preface continues:

To a diligent, and even sometimes to a careless inquirer, many
valuable experiments, no doubt, occur: and these would enrich
our collections, though without this method of conveyance they
would be entirely lost to the public. The united judgments too
of men correct and confirm each other by communication; their
frequent intercourse excites emulation; and from the comparison
of different phaenomena, remarked by different persons, there
often result general truths, of which, from one of these phae¬
nomena, no man of the greatest sagacity could entertain any
suspicion. Though the collection of experiments seems contin¬
ually, by means of the learned societies, and the labours of
individuals, to be augmenting, we need not entertain any ap¬
prehensions, that the world will ever be overwhelmed by the
number of confused and independant observations. The heap
does not always go on, increasing in bulk and disorder, through
every age. There arise, from time to time, bold and happy
geniuses, who introduce method and simplicity into particular
branches of sciences; and reducing the scattered experiments
to more general theorems, abridge the science of nature. Hints
of this kind, we hope, may be able to pass through our hands;
and at worst, our collections will be a species of magazine,
in which facts and observations, the sole means of true in¬
duction, will be deposited for the purposes of philosophy.

Despite the lack of a sharp distinction between "natural philos¬
ophy" and "literature", however, the Philosophical Society did not
hesitate to define a number of subjects which they had "resolved en¬
tirely to exclude from their plans." An announcement was also made to
the effect that the Society accepted no responsibility for "the just-
ness of every reasoning, nor the accuracy of every observation" to appear in their publications. Concerning these matters, the Preface reads as follows:

The sciences of theology, morals, and politics, the society are resolved entirely to exclude from their plan. However difficult the inferences in these sciences, the facts on which they are founded, are extremely obvious; and we could not hope, by our collections, to be in this respect of any service to the public. The great delicacy of the subject, the imperfections of human understanding, the various attachments and inclinations of mankind, will for ever propagate disputes with regard to these parts of erudition. And it is the peculiar happiness of geometry and physics, that as they interest less the passions of men, they admit of more calm disquisition and inquiry.

It is not that the Society expect or propose, that what they communicate will be entirely above doubt and disputation. The papers, indeed, which they print, were all read before them, and they gave their consent to the inserting them in their collections: but they pretend not to warrant the justness of every reasoning, nor the accuracy of every observation. The author alone of each paper is answerable for the contents of it; and the Society are as willing to insert what may be communicated in opposition to the sentiments of any of its members, as in confirmation of them.

The editors modestly conclude their preface with an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the public, and a frank admission that "all the merit to which they pretend, is that of exciting the industry of the learned, and of conveying their productions to the notice of the world." This is followed by a few short directions to those who may wish to contribute, which read as follows:

Whoever will favour the Society with any discourse which it comprehends in its plan, may send their papers to either of the secretaries, Mr. Alexander Monro, Professor of Anatomy at Edinburgh, or Mr. David Hume, Library-keeper to the Faculty of Advocates.

1. This was Alexander Monro, primus, the first of three Alexander Monros, father, son, and grandson, who held the chair of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh for over one hundred years.
The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh is another literary society which probably did not keep records, or, if it did do so, its records have since been lost. And, once again, we have cause to complain of disappointment, for, lacking the society's records, we can have no real idea of the day-to-day activities of the organization nor of the members who participated in them. By piecing together the few scraps of information which have been handed down, however, it is possible to give at least an impression of the society's activities and organization.

Lord Kames, who was the leading spirit in many an "improving" society, was the natural leader of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. In a letter to William Cullen, Kames did not disguise the fact that he had managed to work himself into a strong position in the society:-

Lord Kames to Dr. Cullen, Edinburgh, 26th December, 1752.

... Remember also to contribute to the Philosophical Society, about which I am turned extremely keen, now that I have got in a good measure the management of it.

1. "Lord Kames was remarkable for public spirit, to which he conjoined activity and great exertion. He, for a long tract of time, had the principle management of all our Societies and Boards for promoting the trade, fisheries, and manufactures in Scotland. As conducive to those ends, he was a strenuous advocate for making and repairing turnpike roads through every part of the country. He had likewise a chief lead in the distribution and application of the funds arising from the estates in Scotland which had unfortunately been annexed to the crown. He was no less zealous in supporting, both with his writings and personal influence, literary associations. He was, in some measure, the parent of what was called the Physical and Literary Society (i.e. the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh). This society was afterwards incorporated into the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which received a charter from the crown, and which is daily producing marks of genius, as well as works of real utility."

(Smellie: Literary and Characteristical Lives, page 142 f.)

2. Thomson: Life of Cullen, page 75.
In another letter to Cullen, Kames gives us an example of the care he took in promoting the interests of the society, and in drawing talented men to Edinburgh—

Lord Kames to Dr. Cullen.

My Dear Sir,

You'll think it now too late for me to observe that the last epistle I had from you appeared to me extremely whimsical. A plan formed, (i.e. of moving Dr. Cullen to Edinburgh) - difficulties struggled with and overcome,- every thing ready for execution, - and, when the hour was come, given up without saying why or wherefore. I was really so well entertained with the oddness of the adventure, that I did not chuse to be undeceived 'ty having a rational cause assigned. Nov/ that the humour is over, I should be glad, if you write and answer, that you clap in a word or two upon the subject by way of postscript.

Change now the scene to the Philosophical Society, of whose works a second volume is preparing. A demand was made upon me for your paper upon Salts.² I either dreamed it, or it was said to me, that you reserved that paper to make part of a greater work. If not, transmit it to me; and if you reserve it, I must insist upon some other paper from you in its stead. You told me you had one upon Remitting Fevers, the publishing of which may do you some service here, if you have not altogether abandoned your project (i.e. of moving to Edinburgh). I insist upon it as a point of right.

What are our friends doing in the College (of Glasgow) farther than teaching? Are there any discoveries? Is there any progress in science? Are they all vox et praeterea nihil? I hope better things of them. But I want facts, and would not rest upon hopes. How goes on your farming scheme, in particular? In this science facts would be delightful. Your friend, at least your correspondent, Du Hamel is a ninny.

Yours Affectionately, Henry Home.

1. Thomson: Life of Cullen, page 75 f. Although this letter bears no date, it is reasonable to assume that it must have been written some time in 1754 or 1755. The second volume of Essays and Observations came out in 1756. Cullen had one contribution, see page 102, note #1, above.

2. The Society had already heard Cullen's paper on Salts. See page 102, note #1, above.
As for the other members of the Philosophical Society, it is possible to name only a few. Adam Smith, Alexander Monro, and David Hume were members; the Reverend Robert Wallace, one of the ministers of the Auld Kirk in Edinburgh, has been named as "one of the founders of the Philosophical Society;" and it has already been stated that Colin Maclaurin was also a founder. In addition to these men, there were certainly many others worthy of recording, but their names are unknown. A few names, however, are contained in a first-hand account of the society, and as this is the only record left by a member of the society, it is worth quoting at length. The passage reads as follows:-

With the venerable Lord Kames as their President, and Dr. Monro secundus as their acting Secretary, (for Mr. Hume, not long after his appointment, left Edinburgh), the Philosophical Society had regular meetings. And I had the honour of being admitted a member of that Society. I was admitted at the very same meeting with that highly respectable soldier, Sir Adolphus Houghton, then Commander of the Forces in Scotland, and Dr. John Hutton, the celebrated Geologist. As long as I continue to be blest with any considerable degree of memory, I shall never forget the pleasant and instructive evenings I passed in the company of those eminent Physicians and Philosophers, who were then the greatest ornaments of Edinburgh, - Lord Kames, Sir George Clerk, Drs. Cullen, Home, Hope, Black, Young, Monro, and many others. But all these, after having enriched the world by their discoveries, have now paid the debt of nature. Their immortal names, however, will live till the latest ages: and the Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary, which they published to the world, will ever hold a distinguished place in marking the progress of Science.

As for the organization of the Society, we know that the members

1. Rae: Life of Adam Smith, page 107.
met at least once a month, and it is likely, from the practice of similar associations, that the members held some sort of meeting at a shorter interval, possibly one meeting every two weeks. At these meet-
ings, papers were read and were then handed over to one of the members who made critical notes to be read at a later meeting. The papers could be submitted by members, or by non-members, and though the Society’s taste ran strongly to the physical sciences, the subject of the paper could be anything except theology, morals, or politics.

1. In the Essays and Observations, there appear two papers which were read a month apart. See notes #1 and #2 on page 102, above.

2. In a letter to Benjamin Franklin, David Hume writes of the Philosophical Society "the established rule of our Society is, that after a paper is read to them, it is delivered by them to some member, who is obliged, in a subsequent meeting to read some paper or remarks upon it." This letter was in reply to the one in which the American philosopher had sent Hume his "method of preserving houses from thunder." Franklin’s "method" was published in volume 3 of the Essays and Observations. (see note #4, page 105, above.) Craig: The Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, pages 557-558, ltr. #192. Franklin was an interested spectator of all the Society’s affairs. In a letter to William Cullen, Franklin reveals his curiosity regarding that aspect of Cullen’s work which dealt with "fire":

Dear Sir,

London, 21st October, 1761.

I hear, that since I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with you on the subject, you have wrote some of your sentiments of Fire, and communicated them to the Philosophical Society. If so, as it may be some time before their publication, I should think myself extremely obliged to you if I could be favoured with a copy, as there is no subject I am more impatient to be acquainted with. It should go no further than my own closet without your permission."

(Thomson: Life of Cullen, page 189; Franklin: Works, London, 1806, Vol. 2, page 75.) In his letter, Franklin introduced Cullen to an American by the name of Morgan. Morgan, who had a successful course of instruction at the Edinburgh Medical School, toured Europe, and, on his return to the American Colonies, was an active and successful medical practitioner. He also established a Medical Society in Philadelphia, and, according to Thomson, Cullen’s correspondence with him reveals a "minute description" of the organization. (Thomson: Life of Cullen, page 140-141.)

3. See the quotation from the Preface to the Essays and Observations on page 106, above.
When William Cullen moved from Glasgow to Edinburgh, shortly before 1760, he was responsible for the introduction of a new function into the Society. In writing to a correspondent in 1760, Cullen says:

There are just now many favourable appearances, of a revival of the spirits of that society (i.e. the Philosophical). The meetings are regular and well attended. At each of them, of late, we have had sufficient employment, and are at present secure of employment at every meeting for a twelvemonth to come. At the meeting in June next, it is proposed that as many members as possible shall engage to read a paper or papers to the society, at one or other of their meetings in the course of the year 1761, but each member shall fix a particular day, so that every meeting of the year may be regularly provided for; and every member has at least six months to provide for it. There does not at present appear to be any doubt about the execution of this plan, and it is proposed that we shall continue hereafter, I hope, for very many years, at the meeting in June, to provide regular employment for the following year. This however, is by no means to hinder any member from making as frequent incidental communications as possible; and particularly, every member is desired to bring to every meeting as much literary news as he can, either from new books, letters, or even conversation.

The plan of "bringing as much literary news" as possible to each meeting was evidently Cullen's. Among his papers, his biographer discovered a review of the Essai de Cosmologie, par M. de Maupertuis, which "appears to have been read by him to the Philosophical Society. Cullen's sentiments regarding this method of gaining information, which follow, are an interesting reflection of the means by which literary societies extended their interests and activities:

2. "If Dr. Cullen was not the first to suggest to the Society this mode of diffusing information, he was at least the first to put it in execution." (Ibid., page 137.)
3. Ibid., page 137.
4. "Of the utility of the mode of diffusing information which Dr. Cullen recommended, there can be no doubt but the multiplication
In my studies I find it of great use to be acquainted with the books that are now daily published in different parts of Europe. I do not doubt but other gentlemen of this company know the benefit, and are equally desirous of being acquainted, with new books. As all of these cannot occur to every one, nor can the reading of all of them be undertaken by any one person, I have always been of opinion, that a principal advantage to be obtained by a frequent communication between a number of persons devoted to study, is that of being more certainly and sooner informed of new books, and being better directed in the choice of them. I wish that this company may be particularly intention obtaining such advantage, and that each member of it may zealously endeavour to be useful in this way. As the company are not otherwise engaged for this evening, I propose to lay before them an account of a new book. My discretion may perhaps be blamed, but I hope my zeal will not. The book I am to give you an account of, is a small duodecimo, printed at Leyden 1751,. and is entitled "Essai de Cosmologie, par M. de Maupertuis." The purpose of the book is to give a new and more satisfying proof of the Existence of God, whence his motto is, "Mens agitat molem." The work is partly metaphysical, partly mathematical; in either respect it falls improperly under my cognizance, and works of this kind I shall hereafter put into other hands; but I had a mind to set on foot such labours; and not the subject, but the book's being the last occurring to me, determined my choice.

In the meetings of the Philosophical Society, the atmosphere was one of friendly co-operation. There is sufficient evidence of this to warrant the generalisation that intellectual disputes were carried on by the Scottish literati with a degree of calmness and toleration which has seldom been equalled. It may also be stated that the commonest attitude of disputants was one of a genuine desire to be of assistance in arriving; at the truth. An exchange of courtesies between Dr. Robert Wallace and David Hume, both of whom had written

of literary and scientific magazines, journals, reviews and newspapers, which of late years has taken place, has in a great measure superseded its necessity; and their circulation now communicates to all classes of society, advantages which, even so late as the time of Dr. Cullen, could be enjoyed comparatively by a few only." (Thomson: Life of Cullen, pages 138-139.)
essays on the same subject, is typical. The details of this transaction are supplied by Ernest Campbell Mossner in his biographical study of the bon David:

At a meeting of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh previous to Hume's secretaryship, Wallace had read a paper on population in which he maintained that the ancient world was considerably peopled than the modern. The same thesis was then subscribed to by a host of thinkers, of whom Montesquieu was but the most distinguished. Wallace's original contribution was the ingenious argument that population varies directly with the food supply and that the presumed superior agriculture of the ancients afforded sufficient proof of their superior numbers. This paper he revised and expanded into A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind in Antient and Modern Times and, upon being introduced to Hume, immediately solicited his opinion. Returning the compliment, Hume permitted Wallace to read his own manuscript Of the Populousness of Antient Nations, upon which he had been working since early in 1750. There, for the first time in the long history of the question, Hume maintained the superior populousness of the modern world.

Although Wallace's essay, in its final form, was "openly written against Hume's own essay," the agreeable philosopher corrected the proof-sheets for his rival and antagonist, and when Dr. Wallace published his Dissertation, he approved the following advertisement which Wallace


2. "Earl Marischal Keith told Rousseau that Hume had corrected the proof-sheets of Wallace's Dissertation, though the work was openly written against his own essay, On the Populousness of Antient Nations; and Rousseau was charmed with the anecdote and inserted it in the Confessions (Bk. XII). For some obscure reason Burton pooh-pooed the story (Life, ii, 295), and was very properly taken to task by Morley (Rousseau, ii, 132 note). Fortunately a document has now turned up which establishes the fact. The proof-sheets of Wallace's Dissertation are among Laing MSS. in the University of Edinburgh, (Bundle II, 90), and they are corrected in two hands, Wallace's and Hume's. Hume's alterations are almost all stylistic. For example, Wallace corrected a misprint their into then, and Hume changed then into therefore." (Greig: The Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 177, ltr. #83, note #3.)
The Author of this Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind, is desired by the Philosophical Society at Edinburgh, to acquaint the Public, that it was composed several Years ago, and was read before them.

For his own part, as he has the Honour to be a Member of this Society, he had no Thoughts of publishing it, till it should have had a Place among their Works. However, as they had not determined when they were to publish their Transactions, he was advised to embrace an Opportunity of publishing his Dissertation at a Time, when he might hope for the Attention of the Learned, which had been already directed towards the Subject, by the Publication of Mr Hume's Political Discourse, Of the Populousness of Antient Nations. He has therefore published it in its original Form; only some inconsiderable Additions have been made to it, since it was presented to the Philosophical Society.

The Dissertation is followed by an Appendix on the same Subject, which was not read before the Philosophical Society. The Author thought he should not have done Justice to his Argument, if he had omitted to subjoin those Observations, with which he was furnished by a Review of the Subject, and by a careful Perusal of Mr Hume's Political Discourse.

In this gentlemanly and courteous manner, therefore, the literati of Scotland assisted and encouraged one another to make those contributions to learning which made this period one of brilliant achievement.

1. "One small request Hume did make. 'Yesterday,' he informed Wallace, 'there was read in the Society an Advertisement which Lord Morton desired you should insert. If it be not printed off, I should be pleas'd that in mentioning my Name, you would call me Secretary to the Society.'... Curiously enough, this Advertisement, approved of by Hume, does not comply with his request that he be called 'Secretary to the Society!'" (Mossner: The Forgotten David Hume, page 115.)

2. It has been stated by Kerr, (William Smellie, Vol. 1, page 28 - 30), that the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh offered prizes to encourage arts and sciences Kerr cites the example of a medal which bore the inscription "The Edinburgh Society, To Messrs. Hamilton, Balfour, and Neil, Printers in Edinburgh, For Their Edition of Terence, M.DCC.LVII." This medal, however, was not given by the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, but by the Edinburgh Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture. The following notice appeared in the Scots Magazine for January, 1758, page 45. "The Edinburgh Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, have adjudged the premiums
Although this closes the account of the Philosophical Society as it appeared between the years 1752 and 1770, we shall meet with it again in the next chapter when the origin of the Royal Society of Edinburgh comes under consideration. The Philosophical Society's influence, however, was not confined to the Edinburgh literati, for it drew its membership from the rest of Scotland, as well as from abroad, and its example was responsible for the establishment of similar societies in Glasgow and Aberdeen.

Glasgow and Aberdeen, after the example of Edinburgh, were each the scene for the establishment of the type of literary society which I have described as being most common in the eighteenth century. In Glasgow, the Literary Society was established in 1752, and the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen appeared in 1758. Both cities, it is interesting to observe, were the seats of universities, and this bears out the ob-

---

1. Some confusion has existed in the past as to the date on which the Literary Society of Glasgow was organized. (See esp. D. Murray: Robert and Andrew Foulis, page 36 f.) This confusion was the result of a singularly inept note which appeared in the Maitland Club's Notices and Documents Illustrative of The Literary History of Glasgow, page 15. The note refers to a statement supposed to have been made by Professor Richardson (in his Life of Professor Archibald Arthur, which appears as an Appendix to Arthur's Discourses on Theological and Literary Subjects) to the effect that Dr. Hutcheson (who died in 1747), "explained in the society the works of Arrian, Antoninus, and other Greek philosophers." The passage in which this appeared, however, was merely misinterpreted, and it contains no reference to the Literary Society of Glasgow.

servation which has frequently been made that the Scottish Universities were the center of the intellectual life of this period.

At the time when the Literary Society of Glasgow began in 1752, Cochrane's Political Economy Club, an association of merchant's who met to discuss matters pertaining to trade and commerce, had been in existence for over ten years. Cochrane's Club, in fact, was then at the height of its career, for it had been joined by its most illustrious member, Adam Smith, in 1751. The club's efforts in arousing interest in theoretical economics had been so effective that Robert Foulis, Glasgow's celebrated printer, had "found it worth his while to reprint such works on Economics as those of Mun, of Law, and of Gee on Trade and Navigation, Sir William Petty's Political Arithmetic, and Sir Joshua Child on Trade.

In addition to Adam Smith, it has been recorded that Dr. Wight, Professor of Ecclesiastical and Civil History in the University of Glasgow was a member. It has also been suggested that Sir James Stewart, the economist, "would almost certainly be a member of the club," and that Sir John Dalrymple "was probably a member at an earlier period." Other suggestions have pointed to Archibald Ingram, and to John Glassford,

2. For the establishment of the club see Chapter 3, page 96, above.
5. Rae: Adam Smith, page 94.
as members; and it has been stated that Alexander Speirs "was probably a member," and that James Ritchie "was almost certainly a member."

The names of other members have been lost, but from its success and its influence, it is reasonable to assume that the club was enthusiastically supported by a respectable number of the Glasgow merchants. The members of the club met weekly, and their discussions, as one would normally expect, centered on practical matters concerning trade and commercial dealings. "What," we find them asking, "are the effects of paper money on prices? on the currency: on the exchanges with other countries? What was the effect of small notes? what of notes not payable on demand?"

But they also found time to consider the more philosophical aspects of their economic interests. Smith, in 1755, read before them a paper which embodied his ideas on "natural liberty in industrial affairs." It has also been suggested that Smith's activities in the Political Economy Club led Glasgow merchants to a more liberal attitude toward trade restrictions. But if Smith had much to contribute, he also gained a great deal. According to Alexander Carlyle, Smith freely "acknowledged his obligations" to the members of the club, and especially to Provost Cochrane who assisted him when "he was collecting material for his Wealth of Nations." It was in the Political Economy

4. Rae: Adam Smith, page 94.
5. Ibid, pages 36, and 61 - 63.
Club that Smith acquired that practical knowledge of the details of commerce which enabled him to formulate and illustrate the doctrines which he later expounded.

The speculative attitude toward economic matters, however, was not confined to the Political Economy Club. When the Literary Society was formed in the College at Glasgow in 1752, it embraced not only professors and literary men, "but also several leading merchants, and the two printers, Robert and Andrew Foulis, which turned its attention to economic questions as well as to those of a literary and philosophical character." When one comes to deal with the Literary Society of Glasgow, the task is made much lighter by the existence of authentic records. There is, for example, an extant Minute-book of this society which covers the years 1764 - 1779. For the earlier history of the society, which held its first meeting in January 1752, one can refer to extracts of the society's records which have been published by the Maitland Club of Glasgow. There are, in addition, the usual general accounts of the society which appear in biographies and general histories of the period. From these various sources, it is possible to give a detailed account of the society and its activities, and it is only this cumulative treatment

which can be of any value, or even of true interest, for unless something is known of the daily activities of these societies, of the interests of their members, and of their intellectual point of view, nothing worth while is really known about them at all. In this respect, the Literary Society of Glasgow is in a different position than all the others I have dealt with thus far. For it is not only well documented, but it is also one of the finest examples of an eighteenth-century literary society to be discussed in this thesis.

The first recorded meeting of the Literary Society of Glasgow was held on January 10th, 1752. At this time the society consisted of twelve members, nine of whom were professors. The original members were:

Mr. James Moor, Professor of Greek.
Dr. Robert Hamilton, Professor of Humanity.
Dr. Lecchman, Professor of Divinity.
Mr. James Clow, Professor of Logic.
Mr. Hercules Lindsay, Professor of Law.
Dr. R. Dick, Professor of Natural Philosophy.
Mr. George Ross, Professor of Humanity.
Dr. William Cullen, Professor of Medicine.
Mr. Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy.
Rev. Mr. Craig, Minister of Glasgow.
Mr. Richard Betham.
Dr. John Brisbane.

The twelve constituent members were soon joined by others who were interested in intellectual speculation:— Dr. Robert Simson, Professor of Mathematics; David Hume; the two Foulis brothers, Robert and Andrew; Joseph Black, Professor of Medicine; Dr. Thomas Reid, Professor of


Moral Philosophy; and many other men of merit. The meetings of the Literary Society of Glasgow were attended by occasional visitors, and the students of the College were also sometimes allowed to attend.

After their first meeting on the 10th of January, the members of the society met three times, on the 16th, the 23rd, and the 30th, before their regular procedure was established of reading and criticising a paper which had been prepared for that purpose by a member.

As there had not been sufficient time for "discourses in regular form" to be prepared, "accounts of new books were given ... Dr. Cullen dealing with the Cosmology of Maupertuis, Mr. Smith with David Hume's Essays on Commerce, and Mr. Clow with Harris's Hermes." On the 7th of February, "the first regular discourse was given by Professor Moor, On Historical Composition. After papers had been read individuals gave their views in the course of a friendly discussion, and the

1. For a complete list of members, see Appendix A, page 578.

2. "In a MS. Note-book of David Boyle of Whewalton, a student in the University, afterwards Rector of the University ... he records that in 1789 he heard Dr. Hope read two papers before the Society: (1) "A Discourse on the composition of Water," and (2) "Observations on the Theory of the Earth by Dr. Hutton and Answers to some of De Saè's remarks upon it." (Murray: Memories of the Old College of Glasgow, Page 100, note #1.)


4. "A volume of Moor's essays was printed by Robert and Andrew Foulis 1759." This volume contained the following subjects:
   - Essays Read by Dr. Moor in the Literary Society.
     - February 6, 1752. An Essay on Historical Composition.
     - March 1, 1754. An Essay on the Composition of the Picture described in the Dialogue of Cebes.
     - February 8, 1755. An Essay on the Influence of Philosophy upon the Fine Arts.
   "He also read an essay on the End of Tragedy according to Aristotle, which was published in 1783, 12 mo. It was afterwards reprinted by Andrew Foulis, printer to the University, 12 mo., 1794." (Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow, pages 18, 181.)
varied talents and accomplishments of the members, as well as the wide range of subjects brought under review, gave weight and interest to the proceedings."

The activities of the Society between July, 1752, and November 2, 1764, are no longer available, but it is reasonable to assume that the organization and the interests of the members did not change to any great extent. In the session 1764 to 1765, we find the society operating under the following rules:

**Laws of the Literary Society in Glasgow College.**

1. The first meeting of the Literary Society shall be held on the first Friday of November every year and the Literary Society shall continue to meet on every Friday from that time till the second Friday of May inclusive which shall be the last meeting for that Session of the College.

2. If any Member shall not be within the threshold of the Room where the Literary Society meets when half an hour past five o'clock afternoon shall strike by the College Clock he shall pay Six pence and if he shall not come into the room before the President shall have left the chair he shall pay One shilling.

3. If any Member shall be absent from the Literary Society four successive nights and shall not make an apology for his absence in writing which shall be sustained by the majority he shall thereby cease to be a member of the Society provided the Secretary shall have given him warning upon the third night's absence.

4. All Members who live within one computed mile of the College shall be subject to the foresaid penalties unless they are sick out of town or giving public lectures in which last

---


2. At least I have not found them, but Rae: *Adam Smith*, page 95, says, rather optimistically, that the Literary Society's "minutes are probably still in existence somewhere."

3. Taken from a typescript "Copied from the original minute Book in the possession of William Henry Hill, Glasgow," by David Murray, Glasgow, 1892. This volume is in the Murray Collection of the University of Glasgow Library. The Laws were passed by the Literary Society on January 18, 1765.
case their attendance shall not be required till fifteen minutes after the Lecture shall be ended. No Member shall be held to be out of Town unless he shall be more than one computed mile from the College.

5. Every meeting of the Literary Society shall be ended when the President shall by the desire of the Society leave the chair. Any three members shall make a quorum to do business and all members who were late or absent shall be fined whether a quorum was present or not.

6. If any Member shall refuse to pay his fines when required in writing by order of the Society and when that order shall have been marked in the minutes the person so refusing shall thereby cease to be a Member of the Literary Society.

7. When any person shall be proposed as fit to be a Member of the Literary Society the proposal shall be made without consulting him and on the Friday preceding his election. If the person so proposed shall be rejected it is declared to be a Rule of the Society that no member shall mention to any one who is not a member that the person rejected was ever proposed. The Election shall be made by Ballot and if there shall be a negative Ballot he shall not be admitted. The Secretary shall be elected by Majority of Votes and shall hold his office during pleasure.

8. Every Member who lives within a mile of the College shall give a discourse in the order of his Seniority and when all shall have given Discourses Questions shall be proposed in the same order no one being obliged to give two questions till all shall have given one. The person who gave the last discourse or question shall be President and failing him his Predecessor and so on. And the person who shall give a discourse or illustrate and explain a question upon the second Friday of May shall be President upon the first Friday of November.

9. The President shall have the power of bringing three Visitors into the Society provided the Orator that is the person who is to give the discourse or question shall consent and the Orator shall have the power of bringing in three without asking the consent of any person and each of these six shall be admitted by producing a written order to the Secretary for that purpose. But this law concerning six visitors shall extend only to the members of this College and to the Inhabitants of Glasgow it being competent to the Society to admit any number of strangers they shall think proper.

10. The Secretary shall begin to read the Minutes of the immediate preceding night as soon as the College clock shall have struck half an hour past five o'clock after which he shall enter in the Minutes the names of such as were late or are absent, he shall exact fines from delinquents demand the subject of the discourse
for the next meeting of the Society and after entering it in the Minutes he shall read aloud the subject of the discourse which is to be given.

11. On the first Friday of November every Member shall deposite in the hands of the Secretary half a guinea which shall be forfeited if he shall not give his discourse in the order and on the day he ought according to Seniority but the half guinea so deposite shall be returned when the discourse shall be delivered in its order. If the person who is to give a discourse shall not inform the Society by word or writing of the subject of it on the Friday before it is to be given he shall pay half a Crown or if after that intimation he shall change his subject he shall pay the same sum.

On the Friday before the last discourse is given for the current Session every member whose turn it shall be to give a question on or before the second Friday of May shall deposite in the hands of the Secretary five shillings which shall be forfeited if he shall not explain and illustrate his question in order. And in the same manner as with respect to discourses if a question shall not be proposed the night before it is to be explained and illustrated he shall forfeit half a crown.

12. The President shall have a casting vote but no vote except in the case of an equality. As soon as a discourse is read or question explained and illustrated he shall desire all the members to give their observations upon it. No reply shall be made by any person till every Member shall have given his observations and no member shall be interrupted in giving them provided he breaks not thro the laws of good breeding. Nor shall the person who gave the discourse or proposed the question make any reply till every one shall have spoken once after which he shall be at full liberty to reply to the whole. When his reply shall be finished the first order of speaking shall not be observed but if two or more attempt to speak at the same time the President shall determine who shall speak first. His business shall be to keep order to execute the laws to be attentive to strangers and to prevent every thing which may be hurtful to the good humour and decorum of the Society.

13. If the Secretary shall be absent and shall not send the books to the Society before the Clock shall strike half an hour past five he shall pay half a crown for that neglect. He shall enter the Minutes in a book and hang up in the place of meeting a list of the members in the order in which they are to give their discourses and a list also in another column of those who live more than a mile from the College.

14. The expenses of the Society for Coals Candles Books Etc., shall be paid out of the fines. If they shall be found insufficient each member living within a mile of the College shall contribute an equal share to make up the deficiency. If the fines are more than sufficient the overplus shall be kept in the Secretary's hand to be disposed of at the pleasure of the Society.
It will be observed from the above rules, that great emphasis was placed on attendance, punctuality, and the discharge of the individual member's duty in providing a discourse or a question for the "day he ought according to seniority." In this there is a decided emphasis on achievement in the form of productive effort on the part of each member. And, once again, we may observe the incredible range of subjects which the society covered. As shown in the minutes, discourses for the session 1764 - 1765 were given in the following order:

November 9, 1764. Mr. R. Foulis read a Memoir on the discovery and Culture of Genius.

November 16, 1764. Dr Leechman read a discourse of Remarks on Mr Hume's natural History of Religion.

November 25, 1764. Mr Muirhead gave a discourse on the Origin and Progress of Poetry among the Romans.

November 30, 1764. Dr Moor gave a discourse on the Structure of the

1. The obligation to provide a discourse was taken seriously by at least one member, as, in fact, it was by all who were active in the Literary Society. David Hume, in a Letter to his friend Adam Smith, writes earnestly:— "I beg you to make my Compliments to the Society, and to take the Fault on Yourself, If I have not executed my Duty, and sent them this time my Anniversary Paper. Had I got a Week's warning, I should have been able to have supply'd them; I shou'd willingly have sent some Sheets of the History of the Commonwealth or Protectorship; but they are all of them out of my hand at present, and I have not been able to recall them..." (Greig: The Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 215, ltr. #107, to Mr. Adam Smith Professor at Glasgow, 9th of Jany., 1755.)

2. Typescript of the Original Minutes of the Literary Society Etc. (see pages 121 - 124 , above.)
Greek Language and the Method of Ascertaining the meaning of Particles in that tongue.

December 7, 1764. Mr. Anderson read some observations on Monse. Montesquieu's *On the Theory of Love*.

December 14, 1764. Mr. A. Foulis read a paper on the first Religion of Mankind and the notion of a chaos.

January 25, 1765. Mr. Millar gave some observations on the Origin of the English Parliament and the changes which have happened in different periods.

February 1, 1765. Dr. Trail gave a Discourse on the general causes of Populousness.

February 8, 1765. Mr. Cumin gave some Remarks on Tragedys and the respective Excellence of the Ancients and Moderns in dramatic performances.

February 15, 1765. Dr. Williamson gave a History of the Rise and Progress of the true or Copernican System of Astronomy.

February 22, 1765. Dr. Wight gave a view of the Origin of the Mohammedan Religion and of the causes of its rapid progress.

March 8, 1765. A paper of Dr. Walker's was read giving an Account of some Experiments made to measure Heights by a Barometer with some Proposals to render that method more accurate.

March 15, 1765. Dr. Reid gave a Dissertation on Memory with observations on the Theorys of some Modern Philosophers.

March 22, 1765. Mr. Robertson gave a History of regular architecture.

As every active member had not given his discourse, or had been excused from doing so, the first man on the list, (i.e. Robert Foulis who gave his dissertation on 9th November, 1764), proposed a question for discussion. These questions were as follows:

March 29, 1765. Mr. R. Foulis's question:— What is faction? Distinguish from Patriotism.

1. Typescript of the Original Minutes of the Literary Society etc., (see pages 121-124, above.)
April 19, 1765. Dr. Leechman's question:— Whether there are Principles inherent in Society by which it must tend to its Improvement?

April 26, 1765. Mr. Muirhead's question:— Whether Anaxagoras was the first that introduced mind into the Make and Management of Nature?

May 3, 1765. Dr. Trail's question:— What was the intention of the Heathen Mysteries?

May 10, 1765. Mr. Anderson's question:— In judging of the Truth of Physical and Political Events is there any standard which the Mind can employ with Advantage? If there is, is it such a one as Tillotson and Hume have endeavoured to establish as the standard for judging of Miraculous Events?

This startling variety, however, may be regarded by some readers as not quite so remarkable as I have tried to make out. Such a blase attitude, if indeed it really exists, merely serves to demonstrate how quickly we become accustomed to a new proposition. But the genuinely astonishing fact is that the Literary Society of Glasgow maintained its inclusive outlook for at least thirty-five years. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the Literary Society of Glasgow was the place of origin of such dissimilar works as Adam Smith's Essay on Language, his Theory of Moral Sentiments, and of his Wealth of Nations; of James Moor's essays On the Influence of Philosophy upon the Fine Arts, On the Composition of the Picture described in the Dialogue of Cebes, and On Historical Composition; and of Joseph Black's papers "on

1. Murray: Robert and Andrew Foulis, page 38. Murray says that the Society was in existence until well past the end of the century, but as he did not give the source of his information, I have been unable to verify this. There was undoubtedly a literary society in the University of Glasgow in the early nineteenth century, but in order to state that such a society was a direct descendant of the Literary Society of Glasgow, there should be the positive evidence which Murray has neglected to give.

Magnesia, Latent Heat, and many other valuable performances."

The Literary Society of Glasgow, because of its long life, its respectable and talented membership, and the quality and quantity of the work done by its members, was one of the most important societies of the century. Very early in its history, the Society exhibited those qualities which were to make it, through its members, as great an influence on the future as any other society to appear in Scotland during this period. It is significant that membership to the society was open to the merchants of the town, for Scotland's future, as well as that of the whole of Great Britain, lay in the development of her commercial enterprise. The contributions of Adam Smith, who provided an economic theory for the impending "Industrial Revolution", and those of Joseph Black, whose work with heat provided the basic theories which enabled James Watt to give the "Industrial Revolution" the steam engine for its essential motive power, brought tremendous prestige to the Society. At a time when there was an ever increasing need for advances in the realms of science, economics, and technology, it was the members of the Literary Society of Glasgow who did much to fill that need.

If the Literary Society of Glasgow was one of the most impressive literary societies in the eighteenth century, the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen was one of the most productive. At the time the Society was organized, in 1758, Aberdonians were very much alive intellectually. "Nowhere in Scotland did science and the belles lettres flourish more during this period than in the two colleges of Aberdeen, particularly

1. Lord Cardross, (who was elected a member of the Society in 1763), quoted in Murray: Robert and Andrew Foulis, page 38. For Black's contributions, see also Murray: Memories of the Old College of Glasgow, page 183.
in the Marischall, where to good seed sown first by Blackwell and afterwards by David Fordyce produced ere long an abundant crop."

And in their efforts to ripen and harvest their crop of literary ideas, the Aberdeen literati were largely assisted by their literary society, the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, or, as it was sometimes referred to, the "Wise Club."

There are several very excellent descriptions of this organization. The earliest comes from a Life of Dr. John Gregory which has been attributed to Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, one of the Judges of the Court of Session, and the biographer of Lord Kames.

As this account is the one from which all the others have ultimately been derived, it will serve admirably to give the essential details of the society. The account begins by drawing the reader's attention to the effect of the society in stimulating literary productions among its members:


3. "Life of Dr. John Gregory," prefixed to A Father's Legacy to his Daughters, by Dr. John Gregory. W. Forbes: Life of Beattie, Vol. 1, page 202, states that Tytler was the author.

4. "Life of Dr. John Gregory," prefixed to A Father's Legacy to his Daughters, by Dr. John Gregory, page 39-41. This account, with all its advantages, has several drawbacks. Tytler is inaccurate in a number of small details. For corrections, see the extracts from the article which appeared in Macmillan's Magazine for October 1863 beginning on page 129, below, see also Appendix B, page 581 f.
It would be curious, in many instances, to trace the history of those literary compositions which have instructed or amused the world, and to mark the progress from their first rude sketches to their complete form and ultimate perfection. Some of the most admired works of those philosophers I have mentioned (i.e. Reid, Campbell, Beattie, and Gerard) owed their origin to a literary society, or rather club, (for it was a convivial meeting in a tavern), which was held weekly in Aberdeen, where a part of the entertainment of the evening was the reading of a short essay, composed by each member in his turn. The projectors of this institution, which the vulgar and uninitiated denominated the "Wise Club", were Dr. Reid, and Dr. Gregory. The society consisted chiefly of some of the Professors of the King's and Marischal Colleges of Aberdeen; but admitted, likewise, several gentlemen of the place, of a literary turn, or of agreeable conversation. Besides the more formal compositions read as discourses by the members, a literary or philosophical question was proposed each night for the subject of conversation at the subsequent meeting. It was the duty of the proposer of the question to open the discussion, and afterwards to abstract or digest the opinions of the several members in the form of an Essay, which was engrossed in the Album of the society.

Further details have been supplied by the author of an article which appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* for October, 1863. The author of the article, who had access to the Society's records, gives the following summary of its activities and organization:--

The Society was formed in January 1758. Meetings were held once a fortnight, on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. It was enacted that each alternate meeting should "begin with a discourse or disserations, not exceeding half-an-hour in length, the subject and design of it being intimate" (sic) "at a previous meeting." After the discourse was read, every member in his order, "had access to make his observations in a free but candid and friendly manner." The limits of discussion were strictly and, as we think, wisely defined. Thus: "Criticisms upon style, pronunciation, or composition, are to be avoided, as foreign to the design of the Society.


The member that discourses," it was also provided, "may answer to any observations made, but the observer is to make no reply without leave of the President." Each member was required to bring forward a discourse once a year. Occasionally, at the end of a discourse and the observations on it, and, as a rule, at each alternate meeting, a question previously proposed by each member in his order was "conversed upon." The proposer of the question "had access to speak first, and the other members in their course." But no member could speak above twice on the same question without leave of the President. The nature of the subjects of the discourses and questions are carefully defined. We transcribe the rule on this head in full, as we find it in the Minute Book in Reid's hand-writing:—"The Subject of the Discourses and Question shall be Philosophical; all Grammatical, Historical, and Philological Discussion being conceived to be foreign to the Design of the Society. And Philosophical Matters are understood to comprehend — Every Principle of Science which may be deduced by just and Lawful Induction from the Phaenomena either of the Human Mind or of the material World; All Observations and Experiments that may furnish Materials for Such Induction; The Examination of False Schemes of Philosophy and False Methods of Philosophizing; The Subserviency of Philosophy to Arts; the Principles they borrow from it and the Means of carrying them to their Perfection. If any Dispute should arise whether a Subject of a Discourse or a Question proposed falls within the Meaning and Intendment of this Article, it shall be determined by a Majority of the Members present."

1. The provision of the "Wise Club" which denied its members the small pleasure of verbal criticism may, by some, be regarded as a flat contradiction of my observation that eighteenth-century literary societies were pre-occupied with the problem of form. I would like to remind the reader, however, that there are large and small considerations of the problem. An evaluation of the general arrangement and content of an essay was certainly of more value to the mature men of letters and philosophers of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen than minor pedantries and small bickerings about matters of style could possibly have been. Ideas, too, have form. Certainly a great deal of the attraction of certain philosophical systems is their balance and structure. In my opinion, the Aberdeen philosophers have only set aside the small problems of form in order to concentrate on the larger.

2. These limitations are unusual for a literary society of the period, but the Aberdeen group was unusual in that its members were very few and very select. In spite of their resolve to avoid all "Grammatical, Historical, and Philological Discussions," the reader will have noted that they still intended to cover a field that would include half of the learned societies of the present day. The society's definition of "Philosophical Matter" is still sufficiently broad to include all the sciences,
Care was taken that neither the discourses themselves, nor the observations made upon them, should pass away quite forgotten. Records of them were kept during the greater portion of the Society's existence. The discourses were recorded in one book, each by its author; the questions and abstracts of conversations on them, in a second—a duty devolving, in each case, on the proposer of the question recorded. The minutes and financial accounts were recorded in another book—the same which has given us materials for the present paper.

The Society chose members for itself, seeking only the fit though few. On a desirable "philosopher" being thought of, he was proposed—often, it would seem, without application on his part, or even without his knowing anything about it. No person was elected but by the unanimous suffrage of the Society, after notice given to all the members present or absent, and the due entry of the day of the proposed election in the minutes. The person elected was then "sounded" and, if willing to act, was admitted. Every member, in the early period of the Society, was President for one month in his turn; afterwards the office was held for a year. The President had an approach to autocratic powers.

In membership, the Aberdeen Philosophical Society was, as has been said, small but very select. The following list of members is provided by the editor of James Beattie's London Diary:

The original members of the society were: John Gregory, then Professor of Medicine at King's College and later of the Practice of Medicine at Edinburgh University, whose collection of lectures on psychology, as well as all the orders of Philosophy. (For some of the various subjects treated by the members of this Society, see Appendix B, 581.) But the statement that they would investigate "the Subserviency of Philosophy to the Arts" is a real shocker. The philosophers I have known do not affect such a modest tone. Far from it, to them philosophy is the Queen of all the Arts, and of the Sciences as well. I suspect that it is either a misprint, a misreading on the part of the author of the article, or a slip of Reid's pen. If none of these is the true explanation, my admiration for the common sense and modesty of the eighteenth-century intellect, which is already large, would be immeasurably increased. (For the subjects of the discussions and discourses, see Appendix B, 583 f.)

Walker: James Beattie's London Diary, page 17 f. A complete list of members also appears in the article in MacMillen's Magazine, page 487 f., and in both biographies by W. and H. Forbes. I have chosen this particular passage not so much for its completeness, for all are complete, but for its identification of the members.
the Duties and Qualifications of a Physician was to give him a high standing in his profession; whose papers delivered to the society were to be published as A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World and to earn him some reputation as a philosopher; and whose Father's Legacy to his Daughters, was posthumously to make his name something of a household word: Thomas Reid, Gregory's cousin, then a regent at King's College and later Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University, whose various philosophical works were to place him at the head of a new school of Scottish philosophers; George Campbell, from 1759 Principal of Marischal College and later also Professor of Divinity there, whose many writings were to raise him into high esteem in his own day as a psychologist and metaphysician; David Skene, the Dean of Faculty at Marischal College, a local scientist who carried out researches in various branches of Natural History; John Stewart, Beattie's old Professor of Mathematics: and Robert Trail, minister till 1750 of Banff and afterwards Professor at Glasgow, first of Oriental Languages and then of Divinity. Since the formation of the society four other members had been elected; Thomas Gordon, Professor of Humanity at King's College: Alexander Gerard, Beattie's former regent and predecessor in the Moral Philosophy chair; John Farquhar, minister of Nigg parish, near Aberdeen; and John Ross, then tutor at Banff Castle to Lord Deskford's son and later Professor of Oriental Languages at King's College. After 1761 only four more ordinary members and one honorary member were admitted before its dissolution in 1773. They were George Skene, Beattie's colleague in the Chair of Natural Philosophy; William Ogilvy, a regent at King's College who became Professor of Humanity there in 1765 and whose Essay on the Right of Property in Land appeared in 1782; James Dunbar, another regent at King's College, whose Essays on the History of Mankind in Rude and Cultivated Ages was an early attempt at a philosophical treatment of history; William Trail, Stewart's successor in the Mathematical chair; and James Trail, the Bishop of Down and Connor, Robert Trail's uncle, who was elected an honorary member at a meeting he attended in 1768. These men, most of them distinguished, or later to be so, in one or other branch of philosophy, were Beattie's companions and counsellors; and just as most of them owed something in their work to the common stimulus and sympathetic criticism of the Philosophical Society, so he owed much to it, both in his efforts to equip himself for the teaching of his subject and in the substance of the writings he produced.

The society's places of meeting are uncertain, for, as is customary with such interesting antiquarian speculations, the number of cocksure statements regarding them has produced the usual chaos. It has been suggested that they met "alternately in Aberdeen and Old Aberdeen; at
the New Inn in the Castlegate or at the Lemon Tree Tavern in Huxter Row, both near Marischal College, or at the Red Lion Tavern not far from King's college. It has also just as confidently been supposed that they met "at John Beans', whose tavern was... somewhere in the Castlegate or Broadgate; or at Luckie Campbell's in the Aulton - situated probably in the High Street." Very likely they met in all five taverns, and perhaps more besides. One thing is certain, they did not waste their substance in riotous living. Extant tavern bills for the club's evening refreshment indicate that they spent, on an average, about eighteen pence each. An example of their expenses for an evening can be given in the following tavern bill:

To 1 Mutchken Punch 0 2 6
To 2 bottles Red Port 0 4 0
To 3 bottles Porter 0 1 0
To Supper 0 3 0
To Pails and Tobacco 0 0 6

Addition by Entertainment 0 1 6
0 12 6

It has been stated that "only on one other occasion, as far as is known, did the bill exceed that amount." Such moderation seems a certain indication that the stimulation of the evening was due to the company and the conversation rather than the liquor. It will be well for the reader to remember this fact, for in later chapters it will be my duty to defend the Scottish literati from charges of too enthusiastic a partici-

pation in the convivial opportunities of their meetings.

The speculative activities of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen gave rise to one of the most charming literary anecdotes of the entire century. When Dr. Thomas Reid had completed his Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, in which he endeavoured to exorcise the spectre of scepticism which had been raised by the philosophical writings of David Hume, he resolved "through Hugh Blair's interposition, to subject the manuscript to Hume's inspection." Le bon David, who at first regarded this proposal with an appropriate scepticism, was, upon examination of the proffered work, very well pleased. His reply to Reid was friendly and encouraging, and when Reid wrote to Hume on 18th March, 1763, he, too, was eager to extend a friendly greeting to the "arch sceptic". His letter reads as follows:--

Dr. Reid to David Hume, 18th March, 1763.

When you have seen the whole of my performance, I shall take it as a very great favour to have your opinion upon it, from which I make no doubt of receiving light, whether I receive conviction or no. Your friendly adversaries, Drs. Campbell and Gerard, as well as Dr. Gregory, return their compliments to you respectfully. A little philosophical society here, of which all three are members, (i.e. the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen), is much indebted to you for its entertainment. Your company would, although we are all good Christians, be more acceptable than that of St. Athanasius; and since we cannot have you upon the bench, you are brought oftener than any other man to the bar, accused and defended with great zeal, but without bitterness. If you write no more in morals, politics, or metaphysics, I am afraid we shall be at a loss for subjects.

1. See Chapter 9, page 520, note #2.
The other members of the Philosophical Society, with one exception, were warm admirers of David Hume's work. Dr. George Campbell had also submitted his Dissertation on Miracles, an answer to Hume's merciless essay Of Miracles, to Hume, and "had acknowledged in his preface almost infinite obligations to him." Only James Beattie was small-minded enough to permit his animosity towards Hume's ideas to affect his personal as well as his literary behaviour. Beattie's attacks on Hume, however, were never as popular in Scotland as they were in England where Beattie was "caressed, and invited, and treated, and liked and flattered by the great," and his Essay on Truth was finally published with the aid of a "pious fraud" perpetrated by two of the author's friends who not only advanced the cost of its publication because no Edinburgh bookseller would accept it, but to forestall Beattie's disappointment, advanced him fifty guineas "out of their own pockets," under the pretext that it was the bookseller's price for the work.

The friendly regard shown by Reid and Campbell for David Hume was a reflection of the general spirit of toleration and unenvying admiration which existed among Scottish men of letters. This spirit was an


3. "Strange to say, this famous work was launched on the world with difficulty. Booksellers refused it, but at last, under the persuasion of Beattie's friends, Mr. Andrew Millar consented to publish it, though only at the author's expense. Unwilling to hurt the author's feelings by this mortifying proposal, his admirers arranged quietly among themselves to pay the cost, and with amiable mendacity told him that it had been sold for fifty guineas, which, of course, they presented to him out of their own pockets." (Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 264.)
important element in the literary life of the time, and it goes a
great way toward explaining the charm and the attractiveness of the
Scottish literati. I shall refer again to these amiable characteristics
when the literary circles of Scotland and England are compared later
on.

If they were friendly and helpful in their dealings with those
who were so unfortunate as to be outside their group, the members of
the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen were of far more assistance to
one another. Nearly every account of the society has drawn attention
to the fact that its activities laid the foundations of the impressive
list of works produced by its members. There is also the direct
evidence of a letter written by James Beattie in which he gives a
detailed account of the origin of his Essay on Truth. This letter,
which was addressed to Sir William Forbes, one of the friends who
committed the "pious fraud" of assisting the Essay through the press,
reads as follows:

Dr. Beattie to Sir William Forbes, Aberdeen, 30th Jan., 1766.

1. See Chapter 10, page 568 f.
   London Diary, page 17 (quoted on page 131-132, above); Graham:
   Scottish Men of Letters, page 250; Coutts: History of the University
   of Glasgow, page 314; Stewart: Life of Thomas Reid, pages 415-414;
   Power: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 3, page 194;
   Life of Dr. John Gregory (Prefixed to his A Father's Legacy to his
   Daughters), pages 39-40 (quoted on page 129, above); W. Forbes:
   Beattie and his Friends, page 21; Smellie: Literary and Character-
   istical Lives, pages 5-6; Lives of Eminent Scots, published by the
   Society of Antient Scots, Vol. 1, page 144 f.; and Macmillan's
   Magazine, October, 1865, page 440 f.
I have of late been much engaged in metaphysics; at least I have been labouring with all might to overturn that visionary science. I am a member of a club in this town, who stile themselves the Philosophical Society. We have meetings every fortnight, and deliver discourses in our turn. I hope you will not think the worse of this Society, when I tell you, that to it the world is indebted for A Comparative View of the Faculties of Man, and an Enquiry into Human Nature, on the Principles of Common Sense. Criticism is the field in which I have hitherto (chiefly at least) chosen to expatiate; but an accidental question lately furnished me with a hint, which I made the subject of a two hours discourse at our last meeting. I have for some time wished for an opportunity of publishing something relating to the business of my own profession, and I think I have now found an opportunity; for the doctrine of my last discourse seems to be of importance, and I have already finished two-thirds of my plan....

From all the evidence which I have examined, it is possible to draw only one conclusion. The Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, with its obvious bias in favour of encouraging the productivity of its members, was an outstanding example of the type of literary society which flourished during the Period of Achievement. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the Society was dissolved in 1773, that is, within two years of the date which I have set for the beginning of a new period. In this same year, Beattie was given a pension of two hundred pounds sterling by the crown, an example of royal patronage which may be taken as a sign of the growing reputation of Scottish authors.

I have spent considerable time in a detailed examination of the activities of the literary societies of Glasgow and Aberdeen, and it is now time to return to Edinburgh. In regards to the relative position of the three towns, and their respective literary societies, it should be kept in mind that although a lack of reliable information has made it impossible to treat the Edinburgh societies with a fullness which they deserve, Edinburgh none the less was the intellectual capital of eight-

teenth-century Scotland. The societies of Edinburgh, however, cannot be treated with the same convincing simplicity and directness as the provincial societies, and there is therefore some danger that the unavoidable complexities of the Edinburgh literary scene may sometimes disguise the fact that I am still heading in the same direction in which I started. But the reader must not lose sight of the fact that the three main themes, (the impulse toward national improvement, the desire to imitate English models, and the organization of societies as a means to both these ends), which have been the guides for this thesis from the beginning are still the most important aids to an understanding of the societies of this period. And such aids are of particular importance at this time, for I am about to discuss a society in which all three appeared. This society, which was the supreme example of an eighteenth-century "improving" literary society, was the Select Society of Edinburgh.

It is one of the well-established traditions of Edinburgh's past that the Select Society was originated by Allan Ramsay, the very talented and successful artist son of Allan Ramsay the poet. The younger Ramsay was a man of many talents, and no mean classical Scholar. On Wednesday

22nd May, 1754, Allan Ramsay and fourteen of Edinburgh's "select" met in the Advocate's Library to organize the society which became "the parent of a numerous progeny of debating societies in Edinburgh." The original fourteen "select" were as follows:

- Mr. John Jardine, Minister of the Gospel in Edinburgh
- Dr. Francis Hume
- Mr. Adam Smith, Professor at Glasgow
- Mr. Anderson
- Mr. Alexander Wedderburn
- Mr. Simon Fraser, Advocate
- Mr. Allan Ramsay, Painter
- Mr. James Burnett, Advocate
- Mr. John Campbell, Advocate
- Mr. Alexander Carlyle, Minister at Inveresk
- Mr. William Johnston, Advocate
- Mr. James Stephenson Rogers, Advocate
- Mr. David Hume
- Mr. John Swinton, Advocate
- Dr. Alexander Stephenson

With such an impressive list of members, we must recognize at once that this was to be no ordinary debating society. The presence of David Hume, Adam Smith, Alexander Wedderburn (who was to become Lord Chancellor), Lord Monboddo (then plain James Burnett), and Alexander Carlyle was alone sufficient to indicate that "this society had no affinity to the clubs

Carlyle: Autobiography, page 312, note. In two well-known accounts which deal with the origin of the Select Society, (Campbell: Lord Chancellors, Vol. 6, page 29; Ritchie: Life of David Hume, page 85), there is considerable confusion as to the relationship between the Select Society and the Poker Club. I have attempted to set this matter right in Chapter 9, page 518, note #1.


3. Taken from the list of members prefixed to the MS. Minute-Book of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh, in the National Library of Scotland. The Minute-Book does not indicate which are the founding members, but we know from Burton and Carlyle that there were fifteen present. The men listed above are the first fifteen in a list which was kept in the order in which members joined.
that are composed principally of raw half-thinking lads." The Select
Society could boast at its institution "of having for its members a set
of the ablest men Scotland ever produced, and it proved, therefore, an
excellent school for eloquence." And eloquence was one aim of the so-
ciety. Its dual purpose, as Dr. Carlyle informs us, the pursuit of
"philosophical inquiry, and the improvement of the members in the art
of speaking."

The new society grew rapidly. By 18th June, 1754, it had already
doubled its original numbers, and by February of the next year, it had
increased its membership to eighty-three. Among the sixty-eight new
members were such able and talented men as John Home, the author of
Douglas; Dr. William Robertson, the Historian; Sir David Dalrymple,
author, jurist, and antiquarian; Sir Gilbert Elliot; Dr. Hugh Blair,
Dr. Johnson's favourite Scottish author; Patrick Lord Elibank, Earl of
Glasgow; Sir Alexander Dick; the Rev. William Wilkie, author of the
Epitaphs; the Duke of Hamilton; and Lord Kames. The number of members
gradually rose to one hundred and thirty, and included "fifteen who were
or became peers and eighteen who were or became law lords, not to men-
tion clergymen of high birth, professors, scholars, and other small
deer." These men met on Wednesday evenings, at first in the Advocate's

1. Ramsay of Ochtertyre: Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Cen-
2. Ibid.
3. Stewart: Life of Robertson, Appendix, page 313, (Note A to page
155), written by Dr. Alexander Carlyle.
4. For a complete list of members, see Appendix C, page 586.
6. Rae: Life of Adam Smith, page 109, says the society met on Friday
Library, and then when the society had outgrown the room provided for then, in the hall above the Laigh Council House which belonged to the St. Giles’ Lodge of Masons.

The laws which regulated the newly-formed society were as follows:-

Rules and Orders of the Select Society, Instituted on Wednesday the twenty second day of May 1754.

1. That the Society shall meet at the Advocates Library every Wednesday evening at six a clock, from the twelfth day of November to the twelfth day of August.

2. That each member shall preside in his Turn, according to the order in which his name happens to stand upon the Roll; who shall leave the Chair and dissolve the meeting at nine a clock.

3. That the Society shall consist of fifty persons: the number to be afterwards augmented, as the Society shall see cause.

4. That any Person desirous of being admitted a member, shall be proposed as a Candidate by a Writing subscribed by two members to be given in to the Secretary, and read, by the President, after the Debates of the Evening are over.

5. That no election of such candidates shall be made the same evening on which they are proposed, nor at any time after, unless one half of the members upon the Roll be present; and moreover, that there shall be no election made unless when there are more candidates than vacancies in the Society.

6. That at such Election the method of Proceedure be as follows: First, That every Member present shall out of the Candidates proposed, give in a list containing so many names as there happen to be vacancies appointed to be filled: and, at giving in his list, shall declare that he has made no Promise for whom he shall vote. Secondly, That such Candidates so voted for by list, shall then be ballotted for, one by one, beginning with him whose name appears the oftestenst upon the lists;


1. MS Minutes of the Select Society, meeting of 13th November, 1754.

2. Ibid.
and so on till the whole vacancies appointed to be filled up are accordingly filled up. And no candidate shall be held to be elected by Ballot unless he shall have three fourths of the suffrages in his favour.

7. That annually upon the third Wednesday of October circular letters shall be sent by the clerk of the Society to each of the members, enclosing a printed Roll of the Society, and desiring their attendance on the first Friday of December, at six o'clock in the evening for a general Re-election. At which meeting, those persons whose names shall be struck out of the said Roll by three fourths of the Members then present, shall be excluded the Society.

8. That every Member upon his first Admission into the Society, and likewise annually upon his Re-election, shall immediately pay the sum of five Shillings Sterling into the hands of the Clerk towards defraying the contingent expences of the Society; otherwise his name to be instantly struck off the Roll.

9. That every Member may propose any subject of debate, except such as regard Revealed Religion, or which may give occasion to vent any Principles of Jacobitism, by giving the same in writing to the Secretary after the conclusion of the debates of the evening, to be received, or rejected, by a vote of the Society; and if received, to be entered in a Book to be kept for that purpose. And the President before he leaves the chair, shall read the Question to be debated at the next meeting, being the first in order, unless it be agreed by a majority that some other Question standing in the Book be debated in its stead.

10. That every person may speak three times in a debate, and no oftener; the first time fifteen minutes and ten minutes each of the other times; adressing himself to the member presiding. And if two, or more, stand up at the same time, the member presiding shall call upon him whom he first perceived rising; always giving preference to him who has not spoke, or not so frequently, as the person or persons rising with him; unless any member rises to explain anything said by him and misunderstood, for which purpose he shall be allowed two minutes. No person shall be interrupted in his argument, nor shall any person present be named in a Debate.

11. That these Rules and Orders being passed by a majority of votes, (as all future ones shall also be) shall be established as the Laws of the Society, and fairly ingrossed on Parchment;

1. Questions to be Debated by the Select Society, a volume of MS. in the National Library of Scotland. I have included a transcript of this volume as Appendix D, page 594 f.
a copy whereof shall be delivered to each member requesting the same, he being at the expense thereof.

12. That no Alteration of the above Laws, or additions to them be enacted, or even debated in a general meeting of the Society, till such alteration or addition be delivered in writing to the Secretary, and afterwards referred to a committee.

The procedure outlined in the above rules was very simple. Each member, in the order in which his name appeared on the role of membership, would take the chair as praeses. After the business of the society had been disposed of, a question would be debated. This question was promulgated at the previous meeting, and it was chosen from a book in which all new questions suggested by the members were entered. An examination of the volume containing the Questions to be Debated by the Select Society, reveals the same multiplicity of interests as was observed in connection with the societies already discussed. There is nothing to indicate, for example, that the interests of the Society were very largely economic," as has been suggested. It is true, however, that the members were not averse to economic speculation, and, further, that they exemplified the improving spirit to the extent that they took positive steps to "encour-

---

1. For the Roll of Membership, see Appendix C, page 596.
2. Compare the practice of the Easy Club, page 48, above.
3. See Appendix D, page 594 f.
4. Rae: Life of Adam Smith, page 110. Rae quotes a notice which appeared in the Scots Magazine listing subjects of debates held in the Edinburgh Society. (Scots Magazine, Vol. 10, page 163). But this notice applies to the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, which also had debates at their monthly meetings, and not to the Select Society. In general, Rae's account is very good, but he has failed to make a proper distinction between the Select Society and its offspring, the Edinburgh Society. For further discussion of this problem, see page 153, and note #5.
age arts, sciences, and manufactures."
At the meeting held on 12th February, 1755, it was proposed "that a Committee might be appointed to consider whether the society might not by raising a voluntary contribution to be bestowed on premiums afford a considerable encouragement to the several usefull arts and manufactures in the country." This proposal was carried out, and on 12th March it was decided that a new society should be organized and that it should bear the name of The Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture. On 2nd April it was announced that the "first monthly meeting" of the Edinburgh Society was to be held on Monday, April 7, 1755.

The new plans of the Select Society were reported to its founder, who had gone to Rome "to read Latin," by the genial David Hume. Hume, who had been elected treasurer soon after the society was established, wrote to Allan Ramsay, giving him a detailed and enthusiastic report of the society's doings. His letter, which must have been written soon after the Select Society had embarked on its new venture, reads as follows:

It (the Select Society) has grown to be a national concern. Young and old, noble and ignoble, witty and dull, laity and clergy - all the world are ambitious of a place amongst us, and on each occasion we are as much solicited by candidates as if we were to choose a member of Parliament. Our friend young Wedderburn has acquired a great character by the appearance he has made. Wilkie the minister has turned up from obscurity, and become a very fashionable man, as he is indeed a very singular one. Monboddo's oddities divert - Sir David's (Lord Hales) zeal entertains - Jack Dalrymple's rhetoric interests. The long drawing speakers

1. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society.
have found out their want of talents, and rise seldom. In short, the House of Commons was less the object of general curiosity at London than the Select Society at Edinburgh. "The Robin Hood," and "The Devil," and all other speaking societies, are ignoble in comparison. Such felicity has attended the seed which you planted. But what chiefly renders us considerable is a project of engrafting on the society a scheme for the encouragement of arts and sciences and manufactures in Scotland, by premiums partly honorary, partly lucrative. A box is opened for donations, and about one hundred guineas have been given in. We hear of considerable sums intended by Lord Hopetoun, Morton, Marchmont, &c., who desire to be members. Nine managers have been chosen; and to keep the business distinct from our reasoning, the first Monday of every month is set apart for these transactions, and they are never to be mentioned in our Wednesday meetings. Advertisements have been published to inform the public of our intentions. A premium, I remember, is promised to the best discourse on Taste, and on the Principles of Vegetation. These regard the belles lettres and sciences; but we have not neglected porter, strong ale, and wrought ruffles, even down to linen rags.

The "project of engrafting on the society a scheme for the encouragement of arts and sciences and manufactures in Scotland" proceeded rapidly. A committee, which had been appointed on 12th February, 1755, to take action on the Select Society's resolution to "encourage arts, sciences, and manufactures", consisted of the following members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His Grace the Duke of Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Lord Elibank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Kaims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Alexr. Monro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir David Dalrymple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. George Clerk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Alex. Wedderburn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Patrick Duff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. White.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonel Oughton.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. "The Robin Hood was a famous debating club in London, of which Burke was at one time a member. By 'the Devil' Hume may have meant the Royal Society Club, which met at the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, from 1746 to 1780." (Greig: Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 220, note 5.) There was also a Robin Hood Debating Society in Edinburgh, but it did not appear until later. See page 226, Chapter 5, below.

2. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society.
On 26th February, this committee submitted proposals for the erection of the new society. The meeting ordered one hundred copies of the proposals to be printed, and, in compliance with one of the said proposals, also ordered the election of ordinary and extraordinary managers for conducting the new Society, as Hume had related to Allan Ramsay. I have not seen a copy of the proposals which were printed by the Select Society, but the Scots Magazine for March, 1755, carried a reprint of them. The proposals read as follows:

Resolutions of the SELECT SOCIETY for the encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture.

That Arts and Manufactures may, by the proper distribution of premiums, be promoted, is a certain truth, founded in reason, and confined by experience.

By premiums, a spirit of emulation is excited in every artist; improvements become universally known; and merit receives the testimony of public approbation.

A more substantial benefit than mere applause, arises also to the artist. He whose merit has been thus distinguished, will find, that although the value of the premium he has gained be inconsiderable, the extraordinary demand for his goods will amply recompense his labour.

The SELECT SOCIETY, determined by these motives, appointed a committee of their number, to consider in what manner a design so laudable might be promoted.

Upon a report from their committee, the society came to the following resolutions, which they ordered to be printed, for the use of the members.

It was resolved, that the method of raising the fund should be by a voluntary contribution, either to be put into a box kept for the purpose, or to be paid to the treasurer on receipt.

With regard to the application of the fund, the society resolved, that the rewards of merit in the finer arts should be honorary; in the more useful arts, generally lucrative.

In the distribution of premiums, the first place, they thought,

was due to genius; it was therefore resolved, that the first premium be bestowed on the discoverer of any useful invention in arts of sciences.

After the example of foreign academies, the society resolved, that two subjects be annually proposed; one chosen from Polite Letters, and one from the Sciences; and that the best discourse on each, composed in this country, be distinguished by some public mark of the respect due to the taste and learning of the composer.

The art of Printing in the country requires no encouragement: yet, as to pass it by unnoticed, were slighting the merit of those by whose means alone it has attained that eminence, it was resolved, that the best printed and most correct book, which shall be produced within a limited time, be distinguished by an honorary reward.

The manufacture of Paper is strictly connected with printing; to the shame of this country, it is supplied with paper from countries which use not half the quantity of linen that is here consumed; in order to remedy this defect; to render people more attentive to their own interest, as well as to the interest of their country; to show them the consequence of attention to matters which may seem trivial; it was resolved, that, for the first, second, third, fourth and fifth parcels of linen rags, gathered within a limited time, a reward be assigned in proportion to the quantity and goodness of each parcel.

Manufactures of Printed Cotton and Linen are already established in different places of this country: in order to promote an attention to the elegance of the pattern, and to the goodness of the colouring, as well as to the strength of the cloth, it was resolved, that, for the best piece of printed linen or cotton cloth, made within a certain period, a premium should be allotted.

The art of Drawing being closely connected with this art, and serviceable to most others, it was resolved, that for the best drawings by boys or girls under sixteen years of age, certain premiums be assigned.

The annual importation of Worked Ruffles, and of Bone-Lace and edging, into this country, is considerable; by proper encouragement, we might be supplied at home with these ornaments; it was therefore resolved that a premium be assigned to all superior merit in such work; such a one as may be a mark of respect to women of fashion, and may also be of some solid advantage to those whose laudable industry contributes to their own support.

The Stockings which in this country are made in looms, have deservedly a great reputation, for the goodness of the workmanship; the worsted, except what is imported, is generally not so good: it was resolved, that a premium be given, to encourage the spinning of good worsted yarn, in such a manner as the gentlemen skilled in these matters shall judge to be proper.
The demand, in this country, for English Blankets, has of late been very considerable; a great part of our wool might be employed in a manufacture of that kind: it was resolved, that for the best imitation of English Blankets a premium be assigned.

Carpets are made in several places in this country: to encourage the manufactures to vie with each other, it was resolved, that a reward be allotted for the best-wrought carpet, and of the best pattern and colours, made within a certain time.

Whisky is made in this country in considerable quantities, but is still capable of great improvement, in the quality and taste: it was resolved, that for the best tun of whisky distilled within a limited time a premium be assigned.

Scots Strong Ale has justly acquired a great reputation, both at home and abroad; but the trade might be carried to a much greater height. PORTER, which was formerly brought in considerable quantities from England is now made here by different brewers. In order to increase the exportation of the one, and enable us to supply ourselves with the other, it was resolved, that a premium shall be given for the best hogshead of each.

Those articles the society chose out, as a sketch of their design. What the most immediate encouragement, will best appear upon a more minute examination. Many other articles will easily occur; particularly in Agriculture, in which premiums may be of the utmost consequence. These, if there shall be a sufficient fund, it was resolved should be afterwards added.

That the management of this plan might not interrupt the proper occupation of the society; and as it can be better carried on by a small, than a great number of men; the following scheme of management was agreed to.

That the execution of this plan shall be committed to nine members of the society, who are to be elected annually. But to burden the managers of some part of the trouble of the society's affairs, they are to be free from the office of judging in the competition for prizes; which is to be executed by three members for each article intituled to a premium, who are to be chosen by the society every year, and who shall determine to which of the competitors for that article the prizes are due.

That the managers have a power to name their own secretary, and shall meet upon a day to be appointed by the society, with a power of adjourning themselves.

That three shall be a quorum; and that the treasurer to be annually named by the society, shall be, in course, one of the managers.

That there shall also be nine extraordinary managers annually chosen.
That for the particular business of this scheme, there shall be a meeting of the society on the first Monday of every month, excepting the three months of harvest vacation; and two extraordinary meetings, on the first Wednesday of July, and the first Wednesday of December. At these meetings, the managers shall lay their proceedings before the society.

That, previous to the two extraordinary meetings, there shall be a meeting of all the managers, both ordinary and extraordinary, who shall take a survey of their former proceedings, and consider what new matter shall be proposed to the society.

That every person who shall subscribe two guineas, or more, for the purposes of this undertaking, shall be a member of the monthly meetings for that year in which he contributes.

That the society for the above purposes take the name of, The Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, in Scotland.

Names of the Managers.

Duke of Hamilton
Earl of Glasgow
Lord Elibank
Lord Deskford
Lord Dalmenie
Lord Kains
George Drummond, Esq., Lord Provost of Edinburgh
Sir Alexander Dick
Sir David Dalrymple
Colonel Aughton
Mr. Alexander Monro, senior, P. A.
Dr. Robert Wytt
Mr. Andrew Pringle
Mr. Gilbert Elliot
Mr. William Johnston
Mr. Alexander Wedderburn
George Clerk, Esq., of Drumcrieff
Alexander Tait, secretary to the Edinburgh Insurance
Adam Fairholt, merchant, Treasurer
Patrick Duff, Writer to the Signet, Secretary

(The names of the extraordinary managers are marked thus — #.)

The same issue of the Scots Magazine announced the first regular premiums to be offered by the Edinburgh Society.

The origin of the idea of offering premiums is interesting. In a pamphlet entitled *Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture*, the following points to Ireland as the country whose example was followed:

To encourage genius, to reward industry, to cultivate the arts of peace, are objects deserving the attention of public-spirited persons.

That the inhabitants of Scotland may become diligent in labour, and excellent in arts, is the concern of all who indeed love their country.

For these good and useful purposes, the Edinburgh Society was instituted. The Gentlemen of whom that society is composed, were sensible that arts and manufactures can never be effectually promoted, unless a spirit of emulation be excited in the various artists and manufactures; a proper distribution of premiums seemed to them the most reasonable method of exciting this spirit. The experience of Ireland has demonstrated the usefulness of such premiums, when wisely directed, and equitably distributed.

The Irish society referred to in the Edinburgh Society's pamphlet was the Dublin Society. The *Scots Magazine* had long made a practice of carrying notices of the activities of this Society. As early as 1739 it had been suggested to Scotsmen that "the Dublin Society, established without any view beside that of serving their country, by instructing and assisting the natives in the improvements of the different parts of their country to the purpose most capable of rewarding their industry, have set your countrymen an example well worth their imitation." The interesting thing is


that the Dublin Society had formerly been instituted in imitation of The honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland which was established in Edinburgh in 1723. The route had been devious, but the example of Scotland's impulse toward national improvement had been reintroduced, after the turmoil of the Rebellion, to reinvigorate her citizen's persistent striving for improvement. It will be noted, however, that the emphasis was now on achievement. Premiums were given for the best examples of workmanship, whether in manufactures, art, science, or agriculture. And often, when the quality of the goods did not justify an award, the premiums were withheld. The promoters of the Edinburgh Society did not subordinate every concern to quantity; quality was always to the fore. The emphasis on high-quality achievement may be illustrated by the society's statement in regard to Scottish printing:

The Art of Printing in this country requires no encouragement, yet, as to pass it by unnoticed, were slighting the merit of those by whose means alone it has attained that eminence, it was Resolved, That the best printed and most correct Book which shall be produced within a limited time be distinguished by an honorary reward.

And later on we shall see this same spirit at work in the Select Society's resolve to "employ the surplus of their annual contributions upon premiums

1. Maxwell: Select Transactions, Dedication, page ix. For the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland, see Chapter 2, page 10 f., above.

2. See the list of awards published in the Scots Magazine for January, 1757, pages 49 - 52, for examples of this.

3. Maitland Club's Notices Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow, page 50; Scots Magazine, March 1755, pages 126 - 127; Rae: Adam Smith, page 113. See also page 114, note 2, page 147, above.
to be bestowed on certain subjects respecting Literature." But before I relate the interesting developments which followed this resolution, it is necessary to devote some space to explaining the rather involved relationship between the Select Society and the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture.

As we have seen, the proposal which led to the establishment of the latter was made in the Select Society on 12th February, 1755. On 26th February, certain proposals were made by a committee which had been appointed for that purpose. These proposals recommended the establishment of the Edinburgh Society, and outlined its methods and purposes. Accordingly, the Select Society established the new Society, which operated under the following Rules and Orders:

Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society.

The Edinburgh Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture in Scotland, consists of all the members of the Select Society, and of such other persons as contribute Two Guineas yearly to the funds of the Society; these being members thereof for every year in which they contribute, and have a voice in all the transactions of the Society, and may elect or be elected Managers or other Officers of the Society. The society, thus constituted, meets, at their ordinary place, upon the first Monday of January, February, March, and April, at six o'clock in the evening; and upon the first Wednesday of July, upon the first Monday and Wednesday immediately preceding the first Friday of December, for the purposes hereafter specified.

The Society is to choose their President on each night by majority of votes; that member present who was last in the chair, to preside during this election.

1. See page 159, below.

2. These proposals have been transcribed for the reader on page 146 f., above.

3. The pamphlet entitled Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, page 5 f.

4. The St. Giles' Masonic Hall, over the Laigh Council House in Edinburgh.
At each meeting of the Society the President is to recommend diligence in procuring contributions and subscriptions for annual payments; and the subscription-paper and cash-box are always to be on the table before them.

The Presidents are to desire Gentlemen to offer in writing any proposals which they shall think advantageous to the Society.

After the ordinary affairs of the Society are determined, the members are to discourse on some subject relating to trade, agriculture, and improvement of arts in this country; each such subject having been proposed at the preceding meeting by the President, out of a list prepared by the Ordinary Managers, and approved by the Society.

The effect of these provisions was to create two separate organizations, although the membership of both was largely the same. "The Edinburgh Society was," therefore, "an organization originating within the Select Society, and forming part of it, while at the same time the two Societies were not wholly identical." As an illustration of the separateness of the Select Society and its offspring or daughter society, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, the following entries in the minutes of the Select Society are revealing:

20th February, 1759. - A motion was made that this Select Society as they were so nearly connected with the Edinburgh Society they would be pleased to think upon the most proper method by which they could be more serviceable to the said Edinburgh Society.

27th February, 1759. - Resolved that as all the members of the Select Society are, by the Constitution, Members of the Edinburgh Society, that it be recommended to all persons of rank and fortune


2. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles' or Select Society of Edinburgh.

3. This did not work both ways. While it was impossible to be a member of the Select Society without also being counted as a member of the Edinburgh Society, it was possible to become a member of the Edinburgh Society alone by simply making a donation of two guineas. But membership in the Edinburgh Society gained in this way did not entitle the holder to join in the debates of the Select Society.
who are already members to contribute to the Edinburgh Society; and that it will be expected of all candidates of rank or fortune who shall desire to be admitted into the Society (i.e., into the Select Society) that they should contribute towards carrying on the Edinburgh Society.

One of the distinguishing features of the Edinburgh Society was the nature of its debates which were held on economic subjects at its monthly meetings. A selection of the subjects of these debates, which were published in the Scots Magazine for March, 1757, reads as follows:

1. Scots Magazine, March, 1757, page 183. (See page 143, note 4, above.)
And the Edinburgh Society did not merely talk over these problems. The question debated on 20th May, 1757, was "What is the best method of getting highways made and repaired?" Following this debate, the Edinburgh Society prepared and published a number of articles in which proposals appeared for rendering "more complete the laws concerning highways, bridges, and ferries," and in June, 1759, the Society came out with a "Plan for repairing the Highways." As a result of this public-spirited agitation, the roads in Scotland were soon as well-surfaced as any in Great Britain. A number of travellers, and among them was Samuel Johnson, made favourable comments on the excellence of Scottish roads.

The primary activity of the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, however, was not debating or publishing proposals for public improvements, but the offering of premiums and prizes for Scottish workmanship. The first list of such premiums, as has already been noted, was published concurrently with the proposals for establishing the new Society. This list, which contained twenty-three items, announced the Society's intention to award a gold medal for "the best discovery in science"; "the best essay on Taste", and "the best dissertation on Vegetation, and the principles of Agriculture". A silver medal was offered for "the best printed and most

3. "That the improvement (of roads) was general we have the testimony of such visitors as Wesley, Pennant, Dr. Johnson, and Pococke - the last averring that the road from Edinburgh to Perth was 'the finest turnpike road in Britain,' Pococke: Tours in Scotland, page 250." (Hume Brown: History of Scotland, Vol. 3, page 287.)
4. See page 149 and note 1, above.
correct book", "the best printed Cotton or Linen cloth", the "best imitation of English Blankets", and "the best hogshead of Strong Ale and Porter." Cash prizes were offered for "the most useful invention in arts", for workmanship in carpets, for "drawings of fruits, flowers, and foliages, by boys and girls under sixteen years of age", for imitation Dresdenware and bone lace, and, lastly, for the greatest quantity of white linen rags for making paper. In 1756, the number of premiums was increased to ninety-two; in 1757, to one hundred and twenty; in 1758, to one hundred and thirty-eight; and, in 1759, to one hundred and forty-two. The complete details of these premiums and the names of the persons to whom they were awarded were published in the Scots Magazine, or in the Caledonian Mercury, to which the reader is referred for further details.

2. Scots Magazine, March, 1755, pages 126 - 150. Resolutions of the newly formed association, and a list of premiums proposed for the first year.
   Scots Magazine, January, 1756, pages 48 - 49. A list of awards for the year 1755.
   Scots Magazine, February, 1756, pages 105 - 106. A list of premiums for the year 1756.
   Scots Magazine, March, 1756, page 147. Notice of intention to have practical farmers admitted to the association.
   Scots Magazine, April, 1756, page 198. An announcement of awards.
   Scots Magazine, January, 1757, pages 49 - 52. A list of awards for the year 1756.
   Scots Magazine, May, 1757, page 260. An announcement of questions to be considered at the monthly meeting of the Edinburgh Society.
   Scots Magazine, April, 1758, pages 211 - 215. A list of premiums offered in the year 1758.
While the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manu-
factures, and Agriculture was thus busily expanding its activities, the
Select Society was not idle. At a meeting on 16th July, 1755, a "com-
mittee who had been appointed to consider some proposals how the society
should extend its plan, brought in their Report," which read as follows:-

Report of the Committee appointed to consider some proposals to
be laid before the Society.

It is humbly proposed that the Select Society for promoting the
laudable purposes which it has in view, should extend its plan
in the following manner.

Scots Magazine, March, 1759, pages 152 - 156. A list of premiums for
the year 1759.
Scots Magazine, April, 1764, pages 229 - 230. A notice of the decline
in the paid subscriptions of the association, and a consequent de-
crease in the number of premiums offered.
Caledonian Mercury, Wednesday, January 26, 1765. A notice of the so-
ciety's intention to publish the awards at the Royal Infirmary at
twelve o'clock, January 29, 1765.
Caledonian Mercury, April 27, 1765. A list of awards.
Caledonian Mercury, April 18, 1764. A list of premiums.
Caledonian Mercury, July 28, 1764. An announcement of a special
meeting.

In addition to the above periodicals, the interested reader will
find helpful information in the following publications:--
Scottish Notes and Queries, December, 1839, pages 103 - 104, an ex-
tract from the General Magazine for 1755 announcing the formation of the
association.
Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society for the Encouragement of
Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, (a pamphlet published
by the society).
Scots Magazine, April, 1759, pages 180 - 182. "Extracts from articles, pub-
lished by the Edinburgh Society, with a view to render more complete the
laws concerning highways, bridges, and ferries, etc."
Scots Magazine, June, 1759, pages 288 - 290. "Considerations concern-
ing a Plan for repairing the Highways, offered to the public by the
Edinburgh Society."
Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, February 26, 1765. An announcement of
a publication entitled "A letter to the Edinburgh Society concerning the
Method of Managing Out-Field Grounds." by a Farmer.

1. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles' or Select Society of Edinburgh.
I. That the Society should resolve to take into consideration all Essays, Questions and discoveries relating to the Arts and Sciences that shall be offered either by its own members or others.

II. That for this purpose the Society shall appoint Committees for Arts and Sciences, who shall receive and examine everything offered to the Society, and transmit what they shall judge to be worthy of its attention.

III. That there shall be at least four committees of this kind, one for natural history and chemistry; one for pure and mixt mathematicks, another for belles lettres and criticism, and a fourth for History and Politicks.

IV. That the method of conveying Papers to the Society shall be by sending them sealed to the Secretary of the Society, who shall open and deliver them to the Presidents of the respective Committees, according to the nature of the subject contained, which shall be marked on the inside of the cover.

V. That the Presidents of the Committees take care to assemble them as often as they have anything of importance to communicate, or when they are desired by three members of a Committee.

VI. That the time for offering anything to the Society from the committees shall be at its ordinary meetings so soon after eight of the clock as the Debate shall be finished, when the Preses shall call for Reports: which being made, the Society shall proceed on them as to them shall seem meet.

VII. That the Papers, after having been examined, by the society shall remain in the hands of its Secretary, to be kept for the Society's use, and disposed of as they shall direct.

Which Report being read before the Society it was ordered that it should remain in the Clerk's hands to be considered by the several members before the society should declare their mind concerning it.

The suggestions contained in the report were accepted at the meeting held on 30th July, 1755, and Alexander Monro, William Wilkie, Robert Wallace, Gilbert Elliot and Adam Smith were appointed to meet in John's Coffee house for choosing the committees. On 6th August, the committee reported "the following persons as proper members of the four committees, viz:—

1. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.
I. That for that on Natural History and Chemistry.
   Lord Dalmenie.
   Dr. Francis Home.
   Dr. John Hope.
   Dr. Alex. Stevenson.
   Mr. Alex. Monro.

II. For pure and mixed Mathematics.
   Dr. Robert White.
   Dr. David Clerk.
   Mr. James Russell.
   Mr. John Adams.
   Mr. Robert Wallace.

III. For Belles Lettres and Criticism.
   Mr. George Wishart.
   Mr. Hugh Blair.
   Mr. David Hume.
   Mr. William Wilkie.
   Mr. Adam Smith.

IV. For History and Politicks.
   Lord Deskford.
   Lord Kaims.
   Sir Alexander Dick.
   Mr. Alexander Taitt.
   Mr. Gilbert Elliot.

The next step came on 7th January, 1756, when the rules committee proposed to the Society "that they should employ the surplus of their annual contributions upon premiums to be bestowed for the best dissertations on certain subjects respecting literature." The following entries in the Select Society's minute-book relate what followed upon this proposal:

21st January, 1756. - The Society took under consideration the proposal which had been laid before them by the committee on law the seventh of this month for employing the surplus of their annual contributions upon premiums to be bestowed for the best dissertations on certain subjects relating to literature; and agreed that they would lay out the surplus in that manner; and named Professor Alexander Monro, Mr. John Swinton, Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, Mr. David Rae, the Rev. Mr. John Jardine, and Mr. Wm. Wilkie a committee to meet and consider on what particular subjects or

1. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.
parts of literature the Dissertations should be for which premiums are to be proposed, when they appointed to bring in their Report against the 4th of February next.

The committee which had been appointed, however, did not make its report until 18th February, 1756. At this meeting the committee made the following suggestions:

The Committee appointed by the Select Society to propose subjects for prizes relating to Literature, which the Society had resolved to add to those of the Edinburgh Society, humbly offer the following to their consideration.

I. History of the extent and duration of the Roman and afterwards the Saxon Conquests and Settlements in Britain to the North of Serverus's Wall in Cumberland and Northumberland.

II. Account of the rise and progress of Commerce, Arts, and Manufactures in North Britain, and the causes which promoted or retarded them.

III. The most reasonable scheme for maintaining and employing the poor in North Britain, and how far this scheme can be executed by the laws now in force.

The proposed questions were approved by the Society, and at the next meeting it was resolved that the prize should be a gold medal. The society's resolution on this matter reads as follows:

25th February, 1756 — Resolved that the authors of the best dissertation on each of the said three subjects shall be entitled to a Gold Medal to be given by the Society of the value of five guineas.

In accordance with the Select Society's resolutions, the list of premiums offered by the Edinburgh Society for the year 1756 was augmented by three additional prizes, each consisting of a "gold medal of the value of five guineas," which was to be awarded for the best dissertation on one of the three subjects which the Select Society had suggested.

1. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.
The fact that the prizes offered by the Select Society appeared on the list of premiums offered by the Edinburgh Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, serves to remind us that, in spite of their separate organizations and their separate interests, many times their respective activities were the result of a common impulse. And it could be no other way, since all the members of the one organization were also members of the other.

One such common impulse, which can be traced in the activities of both societies, was the movement to abolish the giving of "vails" or drink-money to servants. The agitation which this measure of reform precipitated between master and servant all but disrupted the genial affability of Edinburgh society, as the class which was to be deprived of an accustomed and cherished source of income was far from meek in their resentment at the attack on their privileges. The affair was undoubtedly begun as a debate in the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture. We have already seen that one of the subjects for debate in this Society was "What is the best and most equal way of hiring and conducting servants? and, what is the most proper method to abolish the practice of giving of vails?"

The activities of this patriotic association having been bruited abroad, as they were certain to have been when so explosive a subject was touched upon, the tempers of a number of domestics in and about the city of Edinburgh were so far from being improved that they were ripe for mischief at the slightest provocation. And that provocation was not long

---

1. See page 154, above.

in coming. On Wednesday, 18th January, 1760, James Townley's High Life 1 Beloz Stairs opened at the Canongate Concert Hall in Edinburgh. This boisterous comedy, with its merciless exposure of the foibles of the serving class, antagonized the Edinburgh footmen beyond bearing. What followed is described by Arnot in his History of Edinburgh:-

Although it is the province of the stage to lash the vices, and ridicule the follies of people in all ranks; yet, soon after the farce of High Life Beloz Stairs was published, the footmen, taking it in high dudgeon, that a farce, reflecting on their fraternity, should be exhibited, resolved that it should be no more performed. Accordingly upon the second night of its being announced in the bills, as a part of the entertainment, Mr. Love, one of the managers, came upon the stage, and read a letter, containing the most violent threatenings, both against the actors and the house, in case the piece should be presented; declaring, that above seventy people had agreed to sacrifice fame, honour, and profit, to prevent it. Notwithstanding this fulmination, the performers were ordered to go on. That servants might not be kept in the cold, nor induced to tipple in adjacent ale-houses while they waited for their masters, the humanity of the gentry had provided, that the upper gallery should afford, gratis, admission to the servants of such persons as were attending the theatre. Yet, did the only part of the spectators, which were admitted for nothing, presume to forbid the entertainment of their masters, because it exposed the vices of their own order. No sooner was the piece begun, than a prodigious noise was heard from the footmen's-gallery. They were ordered to be silent, but ineffectually. Many of the gentlemen discovered, among this noisy crew, their individual servants. When these would not submit to authority, their masters, assisted by others in the house, went up to the gallery; and it was not till after a battle, and thrust out of the house, that quietness could be restored.

This episode, which reflected so strongly the lack of fidelity and the ingratitude of the instigators of the disturbance, brought the entire class into discred. And the disturbance in the theatre was not soon forgotten. The January issue of the Scots Magazine, a magazine which enjoyed a wide distribution among the Scottish gentry, added fuel

to the conflagration by publishing a long letter condemning the action of the footmen and containing the suggestion that the disturbance was part of a well-laid scheme of the instigators to raise servants wages:

It is very possible, that some of the footmen were such politicians, as to incite or give countenance to the riot, from a view to promote the interest of their order. They knew that the abolishing of their vails was projected; they knew that some of their brethren intended so bold a stroke, as to disappoint all the ladies and gentlemen of the entertainment expected from the farce; and they very reasonably concluded, that such an attempt would ripen and forward the gentlemen's project, and make them universally declare that their footmen must have no more vails. The immediate consequence of this, they thought, would be, the raising their wages much higher than before; and they concluded that in a very little time, the vails would come to be given in as great abundance as formerly, though perhaps a little more privately; and so the whole increase of the stipulated wages would be so much gained to their fraternity. That this may really be the case, seems not improbable, whether any of those footmen were so great politicians as to foment the riot with that view or no.

On 29th January, the Select Society entered the fray. The minute for the meeting held on that date reads, "Resolved that at next meeting, previously to any discussion of the questions the Society will take under their consideration the fitness of the practice of giving vails or drink-money to servants." This resolution was carried out on 5th February, 1760, when the society entered in their records the following agreement which was to be binding on all members:

The Select Society having taken into consideration the practice of giving vails, or drink-money to servants, and being convinced that this custom, unknown to other nations, is a reproach upon the manners and policy of this country, has a manifest tendency to corrupt the morals of servants, to obstruct the exercise of hospitality, and to destroy all social intercourse between families; the members did unanimously agree to exert themselves to

---


2. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.
the utmost, in order to remove this publick nuisance: and, for that purpose, they came to the following resolutions:

I. That from and after the term of Whitsunday next, every member of the Society would absolutely prohbit his own servants to take vails, or drink-money, on any occasion or pretence whatsoever, from the guests whom he entertained in his house.

II. That from that Term, no member of the society would, on any occasion, offer vails, or drink-money, to the servants of any person who had agreed to the former resolution.

III. That all the Members should use their influence in the other societies to which they belong, in order to suppress the practice complained of, and to render Resolutions against it generally.

The President of the Night was entrusted to recommend this to the care of all the Members, upon their return to their own counties; which having been done, several persons of Quality and Distinction signified their intention to promote this laudable scheme in those parts of the country with which they were connected.

Resolutions to abolish the custom of giving vails or drink-money were now becoming general. The "Company of Hunters", the "Clerks to the Signet", the "Heritors of Mid-Lothian", and the Society of Advocates all resolved, from the following Whitsunday, to "abolish the pernicious practice." By June, 1760, similar resolutions had been taken in the counties of Ayr, Berwick, Caithness, Dumbarton, Dumfries, Elgin, Fife, Forfar, Galloway, Haddington, Kincardine, Linlithgow, Peebles, Renfrew, Ross, Roxburgh, Selkirk, and Stirling.

The servants of these resolute reformers did not willingly give up their cherished privilege. An article which appeared in 1762 gives us some insight into their lack of enthusiasm for the resolutions of their masters, and proves that the suggestion that "recruiting-officers and

their emissaries" might take a hand in the affair was no idle threat. The article reads as follows:

When these resolutions came to take effect, it raised a general mutiny amongst servants in Scotland, particularly in Edinburgh and the neighborhood, where many of them left their services all at once, and got into ships in order to come to London in quest of new places and vails; but happily for the others most of them were impressed in the Thames, and sent on board the fleet before they had an opportunity of setting foot on shore. The account of this soon reached Scotland, which put a stop to the defection; and now servants there, having no expectations of vails, settle quietly to their business. Their wages have been moderately raised; they are become much more reasonable and tractable, as they now find they must trust to their own good behaviour for a suitable encouragement from their masters; and a person may now travel from one end of that kingdom to the other, without having occasion to put his hand into his pocket, except when he lodges at an inn.

There is every reason to believe that the resolutions to abolish vails were faithfully carried out, and that the custom was absolutely destroyed in Scotland. In 1763, there are indications that the agitation had spread to the northern counties of England, to London, and even to Ireland. The success of the Scottish gentlemen in ridding themselves of this social nuisance was certainly the example which was being followed in those places. But the Scots have always been denied a full share of the credit due to them. When James Boswell "boasted that (Scotland) had the honour of being the first to abolish the unhospitable, troublesome, and ungracious custom of giving vails to servants," Johnson answered, "Sir, you abolished vails, because you were too poor to be able to give them."

The abolishing of vails, however, was not the only social reform which engaged the attention of the Select Society. In 1761 we find the

members occupied in organizing a new association, the purpose of which was described in its title. The new organization was called The Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland. As this episode in the history of the Select Society is very interesting from the point of view assumed in this thesis, and as it has been the subject of a number of highly imaginative conjectures in the past, I intend to treat it at length.

It has already been stated that the literary Scots of the Age of Improvement were preoccupied with the problem of form, and that in reaching a solution to that problem they had resolved, as they had in other fields, to follow the English example. We have seen how the English periodical papers were instrumental in turning the attention of Scottish writers to the improvement of their style, and how, later on, the Ran¬

ksonian Club, the Philosophical Society, and others were erected to effect the desired "improvement" in Scottish literary endeavours. The pre¬

occupation of Scottish men of letters with matters of form and style,

and the success of their ambitions to master "classical" literary English had been described many times. And the works of David Hume,


See also Boswell: Life of Johnson, text and notes on the following
William Robertson, and Hugh Blair, to name only three of the most successful Scottish authors, were proof that Scotsmen could develop a literary style that was universally admired. But the greatest compliment ever paid to Scottish literary achievement came from Samuel Johnson, a man who was not predisposed to praise North Britain, when he wrote to Boswell, "Please to return Dr. Blair thanks for his sermons. The Scotch write English wonderfully well."

But writing English was one thing, and speaking it another. For one thing, the differences in the spoken dialect were wider, and of more durable nature. As an illustration of the difficulty that Scotsmen and Scotswomen of every class had in accustoming themselves to the Southern dialect, two anecdotes related by Ramsay of Ochtertyre are instructive. The first concerns a young Scotswoman who was apparently on a visit to Edinburgh:

A gentleman's daughter from the country being one day asked by a lady what plays she had seen, answered, Love for Love; and The Old Bachelor. "O fie, Mrs Betty!" said her friend, "those are smutty plays, not proper for young women." "Indeed," replied she, with great simplicity, "they did nothing wrong that I saw; and as for what they said, it was high English, and I did not understand it."

Ramsay's second anecdote reveals the difficulties met with by Scotchmen who had to appear in the Houses of Parliament after the legislative Union of 1707. It is also a revelation of the danger of relying on ill-
advised attempts to learn English pronunciation:——

I heard Lord Kames say he was in London when three of the Lords of Justiciary were ordered to appear at the bar of the House of Peers about Porteous's affair. The night before he was invited to sup with them, when Lord Dun, who was a very worthy, but withal a very pompous man, said to his colleagues: "Brethren, I am sorry to say, neither of you will be understood by the House tomorrow. I am, you well know, in a different situation, having made the English language my particular study." Tomorrow came, when Lord Kames said Lord Royston was hardly intelligible; Lord Milton, though no elegant speaker, was well heard, and his meaning comprehended. As for Lord Dun, "Deil ae word, from beginning to end, did the English understand of his speech."

Despite these difficulties, the literati, the nobility, and the gentry of Scotland were determined to discard their northern dialect for a southern one, and early in the century there is evidence that instruction in English was being fostered among the lower classes as well. Henry Grey Graham tells us that in 1738 a master was removed from his post in a parochial school because of his being "not known in the new method" of teaching English.

There were, therefore, three important elements in the process which resulted in the general adoption of the Southern dialect in Scotland. The first of these was the difficulty which men of letters and

men of affairs had in their essential task of mastering English. The second, was the widespread desire of the nobility and gentry to discard their "provincial" Scottish dialect for the "modern mode" which had been introduced from the south. The third element was the introduction of instruction in English in Scottish schools, and the preference given to teachers who were proficient in teaching that subject. These three elements should be kept in mind as they will be referred to in a later part of this chapter.

The Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language was a direct result of the lectures on elocution and the English tongue given by Thomas Sheridan in Edinburgh. Sheridan, who had arrived in Edinburgh on 10th June, 1761, began a series of lectures on 30th the same month. In the Scots Magazine for July, there appears a complete report of his efforts. This article reprints Sheridan's original advertisement, which gave a synopsis of the lectures:

Edinburgh, June 16, 1761.

Mr. Sheridan proposes to read two courses of Lectures; the first, on Elocution, the second, on the English Tongue; consisting of eight lectures each.

In the first, he will treat of everything necessary to a Good Delivery, under the following heads: Articulation, Pronunciation, Accent, Emphasis, Pauses or Stops, Pitch and Management of the Voice, Tones, and Gestures.

In the second, he will examine the whole state and constitution of the English Tongue, so far as relates to sound; in which he will point out its peculiar genius and properties, and specific difference from others, both antient and modern.

In order to do this in the clearest and most effectual manner, he will begin with the very first elements of speech, and thence proceeding through syllables and words, to sentences and verses,

lay open the principles of composition and numbers, in a manner hitherto unattempted. In this course he will point out the true source of the difficulty (at present thought to be insuperable) which all foreigners, as well as natives of different kingdoms and counties, that speak a corrupt dialect of English, find in the attainment of the right pronunciation of that tongue.

In the close he will point out an easy and practicable way of reducing the living tongue to a standard, and establishing such a method of teaching it, that the adult may become master of it with more ease and certainty, than of any other modern tongue; and that the rising generation in this country may be taught to speak it in its utmost purity.

The price of a ticket, which will admit one person to both courses, will be a guinea.

These lectures, reports the magazine, 'were continued four weeks, every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, at 6 o'clock in the evening. They were attended by more than 300 gentlemen, the most eminent in this country for their rank and abilities; who expressed no less satisfaction with the ingenuity and justness of his sentiments, than with the elegant and interesting manner in which he delivered them.' Sheridan's lectures were obviously a great success, although there were some critical comments, even among those who most admired the Southern mode of speech. Young James Boswell, who had been among his numerous audience, recorded the following impression:

1. The lectures were given in Saint Paul's Chapel, Edinburgh. Dibdin: Annals of the Edinburgh Stage, page 111, wrongly says that the lectures were given in the 'operating room of the Royal Infirmary.'

2. "His lectures were generally approved, though they sustained some slight injury from the ridicule of Mr. Foote, who produced a burlesque on them in 1762, at the theatre in the Haymarket. (Scots Magazine, January 1789, page 41.) See also, for an account of the same incident, The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany, Vol. 8, December, 1788, page 388.

Mr. Sheridan's lectures are vastly too enthusiastic. He is to do everything by oratory. It is like the verse in the Song extolling Drunkenness:

Alexander hated thinking,
Drank about at Council-board,
He subdues the world by drinking
More than by his conq'ring sword.

Sheridan, however, did not fail to turn his success to further profit.

The same article in the Scots Magazine which reported his lectures announced that he had advertised his intention of publishing the lectures, and that he was taking subscriptions for them. The article also contains another advertisement in which Sheridan announces his intention of giving a second course of lectures:

Mr. Sheridan gives notice, that he will begin a course of lectures on Tuesday next, the 28th (of July) instant, and finish it on Friday in the following week, chiefly intended for the use of the ladies, (Note: No ladies attended the former courses.), or such gentlemen as had not the opportunity of being present at the former course....

For our immediate purpose, however, a notice appearing in the same issue is of far greater importance.

Notice was given in the Edinburgh papers of July 27, that on the Tuesday following, the plan of a new establishment for carrying on, in this country, the study of the English tongue, in a regular and proper manner, was to be laid before the Select Society. Mention was made of this by Mr. Sheridan, on the Friday before, in the last lecture of his first two courses.

The Select Society, which was now well versed in the organization of

1. Owing to a twelvemonth's delay in the delivery of the books for which Mr. Sheridan had taken subscriptions, there was considerable dissatisfaction among his Scottish customers, and his reputation underwent some depreciation. See Scots Magazine for September, 1762, for articles covering this affair.


3. Ibid.
associations designed to promote Scotland's welfare, lost no time in setting their plans before the public. In the next issue of the Scots Magazine, that for August, a detailed proposal appeared under the title of Regulations of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland. The text of these regulations reads as follows:

As the intercourse between this part of Great Britain and the capital daily increases, both on account of business and amusement, and must still go on increasing, gentlemen educated in Scotland have long been sensible of the disadvantage under which they labour, from their imperfect knowledge of the English Tongue, and the impropriety with which they speak it.

Experience hath convinced Scotsmen, that it is not impossible for persons born and educated in this country, to acquire such knowledge of the English Tongue, and to write it with some tolerable purity.

But with regard to the other point, that of speaking with propriety, as little has been hitherto attempted, it has generally been taken for granted, that there was no prospect of attempting any thing with a probability of success; though, at the same time, it is allowed to be an accomplishment, more important, and more universally useful, than the former.

In other countries, great and beneficial effects have flowed from the regular study of their own languages, and the art of public speaking, under diligent and well-instructed masters. And, in proportion as the dialect of any province is corrupt or barbarous, the necessity of studying purity in speech increases.

Even persons well advanced in life may be taught, by skilful instructors, to avoid many gross improprieties, in quantity, accent, the manner of sounding the vowels, etc., which, at present, render the Scotch dialect so offensive.

Among those in a more early period of life, greater effects may be expected from regular instruction. It is in their power, not only to guard against the more gross faults in speech peculiar to Scotsmen, but to attain, in some degree, propriety and elegance in discourse.

Such as are just entering upon their course of education, whose

1. Scots Magazine, August, 1761, pages 440 - 441.
organs are yet pliable and capable of being formed to new sounds and new habits, may acquire the power of speaking, not only with purity, but with grace and eloquence.

For these reasons, the Select Society, at a very numerous meeting held in order to consider this matter, did unanimously declare it to be their opinion, that it would be of great advantage to this country, if a proper number of persons from England, duly qualified to instruct gentlemen in the knowledge of the English Tongue, the manner of pronouncing it with purity, and the art of public speaking, were settled in Edinburgh; and if, at the same time, a proper number of masters from the same country, duly qualified for teaching children the reading of English, should open schools in Edinburgh for that purpose.

But being fully sensible, that there could be no prospect of procuring persons with the qualifications requisite for these stations, without giving them proper security for their encouragement and subsistence, the Society, in order to promote this laudable design by their example, did instantly begin a voluntary subscription, for raising the sum necessary towards carrying it into execution; and appointed some of their number to apply to the absent members, to other private gentlemen, and to most of the public bodies or societies in Scotland, that they might give it their countenance and assistance.

And as the direction of this scheme would greatly interrupt the proper business of the Select Society, and as it is equitable, that all contributors should have access to oversee and direct the application of the sums to be levied, it is therefore resolved,

1. That the Management and direction of this undertaking be vested in sixteen persons, to be elected as Ordinary Directors, in the manner after mentioned.
2. That, besides these, ten persons shall be elected Extra-ordinary Directors.
3. That the Ordinary Directors shall be impowered to elect their own Treasurer, Secretary, and other officers; to appoint the time and place of their meetings and to receive and apply the money subscribed.
4. That the Ordinary Directors shall employ as many teachers and masters as the funds will permit, and appoint them such salaries as to them shall appear proper, and oblige them to teach according to such plans or regulations as they shall judge most expedient for promoting the purposes which the subscribers have in view.
5. That two of the Ordinary Directors shall, on the first Monday of July and December, in each year, visit the schools taught by the masters whom they have appointed, examine the children under their care, and make a report in writing to the next meeting of the Ordinary Directors.
6. That, on the same days, two of the Ordinary Directors
shall call before them the teachers whom they have appointed, take account of their method of instructing those under their care, and inquire concerning their diligence and success.

7. That there shall be held two general meetings of the Society in each year, one on the second Wednesday of July, the other on the second Wednesday of December; of which meetings, not only all the members of the Select Society, but every other person, who shall subscribe one guinea yearly, for the space of three years, shall be members, and have a right to vote in all matters that come before them.

8. That the Ordinary Directors shall lay before each of these meetings, a report of their transactions during the six months preceding.

9. That the Directors, both Ordinary and Extraordinary, shall be annually elected, on the second Wednesday of December, by the foresaid general meeting of contributors; it being understood, that a third part of the Directors shall be changed each year.

10. That on Tuesday, the 4th of August, the Select Society shall elect Directors Ordinary and Extraordinary, who shall continue in office till the second Wednesday of December, 1762.

11. That the general body of contributors, together with the members of the Select Society, shall take the name of, The Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland.

N.B. In order to satisfy contributors, that teachers and masters properly qualified may be got, and shall be employed, it is proper to inform them, that Mr. Sheridan, whose ingenious and instructive lectures in this city first suggested the idea of establishing the society proposed, has not only engaged to find out teachers and masters, and to communicate to them his ideas concerning the proper method of performing their duty; but has also offered to visit this place, as often as the situation of his affairs will permit, and, during his residence here, to contribute his advice and assistance, towards carrying forward the operations of the society, in the most extensive and successful manner.

List of Ordinary and Extraordinary Directors named and appointed for the purpose above mentioned.

Ordinary Directors.

Lord Auchinleck
Lord Alemoor
Sir Adam Ferguson, Baronet
Mr. Walter Stewart, Advocate
Mr. William Johnstone, Advocate
Mr. George Dempster, Advocate
Mr. James Ferguson, tertius, Advocate
Mr. Alexander Tait, Clerk of Session
Rev. Dr. Hugh Blair
Rev. Dr. John Jardine
Rev. Dr. William Robertson
Dr. John Hope
Professor Adam Ferguson
Mr. John Fordyce, Merchant
Mr. John Adam, Architect
Mr. James Russell, Surgeon

Extraordinary Directors.

Earl of Errol
Earl of Eglinton
Earl of Galloway
Earl of Elgin
Lord Elibank
Lord Kames
Sir Alexander Dick
Mr. James Ferguson, Advocate, Dean of Faculty
George Drummond, Esq., Commissioner of Excise
Mr. Charles Hamilton-Gordon, Advocate

These regulations, the remarks which preface them, and the lists of
Directors which are appended are an indication that the association was
admirably begun and that it was well supported. The new Society, however,
did nothing for twelve months. In August, 1762, the following notice
appeared in the Scots Magazine:

The managers of the Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of English in Scotland, gave notice in the Edinburgh papers of July 28, that they had engaged Mr. Leigh, a person well qualified to teach the pronunciation of the English tongue with propriety and grace; and that they had fixed the prices and conditions of his attendance upon gentlemen in the following manner:

For one hour, during a month, to a single person, one guinea; for two or more persons, during the same time, half a guinea each; but that Mr. Leigh shall not admit more than six persons at one hour.

The reason for this delay is not known, but even in this inactive state, the society lasted longer than has been reported. Public notices of

2. Ritchie: Life of David Hume, page 101, writes, "A few weeks afterwards, (i.e. after the publication of the Regulations for the Society,
meetings of the Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland indicate that the society met on 22nd, 1 February, 1763, and on 30th July, 1764. The latter announcement is of particular interest, for it illustrates the close connection between the two societies which had their origin in the Select Society. The Caledonian Mercury for the 28th of July, announced "a general meeting of the subscribers to the fund of the Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland." To this same announcement was appended a list of premiums offered for competition by the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture. This connection is important to bear in mind, for it is an indication that the fate of the two societies was bound together.

What that fate was to be was fairly obvious. The two societies had, in 1764, reached a crisis, and the fact that the meeting of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland held on 30th July, (which was to be the last of that organization), was called because "matters of great moment to the Society were to be laid before the meeting" is an indication of the gravity of the situation. As for the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts,

in August, 1761), the managers intimated in the newspapers, that they had engaged Mr. Leigh, a person well qualified to teach the pronunciation of the English tongue... and with this contemptible announce the Select Society, which comprised all the high rank and literature of Scotland closed its labours for ever." The "few weeks" was actually a year, and the society did not finally dissolve until 1764.

1. The Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, February 19, 1763, gave notice of the meeting; and the same paper, on February 26, contained a report of the meeting.

Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, it had already been giving signals of distress. The list of premiums for 1764 was reduced to eighty, and the Scots Magazine for April of that year published the following explanation of the lamentable decrease:

The following article, taken from the Edinburgh papers, must give pain to every lover of Scotland.

"The Edinburgh Society expected, that the manifest utility of their undertaking would, of itself, have interested the public in its favour; and therefore they did not importunately solicit subscriptions. They now find that they have been too sanguine in their expectations: The number of contributors, instead of increasing, diminishes; and many gentlemen who have not recalled their subscriptions, do yet neglect to make their annual payments.

"The great arrears due by subscribers might seem to confirm an observation which has been sometimes made, 'That, in Scotland, every disinterested plan of public utility, is slighted as soon as it loses the charms of novelty.'

"Upon the faith of the sums actually subscribed, premiums have been proposed and distributed: all subscribers, therefore, are most earnestly requested, to order payment of their arrears to Mr. Anthony Barclay, Secretary to the Society, at his house, the first door above Mr. Brodie, wright, in the Lawn-market, Edinburgh.

"Meanwhile, the Edinburgh Society find themselves under the very disagreeable necessity of proposing a smaller number of premiums for the year 1764, than former years; but such is the present state of this national and useful institution, that no other measures could be followed."

In 1765, the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland was already dead, and the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture was, in the words of Alexander Ramsay, "fairly moribund." The Caledonian Mercury for 18th March had a list of premiums, but only six were offered. And the same paper, on 15th July, once again carried the

---

ominous announcement:—

The contributors to the fund of the Edinburgh Society are earnestly requested to meet by themselves or by proxies in the Advocate's Library, on Tuesday next, the 16th current, at six o'clock in the evening, when matters of the utmost importance to the Society would be laid before them.

This meeting, which was actually held on 26th July, made the following desperate resolutions:—

1. That the subscription money payable at Candlemas 1765 be immediately collected in order to answer the premiums now due.

2. That an action be raised against the subscribers who are in arrears for the subscription payable at Candlemas 1764, as well as for all preceding years, unless they pay up their arrears on or before the 12th of August 1765.

"After the intimation of threat of legal proceedings to enforce payment of arrears," writes Ramsay, "there was nothing more to be said, and we may therefore conclude that Mr. Secretary Barclay, on the 12th August, 1765, finally closed the books of the Edinburgh Society, and went grouse shooting."

In explanation of the failure of the three societies, it has been stated that "the ignominious result of all (the) mighty bustle" of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland brought an end to the activities of the Select Society and to the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture as well. The inference in all such

reports is that the patriotic indignation of the Scottish populace, at this attack on their language, was such that all three related societies were regarded with such scorn that they withered and died away.

Although I freely admit that this explanation is plausible and that it has the attraction of simplicity, I would like to suggest that there are several cogent arguments against it. It is unfortunate that none of the authors who have offered this version of the downfall of the Select Society have given the sources of their information, for I have been unable to find any evidence of a popular outcry against the introduction of the new dialect. And as I have pointed out above, the men of letters, the men of affairs, the nobility, and the gentry of Scotland ardently desired to learn the "modern mode" of speaking; and the lower orders were not immune from the encroachments of the new dialect, for their schoolmasters were frequently chosen for their abilities in teaching English. It is true that a year or so after the Select Society was first organized, there was a public outcry against it, especially when the society offered its support to John Home's Douglas. The abuse which was directed at the Select Society at that time, however, was of a very different nature from that which would have been raised by the Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland, and, in fact, it occurred five years before the latter society had made its appearance.

In view of the lack of evidence of any popular indignation raised

1. See page 168, above.
3. See page 190 f.
by the ambitions of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland, I would like to suggest that the cause of its downfall, as well as that of the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, came from a gradual diminishing of interest in the members of the society which was their common parent, the Select Society of Edinburgh. As long as the Select Society remained in a flourishing condition, it had no difficulty in drawing the support of voluntary contributions for its various activities. But when the Select Society began to suffer from the increasing lack of interest and the non-attendance of its members, its dependant societies likewise suffered from lack of support. In June, 1756, two years after its establishment, I detect the first indications of a falling off in the enthusiasm of the members of the Select Society. In 1757, in 1759, and again in 1760, emergency action had to be taken to revive the interest of members.

In view of these facts, I feel that it is reasonably clear that the suggestion that the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland led to the downfall of the Select Society is not only wide of the mark, but that it is directly contrary to the facts. I believe that the life of the Select Society was actually prolonged, and not shortened, by its extra activities. In defence of this statement, I offer the reader the following analysis of the entries in the Minute-book of the Select Society.

As I have already stated, the first signs of a decline in the interest of the members of the Select Society in their organization

1. *MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.*
came in June 1756, only two years after the society was organized. On
the twenty-third of that month, it was recorded that, at the request of
certain members, the meeting night had been changed from Wednesday to
Tuesday. In itself, this may not appear to be very positive proof that
the Select Society had passed the peak of its vigour, but I would like
to remind the reader that for two years the members of the organization
had adjusted their activities to agree with those of the Society. What
we must recognize is that at this time the Society had reached the point
where certain members felt that it must adjust its activities so as to
avoid conflicting with their other interests. In other words, the Select
Society was no longer regarded as sufficiently important for its meetings
to come before all other considerations. The suspicion that this was a
genuine sign of weakness is borne out by complaints of ill-attendance
recorded in the minutes of the meetings held during December and January.
On 11th January, 1757, it was decided that action must be taken "to re-
vive the Society", and a committee of eight members was appointed to in-
vestigate the problem and to suggest appropriate measures for the con-
sideration of the members. On 25th January, the committee made its re-
port, and it was resolved to elect six presidents who were to serve an-
nually, instead of the usual practice of members taking the chair in
turn. It was also resolved that failure to pay dues was a forfeiture
of membership. The committee had also recommended to the Society that
any member resident in Edinburgh who missed three successive meetings,
should forfeit membership. This suggestion, however, was considered
too drastic, and it was deferred for further consideration.

The provision that six annual presidents should be elected was
obviously intended to tighten up the organization of the Society. With six responsible members sharing the burden of presiding over the meetings, there was reasonable assurance that there would always be someone present who was capable of directing the society's activities to worthwhile ends. The first six to be chosen as annual presidents were:

Mr. James Burnett, (later Lord Monboddo).
The Rev. Mr. William Robertson.
Sir David Dalrymple.
Dr. Alexander Monro.
Sir Alexander Dick.
Mr. Alexander Tait.

In spite of the measures which had been taken to "revive interest", the society continued to show signs of uneasiness. On 14th June, 1757, the meeting night was changed back to Wednesday, and on the following 7th December, on the suggestion of James Burnett, the meeting night was again changed to Tuesday. On 20th December, it was finally resolved that missing four successive meetings, one more than had been recommended by the committee, would forfeit the membership of any member who was resident in Edinburgh at the time of his absence from the society. The

1. "When the Society was on the decline, by the avocations of many of its most distinguished members, and the natural abatement of that ardour which is excited by novelty and emulation, it was thought proper to elect fixed presidents to preside in their turns, whose duty it was to open the question debated upon, that a fair field might be laid before the speakers. It was observed of Dr. Robertson, who was one of those Presidents, that whereas most of the others in their previous discourses exhausted the subject so much that there was no room for debate, he gave only such brief, but artful sketches, as served to suggest ideas, without leading to a decision." (Stewart: Life of Robertson, page 314, Appendix "Note A to page 165," written by Alexander Carlyle.)

2. It is obvious from this list that although there may have been a falling off in interest, there was none in talent. The fact that six men of the caliber of those listed above could be found in the active membership of the association is sufficient proof of the high level of merit of its members. It is also the strongest possible motive for the present thesis.
new list of presidents for 1758, however, was as illustrious as the
former. The six Presidents chosen on 21st February were:

- Lord Elibank.
- Dr. Alexander Monro.
- Mr. James Burnett.
- Mr. Alexander Tait.
- The Rev. Mr. William Robertson.
- Dr. Cullen.

Throughout the year 1758, the Society appears to have maintained
a fairly steady attendance. The process of dissolution had merely been
suspended, however, for on 13th February, 1759, the society resolved to
admit "strangers to this country", but only as "a temporary expedient."
The resolution to admit strangers is innocent enough in itself, but the
qualification that it was to be only a "temporary expedient" suggests
that the step was taken merely to make up the membership of the meetings.
At this time there appears the first indication that the Edinburgh Society
for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture was also in
difficulties. At the meeting held on 20th February, the members of the
Select Society made "a motion ... to think upon the most proper method
by which they could be more serviceable to the said Edinburgh Society."
Having thought upon the most proper method of assisting the Edinburgh
Society, the members, on the 27th of February, "resolved ... that it be
recommended to all persons of rank or fortune who are already members to
contribute to the Edinburgh Society; and that ... all Candidates of rank
of fortune who shall desire to be admitted into the Society that they
should contribute towards carrying on the Edinburgh Society." This
resolution was apparently successful, for the list of one hundred and

1. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles of Select Society of Edinburgh. See
also pages 153 - 154, above, where these minutes are quoted in full.
forty-two premiums which the Edinburgh Society announced in March of 1759, was the largest ever to be offered by that organization. But it was soon to become apparent that this was the culmination of the Edinburgh Society's activities, for its decline after 1759 was as rapid as its rise had been since its organization in 1755.

At this time the Select Society may have had a short period of reviving energies also, for on 27th November, 1759, the number of "stranger guests was restricted to one who was to be invited by the Preses presiding over the meeting." The guest, contrary to the previous arrangement, could be either Scots of foreign

1. There is a rather unpleasant legend concerning an English visitor who afterwards became a member of the Select Society. The story is told by Campbell: Lives of the Lord Chancellors, Vol. 6, page 35, (Campbell's account has been twice repeated. Mathieson: Awakening of Scotland, page 199; and Rae: Life of Adam Smith, page 119.) "The famous Charles Townshend, connected with Scotland by having married the Dowager Duchess of Buccleugh, had been admitted a member of the Select Society, and had spoken once with great brilliancy; but he never could be prevailed upon a second time to take part in the debate, and he threw out a number of gibes against the dialect in which the members expressed themselves, doubting whether he could be intelligible to the audience, hinting that he was often unable to follow their reasoning or fully apprehend their rhetorical figures. He jestingly asked them, 'why they did not learn to speak as well as to write the English Language? and proposed that in the mean time an interpreter should be employed.'" Campbell goes on to explain that this insult was one of the Select Society's motives for establishing the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland. Two Scottish accounts of Townshend's visit to the Society do not mention his sarcasms. Henry Mackenzie: Anecdotes and Egotisms, page 40, gives the following account:— "The evening on which he (Charles Townshend) visited the Society, this great orator of the House of Commons was of course expected to speak. He spoke very indifferently, and the Society could not understand whence he acquired his great reputation in Parliament; but he afterwards said himself that a new audience, for which from their known talents he felt much respect, had overawed him so much as to choke his powers of speaking. Fortunately, however, after discussion of the question for that evening, some accidental topic occurred on which several members spoke; Mr. Townshend had by that time recovered his composure, and made an excellent impromptu speech, which redeemed his character for eloquence with the Society." The
From February to July in the following year, (1760), the society was again troubled with the problem of non-attending members, and in February, 1761, the meetings of the society were so ill-attended that the members present at the meeting held on the third of that month made provisions for a circular letter to be sent to all members inviting them to attend a meeting on "Tuesday the tenth instant ... in order to take under consideration some proposals for reviving the original spirit of the Society." On 10th February, a committee was appointed to examine the matter and to suggest appropriate measures to be taken. On the seventeenth the committee reported, but its proposals were deemed inadequate, and at the next meeting, held on 23rd February, the Select Society established, for the first time, a system of fines for unexcused absences from regular meetings.

With its members thus "encouraged" to be more punctual in their attendance, the Select Society continued its activities for two more years, though its membership was less than half of what it had been in the peak year of 1759. During these two years the society's records were often

account given by Alexander Carlyle: Autobiography, page 409, year 1749, substantially agrees with that of Mackenzie. "While Mr. Townshend was here, we had him chosen a member of the Select Society in one sitting (against the rules), that we might hear him speak, which he accordingly did at the next meeting, and was answered by Lord Kibinak and Dr. Dick, who were superior to him in argument and knowledge of the subject. Like a meteor, Charles dazzled for a moment, but the brilliancy soon faded away, and left no very strong impression, so that when he returned to England at the end of two months, he had stayed long enough here." The discrepancies in these three accounts may be explained by the different points of view of their respective authors, but I suspect that Campbell's account is mere literary embroidery. In any event, the Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of English was not established until two years after Townshend's visit to Edinburgh.

1. For a list of members of the Select Society in 1763, see Appendix C, page 665, 592-3.
neglected, and the minutes are so sketchy that they give no adequate impression of the organization's state of health. It is certain, however, that the society continued to meet, and to hold its weekly debates.

As is so often the case with such records, the last entry in the Minute-book of the Select Society gives no indication that the activities of the organization were to be suspended. We know from the Caledonia Mercury for January, 1763, that the meeting to be held on 18th January was postponed until the twenty-fifth "on account that the solemnity for the Queen is to be celebrated to-morrow." And when the twenty-fifth drew near, another announcement appeared informing the members that "The Meeting of the St. Giles Society is postponed till February first, Tuesday, on account of the ordinary place of meeting being other ways occupied Tomorrow evening." The meeting announced for February first was held in the normal manner. The next entry in the Minute-book, however, that for 8th February, was the last to be recorded. This minute reads simply:

8 Feb., 1763. - Mr. Cosmo Gordon Praeses.
   Last Quest. concluded.
   Question for next night - "Whether a Union with Ireland would be advantageous to G. Britain."

There may have been other meetings after this, but they were not recorded.

The question announced for debate on the "next night" is shown in the Question-book as having been debated, but whether this debate actually

2. Caledonian Mercury, Monday, January 24, 1763. As I have pointed out above, the St. Giles Society was another name for the Select Society. It was taken from the name of the hall in which they met. See page 152, note #4.
3. MS. Minutes of the St. Giles of Select Society of Edinburgh.
took place on the fifteenth of February, or at some previous meeting, there is no way of determining. Beyond 8th February, 1763, the Select Society lapses into silence.

It appears to me that there is only one conclusion to be drawn from these extracts, and that is that the process of decay and dissolution which finally destroyed the Select Society was a gradual one brought about by failing interest among its members, by its being too expansionist in forming subsidiary societies, by the demands made on its members for repeated contributions, and by the natural shocks that such institutions are heir to. There is absolutely no evidence, insofar as the records are concerned, to indicate that the Society was dissolved as a result of public indignation which was brought about by the activities of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Writing of the English Language in Scotland. In fact there is every reason to believe that the Select Society's offspring outlived its parent, for the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language was still holding meetings eighteen months after the last recorded meeting of the Select Society proper. Unless further evidence is found to support the story which was begun by Thomas Edward Ritchie, embellished by John Lord Campbell, and repeated with variations by John Rae and Henry Grey Graham, I am firmly convinced that their picturesque version must be rejected. For the time being, therefore, it must be accepted that the failure of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland had little or nothing to do with the downfall of the

1. For the final meeting of the Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland, see page 176, above.
Select Society, nor with the dissolution of its near relation, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture. Indeed, what seems far more likely is that the failure of the Select Society was largely the cause of the failure of the two societies which it had established, and with which it had such close connections. I cannot but feel that if the Select Society had survived in all its original vigour, all would have been well.

Because of the close connection which existed between the Select Society, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, and the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland, it is necessary to judge the success and the influence of these societies together. This means that their work must be judged on three levels; on the intellectual, on the economic, and on the social; for the combined societies must certainly have had a wide and lasting influence on all three of these aspects of Scottish life.

In the intellectual life of the capital, the Select Society loomed large. The Society's debates were, in the oft-quoted words of Dougal Stewart, "such as have not often been heard in modern assemblies:--debates, where the dignity of the speakers was not lowered by the intrigues of policy, of the intemperance of faction; and where the most splendid talents that have ever adorned this country were roused to

their best exertions, by the liberal and ennobling discussions of literature and philosophy." From Alexander Carlyle, we learn that the "most distinguished speakers in the Select Society were Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Wedderburn, Mr. Andrew Pringle, Lord Kames, Mr. Walter Stewart, Lord Elibank, and Dr. Robertson. — David Hume and Adam Smith never opened their lips." The effect of the Society in stimulating Scottish minds is described by Alexander Tytler, (Lord Woodhouselee), as follows:—

The Select Society had an influence yet more extensive and permanent in diffusing the taste for letters in Scotland, and in kindling the fire of genius, which then began to display itself in various works, which have done honour to the national character. Besides the classical compositions of Hume, Robertson, Smith, and Ferguson, the writings of John Home, of Professor Wilkie, of Lord Hailes, Lord Monboddo, Sir John Dalrymple, the elder Mr. Tytler, all members of the Select Society of Edinburgh, have thrown a lustre on that institution, as marking the commencement of a literary era, which it is doubtful if the succeeding times have yet surpassed.

There is, in addition to Tytler's claims for the Society, the more direct evidence of the Select Society's intellectual stimulus in the appearance of the first Edinburgh Review in 1755. The Edinburgh Review, while it was not an official organ of the Select Society, was projected and carried out by a group of men who were all members of that organization. The editor of the Review was Alexander Wedderburn, and its most

---

1. Stewart: Life of Robertson, Page 186. For the subjects debated, see Appendix D, page 594.
2. Stewart: Life of Robertson, page 315, (Appendix, Note A to page 165, written by Dr. Alexander Carlyle.)
4. The Edinburgh Review, Numbers one and two, 8vo, 80 pp. Edinburgh: printed for G. Hamilton and J. Balfour. (Number one appeared in August, 1755; Number two in March, 1756.)
extensive contributor was Adam Smith. Other contributors were William Robertson, Dr. John Jardine, Hugh Blair, and James Russel, Professor of Natural History at the University of Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh Review met with a tempestuous reception, but as it only lasted for two numbers, it is probable that the effort was premature. At this period, the literary activity in & around Edinburgh was not varied nor extensive enough to support even a biannual review. The Review, however, did serve as an additional outlet for the energies which were stimulated among the Edinburgh literati by the Select Society.

At the same time that their Edinburgh Review had aroused the wrath of those who were outside the circle of the "Select", the members of the Society borrowed more trouble by giving their enthusiastic support to John Home's Douglas. Home, who was a popular member of the literati, received all the stigma that a Scottish clergyman turned playwright could expect. To his succor came such men as David Hume, Alexander Carlyle, Hugh Blair, and Adam Ferguson. The tenor of the generous abuse which this friendly gesture drew upon the coterie of "geniuses" has been expertly caught by the most recent of Hume's biographers, Ernest Campbell Mossner. The attacks came in the form of abusive pamphlets, some of which are not without a rude sort of


2. For the reception in Edinburgh of Home's Douglas, see Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 63 f; Schmitz: Hugh Blair; Mackenzie: Life of John Home; Thomson: Scottish Man of Feeling; Craig: David Hume; and Carlyle: Autobiography. See also Chapter 9, page 509 f.
wit. In his description of these paper "bullets", Mossner writes as follows:

Most of the authors of these pieces lurk as unsuspected as they could wish; but some of them are known. The writer, first brought "into the mouths of the world" (in Ramsay of Ochtertyre's picturesque phrase) by his satires against the defenders of Douglas, was John Maclaurin, son of the famous Professor Colin Maclaurin, and himself later raised to the bench as Lord Dreghorn. In the Apology for the Writers against the Tragedy of Douglas, Maclaurin displayed all the rancor of an outsider against the Edinburgh Select Society, making no effort whatsoever to understand their literary program. His main attack was directed against Hume, their leading literary light:

"Some years ago, a few gentlemen in this town assumed the character of being the only judges in all points of literature; they were and still are styled the geniuses, and lately erected what they called a select society, which usurps a kind of aristocratical government over all men and matters of learning. The first and fundamental maxim of this dictatorial club is, That a punctilious correctness of style is the sumnum bonum of all compositions: though the greatest genius should shine throughout a work, yet if in it is found an unguarded expression, a slip in syntax, or a peccadillo in grammar, ad piper et farras with it. The Reverend author of Douglas was a worthy member of this society; and his tragedy, long before it appeared in public, was by this society, extolled with all the noise of declamation; and the little merit it has, exaggerated with all the amplifications of bombast.

A famous author whom I have mentioned more than once, said, in private, that "he would give the English 200 years past, and 200 years to come, and they would not be able to produce such another tragedy:" and the same gentleman has publicly told his namesake, that "he possessed the true theatrical of Shakespear and Otway, refined from the unhappy barbarism of the one, and licentiousness of the other."

This author must be forgiven for these rodomontades; for he frankly owns, that "it is less my admiration of your fine genius, which has engaged me to make this address to you, than my esteem of your character, and my affection to your person." Love, we all know, is blind; and it would be unpolite to blame Corydon for running out extravagantly in the praises of Alexis."

In a second blast, a three-act farce of no little wit, Maclaurin relentlessly pursued the philosopher, the dramatist, and the Select Society, his little of The Philosopher's Opera revealing the chief object of ridicule. The leading figures in this piece, "as it ought to be represented at Edinburgh," are Satan, Mr. Genius as
David Hume, Mrs. Sarah Presbytery, "relict of Mr. John Calvin," and Jacky, dramatist and son of that lady, as John Home. The plot concerns the wooing of the now elderly Mrs. Sarah Presbytery by Mr. Genius and the success of Jacky's play by the puffing of the same swain.

Satan, long notoriously weak in Edinburgh through the dominance of the godly, having only "a small select society" to stick by him, appears in person on hearing of a Scottish clergyman's writing plays. "I thought," he explains, "the least I could do was to give my countenance to such a bold attempt to serve me." Upon making inquiries about other recent literature, Satan is reliably informed that Mr. Genius is the only author of note. Greatly impressed, Satan meets Genius, observing that he has read his books. "Why, then, Sir," replies that worthy, "you are convinced, I suppose, that there is no God, no devil, and no future state; — that there is no connection betwixt cause and effect; — that suicide is a duty we owe ourselves; — adultery a duty we owe to our neighbors; — that the tragedy of Douglas is the best play ever was written; and that Shakespeare and Otway were a couple of dunces. — This, I think, is the sum and substance of my writings." Genius departs, leaving Satan a little perplexed: "'Tis not what I don't know well what to think of him. Are you sure he is true blue on our side? I confess, I have some suspicion, that he is a shrewd fellow, endeavouring to convert men to Christianity, by writing nonsense against it."

The economic influence of the Select Society, and of its offspring, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, is easier to imagine than it is to prove by documentation. There is, however, an interesting document in existence which gives a clear impression of the attitude which seems to have prevailed at the time these societies were active. In November, 1760, young William Smellie, then twenty years of age, wrote an essay which he intended to enter in the contest for the best answer to the Select Society's competition "For the best account of the rise and progress of commerce, arts and manufactures, in North Britain, with the causes of promoting or

1. A prize for this subject was first offered by the Select Society in 1756. (Scots Magazine, February, 1756, page 105.) See also page 160, above.

the generous members of which have spared neither cost nor labour in exciting their countrymen to industry in every art which can contribute to public utility.

We presume not to make any criticisms on the manner of conducting these noble institutions; we should rather congratulate that country which gives birth to such ornaments of human nature; and our congratulations should be still more hearty, were the number of such societies increased, or the funds of the present ones greatly enlarged. — We shall in a few words explain what is meant by this observation.

Provided all or most of the men of fortune in each particular county in Scotland would create themselves into separate societies for the encouragement of arts, etc. within their own particular counties, we imagine that institutions of this kind would in a short time diffuse a spirit of improvement to the farthest bounds of the nation.

The advantages which would attend a prudent execution of this plan are abundantly obvious. — Manufactures, etc. who live at a great distance from the metropolis, allowing them to be properly advertised of the bounties offered by the Edinburgh Societies, must of necessity labour under several disadvantages which those who are less remote from the capital cannot feel. The risk and difficulty of transmitting specimens of their art to industry; the want of proper persons to direct their behaviour; nay, some country-mechanics are so very ignorant, that they are unable fully to comprehend the directions contained in a common advertisement. These, and many other difficulties, although of a trifling nature, are more than sufficient to cramp the influence of the societies at Edinburgh, especially in corners of the kingdom where indolence and ignorance are the characteristics of the people. It is even difficult to make persons in this situation believe, that money, or any other reward of merit, will ever be transmitted to them, unless they have had experience of it themselves, or seen it transmitted to others in similar circumstances. Time, and the diligence of the Edinburgh Societies, will no doubt obviate these difficulties. But the pain we have hinted at would, it is thought, be the means of introducing improvements in a shorter time, and of propagating taste, genius, and public spirit more universally over the kingdom.

I have already shown that the activities of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland have generally been regarded rather unfavourably by many authors who have treated this period of Scottish history. The clamour of condem-
nation, however, is not unanimous, as there are one or two exceptional authors who have expressed approval of the much maligned organisation.

The most important of these is the Reverend Thomas Somerville who lived in Edinburgh at the time the Society was active. Somerville expresses his approval in the following terms:

In the summer of 1761, Mr. Sheridan, the father of the late celebrated Richard Brinsley Sheridan, made a visit to Edinburgh, and delivered a course of lectures on elocution—an event which gave a new direction to the pursuits of students in all the different branches of literature. He was patronised by the professors in the College, by several of the clergy, by the most eminent among the gentlemen at the bar, by the judges of the Court of Session, and by all who at that time were the leaders of public taste. His lectures were attended by ladies and gentlemen of the highest position, as well as by most of the students then in town, all of whom were charmed with his instructive criticisms, and still more with the select readings from the English classics which followed every lecture. A rage for the study of elocution became universal, as if it were the master-excellence in every profession. Among other results of Mr. Sheridan's visit, a society, consisting of literary men, was formed, for the purpose ofconcerting measures for the instruction of the young in this hitherto neglected, but, as was now supposed, primary branch of education; and the lecturer was himself commissioned to send a teacher of reading and pronunciation, who should, besides the fees of his scholars, receive a fixed salary from the society. Since this time, correct pronunciation and elegant reading have, in Edinburgh, been reckoned indispensable acquirements for people of fashion and for public speakers, and perhaps have come to be overrated, particularly in pulpit oratory, to the neglect of attainments of a more important nature.

While it cannot be said that Somerville is whole-hearted in his approbation, still there is no indication of indignation in his attitude, and that is what is important. The fact that he regards the activities of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland as having led the attention of young Scotsmen from "attainments of a more important nature" does not signify that he contends the attempts to learn the Southern dialect.

Among more recent writers, the Rev. Alexander Macrae has written of the Society as follows:

These efforts to acquire the Anglican accent and pronunciation excited the sarcasm of the old-fashioned, but the "modern mode," as it was sometimes called, continued to gain ground not only in Edinburgh but all over the country. The Scots speech was universally spoken then and until towards the end of the century by all Scotsmen of whatever rank, but it was spoken by the better classes with a refinement which ceased to be cultivated as southern English gradually became the spoken language of the educated, and for any trace of which one would listen in vain today in the Canongate or High Street of Edinburgh. Though David Hume was master of such an admirable English style in his writings, yet his speech, like that of most of his literary Edinburgh contemporaries, was broad Scots. By the end of the century educated young men of the better class spoke English, differing from that of the south only in the accent, which was not unpleasant to English ears.

Whether the reader agrees with me that the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland has been gravely misrepresented in the past, or whether he has made up his mind that I have overstated the case for the defence of that organization, there is no escaping the plain fact which was stated by Macrae that the Scots dialect had disappeared from everyday urban speech in Scotland. It follows, therefore, that whether it was a failure or not, the Society was historically correct inasmuch as it supported and assisted the spread of the Southern dialect, for that dialect has not only been accepted in Scotland, but has become the recognized standard.

I have attempted to show the Select Society in its three roles: as a debating society, as an "improving" society, and as an association for the promotion of the Southern dialect in Scotland. There remains, however, one role of this versatile organization which has not been discussed

heretofore, and that is the part it played in Scottish intellectual life as "the parent of a numerous progeny of debating societies in Edinburgh."  

One of the first debating societies which followed upon the example of the Select Society was the Belles Lettres Society of Edinburgh. In the extant records of this society there appears the following account of proceedings of the first meeting:

The following Gentlemen, viz: The Reverend Mr. James Grant, James Sholto Douglas, William Govane, Thomas Robins, John Pringle, and Walter Campbell, Esquires, formed themselves into a society under the name of the Belles Lettres Society and resolved to meet every Friday night at six in the Evening within the College of Edinburgh and that at each of these meetings a Discourse shall be pronounced by one of the members and thereafter a Question shall be debated.

The Society Resolve: that the Reverend Mr. James Grant shall be President.

The Society resolve that for some time the Members shall be allowed to choose the Topicks of their own Discourses and that the minimum of Time for pronouncing a Discourse shall be twelve Minutes and the maximum twenty five minutes And recommend to the members to study a perspicuous Brevity in their Discourses.

The Society resolve that the President shall choose the first Question to be debated then any of the Members may propose a Question having first applied to the President for the Society's Consent.

The Society resolve to admit members without Ceremony untill there shall be seven admitted But that none be admitted without a previous Application to and Consent of the Society.

Resolved That the Society shall at every meeting continue assembled.

2. MS. Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society. As none of the founding members appear as members of the Select Society, the Belles Lettres could not have been "another offshoot" of the Select Society as has been stated. (Schmitz: Hugh Blair, page 25.)
3. For the subjects of these discourses, see Appendix E, page 602 f.
4. For the subjects of the weekly debates, see Appendix E, page 602 f.
until their Business be dispatched. But not later than half and hour after eight and that each member who absents himself shall be liable in a fine of sixpence Sterling for every nights absence.

From the first, the Belles Lettres Society adopted and maintained a serious and purposeful tone. One of the first revisions of the Society's laws provided that "every member who shall be absent for four nights successively without adducing a proper excuse shall be extruded," and this provision was rigidly maintained. And gaining ordinary membership in the Society was a solemn ordeal. The aspiring candidate had to apply in writing in the form of the following petition:

Unto the President and Permanent Members of the Belles Lettres Society.
The Petition of A. B.
Humbly Sheweth

That as your Petitioner is fond of Every thing that may tend to his Improvement and Sensible how well your Society is calculated for that Purpose so he cannot fail to be desirous of making one of your number.

That your Petitioner by studying to acquit himself properly in his Discourses and adhering strictly to your Regulations shall endeavour not to be unworthy of so great an Honour.

May it Therefore please the Society at next meeting to Elect your Petitioner by Ballot and being so elected to admit him a member at the meeting thereafter in common form - And your Petitioner shall ever pray Etc....

That the Petitioner is properly qualified to be a member of this Society is attested by .

The Society also made provision for creating a limited number of honorary members. Honorary membership was open to men of distinction, and also to ordinary members of the Society who had demonstrated their qual-

1. Resolution taken on Friday, March 2, 1759.
2. See the list of Ordinary Members, Appendix F, page 619.
ification for that honour by their punctual attendance at meetings and by their active participation in the functions of the Society. The first honorary member to be created in this was was the Rev. James Grant, who had been among the founding members, and who had been the Society's first president. The next ten honorary members were created for merit. In the order in which they appear in the records they were Mr. Alexander Murray, Advocate; Mr. Dick; Mr. Wm. Wallace, Advocate; the Reverend Dr. Robertson; the Reverend Hugh Blair; Mr. John Stevenson, Professor of Logic; David Hume, Esquire; the Reverend Dr. Fordyce; John Home; and Adam Ferguson, Professor of Experimental Philosophy. The fact that the Belles Lettres Society could attract such men is a certain indication that the Society's affairs were well managed, and that the members were skilled in debate.

After the first few months of its existence, the Belles Lettres Society adopted the practice of electing a praese for each meeting. The two candidates nominated for the chair, and the speaker who was appointed to deliver the discourse for the meeting, were allowed to invite a certain number of guests. This practice of admitting visitors was found to be very beneficial to the Society, and from the list of visitors, which contains the names of many of the more illustrious of the Edinburgh literati, it is easy to discover the reason for the success of this measure. From 11th March, 1761, it was the practice to

1. After August 1, 1759, the requirement was two years continual membership.
2. For the list of Honorary Members, see Appendix F, page 618 f.
3. For the list of Visitors to the Belles Lettres Society, see Appendix F, page 623 f.
issue tickets for the "admittance of strangers."

In December, 1760, the Belles Lettres Society adopted a simple procedure for freeing their regular meetings from the press of business. From a minute for the meeting held on the eleventh we learn of the new arrangement. The minute reads as follows:

The Society having considered the many inconveniencies to which they are liable from the manner in which their private business is transacted in their ordinary weekly meetings Resolve that for the future All the private Business of the Society shall be transferred from their ordinary weekly meetings to an Extraordinary meeting to be held for that purpose the second Wednesday of every month after this date at 5 o'clock in the evening.

The practice of the extraordinary meeting for business became firmly established, and apparently met with conspicuous success. On at least one occasion, there were visitors present at the monthly meeting just as there were regularly at the weekly meetings for debate. It can only be imagined that such visitors would be present to study the manner in which the Society conducted its affairs, and, indeed, the Belles Lettres Society seems to have been a model of good management.

In 1760, the Belles Lettres Society began to draw the attention of the students then studying at the College of Edinburgh. Soon the Society was receiving petitions from students of law and divinity. Among the most noteworthy of the promising young men whose names appeared on the roll of members were Henry Dundas, (afterwards Viscount Melville); Robert Blair, (afterwards Lord President); and Thomas Somerville, (the author of a very pleasant autobiography). A few months earlier, another student member of the Society, the Honourable Arthur Duff, who had gone

2. At the meeting held on February 11, 1761. See Appendix F, page 624.
to Glasgow to continue his studies, established a society there after the example of the Belles Lettres Society. On 7th December, 1759, the Secretary of the Belles Lettres sent "a copy of the Laws" to Duff "in order to assist him in the Institution of a Society after the plan of the Belles Lettres." In April, 1760, the members of the Glasgow association visited the Belles Lettres Society as "auditors".

In the year 1761, the Belles Lettres was in a very vigorous condition. Before the year was over, it had created all but four of its honorary members, and it had received so many petitions for ordinary membership that the members found it necessary to limit their number to forty. In addition, the rule of extrusions for non-attendance was revised so that two consecutive absences became a forfeiture of membership. Despite these restrictions, however, the Society soon outgrew the room in which it met, and in January it moved to "the room in which Drs. Rutherford and Whytt" gave their lectures. The Society continued to meet in these rooms until 14th December, 1764.

1. MS. Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society. Nothing further is known of this society in Glasgow.
3. The Society's records cease with the entry of minutes of the meeting held on this date. There is no indication in the minutes that the Society was contemplating dissolution, nor do the minutes of previous meetings contain any evidence of a crisis in the affairs of the Society. The year 1764, however, seems to have been peculiarly fatal to literary societies. The Select Society, (see page 198, above), and the Theological Society, (see page 203, below), both expired in that year, and the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture, and the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland were both defunct by 1765, (see page 178 - 178, above). The minutes of the last meeting of the Belles Lettres Society read as follows:- 14th December 1764. Weekly Meeting. Honorary Members (present),
From all indications, the Belles Lettres Society was a very successful and hearty organization. During the five years of its existence, it gave all the signs of corporate health. It grew in membership; it expanded its interests; and it gave rise to other societies; all of which are symptoms of a successful society. A large measure of this success was due to the application of its members, and to their conviction that such a society was of genuine benefit to them. Among the papers which pertain to the Belles Lettres Society, there appears a volume of notes which have been labelled "Notes and Speeches on Questions Debated in the Belles Lettres Society". Upon examining this volume, I discovered that it was actually a notebook in which its owner, William Lothian, had entered notes which he obviously intended to use during his part in the debates. The notes which Lothian made in preparation for the debates

1. These papers, which are in the National Library of Scotland, consist of three large folios. The first is labelled, Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society 1759 - 1761; a second volume is labelled Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society - Minutes 1761 - 1764. Both contain minutes of the meetings. The third volume is as described above.

2. William Lothian, D. D. was admitted, when a young man, to the Belles Lettres Society on January 9, 1761. He afterwards became "first minister of the Canongate, Edinburgh, and author of a History of the
held in the Belles Lettres Society are an interesting example of the diligence exercised by an ordinary member of this Edinburgh literary society. There is further evidence of the general earnestness of purpose which existed among members of the Society in Lothian's "Charge to the Right Honourable Lord Greville at his Admission into the Belles Lettres Society." This address, which Lothian delivered from the chair on the night which his Lordship was admitted, reads as follows:

My Lord,

You are now, according to your own Desire, admitted a Member of the Belles Lettres Society; a society which has justly acquired great Reputation among the Judicious and the learned; a Reputation which does Honour to the first Founders of the Society, and to those Gentlemen who still continue to support its Dignity and Spirit.

— Neeterlands (London, 1780.)" (Somerville: Life and Times, page 43, note.) The volume does not bear Lothian's name, nor is there any outward sign that it was his property, but it contains an address (transcribed on pages 203 - 204, below) which was delivered on the night he occupied the chair, and Lothian was present at every meeting when the questions which appear in the book were debated, and it is often recorded in the minutes that he took part in those debates for which he had prepared, and, upon one occasion at least, that he "led off the debate." (See Appendix G, page 628, for the contents of this volume.) The volume also contains "Notes on Some Questions Debated in the Theological Society." William Lothian was the only one of four members who are known to have belonged to both societies (the others were James Dickson, admitted to the Belles Lettres February 23, 1759; Andrew Smith, admitted to the Belles Lettres Society May 11, 1759, expelled May 25, 1759; and John Warden, admitted to the Belles Lettres Society May 15, 1759 - for these members see Appendix F, page 618, below.), whose dates of membership coincide with the dates of the debates which are entered in this volume. In view of these facts, there is no question in my mind that the notebook was the property of William Lothian, and was prepared by him for his own use, and that it was not, as is suggested by the description of it in the Catalogue of Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland, a part of the official records of the Society.

1. Notes and Speeches on Questions Debated in the Belles Lettres Society. Lord Greville was admitted an ordinary member on December 8, 1762. This night William Lothian was in the chair, and it was he who prepared and delivered this address. See note 2, pages 202 - 205,
The name of the Society sufficiently marks its Intention and Design. To promote liberal studies, and to give opportunities for a laudable Emulation are views which in former Ages were greatly regarded by every polite and refined Legislature. These studies are now looked upon as necessary to compleat the Scholar and the Gentleman. They compose the ornamental Part of Learning, and Give Elegance to the more abstruse sciences. After we have laid up proper Materials, these are like the skillful Hand of the Architect, which put them in due Arrangement and display their Beauty. These studies from being confined to a Few, are now become universal. The Taste which had prevailed for some time in this Country, makes a particular Attention to them necessary. Without these the abstruse Philosopher or Systematic Devine will in vain endeavour to communicate their Knowledge. Besides, great Penetration, Elegance and Propriety are now requisite. From several Instances it might easily be shown that our country is not so unfavourable to studies of this kind as some have imagined. Those who have been present at the Debates in this Society must acknowledge that Learning, Taste, and Genius have often been displayed. These indeed, might have been expected from the Gentlemen who compose this Society, but, without this opportunity, they might not, perhaps, have been so easily observed. These Branches of Science which fall within our Province, have many powerful Recommendations. Being of a general Nature, they allways have some connection with these studies, which are more immediately the objects of our Pursuit. They ought not therefore, to be considered as separate, but, as they are in Truth, strictly connected together.

This Society was instituted that proper opportunitys might not be wanting where Gentlemen of Taste might communicate their Opinions to one another, and receive mutual Improvement. In the antient Republick of Greece, Poets and Historians recited their Works in the Presence of a whole assembled Nation. Such an opportunity as this excited a Spirit of Emulation, and gave Birth to some of the noblest Productions of the Human Mind.

This Society has now flourished for several years, and, if anything may be concluded from the known Abilities of its Members, we have good Reason to hope that it shall long preserve that Character which it has already obtained, and continue to produce those many Advantages which are reasonably to be expected from an Institution calculated to promote so noble a Design, and so properly regulated in all its Parts.

You, My Lord, are already acquainted with the General Rules of the Society. At each Meeting a Discourse is Delivered by one of the Members on any Subject he pleases, and a Question is debated by the Gentlemen present. The other more special Regulations refer to Admission of ordinary members, the creation and Election of Honorary Ones, and to the preserving order in all our Proceedings. Such being the Constitution, and such the Design of this Society,
the Duty of a Member will easily occur to your Lordship. It would therefore be inexcusable in Me to detain your Lordship with many Words on a subject in itself so very plain, and in recommending a Duty in itself so very reasonable. Perhaps it might be sufficient to say that the Society demands such from every Member, and, from the Acquaintance with your Lordship, (they) expect it from you in particular. However, there is one thing which I must mention as President of the Society, because I think it worth the Attention of all here present. It is, that an erroneous opinion with Regard to the life of this Society has been entertained by too many of its Members. They are accustomed to look upon it in too trivial a Light, and their attendance upon the Meetings as a weekly Amusement only amidst the Severity of their other studies. From such a partial view, it is plain, many bad consequences must follow. To this must be imputed the Thinness of our Meetings, whenever the Town affords upon that day any other amusement. To this likewise is owing that Languor and Indifference which is too often observable. Whereas, on the other hand, were the Attendance upon the Society regarded as immediately connected with our other studies, and as serving to promote a Branch of Education in these Days absolutely necessary, not only these bad consequences would be prevented, but every Individual would feel its happy Effects, and the Society would shine with redoubled Luster. Such happy Days, I would gladly hope, are fast approaching. It is in your Power, My Lord, to hasten their Progress. The Society expects from you a regular Attendance, and your Opinion with regard to the Subjects in Debate. Their sense of your merit engaged all on your side, and now serves to confirm these Expectations. Allow me only further to add, That any Application which your Lordship shall think necessary for this Purpose will be amply rewarded by the many Advantages It will confer upon your Lordship, and I may assure you, in the Name of all the Gentlemen here, that the Fruits of such Application will be gratefully accepted by this Society.

In his notebook, William Lothian has also entered some preparatory notes for debates held in the Theological Society. Little is known of this society except that it met in the College of Edinburgh between the years 1759 and 1784. The only direct account, that of Thomas Somerville, contains the following information:

1. For the subjects of these debates, see Appendix G, page 633 f.

2. Somerville: Life and Times, page 42 f. Somerville and his editor have supplied a number of notes which identify the men referred to above, these notes read as follows:— "James Dickson (Mr. Dickson entered into business as a bookseller in Edinburgh); John Martin (He became Minister, first of Merton, and then of Spot, and died in
The Theological Society was not only a school of mental improvement, but a nursery of brotherly love and kind affections. In the two first years of this Society, while limited to a small number, a general good-will and attachment united the whole body, and many intimate and lasting friendships were formed among its individual members. My warm attachment to James Dickson, Walter Young, Andrew Smith, John Robertson, afterwards minister of Kilmarnock, John Martin, John Cook, John Gowdie, Wm. Lothian and John Warden, originated from our fellowship in the Theological Society, and continued on my part, and I hope on theirs, unabated during their lives; for, while I am writing this in October 1813, John Cook, Professor of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrews, and Dr. Young, minister of Erskine, and perhaps not above six or eight more, are the only surviving members of the Theological Society, which, before its dissolution in 1764, had increased to a list of fifty or sixty names.1

The darkest side of the history of this society, which diminished, perhaps counterbalanced the advantages derived from it, I will not conceal. Our tavern adjournments, which succeeded our weekly meetings in the College, were the cause of expense, and sometimes of excess and irregularity, unsuitable to our circumstances and professional views. I can never forget the exquisite pleasure I derived from these social meetings—the unrestrained utterance of

---

1763): Wm. Lothian (Wm. Lothian, D. D., first minister of the Canongate, Edinburgh, and author of a History of the Netherlands, London: 1780. He died in 1783, in the forty-third year of his age.;) John Warden (Afterwards Dr. John Maclaran, having changed his name for an estate, second minister of the Canongate. Sir H. Moncrieff says, in his Life of Erskine, that 'he died regretted by the whole community of Edinburgh, who lost in him one of its most useful and valuable members,'); John Cook & Dr. Young (Dr. Young died in 1814, Professor Cook in 1815. The latter was the father of the late Dr. George Cook, the author of Histories of the Reformation and of the Church of Scotland, and long the leader of the Moderate party in the General Assembly.) There was another Theological Society in the University, established in 1776. For an account of this society, see Chapter 6, page 387.

1. In a later part of his pleasant autobiography, Somerville mentions another member of the Theological Society. The member was John Brown, born 1738, who, as Somerville notes "started a new medical school based on a new method in Edinburgh." Regarding Brown as a member of the Society, Somerville writes:—"In the Theological Society he used to speak at great length almost on every subject. His thoughts, however, were incoherent, his arguments superficial, and his style loose, diffuse, and inelegant." (Somerville: Life and Times, page 159.)
every thought - the harmless sallies of wit in which we indulged -
the profitable conversation introduced, and enlivened with mirth
and good humour - the affection with which my heart glowed towards
the partners of my pleasure - the generous purposes excited, and
often productive of friendly actions. But again, when I reflect
on the baneful habits by which some of the worthiest of my earliest
contemporaries have been enthralled, and which I have too much
reason to think germinated in the fascinating indulgences I have
described, and reflect by what a narrow escape my own
health and character have been maintained, ascribable chiefly to the fortunate
incidents of after retirement, and domestic connections, I recognize
a substantial moral amendment in that sobriety and temperance
now practised by persons of every age and rank, and am thankful
that the rising generation, in whom I am interested, are exempted
from temptations which have sometimes blighted the fairest blossoms
of genius and virtue.

Although neither the Belles Lettres Society nor the Theological
Society can be compared with fairness to the much larger and more influential
Select Society whose example they both followed, it seems certain that
within their limited scope they probably had a much more direct and lasting
influence on their members. Somerville, in speaking of his membership in
these societies, comes to the following conclusions:

To my attendance on these societies, more than to any branch of
reading or study, I impute any progress I have made in literature,
in composition, and in solid intellectual improvement. I thus ac-
quired, especially, some facility and correctness of expression,
and, what I deem of still greater importance, an estimation and
love of truth. A rule to which I invariably adhered, was to speak
only on such subjects as I believed to be within the compass of my
understanding, and to embrace and defend that side of the question
which accorded with my genuine sentiments," and appeared to be


2. Somerville is certainly speaking as one of Dr. Hugh Blair's pupils.
Compare the following passage from Blair's Lectures on Belles Lettres:

"In order to be persuasive speakers in a popular assembly, it is in
my opinion, a capital rule, that we be ourselves persuaded of what-
ever we recommend to others. Never, when it can be avoided, ought
we to espouse any side of the argument, but what we believe to be
the true and the right one. Seldom or never will a man be eloquent,
but when he is in earnest, and uttering his own sentiments. They are
only the unassumed language of the heart or head, that carry the force
supported by the most solid arguments. My exertions in both these societies also contributed in various respects to my advantage, by procuring me the esteem of several of my fellow-students. Most of the members of the Belles Lettres Society were sons of gentlemen of high rank, the greater number of them students of law, and I have, in the after course of my life, reaped the benefit of their favourable opinion and early attachment. In the Belles Lettres Society, Mr. Blair and Mr. Dundas were esteemed the best speakers, and gave early proofs of those splendid oratorical powers which afterwards raised them to pre-eminent prosperity and honour. Mr. Blair's speeches were not only brilliant, but full of sound argument, and strictly confined to the subject under discussion. Mr. Dundas excelled chiefly in readiness and fluency of elocution, but he reasoned feebly, and often digressed from the question. In discussions of a political nature, he always professed an enthusiastic attachment to Whig principles. The eminence which Mr. Dundas afterwards attained as a statesman and able debator surpassed the expectations I had formed from his appearances in the Belles Lettres Society and in the General Assembly, where he also took a

of conviction. In a former Lecture, when entering on this subject, I observed, that all high eloquence must be the offspring of passion, or warm emotion. It is this which makes every man persuasive; and gives a force to his genius, which is possesses at no other time. Under what disadvantage, then, is he placed, who, not feeling what he utters, must counterfeit a warmth to which he is a stranger?

"I know, that young people, on purpose to train themselves to the art of speaking, imagine it useful to adopt that side of the question under debate, which, to themselves, appears the weakest, and to try what figure they can make upon it. But, I am afraid, this is not the most improving education for public speaking; and that it tends to form them to a habit of flimsy and trivial discourse. Such a liberty they should at no time allow themselves, unless in meetings where no real business is carried on, but where declamation and improvement in speech is the sole aim. Nor even in such meetings, would I recommend it as the most useful exercise. They will improve themselves to more advantage, and acquit themselves with more honour, by choosing always that side of the debate to which, in their own judgment, they are most inclined, and supporting it by what seems to themselves most solid and persuasive. They will acquire the habit of reasoning closely, and expressing themselves with warmth and force, much more when they are adhering to their own sentiments, than when they are speaking in contradiction to them. In assemblies where any real business is carried on, whether that business be of much importance or not, it is always of dangerous consequence for young practitioners to make trial of this sort of play of speech. It may fix an imputation on their characters before they are aware; and what they intended merely as amusement, may be turned to the discredit either of their principles or their understanding." (Blair: Lectures, Vol. 2, page 216 f.)
keen part in the discussion of business. A list of the members, and the minutes of the Society were, a few years ago, deposited in the Advocate's Library by Lord Buchan, who was one of our number, and whose thirst of knowledge and assiduous application at that time, gave promising hopes of future eminence in the literary and political world.

Another society which met in the College of Edinburgh at the same period as the Belles Lettres Society and the Theological Society was the Newtonian Society. The Newtonian was established in 1760 by a number of young men who had completed their University education, and who entered into the association "for their mutual improvement in literature and science, more especially in natural philosophy." An account of the Society was given to William Smellie's biographer by Robert Hamilton, then Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Aberdeen, and one of the Society's original members. Hamilton's account reads as follows:

The Newtonian Society was instituted in 1760, and was composed of young men, most of whom had completed their academical studies at the University of Edinburgh. Weekly meetings were held in one of the rooms of the College; at each of which a discourse was read by one of the members in rotation, and a subject discussed which had been given out for debate at the preceding meeting. The original design of the Society was chiefly directed to the prosecution of Natural Philosophy, whence the members assumed the

1. Somerville gives the following note on Lord Buchan:— "Lord Buchan's vanity overpowered his judgment, and disappointed the expectations which had been excited by the brilliancy of his talents, and his application to literature in early life." (Somerville: Life and Times, page 42.) This was David Steuart Erskine, 11th Earl of Buchan (1742 - 1823), brother of Henry and Thomas Erskine. He founded the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, (see Chapter 5, page 321, below). It is interesting to note that the name of Lord Buchan does not appear, in any of its forms, in the list of members of the Belles Lettres Society, (see Appendix F, page 618, below.).


3. Ibid, page 65, "Letter #6, from Dr. Robert Hamilton to Mr. Alexander Smellie, Aberdeen, 1 March, 1810."
the name of the Newtonian Society; but they afterwards extended their debates to miscellaneous subjects, though their discourses were always confined to natural science. The Society subsisted in this manner for several years; and though its members were fluctuating, as is usual with most societies, their number never exceeded twenty at any one time. Of the members of this Society, there are still in life, (i.e. in 1810), the Right Honourable Robert Blair, Lord President of the Court of Session, — the Reverend Dr. Samuel Charters, minister of Wilton, — the Reverend Dr. Thomas Miller, minister of Old Cumnock; — and the Reverend Dr. W. Macquhae, minister of St. Quivox. Among the deceased members were, the Reverend Dr. Henry Hunter, late of Londonwall; — the Reverend Dr. Andrew Hunter, late Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh; — the Reverend Dr. Thomas Blacklock; — Michael Nasmyth, Esq., writer to the signet; — Dr. William Buchan, physician in London; — Mr. John Petrie; — Mr. James Gray, writer; — Mr. Michael Gardiner, surgeon in Dumfries; and Dr. Alexander Adams, late Rector of the High School of Edinburgh, was Secretary.1

John Kay, in his Original Portraits, relates a rather pointless anecdote regarding Andrew Hunter's first attempt to deliver a dissertation to the Society. I have included it not so much for its intrinsic value, but on the long chance that it may prove useful to some reader whose interests are less specialized than my own:—

An anecdote is told of Dr. Hunter in connection with this Society. He was at the time very young, and not sufficiently practised in the art of literary condensation. When it came to his turn to produce an essay for the evening, he had entered so sincerely and fully upon the subject, that he appeared at the forum with an immense bundle of papers under his arm; and commenced by stating that his discourse consisted of twelve different parts! This announcement alarmed the press for the night so much, that he interrupted him by declaring that he had twelve distinct objections to the production of such a mass of manuscripts. The press accordingly stated his twelve reasons, and was followed on the same side by six other members, who prefaced their observations by a similar declaration. During their opposition the temper of the young theologian remained unaltered; and it was not till the last speaker had finished his oration, that he took up his papers, and, without deigning to reply, walked out of the room.

1. For the part played in the Newtonian Society by Alexander Adam, see Life and Character of Alexander Adam, page 18.

As for the other discourses read before the Society, and the subjects of debates, it is now impossible to give much information. The whereabouts of the book of records is not known at present, if, indeed, it ever really existed. The contributions of one of the members, William Smellie, however, are known. "The first essay he ever wrote, was a Description of the Telescope and Microscope," read before the Newtonian Society in August 1760, when he was twenty years of age." In the same year, Smellie, in writing to a friend, described another of his essays as follows:—

Saturday last I delivered by Tangible Theory to the great astonishment of the wondering Newtonians. I am not satisfied with the execution. It is forty minutes long. To give my theory the finishing stroke, I was obliged to prove that the human soul is neither composed of fire, earth, air, or water, but a species of matter the next remove from these substances. I cannot propose to give you any idea either of the arguments or method of this very eccentric performance; but I hope in a month or two at farthest, you and I shall indulge our risible faculties with it in my Grotto del Cane.

In 1762, Smellie read the following three essays before the Newtonians:

I. "Whether are all Animate and Inanimate Bodies Made for the Immediate Use and Conveniency of Mankind; or, is that only a secondary end of their existence?"  

II. "Whether Oratory, upon the whole, has been of Use to Mankind?"  

III. A Discourse on Vegetation.

1. Kerr wrote to the author of the Life and Character of Alexander Adam that there was such a book in existence, but the latter failed to obtain permission to view it. See Life of Adam, page 13.


4. "Alluding to the confined air of his correcting-room." (Kerr's note.)


In keeping with the general practice of eighteenth-century literary societies, the Newtonians cultivated wide interests. The training which Smellie received in the sciences, and in composition, was to stand him in good stead when he undertook the task of editing and compiling the first edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, or Dictionary of Arts and Sciences in 1771.

After the dissolution of the Select Society, the Belles Lettres Society, and the Theological Society, all of which occurred in the year 1764, there was an apparent lull in the activities of adult literary organizations in Scotland. The next flurry of mature debating assemblies did not begin until after 1770. But this lull was more apparent than real, for beginning with the Speculative Society of the College of Edinburgh, in 1764, Scottish University students entered into a number of intellectual and forensic associations, doubtless in imitation of their elders of the Select Society, which have lasted to the present day. The activities of these student organizations, however, have been assigned to a separate chapter to which the reader is referred for further information.

1. For the Encyclopaedia Britannica see Chapter 8, page 470.
CHAPTER FIVE.

THE PERIOD OF RECOGNITION, 1770 – 1800.

In dividing the Age of Improvement into its three phases; the period of preparation, the period of achievement, and the period of recognition, I recognized, as I have already stated, that the period of recognition is not as clearly defined as the two previous periods. One reason for this is the fact that recognition of Scotland's literary achievement had necessarily to come from abroad, and such recognition is often conditioned by factors which are irrelevant to the achievement itself. The French, for example, were among the foremost in their admiration for the work of Hume and of the other writers who figured largely in the period of achievement.

But the French were not involved in those national prejudices which account for the intellectual myopia of Scotland's southern neighbour. It was something more than ignorance which caused Dr. Johnson to exclaim, in 1768, when Boswell talked to him of Scotland's "advancement in literature", "Sir, you have learnt a little from us, and you think yourselves great men."


2. Boswell: Life of Johnson, Vol. 1, page 346, (Everyman's Edition). Even when it came, English recognition of Scottish achievement was all awry. "The palm of literary celebrity in the 18th century was not given to the great writers of Scotland - to Hume for his brilliant philosophical essays, or Robertson for his admirable histories, or Adam Smith for his unequalled exposition of political economy, or to Reid for his acute, astute, intellectual work - but to Dr. James Beattie, author of The Minstrel, and the Essay on the Immutability of Truth which "avenged insulted Christianity". (Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 259.) See also Chapter 10, page 562 f.
In the next year, however, one of the "great men" had displayed the little he had learned to such advantage that he had received "the greatest price that was ever known to be given for any book." To a cultivated European, such an attitude as Johnson’s must have seemed singularly perverse. A few years later, "a literary Hungarian writing from Paris," awarded to Scotsmen the following unqualified accolade:

Whenever the English mention Scotsmen to me in that contemptuous tone they sometimes affect, I advise them to go to Edinburgh to learn how to live, and how to be men. Your learned men, Robertson, Black, and Hume are looked upon here as geniuses of the first rank. Only two days ago, I saw Comte de Buffon, who named them all to me at his finger’s tip, just as you might name Newton and Locke.

And the Edinburgh to which this writer referred was indeed a place for strangers to "learn how to live, and how to be men." Mr. Amyat, the

1. Wm. Robertson's History of the Reign of Charles V, published in 1769, received 4000 pounds. (Croig: Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 205, ltr. #451 to Abbe Morellet.) Chamber's Encyclopedia of English Literature gives the figure as 4500 pounds. Henry Grey Graham in his Scottish Men of Letters, page 106, leaves no doubt about Scottish superiority in literature at this period. "Within a few years, the English, who sneered at the Scots, were obliged to buy and to read their books. They read Ferguson for Roman history; Hume, Smollett, Henry for English history; Robertson and Watson for foreign history. In philosophy little had been produced in England since Bishop Berkeley wrote, and they therefore resorted to Hume and Reid, even to Beattie and Morello. They got criticism from Blair and Lord Kames; learned political economy from Smith; and docilely accepted poetry from the piping of the Minstrel. All this shows a remarkable contrast in literary activity between north and south of the Tweed."

2. Messori: The Forgotten David Hume, page 202; Thomson: A Scottish Man of Feeling, page 185 (in French). The author was Tieman. A number of years earlier, Boswell had a conversation with the "Marcgrave of the Court of Baden Durlach in Germany" which he reports as follows: "He told me he had been in England twice. He spoke English remarkably well. He talked of Lord Wemys, Sir James Stewart, Lord Dunmore, all Scots, Bravo! and my Lord March, too. His Highness knew well the present literature of Scotland. I talked to him of the Select Society, of my having been a member of it, of the same Society with Hume, Robertson, etc. He was attentive to every little anecdote." (Boswell: Private Papers, Vol. 3, page 161, Friday 9th November, 1764.)
king's chemist, once observed to Mr. Smellie, "that Edinburgh enjoyed a noble privilege not possessed by any other city in Europe." On being asked his meaning, he said, "Here I stand at what is called the Cross of Edinburgh, and can in a few minutes take fifty men of genius and learning by the hand."

As an illustration of that peculiar intensity of talent which caused Matthew Bramble, in Smollett's Humphrey Clinker, to describe Edinburgh as a "hot-bed of genius", nothing is more fitting than to refer to another work of fiction, this time from the pen of the "Wizard of the North", Sir Walter Scott. When Counsellor Pleydell gives Guy Mannering notes of introduction to the leading Edinburgh literati, the reader of Scott's novel is forcibly reminded how rich a store of talent existed in the Scottish capital:—

1. Smellie: Literary and Characteristical Lives, page 161; Kerr: Life of William Smellie, Vol. 2, page 252; the story has been repeated by Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 106. Graham has also pointed out the intimacy in which Scottish men of letters lived in Edinburgh at this period:— "The remarkable feature of literary society in Scotland in the second half of the century was the familiar fraternity in which these men lived. They all knew one another — most of them since boyhood, for they were all about the same age. They met one another almost every day of their lives; they belonged to the same set of society, ... etc." (Ibid, page 102.)


3. Sir Walter will shortly appear in this thesis as the participant in a number of outstanding student societies, see Chapter 6, page 384 f.

4. Guy Mannering, page 348. For remarks on the identity of the original model for "Pleydell", see Chapter 3, page 465, below. Scott's chronology is a little out. The scene was supposed to have taken place in "the closing years of the American war (1775 - 1783)." At this time Mannering could have visited Hume only in his squat tomb on Calton Hill for he had died, rather gaily, on August 25, 1776.
On looking at the notes of introduction which Pleydell had thrust into his hand, Mannering was gratified with seeing that they were addressed to some of the first literary characters of Scotland—

"To David Hume, Esq." "To John Home, Esq." "To Dr. Ferguson." "To Dr. Black." "To Lord Kaims." "To Mr. Hutton." "To John Clerk, Esq. of Edinburgh." "To Adam Smith, Esq." "To Dr. Robertson."

I need scarcely remind the reader that Guy Mannering was about to visit a number of men who had contributed, or were to contribute, a great many of the ideas which have made our modern Western world what it has become, and that he had every reason to remark to himself, "Upon my word, my legal friend has a good selection of acquaintances—these are names pretty widely blown indeed. An East-Indian must rub up his faculties a little, and put his mind in order, before he enters this sort of society." I have already spoken of the achievements of Adam Smith and Dr. Joseph Black. From the point of view of Western culture, few contributions to the world of learning could have been more important than Smith's Wealth of Nations, and Dr. Black's discoveries in the physics of heat. As great as our debt is to them, however, some of the other men whom Mannering was to visit have even more striking claims to our admiration.

It is no exaggeration to claim for Hume that as the "greatest British

2. See Chapter 4, page 127, above.
3. As this remark is liable to be misunderstood, I will anticipate the objections of the reader by pointing out that, in the broadest sense, Western culture is nothing if it is not commercial (with Adam Smith as its economic prophet), and that without the motive power of the steam engine (thanks to Dr. Joseph Black through James Watt), it could have created only a small part, either for good or ill, of the incredible mass of machines and cities which its commercialism and its steam power have made possible. The cultural significance of industrialism are examined with great care, ingenuity, and insight by Oswald Spengler in his Decline of the West. It is to that work that the sceptical reader must turn for the complete argument of which I have but hinted.
Philosopher", and through his influence on Kant, he profoundly affected the course of modern European thought. And the Battle of Trafalgar, which was probably the most outstanding single event in British history, was fought and won with tactics which had been propounded in John Clerk's Naval Tactics. Drs. Robertson and Ferguson did much, with Hume, to raise the writing of history to an art and to place it in the front rank of belles lettres, and for this reason, Edward Gibbon looked to them as his masters.


2. See D. N. B. article on John Clerk, which states, "Nelson is said to have been a careful student of Clerk's book."

3. There are two letters of Gibbon's which are of interest here. Gibbon not only looked to Hume and Robertson as the leading historians of the day, he envied the intellectual environment in which they lived.

"Mr. Gibbon to Dr. Robertson. Bentinck Street, November 3rd, 1779.
"... I have often considered, with some sort of envy, the valuable society which you possess in so narrow a compass." (i.e. in Edinburgh.)
(Stewart: Life of Robertson, page 268, Appendix.)

"Mr. Gibbon to Dr. Robertson. London, September 1, 1783.
"... I should have thanked you for the opportunities which you have afforded me of forming an acquaintance with several men of merit who deserve, and whose character and conversation suggest a very pleasing idea of the society which you enjoy at Edinburgh.... I should rejoice if I could repay these losses by a visit to Edinburgh, a more tranquil scene to which yourself, and our friend Mr. Adam Smith, would powerfully attract me....

I have been lately much flattered with the praise of Dr. Blair, and a censure of the Abbé de Mably; both of them are precisely the men from whom I could wish to obtain praise and censure, and both these gratifications I have the pleasure of sharing with yourself. The Abbé appears to hate, and affects to despise, every writer of his own times, who has been well received by the public; and Dr. Blair, who is a master in one species of composition, has displayed, on every subject, the warmest feeling, and the most accurate judgment. — I will frankly own that my pride is elated, as often as I find myself ranked in the triumvirate of British Historians of the present age, and though I feel myself the Lepidus, I contemplate with pleasure the superiority of my colleagues..." (Stewart: Life of Robertson, pages 269 - 272.) For
As for Lord Kames, and Dr. Hutton, though their works have been mostly forgotten, and their influence was ephemeral, each was honoured in his day for having excelled in his respective science as it was then understood. John Home, whose tragedy of Douglas is dead but not forgotten, needs no more apology than any other poet among the host of neglected dramatists. He understood the form and pressure of his time sufficiently to hold his audience, and that is excuse enough for his fleeting celebrity.

Recognition of Scottish genius may have been long in coming, but under the pressure of mounting achievements, it could not be totally withheld even by those whose attitude towards the Scots was anything but appreciative, and this included some of the Scots themselves. Yet even

1. In 1770 there came a change for the better. The Scots of London organized a society which was called the Society of Ancient Scots, the purpose of which was to "cultivate a knowledge of (Scotland's) history and literature." A description of this society follows:

"From the Secretary of the Ancient Scots Society to the Public. The Literary and convivial Association known by the name of the 'Ancient Scots', is composed of a select number of Natives of Scotland resident in the Metropolis, who are fond of cherishing the re-
at the present day there is reason to believe that these men have yet to receive all the credit that is due to them. There were other visitors to Edinburgh, however, besides Guy Mannering, who found the intellectual and cultural climate exhilarating, and who did not stint their praise.

The poet Samuel Rogers described a visit to Edinburgh he had made as a

membrane of their common country, and cultivating a knowledge of its history and literature. The more effectually to promote these objects, each candidate for admission is required to accompany his application with an original Memoir, written by himself, of some Scotsman eminent in arts or arms, in letters or in science; and this specimen of his qualifications must be publicly read at some meeting of the society, previous to that on which the ballot, takes place. The Society is as old as the accession of James the Sixth (of Scotland) to the throne of England; but there is a long lapse in its history, during which the whole of its ancient records have been lost. In 1770, it was happily re-established in all its original vigour, and comparatively short as the succeeding period has been, the effect of the peculiar condition attached to admission into its body, is of a nature alike gratifying and important. The Society is now in possession of a body of Scottish Biography, which far exceeds all the published collections with which they are acquainted, in authenticity, in interest and in variety. Scarcely a single Scotsman who is known to fame for anything great or good can be named, who has not found, in some member of the Society, a zealous, if not an able biographer. Many of the memoirs are of a very original character abounding in facts not generally known; not a few have been written by individuals, neither rash in approbation nor ill qualified by education and habits to form a just appreciation of literary excellence."

(Scottish Notes and Queries, Vol. 2, page 92 f., letter from George St. J. Bremer, Pasadena, California, U.S.A.; also prefaced to the first volume of the Society's Lives of the Scottish Poets, by the Society of Ancient Scots, Re-established A.D. 1770. London: Printed for T. Boys, 1821-1822. For some reason this latter publication has been attributed to Joseph Robertson. The Catalogue of the University of Edinburgh Library lists him as "the probable author". The National Library of Scotland, which has two copies of the six-volume work, lists one under Joseph Robertson, and the other under the Society of Ancient Scots. From the nature of the publications, it is obvious that they could not have been the work of one man, as each of the longer biographies has the initials of its author subjoined. It may be, however, that Joseph Robertson was implicated in the editing of the volumes, though the notes in the volumes are signed by the initials A. S., which stand for Arthur Sempil, the Secretary of the Society.)

young man in the following terms:

The most memorable day perhaps which I ever passed was at Edinburgh,—a Sunday, when, after breakfasting with Robertson, I heard him preach in the forenoon, and Blair in the afternoon, then took coffee with the Piozzis, and supped with Adam Smith. Robertson's sermon was excellent both for matter and manner of delivery. Blair's was good, but less impressive; and his broad Scotch accent offended my ears greatly.

And Rogers was not the only one who found Edinburgh agreeable. A studious and talented young Swiss, Benjamin Constant, recorded that he spent "the most agreeable year of (his) life" as a student at the College of Edinburgh, where "le travail était à la mode parmi les jeunes gens d'Edimbourg," and where "ils formaient plusiers réunions littéraires et philosophiques."

But Scottish literary merit, which, under the terms of this thesis, includes accomplishments in nearly every field of human inquiry, was recognized in ways less devious than those which I have just set before the reader. In the rise of a new type of organization which was soon to appear in Scotland, the incorporated learned society, Royal Charters not only recognized the solid merit of Scottish scholars, thinkers, men of letters, and scientists, but also did what such recognition could to guarantee that their societies would live unto perpetuity. The essential difference between incorporated and unincorporated— the type we have been studying up till now—is incisively drawn by the Reverend Abraham

1. Rogers: Table Talk, pages 44 - 45.
2. L. Constant de Rebeque: Le Cahier Rouge de Benjamin Constant, page 14. For the student societies of which Constant was a member, see Chapter 6, page 385.
3. See Chapter 1, page 5.
Learned Societies are ... divided into incorporated and unincorporated. In the latter case, there is not necessarily any element of permanence about them; their constitution may be changed at any time by the concurrence of a due majority of the members; their objects, rules, and machinery may become totally altered in the same way; or they may silently cease to act, or become formally dissolved. But a society that is "incorporated by Royal Charter" is an official body publicly and legally recognized; it has perpetual succession and a common seal; and the statutes or byelaws, which are framed for the ordinary guidance of the members, must be in perfect accordance with the stipulations or principles of the charter.

The official names of the incorporated societies are unchangeable, being always coincident with those by which they are called in their respective charters; while those of other societies have no permanence beyond the wish of the members. Even in the latter, however, there is often a loose designation adopted for the sake of brevity; while the more formal one is that which is found in the Laws of the society. When it is thought desirable to change the name of any society to a more appropriate one, the period of incorporation is the most fitting opportunity for it; and several, we find, have taken advantage of that occasion to do so. Thus, in 1783, the "Philosophical Society of Edinburgh" became the "Royal Society of Edinburgh."

When the Crown granted a Royal Charter to a Scottish intellectual organization, such a grant was an official symbol of recognition that literary society had risen, through the achievements of its members, to a level that could be compared quite favourably with such organizations...


2. For an account of this transformation, see page 338, below.

3. The incorporated societies of Scotland in the eighteenth century were the Royal Medical Society, incorporated 1778, (see Chapter 6, "Student Societies"); the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, incorporated in 1781; the Royal Society of Edinburgh, incorporated in 1783; the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, incorporated in 1787; and the Royal Physical Society, incorporated in 1788. These societies are all treated with in the latter pages of this chapter.
as the Royal Society of London, the Academy of Sciences of Paris, the Royal Society of Sciences in Copenhagen, the Academy of Sciences of Berlin, the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg, and the many other learned societies of Europe. This official and public

1. It is of interest to record at this point that the first President of the Royal Society of London was Sir Robert Murray, or Moray, a Scot who was educated at the University of St. Andrews. In the eighteenth century, Sir John Pringle, a Scottish medical man, was President of this society from 1772 to 1778 (see the D.N.B. for further details.)

2. Many Scottish Scientists were made members of this organization. The earliest was probably Colin Maclaurin, the mathematician. "We are told, this month, that Mr. Colin Maclaurin, Professor of Mathematics in Aberdeen, has met with a peculiar honour in France this summer. The Academey of Sciences published a Physico-mathematical question to the learned, and ordered a premium to those who gave the solution that should be approven as best by the Academy. Mr. Maclaurin was at Montpellier, or some other place at some distance from Paris, and wrote a solution to the problem, and sent it, without signing it, only put a mark to it, and sent it as directed. The Academy declared it the best solution, and gave publick notice that the gentleman who had sent such a mark might call at such a place and receive the premium, fifteen hundred livres, I think. That youth is like to prove an honour to this country." (Wodrow: Analecta, Vol. 6, page 161, July 1724.)

3. "In 1772 the gold medal of the Royal Society of Sciences in Copenhagen was adjudged to Professor Wilson for the best and most satisfactory dissertation on the sun-spots." (Glasgow Courant, 23th May, 1772, quoted by Murray: Memories of the Old College of Glasgow, page 282, note.)

4. "In 1793 (Adam) Ferguson was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Sciences of Berlin. He was also a member of the Academy at Florence, of the Etruscan Society of Antiquaries at Cortona, and of the Arcadia at Rome." (Small: Life of Ferguson, page 55.)

5. "On the 8th of August 1777, (William Robertson, the historian) was unanimously elected a member of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid.... He was, some years afterwards, elected one of the foreign members of the Academy of Sciences at Padua, and of the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburgh..." (Clay: Life of Robertson, page 111; Stewart: Life of Robertson, page 372, note 1 to page 261.)
recognition may be regarded as the final stage in the last phase of the Age of Improvement. With the formation of the Royal Physical Society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Society of Antiquaries, Scottish literary societies had reached the climax and the summit of their eighteenth-century development.

Before I attempt the history of the rise of Scottish incorporated learned societies, however, there are a number of unincorporated societies, most of which were among the "progeny" of the Select Society, which are worthy of attention. It is my intention, therefore, to begin my account of Scottish literary societies which were active during the period of recognition with these unincorporated societies, and to conclude with the Royal, or incorporated, learned societies which have brought so much honour and which have done so much credit to Scottish intellectual achievements both in the latter years of the eighteenth century and since.

After 1770, the first newly-organized literary society to appear in Scotland was the Speculative Society of Dundee. A notice of this debating society, which was the first in Scotland to admit women to its proceedings, appeared in the *Weekly Magazine and Edinburgh Amusement* for January 27, 1774:

Extract of a letter from Dundee, Jan. 22, 1772.

Amongst the several entertainments of this place, the Speculative

1. See pages: 302 f., below.
2. See pages: 334 f., below.
Society claims the pre-eminence, formed on a rational system, it hath the resort of great numbers who feast on the knowledge and ingenuity of the speakers. Tribes of females, deserting the card-tables, flock thither and acknowledge the superiority of philosophy. This institution promiseth great success. Various questions are here discussed in a masterly and becoming manner. Here the young men may be trained up to oratory, and graceful deliverance, and afterwards become an ornament to the great council of the nation. Drinking entereth not the walls of this society, and Harmony and good Order keep the porch. This society hath taken for a device, a card on which is represented a view of the society upheld by three female Figures, Virtue, Eloquence, and Contemplation, and supported by two masculine ones, Knowledge and Learning, and the motto is, Dignum sapienti bonoque est.

Such flouting of convention as the admission of women to a public debating society certainly did not pass unrecognized. The Speculative Society of Dundee, as an organization which was so regardless of "sobriety and good order" as to admit "tribes of females", was immediately castigated in the following terms:

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.
Edinburgh, February 4, 1774.

Sir, I happened to be in Dundee when the pompous encomium on a society appeared in your magazine. So different were the sentiments of every body in that place from those of your correspondent, that at first his panegyric was universally considered as a burlesque; and it was not till the complacency, with which it was regarded by the members of that society, had been observed by their fellow citizens, that they discovered it to be serious, and to be the work of the eloquent men on whom it bestows such praises. A stranger, no doubt, will be surprised, when he is informed that this speculative body consists of men without education, and even without that natural vigour of understanding that might make their want of education a subject of regret - of men whose reading has been confined to the perusal of an invoice - and whose compositions have not extended beyond the drawing out of an account. The disputes of such untutored rhetoricians may afford entertainment to the tribes of females who have honoured them with their presence, but can scarcely be regarded as a model for those whose eloquence has a more important destination. Were they contented with the praises of sobriety and good order, they might remain uncensured: they

---

might even be permitted to appropriate to themselves the figure of
virtue, which, happily for us, is not necessarily excluded from any
station; but, when they join with it two others incompatible with
their employments, they only prove their ignorance of things with
which they affect to be so intimately acquainted. They seem to
have mistaken loquacity for eloquence, and dulness for contemplation.
I should ask their pardon for addressing them in Latin; but I can-
not help recommending to their consideration a proverb in that lan-
guage, much more to their purpose than the motto they have assumed.
Ne sutor ultro crepidam.

Yours, etc., B. C.

This, however, was not the final word. The members of the Dundee Spec-
culative Society had something to say in reply, and they did not mince
matters when they did so. Their retort, which appeared in the next issue
of the Weekly Magazine but one, reads as follows:

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.
Dundee, February 18, 1774.

Risu incepto res inceptior nulla est.

Sir, Anonymous and abusive letters are the spawn of cowards and
scribblers, and can only be licked into life by the favour of the
press. An ungentleel, malicious and virulent attack on a body of
men in this place, equally destitute of truth or wit (has appeared
in your magazine). The author of this wretched performance seems
to be one of those odious and contemptible vermin which crawl on
the face of the earth to disturb the peace and quiet of mankind,
and, in the hard strainings of his envenomed pen, hath unwittingly
done the members of the Dundee Speculative Society the honour of
being exceedingly dull upon them.

The several moral virtues and liberal arts are, if I mistake not,
diffusive; and it doth not appear that the society, on whom he looks
down with such avowed contempt, has monopolized these virtues, de-
siring shelter only under the wings of such worthy patrons. These,
Mr. Printer, have condescended to visit every degree of mankind
since the creation of the world; and I would advise this whiffling
pretender to learning, this person of invigorated understanding,
to say less about education, it being very impolitical and weak in
a man to be always talking of gibbets, whose father was hanged.

I have, I confess, neither inclination nor time to trespass on the

1. Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement, Thursday, February 24, 1774,
page 278 f.
public, or to enter into a further discussion of this matter at present. The fountain-head is defiled; and it is no pleasant task to dip into the united streams of malevolence, disappointment, and envy. I, however, take leave to tell him, that he would be better employed in completing his studies in the school of veracity.

Permit me, Mr. Printer, to conclude with the following lines from Dr. Swift.

True splendor gives the fairest mark
To poison'd arrows from the dark....

Yours, etc., D. M.

At the time when this well-mannered discussion was going on in the 

Peekly Magazine, there also existed in Edinburgh a "parliamentary debating club" which was known as the Robinhood Society, and which afterwards became the Pantheon Society. The Robinhood Society is said to have "enjoyed a considerable measure of popularity for some little time before it was transformed into the Pantheon. Its speakers assumed the role of some

1. There was a Robinhood Society in London from about 1752 to 1781. For further information on the London Robinhood, see the informative note in Boswell's Life of Johnson, edited by George Birkeck Hill, revised and enlarged edition by L. F. Powell, 6 Vols., Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1934. Boswell, who paid the Robinhood in London a visit, described it as follows:— (Ibid, Vol. 4, page 92 f.) "I mentioned a kind of religious debating society, which met every Sunday evening, at Coachmaker's-hall, for free debate; and that the subject for this night was, the text which relates, with other miracles, which happened at our Saviour's death, 'And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.' Mrs Hall said it was a very curious subject, and she should like to hear it discussed. Johnson, (somewhat warmly) 'One would not go to such a place to hear it, — one would not be seen in such a place — to give countenance to such a meeting.' I, however, resolved that I would go.... I stole away to Coachmaker's-hall, and heard the difficult text of which we had talked, discussed with great decency, and some intelligence, by several speakers. There was a difference of opinion as to the appearance of ghosts in modern times, though the arguments for it, supported by Mr. Addison's authority, preponderated. The immediate subject of debate was embarrassed by the bodies of the saints having been said to rise, and by the question what became of them afterwards; did they return again to their graves? or were they translated to heaven? Only one evangelist mentions the fact, and the commentators whom I have looked at, do not make the passage clear...."
parliamentarian of the day, and the affairs of the nation were discussed with a dignity and seriousness that would have done credit to the assembly of which it professed in some degree to be a counterpart."

The Robinhood Society also has a small place in Scottish literature, for it was mentioned by Robert Fergusson in two of his poems. In the "Mutual Complaint of Plainstanes and Causey," Fergusson makes Causey say:

1. Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 1, page 49. The author of the article which appears in this work adds that "very full reports of the debates are to be found in the contemporary pages of Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement. I have been able to find only one such report (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 20, Thursday, April 22, 1773, page 99.) which is entitled as follows: - "An Essay on the Question, whether Fatality he agreeable or not to Reason? Debated in the Robinhood Society on Thursday the 8th of April 1773. Humbly addressed to the Preses, and inscribed to Dr. Fergusson." In earlier numbers of the same Magazine, (Vol. 10, Thursday, December 8, 1770, page 510 f.; Thursday, December 13, 1770, page 341; Thursday, December 20, 1770, pages 374 - 376; and Thursday, December 27, 1770, page 408) there appear reports of Parliamentary debates under the fictitious title of the Robinhood Society'. For proof of the fictitious nature of this Society, see the same magazine for Thursday, December 13, 1770, page 549 where the following entry appears in the section devoted to reports from England:- "Tuesday a motion was made in the Robinhood Society, for renewing the debates on the subject of the Middlesex election, but it was over-ruled by a very great majority." This is obviously a device for getting around the parliamentary privilege, as it was then understood, which prevented the publication of verbatim reports of Parliamentary debates. It may be that the author of this article in the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 1, page 49 f., was well aware of this fact, but inasmuch as he has described the society as one in which the "speakers assumed the role of some parliamentarian of the day, and the affairs of the nation were discussed with a dignity and seriousness that would have done credit to the assembly of which it professed in some degree to be a counterpart", there is some cause to suspect that he regarded these reports as being those of the Edinburgh Robinhood Society. It will be noted that the one question which we can be certain was debated in the Edinburgh Robinhood, (the title of which appears in this note, above), was not in the nature of a Parliamentary question at all. See also my chapter on "Fictitious Clubs," Chapter 3, page 468 f.

But first, I think it will be good
To bring it to the Robinhood,
Where we shall have the question stated,
And keen and crabbitly debated
Whether the provost and the bailies,
For the town's good whose daily toil is,
Shou'd listen to our joint petitions,
And see obtenaper'd the conditions.

In a footnote to this poem, Fergusson indicated that the Robinhood was,
"A new instituted society, then held weekly in the Thistle Lodge, but
which now goes under the name of the Pantheon, and meets occasionally
in Mary's Chapel where the grand concerns of the nation are debated by
a set of Juvenile Ciceros."

The Robinhood Society also appeared in Fergusson's "Leith Races",
where it is the basis for a lively stanza:

Siclike in Robinhood debates,
When two chiefts have a pringle;
E'en now some couli gets his aits,
An' durt wi' words they mingle,
Till up loups he, wi' diction fu',
There's lang and dreech contesting;
For now they're near the point in view;
Now ten miles frae the question
In hand that night.

The reason for the change of the name and of the nature of the
Robinhood Society is not known. On December 25, 1773, however, the
parliamentary debaters of the Robinhood Society, became the fashionable
orators of the Pantheon Society. Instead of weekly meetings, they

1. Poems on Various Subjects, by Robert Fergusson, Part II, Edinburgh,
1779, page 43, note.
now met fortnightly, and they changed their place of meeting from the
Thistle Lodge to Saint Mary's Chapel in Middry's wynd. Sometime later
the Society again moved, this time to Saint Andrew's Chapel in Carrubber's
Close. The history of the Close, and of Saint Andrew's Chapel is, in
itself, worth repeating, as it gives some idea of the surroundings in
which the debates of the Pantheon took place. The best account of these
surroundings is that contained in Wilson's Memorials of Edinburgh in the
Olden Time, which reads as follows:

This old close was the scene of the only unsuccessful speculation
of another poet whose prudent self-control enabled him through
life to avoid the sorrows that so often beset the minstrel's
path, and to find in the muse the handmaid of wealth. It had
already furnished accommodation for dramatic exhibitions, and
such feats of agility as pertain to the modern circus. Signora
Violante and a company of Italian mountebanks performed there
about 1720. At a later date she returned with a regular company
of English comedians, and met with such success that a strolling
company of players made it their resort for some years there¬
after. Allan Ramsay wrote the prologue to their first night's
performance in 1726; and encouraged by the popular favour ex¬
tended to such crude dramatic efforts, the poet at length under¬
took the erection of a playhouse, still standing at the foot of
Carrubber's Close, (i.e. until 1872 when it was demolished),
which involved him in heavy loss. It was closed by the act for
licensing the stage, which was passed in the year 1737, and the
poet solaced himself by writing a rhyming complaint to the Court
of Session, which appeared soon in the Gentlemen's Magazine.

1. The Pantheon, "a Society for debate, which meets every other Thursday
in Mary's Chapel." (The Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement,
Thursday, June 2, 1774, page 320.) See also the Calendonian Mercury
for Saturday, May 27, 1775. In 1779, the meetings were held weekly.
(See note on Boswell's attendance on page 237, below.)


3. Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 1, page 50, see also the
"Treasurer's Report" in the same article, page 55 - 56.

48.
The abortive playhouse has since served many singular purposes. It bore in later days the name of St. Andrew's Chapel, bestowed on it soon after the failure of the poet's dramatic speculation. In 1773 it formed the arena for the debates of the Pantheon, a famous speculative club.  

The ostensible purpose of the new society was the conventional one of "Improvement in public speaking." But there was an important difference in the new organization which distinguished it sharply from the Select Society which it undoubtedly took as its model. The Pantheon Society, and the Speculative Society of Dundee as well, were organized primarily as a form of public amusement. The number of spectators, who paid from sixpence upwards for their tickets, "varied from one hundred to about three hundred persons." A passage taken from the treasurer's statement for 1791, entitled Improvements on the Institution of the Pantheon, clearly reveals the primary concern of this officer of the society. After laying down certain financial reforms necessary to revive the plundered funds of the society, the treasurer suggests a number of changes in the debating procedure. He then continues as follows:—

These Arrangements are the more necessary, as the Pantheon has now to cope with the Theater, the Circus, and every other place of public Exhibition and amusement going forward in Edinburgh. Besides the Students at the College having of late formed them—

1. The date which Wilson gives for the occupancy of St. Andrew's Hall cannot be correct. James Boswell, (see note 2, page 237), records that he attended debates in St. Mary's Chapel as late as 1775.


selves into different debating Societies under penalties for Absence, less Support and Emolument are now to be looked for from that quarter than formerly. The present being also a time of general Peace, all party spirit, and division of political sentiments are at an end for some time.

Although this public display of the members powers of dispute brought down the scornful condemnation of the lovers of truth upon the head of the Pantheonites, it had able defenders as well. The following article pretty well reviews the controversy regarding the merit of public disputes. The author ably states the case for the defence, and goes a step further by suggesting that such orations should be printed in the public journals:

Sir, Notwithstanding all that your critical friend Zoilus, (alias Philo-Rhythmicus, or the Candid Critic if he pleases) has advanced, and perhaps with justice, against modern Oratory,¹ I must still profess my veneration for that elegant accomplishment, though indeed I could wish it were never employed but in the cause of truth. - I never hear a good sermon from the pulpit, Mr. Printer, or a sensible speech in the Pantheon, without wishing it were in print. - I have often regretted, that so much good sense and strength of argument as I have heard delivered both in Kirks and Mason Lodges, should die almost as soon as born, and be lost to the world for want of being recorded. The clergy indeed can scarce be blamed for not publishing their orations, however well executed they may be, as they are but too sensible, that this is not an age for encouraging the sale of sermons; for which reason the wiser part of them, spend as little of their time and talents in that dry study

¹. See Appendix H, page 635 f.
². Gentlemen and Lady's Weekly Magazine, Friday, April 22, 1774, page 393.
³. "English Oratory: which... is often injurious to an article of greater importance, I mean that precious jewel, which ancient philosophers are said to have searched so long for in the bottom of old pits and wells; in plain English - Truth! I fear, Sir, many of our modern orators and philosophers too often exert their rhetorical powers with a quite opposite intention, - to plunge it into the well again, when it is fairly out - for, not to speak of stage rhetoricians, who honestly profess to live by fiction, - do not our ablest barristers, whose office it is to discover it, often endeavour to make Truth appear Falsehood, and vice versa?" (Zoilus in the Gentleman and Lady's Weekly Magazine, For Friday, April 1, 1774.)
as possible, knowing, that they will be much better rewarded, in this world at least, (and 'tis time enough to think of the next when it comes) - for writing history; - some of them indeed may gain little even at this trade, but to print sermons at their own expense would be certain loss; and they are generally too prolix for our Magazines: - but surely our Society Orators have no such excuse, when there are so many periodical publishers ready to print works gratis, either weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, as they choose, or chance to deliver them.

I was one evening lately debating (though no orator, I assure you, Sir, more than Zollus), with a friend of mine, upon this subject, who is a member of the Pantheon: - (Abold fellow, you'll say, to engage with one of the Gods:;) - I insisted much upon his sending, or allowing me to send you, one of his late orations, but found him quite invulnerable. - The most material argument he used in his own defence was, "That it savoured too much of ostentatious vanity, to print speeches that had been delivered so publicly, the composition whereof being solely intended for the author's own improvement in eloquence, and this purpose being obtained, a man would be despised as a self-conceited fool who would afterwards publish them." - In vain did I argue, that it was a public loss to suppress such excellent compositions, and that, granting there was any truth in his supposition, private disadvantage always ought, (and with every true Patriot certainly would) give place to public benefit. - In vain did I urge precedents in other Magazines: - Equally vain was it to quote the old Roman Bard,

Sei'ra. Tuum nihil est; nisi te seire, hoc sciat alter,

or our own British poet, to prove,

That the worst avarice is that of sense:

All my arguments went for nothing with this over-modest dogmatic Pantheonite.

They had more weight however last week with another young friend of mine, just arrived from the north country, where he had been Preses of a private Society, which he had the honour of closing lately; when he delivered the following judicious Speech upon the nature of Society in general, and of such Literary Societies in particular. I also, (though with much difficulty) obtained another oration, (on History) which shall be communicated, if you give this a place in your useful Miscellany, and extorted from him a promise of transmitting you some other Essays on subjects more generally entertaining and interesting.

As I am informed you have many Subscribers in the North country, where I see you have already several excellent correspondents, I

---

1. For this address, see Appendix L, page 656, below. The "private Society" in the "north country", has not been identified, but see the address for proof that it was not the Speculative Society of Dundee.
doubt not the Gentlemen who are members of that Society, will be glad to see these Speeches preserved in your Miscellany: If any of them, or the members of any other Speculating Societies, here or elsewhere, will be so obliging as to communicate their own remarks upon the most important questions that came under their review, I doubt not but they will be as acceptable to all your readers, as to

Your Humble servant, Philo-Rhetor-Socio-Philus.
Edinburgh, April 11, 1774.

An obvious result of the public nature of the Pantheon debates was that the debaters largely confined themselves to popular subjects. But this was not always the case. In May, 1775, the Society debated the questions "Would unlimited Toleration in Religion be advantageous to a State?" and "Whether has Education, or a natural Disposition, most influence on our manners?" And in May, 1776, the Pantheon celebrated the opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland by debating the question "Whether would marriage or Celibacy in the Clergy tend most to promote the interests of religion and virtue?" The following is a description of the Society as it appeared to an anonymous observer at this time:

1. Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, May 27, 1775. See also Appendix I, page 659.

2. Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, May 19, 1776. For other questions debated by the Pantheon, see Appendix I, page 659, below. Brief accounts of the Pantheon debates were also given in the Edinburgh Advertiser, (Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 1, page 54.)

3. Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Thursday, August 8, 1775, page 203 f. This article, in keeping with the practice of the period, has probably used the Pantheon Society as an excuse to put forward the personal ideas of the author. The bulk of the article is taken up with an examination of the issues involved in the American conflict, and the Pantheon, as it were, only comes in as a handy framework upon which the author has hung his argument. For example, the arguments for a peaceful settlement of the troubles with the colonies are four or five times as long as the arguments for coercion, which rules out the possibility that the article was fundamentally a report of the debate. And the author signs himself "A Friend to Peace", which I take as a certain indication of where his sympathies lay, and an indication as to the true purpose of the article. See also my Chapter on fictitious clubs and societies, Chapter 8, page 443 f.
To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

Sir, 

Having heard much of a literary society in this city, called the Pantheon, I was desired by some of my acquaintance, in a populous country town where I live, to inquire concerning the regulations of that society the first time I came to Edinburgh, as it was intended to institute one of the same kind in our town; and they requested I would transmit them an account of it by your useful Magazine. I accordingly applied to one of the members of the Pantheon for the necessary information, when he very discreetly gave me the following account, viz.: That their society consisted of about twenty members, all of whom obtained admission by having spoke upon three different questions proposed by the society; That they meet once in a fortnight during the summer and winter sessions, betwixt eight and ten o'clock in the evening, in order to debate upon a question that had been previously given out at the last meeting; and that every member must officiate as president, or clerk, in rotation for four successive meetings; but that a member not having spoke three times, on the meetings immediately preceding his turn for being president, disqualifies him for that office for that time, and the next in rotation who qualifies takes the chair; That two hundred tickets are divided among the members to give to their acquaintances, as well ladies as gentlemen, for their admission as visitors; and that the visitors have an equal right with the members to speak and vote upon every question that is proposed to be publicly debated on in that society; and that every gentleman, members as well as visitors, after having given their ticket to a waiter at the door of the place of meeting, must give a sixpence to another waiter; a third gives each gentlemen a mutchkin bottle of rum punch and a glass; and thus provided, he may take his seat in any place of the room he pleases, except the seats allotted for the ladies, who pay nothing, and are also treated by the members with fruits to season; and that every member, who omits publicly to deliver his sentiments in the society for two meetings together, forfeits his share of the admission tickets; so that often the whole number of tickets are divided amongst only one third of the members. His silence in public likewise deprives him of interfering in the private business of the society in any respect; but the moment he again speaks on any public question, he is restored to all his privileges as a member.

The funds of this society arise from the small profits on the punch, which are so well managed, that out of them they pay their house rent, fruit for the ladies, candles, and waiters, and yet have a considerable reversion, every farthing of which they give in charity. Every visitor also, who speaks in that society, is intitled to three admission tickets for next meeting. — Such are the principal regulations of that society.

I have been at several of their meetings, and was very well entertained, and was always greatly pleased with the strict regard that was paid to order and decency. In the time of the last general assembly, the question, "Whether unlimited toleration in religion would be advantageous to a state?" was there very ably debated by upwards of twenty
speakers, twelve of whom were clergymen, every one of whom, much to their honour, were in favour of toleration; and it was carried by a great majority in favour of toleration."

The last question that was debated on there was, "Whether lenient or coercive measures would be the most effectual method of terminating the differences betwixt Great Britain and her colonies?"

... It was carried by a majority of nine, that coercive measures were the most prudent means of terminating the differences between Great Britain and her colonies. It was remarkable that most of the ladies, a very genteel company of near forty of whom were present, voted for coercive measures: so fond are the fair sex of power.

Now, Sir, if you will please insert this rude sketch of the Pantheon for the benefit of my country friends, you will much oblige,

Yours, etc.,

A Friend to Peace.

By 1776, the prestige of the Pantheon had become so considerable that an honorary membership in it was considered a desirable distinction.

And the Society's debates excited considerable public interest, as the

1. "Thursday last, the following question was debated in the Pantheon, viz. Would unlimited Toleration in Religion be advantageous to a State? - The meeting was extremely full, and the question very ably supported in both views of it. Many members of the General Assembly attended, several of whom spoke with great spirit and good sense in favour of unlimited Toleration. After the time allotted for the debates was expired, the vote was stated, limited, or not? when it carried, by a great majority, not. By the rules of the Pantheon, their meetings are only once a fortnight. Some of the Clergy, however, who were present on Thursday night, having expressed a desire again to visit the Society, and being sensible it would not be in their power to do so, were the meeting not to be held till that day fortnight, the members of the Pantheon, in order to gratify the curiosity of such of the Clergy as were anxious to partake of that rational amusement, very politely agreed so far to deviate from their original institution, as to appoint the following question to be debated on Thursday next, viz. "Whether has Education, or our natural Disposition, most influence on our Manners?" (Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, May 27, 1775.)

2. James Boswell, (see note 2, page 237, below), took considerable pride in the fact that the Pantheon had made him an honorary member. And he was right in doing so. "The members of the Pantheon, as a testimony of the high sense they entertain of the many private and patriotic virtues of the Right Hon. James Stodart, Esq; Lord Provost of the city
following account of one of the debates reveals:-

In consequence of the advertisement inserted by the Society in our Weekly Mercury of the 22d ult., offering two premiums of a Silver Medal each to the two best speakers in point of Composition and powers of Oratory, an uncommonly crowded audience assembled on Thursday the 6th curt. to hear the question debated, "Whether Hope or Possession contributes most to Temporal Happiness?" The curiosity of the public was so great, that the chapel was full at half past seven; and before eight (the usual hour of admittance) the door was obliged to be shut for some time, otherwise neither the President nor the Judges could have got access. Many ladies and gentlemen who had got tickets could not get admittance. The President took the chair at half past eight, when the debate began, and continued till ten, when a motion was made, that, on account of the great heat of the room, which prevented other speakers from rising, the debate should be adjourned till that day se'en-night, and the money then collected given to the Society for relief of Industrious Poor.

This being unanimously agreed to, the Society met again last Thursday evening, when the house was also very crowded; but by the care of the members in restricting the number of tickets, none were disappointed of admission. We are persuaded, no question hitherto discussed in the Society has produced a greater number of speakers, or more ingenious reasoning, than appeared upon this occasion. The debate was resumed at seven, and continued till ten, when the President (Mr. Thomas Somers) concluded it in such an eloquent speech that the judges were at no loss to decide the

---


2. The offering of prize medals was apparently a fairly frequent event in the Pantheon. "Armstrong, John, a native of Leith, an licentiate of the Scottish church; who came up to London about 1790, and died there a few years after; was the author of some juvenile effusions of considerable promise. While at the University of Edinburgh, (1789), and only in his eighteenth year, he published a volume of 'Juvenile Poems, with Remarks on Poetry, and a Dissertation on Punishing and Preventing Crimes.' The Dissertation, last mentioned, had been honoured by a gold prize medal from the Edinburgh Pantheon (Debating) Society." (Lives of Eminent Scotsmen, Vol. 6, page 97.)
Elocution Prize in his favour. The premium for Composition, we hear, will be decided some time next week, when the judges will meet privately for the purpose, and review the speeches of the different competitors. Although a great majority of the speakers at both meetings appeared in favour of Hope, the majority upon calling the vote was very small, being only 17 out of between 300 and 400.

The question given out for next meeting, which takes place on Thursday the 27th curt, is, "Whether does Money or Merit tend most to raise a man in the World?" The merits of the gainers will then be announced, and the prize-medals delivered to them in public.

In later years, however, the subjects chosen for debate were selected for their popular appeal rather than for their possible usefulness or for any other serious purpose, and the standing of the Society fell considerably. In 1785, James Boswell, who had frequently visited the Society and had taken part in its debates, found it "so crowded and blackguard" that he left it "in disgust".

1. Three of the speeches given in this debate were published. See The Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine for Thursday, March 22, 1780, pages 46-47; April 8, 1780, pages 101-106; and April 17, 1780, pages 159-145.

2. The course of Boswell's association with the Pantheon Society is instructive. The following extracts are taken from Boswell's Private Papers.

"Thursday 25, November (1775). - At eight I went to an Oratorical Society in Mary's Chapel, called the 'Pantheon', as a Militia for Scotland was to be debated: and, as I thought it of consequence to rouse a general spirit for it, I made a vigorous harangue and introduced an Eulogium on Lord Houstuart as the Tutelary Patron of this country. I beleive I did very well. I got applause enough from the company, about 100 Writers, Wrights, etc., etc., and the question carried for a Militia upon the votes of all present being taken. I suppose the visitors bore a great proportion above the members. There were a number of Officers of the 61 Regiment who all voted against a Militia. They were not fair Judges. I was made an Honorary Member...." (Private Papers from Malahide Castle, Vol. 11, page 55.) For another Scottish society concerned with the Militia question, see under the Poker Club, Chapter 9, page 521 f.

"Thursday 21 December (1775). - At nine o'clock I went to the Pantheon, of which I had been made an Honorary Member, and heard a debate whether
On the thirtieth of September, 1779, the question "Whether Poetry, Painting, or Music has the greatest effect upon the passions?" was debated, and a poem upon a speech delivered at this debate appeared in the Edinburgh... or not Lotteries are beneficial to Great Britain." (Ibid, Vol. 11, page 44.)

"Thursday 15 July (1779). - Grange drank tea with us. At eight o'clock he went with me to the Pantheon, to which I had been particularly invited this night, as it was to be debated "Whether the British Legislature could Alter the Articles of the Union?" I had no mind to go. But as they had made me an honorary Member, I thought it would be uncivil to resist a pressing invitation. I was pretty well entertained. But what was strange, I was so bashful inwardly that I delayed to speak till I had only time to give a short flourish seconding a motion to adjourn the debate till this day se'night, that it might be maturely considered..." (Ibid, Vol. 13, page 268 - 269.)

"Thursday 22 July (1779). - I went this evening to the Pantheon, and in order to oblige the Society who had made me an honorary Member and to get some reputation among people of various ranks and professions who would spread it, I had studied the question, and I spoke really well to shew that such Articles of the Union as are not plainly temporary, or when no reservations are made, cannot be altered by the British Legislature, which sits under those articles. The debate becoming rather too grave and serious, I rose again and made a Reply which produced high entertainment and Applause, expressing my anxiety lest the fair part of the Audience should go from the Pantheon with a Decision which would alarm them. For of what were we debating, - whether a Contract is to be kept? whether Articles of Union are to be kept? I assimilated the Union between England and Scotland - the Stronger and the weaker Country - to a Contract of Marriage, and I mentioned (as I sometimes look into old Books) a curious pamphlet, published about the time of the Union, On the Marriage of Fergusia and Heptarachus. I had great pleasure tonight in speaking, and the Question carried by a great Majority for my Opinion..." (Ibid, Vol. 15, page 271 - 272.)

"Monday 16 August (1779). - I dictated today from notes kept by the clerk of the Pantheon my speeches in that society on the Articles of the Union." (Ibid, Vol. 15, page 279.)

"Thursday 20 February (1783). - Went to the Pantheon in the evening to hear a debate on this curious question: whether it was most culpable for a young woman to marry an old Man or for an old woman to marry a Young Man. But it was so crowded and blackguard, I soon left it in disgust." (Ibid, Vol. 15, page 187.)

For other questions debated by the Pantheon Society, see Appendix I, page 659 f.
The appearance of poetry in connection with Pantheon debates was in keeping with that society's practice at this period of debating sometimes in verse. The part played by verse in the Pantheon debates was extensive, as is shown by the following account:

Many of the speeches delivered were in verse, and a number of these afterwards in contemporary publications. The well-known piece Rab and Rimgan was apparently originally written specially for the Pantheon by the author of Watty and Meg, Alexander Wilson, who recited it in a debate on the question, "Whether is Diffidence, or the Allurements of Pleasure, the greatest bar to Progress in Knowledge?" The Loss o' the Pack, by the same writer, was delivered by him in a debate on the question "Whether is Disappointment in Love, or the Loss of Fortune, hardest to bear?" This piece subsequently became immensely popular when published in chap-book form, and thousands of copies of it must have been sold.

On 14th April, 1791, a debate took place on the question "Whether have the Exertions of Allan Ramsay of Robert Ferguson done more Honour to Scotch Poetry?" Wilson took part in this debate, as also did Ebenezer Picken, teacher of languages in Edinburgh and a minor poet, and these two published their contributions (in verse) in a pamphlet bearing the following title:

1. Edinburgh Eighth Day Magazine, Tuesday, October 12, 1779, page 178. This periodical also printed a number of prize-winning speeches given in the society. For a list of the questions debated, see Appendix I, page 639 f.


5. Ibid, part 7.


Although the prize went to one of the supporters of Allan Ramsay, it seems likely that the best poem was produced by Alexander Wilson who maintained Fergusson's superiority "in virtue of his greater realism", a conclusion which has been accepted by one of the most recent of Allan Ramsay's biographers. Wilson's opinion on this matter appeared in his poem in the following stanza:-

It's my opinion, John, that this young fallow,  
Excees them a', an' beats auld Allan hallow,  
An' shews, at twenty-two, as great a giftie,  
For painting just, as Allan did at fifty.

The decision of the Pantheon gathering in favour of Allan Ramsay, however, may or may not have been a reflection of the true sentiments of the generality, or even of the judicious few. Suspicion is cast upon the fairness of the proceedings in "Ford's edition of Fergusson's Works":-

Seven speakers, it appears, took part.... All took the side of Ramsay but Wilson, who, although his poem received the approbation of the audience, and by those best able to judge was esteemed the highest in literary quality of all the seven delivered, had yet to yield the prize, by seventeen votes of the meeting, to a Mr. Cumming, who was accused of gaining a majority by bribery. Tickets of admission, which cost sixpence each, were bought and distributed in abundance. The award was to be made by a vote of the audience;

1. To Robert Cumming for his Essay on the Question, "Whether have the Exertions of Allan Ramsay or Robert Fergusson done most Honour to Scotch Poetry?" Cumming's Essay was published as a pamphlet in Edinburgh, 1791.
3. Ibid, page 152. See also page 27 of the pamphlet described directly above.
and to secure the majority which he actually attained, Cumming, it was said, purchased alone forty tickets, which he presented to ladies of his acquaintance, merely that they might attend and vote for him.

It is interesting to note that at this period, 1791, the motion to admit women to the Pantheon debates, which had been rejected in 1774, had been fully accepted, and that the ladies of Edinburgh were taking an active part in the proceedings. Inasmuch as the Society offered its activities as a public amusement, such a step must have been as inevitable as it would have been welcome to many of both sexes. In this new fashion, the Pantheon Society continued to hold its meetings "till about 1800."

1. When the motion was first made to admit women, in 1774, it was rejected. At that time the following poem appeared in the Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement, Thursday, March 5, 1774, page 306.

On hearing the Members of the Pantheon* had resolved to admit no Ladies into their Society. By Miss J. S.

The eastern prophet did exclude
All women from his heaven;
And in our time a dread command
By Pantheonites is given,

'That now no fair shall entrance find
Into the learned hall,'
As Salique law precludes the sex
From ruling over Gaul.

But, gods! beware, perhaps ere long
You sorely will repent;
We can debar you access too;
Tis time then to relent.

*The Pantheon was the Temple of all the Gods; and under this name has a Society for public debate been lately instituted in Edinburgh.

It is interesting to note that when Boswell visited the Pantheon in July, 1779, there were ladies present. (See note for July 22, page 238, above.)

During the early days of the Pantheon, that is about 1776, another debating society, the Cannongate Debating Society made its appearance in Edinburgh. Nothing is known of this society, however, apart from the fact that on Wednesday 17th April, 1776, it was honoured with a poem spoken from the chair. The poem, which indicates that the Society was established by two gentlemen named Noble and Moodie, and that it was in rivalry with the Pantheon Society, reads as follows:

Spoken from the Chair, by the Presses of the Canongate Debating Society, on Wednesday 17th April 1776.

When ancient Romans, the whole world did sway,
Their poorest peasants could both sing and say;
And that in public too, - none but could rhyme,
In long orations at festival time.
But in this learn'd, polite, and polished place,
There's few can say, "how d'ye" with a good grace.
How many public men of sense and skill,
That can't express their mind, do what they will.
Our bar and pulpit boast indeed at large,
And men of merit, likewise tread out stage;
But have not we got sense as well as them,
A small improvement makes us just the same.
- Yes, now we hope this evil will be mended,
Nay, this society here, must surely end it;
And, if conducted on the plan laid down,
'Twill soon a rumour make thro' all the town.
But what will the great Don's say up the street,
When they see Canongatians turn'd polite?
Ha! ha! says one - pulling up his breeches,
"Who would have thought to hear such clever speeches!"
"If they had on as they have now begun,
"They will our Pantheon beat, as sure's a gun."

1. The Scots Spy, or Critical Observer, Friday, May 5, 1776, page 106.
This was not the first society to compete, unsuccessfully, with the Pantheon: "The debating society, which was some time ago erected in this city, having been dissolved on Monday the 2d current, the members generously resolved to apply their remaining funds to charitable purposes; and accordingly gave a benefaction of 12 pounds sterling to the society for relief of the honest and industrious poor in and about the city of Edinburgh." (The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 24, Thursday, May 12, 1774, page 223.)
Yes, sure it is, that every one will find,
That this our club likewise improves the mind.
Our teaching learns ourselves; none tries to teach,
But finds out things they thought above their reach.
Then who would not a bumper drink to those,
Who in our street did first this club propose?
It was not me; not I; I would never
Have thought on any thing that's half so clever.
Here's to our founders both. - Noble and Mood,*
And all those whose schemes doth tend to public good.

*Moodie.

The debating societies which have just been described, however, were not the only Scottish literary organizations to direct their activities toward providing entertainment for the public. In 1779, an association which afterwards became known as the Mirror Club began to publish a weekly paper. This was so well received in London as well as in Edinburgh that it may be said to have brought to its Scottish authors an admiring recognition of those lighter qualities in literary composition which they were long assumed (and no more so by the English than by the Scots themselves) not to possess. The successful periodical, which was frequently classes as next in merit to the Spectator upon which it was modelled,

1. "The Mirror is deservedly much esteemed in England; and I have heard an high literary character declare it the best book of the kind, save the Spectator." (Pinkerton: Ancient Scottish Poems, page cxl, note.) See also, W. Forbes: Life of H Ritchie, Vol. 5, page 297, (Appendix Note (q) to page 182.), "Both Burns and Scott deemed Mackenzie the 'Scottish Addison,'" (Thomson: Scottish Man of Feeling, page 179, note.) For Burns opinion, see Currie: Life and Works of Burns, Vol. 2, page 301, ltr. Burns to Mrs Dunlop, ltr. No. xcv, Ellisland, 10th April, 1790. Scott dedicated his Waverly "to the Scottish Addison." As for the Mirror being patterned after the Spectator, Gregory Smith: Scottish Literature, page 212 - 213, is as well qualified to speak as anyone. "It (the Mirror) was literary in the olden sense in which we think of the Spectator, and its avowed object 'to hold the Mirror up to Nature', was so truly spectatorial that the 'Scottish Addison' as Scott styled Mackenzie, had the charge preferred against him that he was too literal a copyist of the English Model. It pursued its course with an old-fashioned amiability and elegance, and revenged itself on its critics by quizzing them in the approved Addisonian manner."
was called The Mirror.

The Mirror Club was a development of another small literary club, the Feast of Tabernacles, which was in existence as early as 1770. In his book on Scotland and Scotsmen of the Eighteenth Century, John Ramsay of Ochteryre writes of the Feast of Tabernacles that it "was a club composed of lawyers and literary men, whose bond of union was their friendship for Mr. Henry Dundas, and who met at Perves's tavern in Parliament Square. The "Mirror" Club was a step from it." The step to the Mirror Club of which Ramsay speaks was one of reorganization, and not of distance.

Ramsay of Ochteryre mentions only one member of the Feast of Tabernacles, Andrew Crosbie, of whom he says "he was one of the great ornaments of that Society, both in its frolicsome and serious moments, when

1. It is not known for certain whether the paper took its name from the club, or whether, as seems far more likely, the name of the periodical determined the title of the club.

2. "That the Feast of Tabernacles was flourishing in 1770 we know from the fact that the club presented to Mrs Cockburn of Cockpen (mother of Lord Cockburn) a large china bowl, with a framed testimonial stating that 'united by the Bonds of Friendship and in testimony of their superior regard, they have presumed to dignify with her name the Rolls of their Society.'" (Harry Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, page 142-143.)


any point of taste and literature was to be canvassed. When a little warmed by liquor, nothing could be more joyous and interesting than his discourse, there being a happy mixture of wit and humour and information."

It has been conjectured that Dundas's brother-in-law, Archibald Cockburn of Cockpen, and John Maclaurin, Lord Dreghorn, were also members.

It is not known exactly at what date the Feast of Tabernacles was reorganized as the Mirror Club. Harry Cockburn, in his paper on *Old Edinburgh Clubs*, has pointed out that Henry Dundas was Member of Parliament for Midlothian from 1774 to 1782, and for most of the time he was Lord Advocate. "We can, therefore," writes Cockburn, "readily understand that his time was mostly occupied away from Edinburgh, and if, as Mr. Ramsay says, the *raison d'être* of the club was the friendship for Mr. Dundas, we can suppose that his absence would cause a slackness in the meetings of his friends; hence a necessary reorganization of the club, and its transformation into the Mirror about 1778."

In 1777, however, there is evidence that the reorganization of the Feast of Tabernacles was already well advanced. At this time the club was joined by Henry Mackenzie, "The Man of Feeling". In his *Anecdotes and Egotisms*, Mackenzie has left an account of the club at this period.

---


3. Ibid., page 145.

4. Thomson: *A Scottish Man of Feeling*, page 137. Thomson has not indicated the source of his information, but as he is accurate in the rest of his book, there is no reason to doubt him on this point.
In speaking of John Logan, Mackenzie writes:-

He was one of a small literary club, chiefly of barristers, of which I was a member, along with Blair, afterwards President of the Court of Session, Mr. (afterwards Judge) Abercromby, Lord Craig, Lord Bannatyne, and Mr. George Ogilvie. We used to discuss literary subjects (generally drinking tea at the house of one of the members) without the formality of a set speech.

Logan, however, "a rather clever man, and an unpleasant one," did not remain a member of the group for long. When the association finally emerged as the Mirror Club, in 1779, there is no mention of him. At this time the members of the group were as follows:

Mr. Henry Mackenzie, "The Man of Feeling.
Mr. George Home, a Clerk of the Court of Session.
Mr. W. Craig.
Mr. Alexander Abercromby, Advocate.
Mr. M'Led Bannatyne, Advocate.
Mr. R. Cullen, Advocate.
Mr. George Ogilvy, Advocate.

"All ... with the exception of Mr. Ogilvy, were contributors to the Mirror."

When the members of the Mirror Club began to issue those publications.

---

1. Logan was a literary adventurer who was accused of victimizing his friend and fellow-poet, Michael Bruce, when he edited a posthumous edition of Bruce's poems. For more information see Mackenzie's Anecdotes and Egotisms, page 152.


3. Ibid, (Thomson's notes in the biographical index), page 275.


which have assured them a place of honour among the authors of periodical papers, they were materially assisted by a number of gentlemen who, while not members of the organization in the ordinary sense, may be regarded as corresponding members. These corresponding members at the time when the club issued the Mirror were as follows:

Mr. Richardson, Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow.
Lord Hailes, (Sir David Dalrymple), judge and historian.
Mr. Frazer Tytler, Professor of History in the College of Edinburgh.
Dr. Beattie, the author of The Minstrel.
Mr. David Hume, nephew to the Historian.
Mr. Cosmo Gordon, Baron of the Exchequer in Scotland.
Mr. William Strahan, Printer to his Majesty.

In 1735, when the same organization produced The Lounger, two additional "corresponding" members joined forces with them. These two men were:

Dr. Henry, the Historian.
Mr. Greenfield, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh.

It has often been observed that the young lawyers and amateur authors who made up this group were men of no ordinary abilities. "No fewer than six of the essayists...became) Judges of the Supreme Courts of Scotland (Lord Abercromby, Lord Craig, Lord Cullen, Lord Hailes, Mr. Baron


Gordon, and Lord Woodhouselee) and other members of the society were equally respectable for talents and literary accomplishments." When the Mirror Club began to prepare for its publications, its places of meeting were frequently changed in order to insure anonymity for its members. The club met "in Clerihugh's in Writer's Court," "in Stewart's Oyster-house in the old Fishmarket Close, or in Lucky Dunbar's in a narrow alley between Forrester's and Liberton's Wynd, or in Somer's opposite the Guard-house in the High Street."

In the concluding number of The Mirror, Henry Mackenzie described how the periodical actually began:

The idea of publishing a periodical paper in Edinburgh took its rise in a company of gentlemen whom particular circumstances of connection brought frequently together. Their discourses often turned upon subjects of manners, taste, and of literature. By one of those accidental resolutions of which the origin cannot easily be traced, it was determined to put their thoughts into

1. W. Forbes: Life of Beattie, Vol. 3, page 290 f. (Note DD to Vol. 2, page 252.) Forbes had made a slight error at this point, Baron Gordon was a Baron of the Exchequer Court, not of the Court of Session. The title of "Baron" was not appointed to Scottish Law Lords.


5. Mirror No. 110, Saturday, May 27, 1790, Repeated in Couper: Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. 2, page 151, and Nathan Drake: Essays...On Periodical Papers, Vol. 2, page 567. "An interesting attempt to 'reconstitute' the meeting at which the Mirror was founded is made in Macmillan's Magazine, for September, 1907. The first paragraph, however, is marred by a peculiar blunder." (Couper: Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. 2, page 153, note.) The blunder to which Couper refers is that of the author of this article calling "Lucky" Dunbar, the proprietor of the tavern in which the club met, a man instead of a woman. "luckie or Lucky, (4) often used to denote 'the mistress of an ale-house.'" (Jamison's Scottish Dictionary.)
writing, and to read them for the entertainment of each other. Their essays assumed the form, and soon after someone gave them the name, of a periodical publication; the writers of it were naturally associated; and their meetings increased the importance, as well as the number of their productions. Cultivating letters in the midst of business, composition was to them an amusement only; that amusement was heightened by the audience which this society afforded; the idea of publication suggested itself as productive of still higher entertainment.

The idea of publication is said to have been suggested by William Craig.

In The Lounger, Lord Abercornby, writing as "a member of the Mirror Club" to Mr. Lounger, describes the meetings of the Mirror Club in the following terms:

I can never forget the pleasure we enjoyed in meeting to read our papers in the Club. There they were criticised with perfect freedom but with the greatest good humour. When any of us produced a paper which, either from the style or manner of it, or from the nature of the subject, seemed inadmissible, it was condemned without hesitation, and the author, putting it in his pocket, drank a bumper to its names. We had stated meetings to receive the communications with which we were honoured, which afforded another source of amusement. This pleasure, however, was not without alloy. We were often, from particular circumstances; obliged to reject compositions of real merit; and what was equally distressing, we were sometimes obliged to abridge or alter the papers which we published.

In view of the great indebtedness of the literature of Scotland to the men in the legal profession, (Kames, Boswell, Scott, Lockhart, and Jeffrey were all legal men), it is interesting to observe that all the members of the Mirror Club, with the exception of Henry Mackenzie, were lawyers. Mackenzie was also the only member who had previously had any

extensive experience in publishing his works, and it was certainly a wise move of the association to place the editorship of the periodical in his capable hands. It was Mackenzie who undertook to supervise the preparation of the papers for the press, who safeguarded the anonymity of the contributors (he alone was known to the publisher), and who contributed by far the greatest number of papers.

The publisher who issued both of the Club’s two series of periodical papers, The Mirror and The Lounger, was William Creech. Creech at that time occupied the shop "at the east end of the Luckenbooths, and facing the line of the High Street." This shop was in a building which had already become famous through the occupancy of Allan Ramsay, the poet, who had established one of the first circulating libraries in Great Britain there in 1725.

When Henry Mackenzie joined the club, at the request of William

---


Craig, "toward the end of 1777," "twenty papers had already been prepared." "Thirty-five 'unexceptional' papers were produced by January of 1779, 'when the publication was resolved on, a resolution which was rather assented to than approved by one half of the society.'" The first issue of The Mirror appeared on Saturday, 23 January 1779.

In undertaking the publication of a periodical paper after the fashion of The Tatler and The Spectator, the members of the Mirror Club were following a long established practice in Scotland. As has already been described, the appearance of the English periodical papers of Addison and Steele created considerable interest in Scotland. Steele's Tatler, which began on April 12, 1709, was reprinted in Edinburgh "sometime about the beginning of February, 1710, by James Watson, an Edinburgh Printer." In the same year there appeared The North Tatler, "printed by John Reid for Samuel Colvil," which "was distinct both from Watson's re-print and from the Tatler of 1711." In 1711, a bi-weekly appeared under the title of The Tatler, by Donald Macstaff of the North. This publication was written by Robert Hepburn of Bearford, "at that time about 21 years of age." "Donald Macstaff" was the avowed imitator of "Mr. Bickerstaff, whose steps he proposed to follow." In 1717, the author of The

Mercury or the Northern Reformer, one Duncan Tatler, announced "I am come of the ancient and honourable Tatlers of the North. I am the only Tatler alive." The Echo, or the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, which appeared in 1729, "was made up of two distinct parts - one devoted to essays and letters, after the manner of the Spectator, and another larger, in which the journal fulfilled the function of a newspaper." The Conjurer, 1735, and The Review, 1737, followed in the same tradition. In describing the latter publication, Couper draws attention to the fact that "A writer in the Scots Magazine refers even the authors of The Mirror and Lounger back to this paper, which he says 'exhibits a favourable picture of Caledonian wit, and humour, in which our brethren of the north have hitherto been supposed deficient." The Letters of the Critical Club, 1738, which professed, as the name indicates, to be the production of a society, however, were the last of such attempts of any importance in Scotland until The Mirror appeared fifty years later.

In contrast to that accorded to its predecessors, the reception and

6. Couper: Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. 2, page 69. "He adds that the late Dr. Robert Wallace, minister successively of New Greyfriars and the New North Churches, Edinburgh, 'was, according to our information, one of the principal authors of it.'"
7. See Chapter 8, page 444, below.
success of *The Mirror* was outstanding. The citizens of Edinburgh, when prompted by the favourable opinion of English "persons of rank and of taste," were quick to extend their support to the new publication, and if *The Mirror* languished at first, on its appearance in single issues, it was enthusiastically supported when it was published in a collected volume. The subserviency of Edinburgh to London in matters of literary fashion are sufficient to account for the delay in recognition of the true merits of this publication in the northern capital. In *Lounger No. 50*, 1 which has already been quoted above, Lord Abercromby, writing as "a member of the Mirror Club," gives the following account of the reception of *The Mirror* to Mr. Lounger:—

You, Sir, started with many advantages which we did not possess. The public are now taught to know, that it is possible to carry on a periodical work of this kind in Edinburgh; and that, if tolerably executed, it will be read, and will hold its place with other works of the same kind. But when we boldly gave the *Mirror* to the world, a very different notion prevailed. It was supposed that no such work could be conducted with any propriety on this side of the Tweed. Accordingly, the *Mirror* was received with the most perfect indifference in our own country; and during the publication, it was indebted for any little reputation it received in Scotland, to the notice that happened to be taken of it by some persons of rank and of taste in England. Nay, Sir, strange as you may think it, it is certainly true, that, narrow as Edinburgh is, there were men who considered themselves as men of letters, who never read a number of

---

1. "The success, while the work continued in detached numbers, was but moderate. In Scotland many people whom a literary adventure like this should have interested, never read the *Mirror*, and of those who read it, many held it in very little estimation. It was from England its fame first arose, and when it came out in volumes, its sale was uncommonly rapid, and the opinion formed of its merit exceedingly flattering. It was then that its merit was first fully acknowledged in its own country." (Thomson: *Scottish Man of Feeling*, page 189.)

2. See page 249, above.

it while it was going on. — The supercilious, who despised the paper because they did not know by whom it was written, talked of it as a catch-penny performance, carried on by a set of needy and obscure scribblers. Those who entertained a more favourable opinion of it were apt to fall into an opposite mistake; and to suppose that the Mirror was the production of all the men of letters in Scotland. This last opinion is not yet entirely exploded, and perhaps has rather gained ground from the favourable reception of the Mirror since its publication in volumes. The last time I was in London, I happened to step into Mr. Cadell's shop, and while I was amusing myself in turning over the prints in Cook's last Voyage, Lord E came in, and taking up a volume of the Mirror, asked Mr. Cadell, who were the authors of it. Cadell, who did not suspect that I knew any more of the matter than the Great Mogul, answered, "That he could not really mention particular names, but he believed that all the literati of Scotland were concerned in it." Lord E walked off, satisfied that this was truly the case; and about a week after I heard him say at Lord M's levee, that he was well assured the Mirror was the joint production of all the men of letters in Scotland.

The lack of an initial success for The Mirror in Edinburgh is confirmed by the editor, who explained in the last number of the paper the difficulties which the Mirror Club had met with in its literary endeavours. Mackenzie, who had "consulted both (Adam) Smith and John Home about the final draft of the last Mirror, in order that the exit might be as graceful as possible," wrote as follows:-

The place of its publication was, in several respects, disadvantageous. There is a certain distance at which writings, as well as men, should be placed, in order to command our attention and respect. We do not easily allow a title to instruct or to amuse the public in our neighbour, with whom we have been accustomed to compare our own abilities. Hence the fastidiousness with which, in a place so narrow as Edinburgh, home productions are commonly

received; which, if they are grave, are pronounced dull; if pathetic, are called unnatural; if ludicrous, are termed low. In the circle around him, the man of business sees few who should be willing, and the man of genius few who are able, to be authors; and a work that comes out unsupported by established names; is liable alike to the censure of the grave, and the sneer of the witty. Even Folly herself acquires some merit from being displeased, when the name of fashion has not sanctified a work from her displeasure. This desire of levelling the pride of authorship, is in none more prevalent than in those who themselves have written. Of these the unsuccessful have a prescriptive title to criticism; and, though established literary reputation commonly sets men above the necessity of detracting from the merit of other candidates for fame, yet there are not wanting instances of monopolists of public favour, who wish not only to enjoy, but to guide it, and are willing to confine its influence within the pale of their own circle, or their own patronage. General censure is of all things the easiest; from such men it passes unexamined, and its sentence is decisive; nay, even a studied silence will go far to smother a production, which, if they have not the meanness to envy, they want the candour to appreciate with justice.

In point of subject, as well as of reception, the place where it appeared was unfavourable to the Mirror. Whoever will examine the works of a similar kind that have preceded it, will easily perceive for how many topics they were indebted to local characters and temporary follies, to places of public amusement, and circumstances of reigning fashion. But, with us, besides the danger of personal application, these are hardly various enough for the subject, or important enough for the dignity of writing. There is a sort of classic privilege in the very names of places in London, which does not extend to those of Edinburgh. The Cannongate is almost as long as the Strand, but it will not bear the comparison upon paper; and Blackfriars-wynd can never vie with Drury-lane, in point of sound, however they may rank in the article of chastity. In the department of humour, these circumstances must necessarily have great weight; and, for papers of humour, the bulk of readers will generally call, because the number is much greater of those who can laugh, than of those who can think. To add to the difficulty, people are too proud to laugh upon easy terms with one, of whose title to make them laugh they are not apprised. A joke in writing is like a joke in conversation; much of its wit depends upon the rank of its author.

During the progress of the paper, however, still another difficulty had arisen. A paper written by William Craig, which appeared as Mirror No. 85 reflected the persistent difficulties of the Scots with their borrowed medium of expression, and renewed the old complaint that the

1. See Chapter 4, page 166, above.
Scots were lacking in humour:

Enquiry Into the Causes of the Scarcity of Humorous Writers in Scotland.

In a paper published at Edinburgh, it would be improper to enter into any comparison of the writers of this country with those on the other side of the Tweed: but, whatever be the comparative rank of Scottish and English authors, it must surely be allowed, that, of late, there have been writers in this country, upon different subjects, who are possessed of very considerable merit. In one species of writing, however, in works and compositions of humour, there can be no sort of doubt that the English stand perfectly unrivalled by their northern neighbours. The English excel in comedy; several of their romances are replete with the most humorous representations of life and character; and many of their other works are full of excellent ridicule. But, in Scotland, we have hardly any book which aims at humour, and of the very few which do, still fewer have any degree of merit. Though we have tragedies written by Scots authors, we have no comedy excepting Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd; and though we have tender novels, we have none of humour, excepting those of Smollet, who, from his long residence in England, can hardly be said to have acquired in this country his talent for writing; nor can we, for the same reason, lay a perfect claim to Arbuthnot, who is still a more illustrious exception to my general remark. There must be something in the national genius of the two people which makes this remarkable difference in their writings, though it may be difficult to discover from what cause it arises.

I am inclined to suspect, that there is something in the situation and present government of Scotland, which may, in part, account for this difference in the genius of the two countries. Scotland, before the union of the two kingdoms, was a separate state, with a parliament and constitution of its own. Now the seat of government is removed, and its constitution is involved in that of England. At the time the two nations came to be so intimately connected, its great men were less affluent than those of England, its agriculture was little advanced and its manufactures were in their infancy. A Scotsman was, therefore, in this situation, obliged to exert every nerve, that he might be able to hold his place.

If preferment, or offices in public life, were his object, he was obliged to remove from home to a city, which, though now the metropolis of the united kingdoms, had formerly been to him a sort of foreign capital. If wealth was the object of his pursuit, he could only acquire it at home by great industry and perseverance; and if he found he could not easily succeed in his own country, he repaired to other countries, where he expected to be able to amass a fortune. Hence it has been remarked, that there are more natives of Scotland to be found abroad than of any other country.

1. Mirror No. 35, Tuesday, February 22, 1780.
People in this situation are not apt to indulge themselves in humour; and few humorous characters will appear. It is only in countries where men wanton in the extravagancies of wealth, that some are led to indulge a particular vein of character, and that others are induced to delineate and express it in writing. Besides, where men are in a situation which makes it necessary for them to push their way in the world, more particularly if they are obliged to do so among strangers, though this may give them a firmness and a resoluteness in their conduct, it will naturally produce a modest caution and reserve in their deportment, which must chill every approach to humour. Hence though the Scots are allowed to be brave and undaunted in dangerous situations; yet bashfulness, reserve, and even timidity of manner, unless when they are called forth to action, are justly considered as making part of their character. Men of this disposition are not apt to have humour; it is the open, the careless, the indifferent, and the forward who indulge in it; it is the man who does not think of interest, and who sets himself above attending to the proprieties of conduct. But he who has objects of interest in view, who attends with circumspection to his conduct, and finds it necessary to do so, is generally grave and silent, and seldom makes any attempt at humour.

These circumstances may have had a considerable influence upon the genius and temper of the people in Scotland; and if they have given a particular formation to the genius of the people in general, they would naturally have a similar effect upon its authors; the genius of an author commonly takes its direction from that of his countrymen.

To these causes, arising from the present situation and government of our country, may be added another circumstance, that of there being no court or seat of the Monarch in Scotland. It is only where the court is, that the standard of manner can be fixed; and, of consequence, it is only in the neighbourhood of the court that a deviation from that standard can be exactly ascertained, or a departure from it be easily made the object of ridicule. Where there is no court, it becomes of little importance what dress the people wear, what hours they observe, what language they express themselves in, or what is their general deportment. Men living at a distance from the court become also unacquainted with the rules of fashion which it establishes, and are unable to mark or point them out. But the great subject for wit and ludicrous representation arises from men's having a thorough knowledge of what is the fashionable standard of manners, and being able to seize upon, and hold out a departure from it, in an humorous point of view.

In Scotland, therefore, which, since the removal of the court, has become, in a certain degree, a provincial country, there being no fixed standard of manners within the country itself, one great source of ridicule is cut off, and an author is not led to attempt humorous composition; or, if he does, has little chance of succeeding.

There is another particular which may have had a very considerable effect upon the genius of the Scots writers, and that is, the nature of the language in which they write. The old Scottish dialect is now banished from our books, and the English is substituted in its place. But
though our books are written in English, our conversation is in Scotch. Of our language it may be said, as we are told of the wit of Sir Hudibras, that we have a suit for holidays and another for working days. The Scottish dialect is our ordinary suit; the English is used only on solemn occasions. When a Scotsman therefore writes, he does it generally in trammels. His own native original language, which he hears spoken around him, he does not make use of; but he expresses himself in a language in some respects foreign to him, and which he has acquired by study and observation. When a celebrated Scottish writer, after the publication of his History of Scotland, was first introduced to Lord Chesterfield, his Lordship, with that happy talent of compliment for which he was so remarkable, addressed him at parting in these words: "I am happy, Sir, to have met with you, - happy to have passed a day with you, - and extremely happy to find that you speak Scotch. - It would be too much, were you to speak, as well as write our language, better than we do ourselves."

This circumstance of a Scottish author not writing his own natural dialect, must have a considerable influence upon the nature of his literary productions. When he is employed in any grave dignified composition, when he writes history, politics, or poetry, the pains he must take to write, in a manner different from that in which he speaks, will not much affect his productions; the language of such compositions is, in every case, raised above that of common life; and, therefore, the deviation which a Scottish author is obliged to make from the common language of the country, can be of little prejudice to him. But if a writer is to descend to common and ludicrous pictures of life; if, in short, he is to deal in humorous composition, his language must be, as nearly as possible, that of common life, that of the bulk of the people; but a Scotsman who wishes to write English cannot easily do this. He neither speaks the English dialect, nor is it spoken by those around him; any knowledge he has acquired of the language is got from books, not from conversation. Hence Scottish authors may have been prevented from attempting to write books of humour; and, when they have tried it, we may be able, in some measures, to account for their failure.

In confirmation of these remarks, it may be observed that almost the only works of humour which we have in this country, are in the Scottish dialect, and most of them were written before the union of the kingdoms, when the Scotch was the written, as well as the spoken, language of the country. The Gentle Shepherd, which is full of natural and ludicrous representations of low life, is written in broad Scotch. Many of our ancient Scottish ballads are full of humour. If there have been laterly any publications of humour in this country, written in good English, they have been mostly of the graver sort, called irony. In this species of writing, where the author himself never appears to laugh, a more dignified composition is admissible; and, in that case, the disadvantage of writing in a language different from that in which the author speaks or those around him converse, is not so sensibly felt.
It is somewhat surprising that the contributors to The Mirror should have found such a tortuous explanation necessary. Their own attempts at humour, particularly those of Lord Hailes and Henry Mankenzie, had been quite sufficient to disprove the alleged lack of the faculty, and their continued success in the humorous vein was absolute proof that this group of Scotch writers suffered from no such deficiency. Regarding this matter, Alexander Carlyle, himself a prospective contributor to the periodical, may be said to have had the last word:—

I shall take this opportunity of correcting a mistake into which the English authors have fallen, in which they are supported by many of the Scotch writers, particularly by those of the Mirror, which is, that the people of Scotland have no humour. That this is a gross mistake, could be proved by innumerable songs, ballads, and stories that are prevalent in the south of Scotland, and by every person old enough to remember the times when the Scottish dialect was spoken in purity in the low country, and who have been at all conversant with the common people. Since we began to affect speaking a foreign language, which the English dialect is to us, humour, it must be confessed, is less apparent in conversation.

1. "Mr. Mirror, it was with great pleasure that I observed in one of your papers a side thrust against playing at cards on Sunday, which with many other modes of vice we have learned from the people on the continent, and which I am very sorry to see prevails much more amongst us now than it did twenty years ago when I left the country...I had heard before I returned to my native land that there was a great change with respect to the rigorous observation of the Sabbath, and I found it so on experience. A man may now shave himself on Sunday morning, and powder his hair and walk after church time, and even visit his neighbours without giving offence, which was very far from being the case in my youth. But I little dreamed that it would have been possible for Presbyterians to have so far lowered the ideal of morality of the Sabbath as to have played at cards on any part of that day...I am one of those who think it very wrong to shock the people with whom I live...I go to the parish church on Sunday lest the people should think me a heathen or an infidel, and I continue to say grace tho' it be left off as ungenteel by many of my neighbours." (This paper was found among the unpublished MSS. of Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk..."evidently intended to appear in the Mirror, purporting to be dated from Perthshire, April 1, 1779, by a gentleman recently returned from the continent." Graham: Social Life in Scotland, page 181, note.)

The ground of this pretension in the English to the monopoly of humour is their confounding two characters together that are quite different — the humorist and the man of humour. The humorist prevails more in England than in any country, because liberty has long been universal there, and wealth very general, which I hold to be the father and mother of the humorist. This mistake has been confirmed by the abject humour of the Scotch, who, till of late years, allowed John Bull, out of flattery, to possess every quality to which he pretended.

The last issue of The Mirror appeared on Saturday, 27 May, 1780, and, as has already been indicated, it was very shortly afterward issued in a collected edition of 'three duodecimo volumes in which the names of most of the authors were disclosed; and so successful were the essays in this form that within a year Mackenzie could write to his class-mate Carmichael, American Charge d'Affairs in Spain, that by 2 December 1780 five editions had been required.' It is said that this success enabled the members of the club not only to hand "one hundred pounds of the proceeds to the Orphan Hospital," but also:"to buy a hogshead of wine for their own use." "Of The Mirror there were at least thirteen British editions before 1813; there were early American editions in 1792 and in 1793; there have been at least nine editions since 1817."

After the lapse of five years, the Mirror Club ventured into print with their second periodical which appeared "every Saturday for 101 issues between 5 February 1785, and 6 January 1787. This time the Edinburgh

1. See pages 254 - 255, and notes, above.


public received the essays with enthusiasm, though critics were found to complain that The Lounger was less lively than its predecessor."

"The pages devoted to criticism in The Lounger were much more numerous than those which were allotted to the same province in The Mirror; and to those Mr. Mackenzie had contributed a large portion." One of Mackenzie's critical papers, Lounger No. 97, the "Extraordinary Account of Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Ploughman; with Extracts from his Poems," was "the most famous essay" to appear in either publication. The Lounger went to six editions before 1804, and since that time there have been at least eight others.

Although it has been generally assumed that The Mirror surpassed The Lounger, there is at least one dissenting voice of authority. In his comparison of the two periodicals, Nathan Drake writes as follows:

The Lounger has been considered by some critics as inferior to its predecessor; this does not appear to me to be the case; it cannot, indeed, boast of a narrative so pathetic as that of La Roche, or

3. December 9, 1786.
6. "While it was running, complaints were heard that the Lounger did not come up to the standing of the Mirror, and that verdict has generally been approved since." (Couper: Edinburgh Periodical Press, page 29; Thomson: Scottish Man of Feeling, page 192; and Nathan Drake: Essays... On Periodical Papers, Vol. 2, pages 384-385.)
Venoni, in the Mirror; but it does not yield in any other requisite, either of character, humour, moral instruction, or popular criticism. On the contrary, I think it may be easily proved, that a larger proportion of good papers is to be found in the pages of the Lounger. They have both, however, contributed very highly to the purposes of edification and amusement, to the best and noblest objects of the genuine periodical essay.

But it is probably unfair to judge the two periodicals separately, as they were the products of the same group of men. The members of the Mirror Club, who acted as "a staff" under the editorship of Henry Mackenzie, have been described as the "earliest approach to the modern organization" such as one finds in periodical publishing at the present day. The Club therefore, undoubtedly did much to promote the success of The Mirror and

1. "The story of La Roche, (Nos. 42, 43, and 44), and of Louisa Venoni, (Nos. 103 and 106), are related with great simplicity and effect; the style is clear, sweet, and unaffected; and the characters are sketched with so much delicacy and adherence to Nature, with touches so powerful in awakening the softer passions, that they have called forth the tears of thousands." (Nathan Drake: Essays...On Periodical Papers, Vol. 2, page 369.) As is well known, the hero of La Roche was David Hume. Mackenzie, who admired Hume for his "good nature and benevolence", wrote of this story as follows:— "The sentiments which such good nature and benevolence might suggest, I ventured to embody, in a sort of dramatic form, in the story of La Roche in the Mirror, in which Mr. Hume is made to say 'That there were times when, recollecting that venerable pastor and his lively daughter, he forgot the pride of literary fame, and wished that he had never doubted.' It will not, I hope, be an offensive egotism, if I inform the Society, (i.e. The Royal Society to whom Mackenzie was reading the paper in which this extract appeared), that, when I wrote that story, being anxious there should not be a single expression in it that could give offence of uneasiness to any friend of Mr. Hume, I read it to Dr. Adam Smith, and begged that he would tell me if any thing should be left out or altered. He heard it attentively, and declared he did not find a syllable to object to; but added, with his characteristic absence of mind, that he was surprised he had never heard of the anecdote before." (Mackenzie: Life of John Home, page 21. See also, for the same story, Burton: Life of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 58.)


The Lounger. And the success of the papers has been almost universally recognized. William Creech, the publisher of both papers, stated that they "met with much public approbation." Pinkerton, whose opinions are always interesting, if sometimes eccentric, judged The Mirror as being "superior to the Guardian, Tatler, Connoisseur," but inferior "to the World," and quotes "an high literary character" who declared it "the best book of the kind, save the Spectator." And Boswell reported that Johnson, who had received a copy of the collected Mirrors, "spoke well of it."

The American biographer of Henry Mackenzie, Harold W. Thompson, who has frequently stated that The Mirror and The Lounger contain "the best of Henry Mackenzie's writing," has claimed that the popularity of the papers was "chiefly due to Mackenzie's contributions." Thompson has also claimed for Mackenzie's essays and tales in The Mirror and Lounger, that although "the Scots no longer read them," they are "essential for a knowledge of sentimentalism; for an appreciation of the eighteenth-
century essay, or for an appraisal of the Scottish nation in its Golden Age."

3. Ibid.
5. Mackenzie: Anecdotes and Egotisms, the editor, Thompson, in the Intro-
7. Mackenzie: Anecdotes and Egotisms, the editor, Thompson, in the Intro-
duction, page xxii.
He also describes Mackenzie's Lounger No. 97, "The Extraordinary Account of Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Ploughman, etc.," as the most important single Scottish review of the eighteenth century, and there is some reason for believing that this is no mere biographer's exaggeration.

In evaluation of Mackenzie's article on Robert Burns, one of Burns' earliest biographers, J. Currie, wrote as follows:

At the time when Burns arrived in Edinburgh, the periodical paper, entitled the Lounger, was publishing, every Saturday producing a successive number. His poems had attracted the notice of the gentlemen engaged in that undertaking, and the ninety-seventh number of those unequal, though frequently beautiful essays, is devoted to An Account of Robert Burns, the Ayrshire ploughman, with extracts from his poems, written by the elegant pen of Mr. Mackenzie. The Lounger had an extensive circulation among persons of taste and literature, not in Scotland only, but in various parts of England, to whose acquaintance therefore our bard was immediately introduced. The paper of Mr. Mackenzie was calculated to introduce him advantageously. The extracts are well selected; the criticisms and reflections are judicious, as well as generous; and in the style and sentiments there is that happy delicacy, by which the writings of the author are so eminently distinguished. The extracts from Burn's


2. "It will ever be remembered to the credit of the Lounger and Mackenzie, that the paper contained one of the earliest and most appreciative notices of Burn's poems - December 9, 1788. 'It speaks volumes for the amiable author of the Man of Feeling,' says Prof. Saintsbury, 'that in the very periodical where he was wont to air his mild Addisonian hobbies he should have warmly commended the Ayrshire ploughman.' Burns himself was greatly delighted with the review, as well he might be, for it was a pronouncement in his favour by the then highest literary tribunal in the country." (Couper: Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. 2, page 175.) "The Lounger having an extensive circulation among persons of taste and literature, and being much regarded for the weight of its decisions, Burns could not have had a more favourable introduction to the notice of the world." (Lives of Eminent Scotsmen, Vol. 1, page 171.) "By this alone the fame of Burns was at once perfected in Scotland, for, by the pronouncement of the greatest tribunal in the country, all lesser judges were set free to give their judgment in the direction which their feelings had already dictated." (Chambers: Works of Burns, Vol. 2, page 10.) "It may be said with some truth, that this production of the "Man of Feeling" proved the means of deciding the fate, and probably the fame, of the bard." (Kay: Portraits, Vol. 2, part 2, page 303.)

poems in the ninety-seventh number of the Lounger, were copied into the London as well as into many of the provincial papers, and the fame of our bard spread throughout the island.

During the period which separated the publication of The Mirror and The Lounger, the subject of Mackenzie's review, Robert Burns, was involved in a debating and discussion club of his own. This club, which has recently been revived, was the Bachelor's Club of Tarbolton. It is said that the Bachelor's Club was organized by Burns "about the end of the year 1780." Burns, who was following the example of a previous debating club which had been established in Ayr, was joined in his attempt by "his brother and five other young peasants of the neighbourhood." The declared objects of the Bachelor's Club were to afford relaxation after toil, "to promote sociality and friendship, and to improve the mind." The club held regular meetings until the autumn of 1782, at which time a minute book was purchased and a short account of the proceedings of the society up to that time were recorded, and the rules and regulations, provided by Robert Burns, were entered. These records read as follows:

History of the Rise, Proceedings, and Regulations of the Bachelor's Club.


2. Nothing is known of this club.


Of birth or blood we do not boast,
Nor gentry does our club afford;
But ploughmen and mechanics we
In Nature’s simple dress record.

As the great end of human society is to become wiser and better, this ought therefore to be the principal view of every man in every station of life. But as experience has taught us, that such studies as inform the head and mend the heart, when long continued, are apt to exhaust the faculties of the mind, it has been found proper to relieve and unbend the mind by some employment or another, that may be agreeable enough to keep its powers in exercise, but at the same time not so serious as to exhaust them. But, superadded to this, by far the greater part of mankind are under the necessity of earning the sustenance of human life by the labour of their bodies, whereby, not only the faculties of the mind, but the nerves and sinews of the body, are so fatigued that it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to some amusement or diversion, to relieve the weary man, worn down with the necessary labours of life.

As the best of things, however, have been perverted to the worst of purposes, so, under the pretence of amusement and diversion, men have plunged into all the madness of riot and dissipation; and, instead of attending to the grand design of human life, they have begun with extravagance and folly, and ended with guilt and wretchedness. Impressed with these considerations, we, the following lads in the parish of Tarbolton, viz. Hugh Reid, Robert Burns, Gilbert Burns, Alexander Brown, Walter Mitchell, Thomas Wright, and William M’Gavin, resolved, for our mutual entertainment, to unite ourselves into a club or society, under such rules and regulations, that while we should forget our cares and labours in mirth and diversion, we might not transgress the bounds of innocence and decorum; and after agreeing on these, and some other regulations, we held our first meeting at Tarbolton, in the house of John Richard, upon the evening of the 11th of November, 1780, commonly called Hallowe’en, and after choosing Robert Burns president for the night, we proceeded to debate on this question—"Suppose a young man, bred a farmer, but without any fortune, has it in his power to marry either of two women, the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome in person, nor agreeable in conversation, but who can manage the household affairs of a farm well enough; the other of them a girl every way agreeable, in person, conversation, and behaviour, but without any fortune;—which of them shall he choose?"—Finding ourselves very happy in our society, we resolved to continue to meet once a month in the same house, in the way and manner proposed, and shortly thereafter we chose Robert Ritchie for another member. In May, 1781, we brought in David Sillar, and in June, Adam Jamaison, as members. About the beginning of the year 1782, we admitted Matthew Patterson and John Orr, and in June following we chose James Patterson as a proper brother for such a society. The club being thus increased, we resolved to meet at Tarbolton on the race-night, the July following, and have a dance in honour of our society. Accordingly we did meet, each one with a partner, and spent the evening in such innocence and merriment, such
cheerfulness and good humour, that every brother will long remember it with pleasure and delight.

Rules and Regulations to be Observed in the Bachelor's Club.

1st. The club shall meet at Tarbolton every fourth Monday night, when a question on any subject shall be proposed, disputed points of religion only excepted, in the manner hereafter directed; which question is to be debated in the club, each member taking whatever side he thinks proper.

2d. When the club is met, the president, or, he failing, some one of the members till he comes, shall take his seat; then the other members shall seat themselves, those who are for one side of the question, on the president's right hand; and those who are for the other side, on his left; which of them shall have the right hand is to be determined by the president. The president and four of the members, being present, shall have power to transact any ordinary part of the society's business.

3d. The club met and seated, the president shall read the question out of the club's book of records, (which book is always to be kept by the president) then the two members nearest the president shall cast lots who of them shall speak first and according as the lot shall determine, the member nearest the president on that side shall deliver his opinion, and the member nearest on the other side shall reply to him; then the second member of the side shall reply to him; then the second member of the side that spoke first; then the second member of the side that spoke second; and so on to the end of the company; but if there be fewer members on one side than on the other, when all the members of the least side have spoken according to their places, any of them, as they please among themselves, may reply to the remaining members of the opposite side; when both sides have spoken, the president shall give his opinion, after which they may go over it a second or more times, and so continue the question.

4th. The club shall then proceed to the choice of a question for the subject of next night's meeting. The president shall first propose one, and any other member who chooses may propose more questions; and whatever one of them is most agreeable to the majority of the members, shall be the subject of debate next club-night.

5th. The club shall, lastly, elect a new president for the next meeting: the president shall name one, then any of the club may name another, and whoever of them has the majority of votes shall be duly elected; allowing the president the first vote, and the casting vote upon a par, but none other. Then after a general
toast to the mistresses of the club, they shall dismiss.

6th. There shall be no private conversation carried on during the time of debate, nor shall any member interrupt another while he is speaking, under the penalty of a reprimand from the president for the first fault, doubling his share of the reckoning for the second, trebling it for the third, and so on in proportion for every other fault, provided always however that any member may speak at any time after leave asked, and given by the president. All swearing and profane language, and particularly all obscene and indecent conversation, is strictly prohibited, under the same penalty as aforesaid in the first clause of this article.

7th. No member, on any pretence whatever, shall mention any of the club's affairs to any other person but a brother member, under the pain of being excluded; and particularly if any member shall reveal any of the speeches or affairs of the club, with a view to ridicule or laugh at any of the rest of the members, he shall be for ever excommunicated from the society; and the rest of the members are desired, as much as possible, to avoid, and have no communication with him as a friend or comrade.

8th. Every member shall attend at the meetings, without he can give a proper excuse for not attending; and it is desired that every one who cannot attend, will send his excuse with some other member; and he who shall be absent three meetings without sending such excuse, shall be summoned to the next club night, when, if he fail to appear, or send an excuse, he shall be excluded.

9th. The club shall not consist of more than sixteen members, all bachelors, belonging to the parish of Tarbolton; except a brother member marry, and in that case he may be continued, if the majority of the club think proper. No person shall be admitted a member of this society, without the unanimous consent of the club; and any member may withdraw from the club altogether, by giving notice to the president in writing of his departure.

10th. Every man proper for a member of this society, must have a frank, honest, open heart; above any thing dirty or mean; and must be a professed lover of one or more of the female sex. No haughty, self-conceited person, who looks upon himself as superior to the rest of the club, and especially no mean-spirited, worldly mortal, whose only will is to heap up money, shall upon any pretence whatever be admitted. In short, the proper person for this society is, a cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who, if he has a friend that is true, and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as gen¬teelly to make both ends meet - is just as happy as this world can make him.

From detached memoranda which Burns made on the "imprudent" side of the
question, it is known that he prepared in advance for his part in the debate on the question proposed for the first meeting held on Hallowe'en of 1780. In addition, Burns' biographer, Currie, gives the following as "farther specimens of the questions debated in the society at Tarbolton":-

1. Whether do we derive more happiness from love or friendship?
2. Whether between friends, who have no reason to doubt each other's friendship, there should be any reserve?
3. Whether is the savage man, or the peasant of a civilized country, in the most happy situation?
4. Whether is a young man of the lower ranks of life likeliest to be happy, who has got a good education, and his mind well informed, or he who has just the education and information of those around him?

After Burns had removed from Tarbolton to Mauchline, in 1784, the Bachelor's Club of Tarbolton survived for several years, but was eventually dissolved as a result of some disagreement among its members. In Mauchline, the two brothers, Robert and Gilbert, organized a second society similar to the first. Little is known of it other than that it was composed "chiefly of sons of farmers, a description of persons, in the opinion of (the) poet, more agreeable in their manner, more virtuous in their conduct, and more susceptible of improvement, than the self-sufficient mechanics of the country-towns." In the new society, fines for non-attendance, which at Tarbolton had been used to "enlarge their scanty potations", at Mauchline were devoted to the purchase of books, and the "first work procured in this

1. Currie: Life and Works of Burns, Vol. 1, page 118. For a description of this meeting see page 266, above.
manner was The Mirror, the separate numbers of which were at that time recently collected and published in volumes. After it, followed a number of other works, chiefly of the same nature, and among these The Lounger."

It is said that Burns had a very favourable opinion of Mackenzie's review of his work, and this may account in part for his interest in and his enthusiastic approval of these periodicals. Robert Burns, however, was not the only member of the club who was an admirer of the literary productions of the Mirror Club. The following letter, from the pen of Robert's brother Gilbert, was in reply to a criticism of Currie's that though The Mirror and The Lounger were "works of great merit," in his opinion, the young peasants would have been better employed with the "Penmanship of Butterworth, and the Arithmetic of Cocker":-

Dinning, Dumfries-shire, 24th October, 1800.

Sir, I do not mean to controvert your criticism of my favourite books the Mirror and Lounger, although I understand there are people who think themselves judges, who do not agree with you. The acquisition of knowledge, except what is connected with human life and conduct, or the particular business of his employment, does not appear to me to be the fittest pursuit for a peasant. I would say with the poet,

3. Burns to Mrs. Dunlop, from Ellisland, 10th April, 1790. "You must know that I have just met with the Mirror and Lounger for the first time, and I am quite in raptures with them; I should be glad to have your opinion of some of the papers. The one I have just read, Lounger No. 61, has cost me more honest tears than any thing I have read for a long time. M'Kenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots; and, in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt by the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour, he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic." (Currie: Life and Works of Burns, Vol. 2, page 310 f.)
"How empty learning, and how vain is art,  
Save where it guides the life, or mends the heart!"

There seems to be a considerable latitude in the use of the word taste. I understand it to be the perception and relish of beauty, order, or any other thing, the contemplation of which gives pleasure and delight to the mind. I suppose it is in this sense you wish it to be understood. If I am right, the taste which these books are calculated to cultivate, (besides the taste for fine writing, which many of the papers tend to improve and to gratify) is what is proper, consistent, and becoming in human character and conduct, as almost every paper relates to these subjects.

I am sorry I have not these books by me, that I might point out some instances. I remember two; one, the beautiful story of La Roche, where, beside the pleasure one derives from a beautiful simple story told in M'Kenzie's happiest manner, the mind is led to taste, with heart-felt rapture, the consolation to be derived in deep affliction, from habitual devotion and trust in Almighty God. The other, the story of General W____, where the reader is led to have a high relish for that firmness of mind which disregards appearances, the common forms and vanities of life, for the sake of doing justice in a case which was out of the reach of human laws.

Allow me then to remark, that if the morality of these books is subordinate to the cultivation of taste; that taste, that refinement of mind and delicacy of sentiment which they are intended to give, are the strongest guard and surest foundation of morality and virtue. Other moralists guard, as it were, the overt act; these papers, by exalting duty into sentiment, are calculated to make every deviation rectitude and propriety of conduct, painful to the mind,

"Whose temper'd powers,  
Refine at length, and every passion wears  
A chaster, milder, more attractive mien."

I readily grant you that the refinement of mind which I contend for, increases our sensibility to the evils of life; but what station of life is without its evils! There seems to be no such thing as perfect happiness in this world, and we must balance the pleasure and the pain which we derive from taste, before we can properly appreciate it in the case before us. I apprehend that on a minute examination it will appear, that the evils peculiar to the lower ranks of life, derive their power to wound us, more from the suggestions of false pride, and the "contagion of luxury weak and vile," than the refinement of our taste. It was a favourite remark of my brother's, that there was no part of the constitution of our nature, to which we were more indebted, than that by which "custom makes things familiar and easy," (a copy Mr. Murdoch used to set us to write) and there is little labour which custom will not make easy to a man in health, if he is not ashamed of his employment, or does not begin to compare his situation with
those he may see going about at their ease.

But the man of enlarged mind feels the respect due to him as a man; he has learned that no employment is dishonorable in itself; that while he performs aright the duties of that station in which God has placed him, he is as great as a king in the eyes of Him whom he is principally desirous to please; for the man of taste, who is constantly obliged to labour, must of necessity be religious. If you teach him only to reason, you may make him an atheist, a demagogue, or any vile thing; but if you teach him to feel, his feelings can only find their proper and natural relief in devotion and religious resignation. He knows that those people who are to appearance at ease, are not without their share of evils, and that even toil itself is not destitute of advantages.

There is a curious fragment remaining from Burns' Mauchline Club days, which, it has been conjectured, was written by the poet as an announcement of his new production, "Holy Willie's Prayer." This document reads as follows:

In the Name of the Nine. Amen.

We, Robert Burns, by virtue of a Warrant from Nature, bearing date the Twenty-fifth day of January, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, (His birthday,) Poet-Laureat and Bard in Chief in and over the Districts and Countries of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, of old extent, To our trusty and well-beloved William Chalmers and John M'Adam, Students and Practitioners in the ancient and mysterious Science of Confounding Right and Wrong.

Right Trusty, Be it known unto you, That whereas, in the course of our care and watchings over the Order and Police of all and sundry the Manufactures, Retainers, and Venders of Poesy; Bards, Poets, Poetasters, Minstrels, Jinglers, Songsters, Ballad-singers, Etc., Etc., Etc., male and female -- We have discovered a certain ...., nefarious, abominable, and wicked Song or Ballad, a copy whereof We have here inclosed; Our Will therefore Is, that Ye pitch upon and appoint the most execrable Individual of that most execrable Species, known by the appellation, phrase, and nickname of The Deil's Yell (Old Bachelors.), and, after having caused him to kindle a fire at the Cross of Ayr, ye shall, at noontide of the day, put into the said wretch's merciless hands the said copy of the said nefarious and wicked Song to be consumed by fire in the presence of all Beholders, in abhorrence of, and terrorem to, all such Compositions and Composers. And this


2. Ibid.
in no wise leave ye undone, but have it executed in every point as this Our Mandate bears, before the twenty-fourth current, when in Person We hope to applaud your faithfulness and seal.

Given at Mauchline, this twentieth day of November, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six.

God Save The Bard!

The effect on Burns of his participation in the Bachelor's Clubs of Turbolton and Mauchline has been described as follows:-

Whether in the humble societies of which he was a member, Burns acquired much direct information, may be questioned. It cannot, however, be doubted, that, by collision, the faculties of his mind would be excited, that by practice, his habits of enunciation would be established, and thus we have some explanation of that early command of words and of expression which enabled him to pour forth his thoughts in language not unworthy of his genius, and which, of all his endowments, seemed, on his appearance in Edinburgh, the most extraordinary. For associations of a literary nature, our poet acquired a considerable relish;...

These observations have been confirmed by no less a person than Professor Regald Stewart of the University of Edinburgh. In a letter to Currie, who was preparing his biography of Burns, Stewart wrote:--

I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a Mason-Lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. (This was in the summer of 1787.) He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and every thing he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. If I am not mistaken, he told me, that in that village, before going to Edinburgh, he had belonged to a small club of such of the inhabitants as had a taste for books, when they used to converse and debate on any interesting questions that occurred to them in the course of their reading. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution.

Burns' "considerable relish" for literary associations, and the "taste for books" which he shared with his companions of the two debating clubs he

---
5. Ibid., Vol. 1, pages 141 - 142.
had established was by no means a rare thing in Scotland at that period. His brother Gilbert, whom we already know to be sympathetic with his literary tastes, expressed a desire, in the letter quoted above, to "have established in every parish a small circulating library, consisting of the books which the young people had read extracts from in the collections they had read at school, and any other books well calculated to refine the mind, improve the moral feelings, recommend the practice of virtue, and communicate such knowledge as might be useful and suitable to the labouring classes of men."

Attempts to establish such libraries had long been afoot in Scotland. In 1764, an eight-page pamphlet was issued in Aberdeen which contained the following proposals for establishing a society for the purpose of establishing a public library in that city:

As men of all ranks and professions in the present age have frequent recourse to books for their instruction or amusement, and most men can purchase but a very inconsiderable part of the books which they desire to peruse, public libraries have been established by subscription in most considerable towns where there is any desire of knowledge and improvement. And this indeed seems to be the only expedient whereby the benefits of the many valuable improvements which have lately been made and are daily making in various parts of Europe, can be quickly diffused, and the thirst of knowledge can be satisfied at a moderate expense. The principles of all the arts as well as of the sciences and learned professions have in this age been explained and published to the world in books, and in a public library properly furnished, not only the architect, the ship-builder, and the farmer, but even the tallow-chandler, and pen-maker, may find the latest improvements that have been made in his profession.

1. See page 271 f., above.
3. "The...remarkable proposal, reprinted from an eight-page pamphlet, dated 4th May, 1764, was the work of Professor William Ogilive. His theories on the land question are now known to have anticipated Mr. Henry George, and in this proposal as to public libraries he also anticipated Mr. Andrew Carnegie." (Scottish Notes and Queries, Vol. 3, October, 1889, page 87.)
A public library cannot answer these valuable purposes, without a considerable annual fund for the purchase of books, nor is it less necessary that the fund should be laid out with the best judgement for the general benefit of those entitled to the use of the books. The libraries for the public, are extremely deficient in both these respects.

For, first, the annual funds belonging to them are very inconsiderable, and in no wise adequate to the purposes of a public library. And it may be expected that those small funds will always be applied according to the humour and taste of academical professors, rather than for the general benefit of readers.

Several gentlemen in and about Aberdeen, moved by these considerations, are desirous to give a beginning to a work of so great public utility, have for some months bygone resolved to form a society at Aberdeen, for establishing a public library, for the benefit of those who now choose to enter, or hereafter shall choose to enter into this society, under the following regulations:

1. Every member shall signify his design of entering into this society, to Mr. William Ogilvie, Professor of Philosophy in King's College, two weeks before the first general meeting of the society. And shall pay half-a-guinea yearly, while he chooses to continue a member, or three guineas if he chooses to enter for life, to the said Mr. William Ogilvie, or the secretary of the society for the time, before the general meeting at which he enters. Every member shall likewise at his entry, promise that he will observe and keep the orders of this society while he continues a member thereof, and that he will faithfully, according to his skill and ability, discharge any office or trust committed to him by the society, according to the rules thereof.

2. The society shall meet twice every year, upon the 20th of June and December, or the first lawful day thereafter, at three of the clock in the afternoon; the first meeting being upon the 20th of June next, in the common hall of Marischal College, and the subsequent meetings in the common hall either of the King's or of Marischal College, as the society shall appoint, for ever after. The principal of the college where the meeting is held, being a member of the society, shall be president of the meeting. The annual payments of the first year shall be laid out for books to be deposited in the library of King's College, the annual payments of the second year for books to be deposited in the library of Marischal College, and so alternately ever after. And the payments for life shall go half to one library, and half to the other.

3. The society shall every year at their meeting in June, choose by ballot, four committees of their number, each committee consisting of three members, viz:—one committee for divinity, moral-philosophy, oriental learning, and ecclesiastical history; one committee
4. These committees shall meet by themselves, for four months after their

election, at least once a month, in one or other of the public li-

braries, and shall each of them make up a list of such books in their

several professions as they judge most needful to be bought, at least

such a number of such books as can be purchased with the fund for

that year. Any of the committees may put into their list such books

as do not immediately fall under any of the professions above-men-
tioned. They shall likewise, with each book, set down the price at

which it may be bought, according to the best of their knowledge,

and the edition which they choose to have. Any member of the so-
ciety may attend any of the meetings of the said committees, and

give his advice and assistance, if desired. Each committee shall

fairly write out and subscribe two copies of their list, and shall

give one subscribed copy to each library-keeper, before the expira-
tion of four months after their election. If any member of a com-

mittee dissent from the rest, he shall give in a separate subscribed

list as aforesaid, and every committee or dissenting member of a

committee failing to give in such a list as aforesaid, shall for-

feit five shillings, to be added to the annual fund for that year.

The library-keepers shall keep the subscribed lists for the purpose

after-mentioned, and shall also record all the books contained in

them in a catalogue to be kept in each of the libraries for that

purpose. After the first year, such books only are to be recorded

as have not been recorded before, and those which have been recor-
ded and bought, shall be marked in the catalogue with an asterisk

or some proper mark.

5. The four committees shall, at the expiration of four months, be

divided into three colleges, the first college consisting of the

four presidents; the second of the four second members; and the
third of the four third members. The members of the committee for divinity, being presidents of their several colleges, shall have power to call them when they see cause. Each of these colleges, shall meet by themselves, at least once a fortnight, for six weeks after their division into colleges, in one or other of the libraries, and having the foresaid subscribed lists laid before them (of which every member may have a copy) shall from them all make up a list of as many books, in the several professions, as can be purchased with the society's fund for that year. Which list shall be subscribed and given to the secretary of the society before the expiration of the said six weeks, that any member of the society may have a copy of these lists before the next general meeting. If the lists of the three colleges agree, that shall be the list of books to be purchased that year, and if they differ it shall be balloted at next general meeting, which of the three shall be the list for that year. And the list for the year being determined, the president of the society, with the presidents of the several committees, shall forwrit purchace the said books, and have them put up in the library in which they are to be deposited before the expiration of the year. The books belonging to the society shall in each library be put in a place by themselves, and a distinct catalogue shall be kept of them, and they shall be lent only to members of the society, under such regulations as the society shall appoint.

5. The president of the society, and the twelve members of the committees for the time, shall be the council of the society, and may be called together by the president, either of his own proper motion, or at the desire of any of the other presidents, or of any three members of the council. All proposals made for the better regulation of this society, and promoting the end thereof, shall first be laid before the council, and debated by them. Any member of the society may propose any matter to the council, or attend any of the meetings thereof. And what is resolved by the majority of the council shall be laid before the next general meeting of the society, with the reasons thereof, and shall be determined either in the affirmative or negative by the ballot of the society.

6. The subscription of those who enter into the society for life after the first five years, may be raised above three guineas, and made more adequate to the annual subscription, as the society shall think proper.

8. Any member of the society may give in to any of the committees a list of such books as he would incline to have bought, and the committees in their choice of books, shall have a regard to the lists given in by members, as far as the fund will admit.

9. If any person, shall make a donation of books to this society, to the value of ten pounds, he shall be for life, not only a member of the society, but likewise an extraordinary member of any committee which he chooses.
This plan having been laid before both colleges, and their concurrence having been desired, in allowing the use of their public halls for the meetings of this society, and in having the books purchased by this society kept in their public libraries, and lent out only to members of the society, according to such rules as the society from time to time shall establish; that so the whole fund of the society may be applied to the purchasing of books: the masters of both colleges have unanimously granted this desire, and authorised the publication of these proposals.

These proposals, however, were not put into effect, and although Aberdeen had a circulating library of "several thousand volumes" in 1780, a public library, in the ordinary sense, was not established there until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In other localities, the attempts, though not begun as early as those in Aberdeen, were further advanced by this period, (i.e. 1770 - 1800). Many of the earlier attempts amounted to nothing more than the clubbing together of a number of individuals to purchase the current periodicals and pamphlets issuing from the presses of London and Edinburgh. In 1770, David Hume wrote to William Strahan, "I am of a Club here that get down Newspapers and Pamphlets from London regularly: so that you wont need to send me the Chronicle any more." The interesting, and perhaps the most significant, thing was that this device for obtaining current publications was not confined to men of Hume's class. With the political and Intel-

3. The wool traders of the Edinburgh Lawnmarket had a news club which has been described as "a dram-drinking, news-mongering, facetious set of citizens, who met every morn about seven o'clock, and after proceeding to the post-office to ascertain the news (when the mail arrived), generally adjourned to a public-house and refreshed themselves with a libation of brandy." (Grant: Old and New Edinburgh, Vol. 1, page 182, and page 94; see also Wilson: Memorial of Edinburgh in the Olden Times, Vol. 1, page 204.) In Glasgow, "when the Edinburgh post arrived with the London News, as it did at five
lectual ferment which was engendered by the spectacular events in America and later in France, interest in foreign affairs was greatly heightened among all classes in Scotland. The results of this interest in the revolutionary ideas which then shone so brightly and so new has been very ably described by Scotland's Historiographer Royal, Dr. Henry W. Meikle, as follows:

Although the standard of teaching degenerated during the latter half of the century, a school was yet to be found in nearly every parish, and such schools were supplemented in many cases by those of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Ability to read and write was thus comparatively widespread, and was remarked by foreign visitors. Towards the close of the century there arose a demand for libraries, and reading clubs were formed. Even in country districts debating societies were not unknown. In manufacturing towns and the larger villages the mill was beginning to provide a natural means of social union for discussion, and quicker methods left the home working weaver free to devote some time to public affairs. The desire for newspapers testified to this new interest. "Although the parish consists wholly of the poorer ranks of society" wrote the minister of Auchterderran in 1790, "newspapers are very generally read and attended to, and the desire for them increases." The secular spirit, always associated with material prosperity, was beginning to affect the lower, as it had already affected the higher ranks of society; and the same acuteness which the former had displayed in religious controversy was now to be transferred to political discussion. The year 1792 was to show how far the writings of Paine had replaced Boston's Crook in the Lot, the Fourfold State, and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress as the favourite reading of a large section of the Scottish people.

o'clock in the morning, in 1785, a gun was regularly fired at the Cross and men would sit in their clubs from that hour until eight reading and discussing the news which had come." (Craig: Scottish Periodical Press, page 59. Craig also refers to a work entitled The Glasgow Herald: The Story of a Great Newspaper from 1785 to 1911. Glasgow: Printed for the Scottish Historical Exhibition, 1911.) Strang: Glasgow and its Clubs, pages 115, 120 f., and 183, tells how this custom led to the establishment of the Morning and Evening Club, an organization of Glasgow "quidnuncs and greedy gossipers" who met morning and evening to read the newspapers of the day.

The miners in the lead-mines of the Earl of Hopetown, at Leadhills, where it is said the father of Allan Ramsay the poet worked, and where young Allan is supposed to have been a washer of ore, had "a common library, supported by contributions, containing several thousand volumes."

In the parish of Little Dunkeld, it was reported, in Sinclair's *Statistical Account*, that "newspapers and other periodical publications find their way to every corner of the parish. And several clubs have been formed, who purchase the *Statistical Account of Scotland*..." From the same source, we learn that in the parish of Banff, in 1798, a "book society" was formed, "on liberal plan, to consist of twenty gentlemen." The *Statistical Account* also contains an interesting letter from Robert Burns, who, at the request of Robert Riddell Esq., of Glenriddell, had undertaken the management of a small library for the district:

Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, to Sir John Sinclair, Bart.

Sir John,

I enclose you a letter, wrote by Mr. Burns, as an addition to the account of Dunscore parish. It contains an account of a small library, which he was so good, (at my desire) as to set on foot, in the barony of Monkland, or Friar's Carse, in this parish. As its utility has been felt, particularly among the younger class of people, I think, that if a similar plan were established, in the different parishes, in Scotland, it would tend greatly to the

---

speedy improvement of the tenantry, trades people, and work people.
Mr. Burns was so good as to take the whole charge of this small concern.
He was treasurer, librarian, and censor to this little society, who will
long have a grateful sense of his public spirit, and exertions for
their improvement and information.
I have the honour to be, Sir John, Yours most sincerely, Rob Riddell.

To Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, Bart.

Sir,
The following circumstance has, I believe, been omitted in the Sta-
tistical Account, transmitted to you, of the parish of Dunscore, in
Nithsdale. I beg leave to send it you, because it is new, and may
be useful. How far it is deserving of a place in your patriotic
publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge, is cer-
tainly of very great consequence, both to them as individuals, and to
society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection, is
giving them a source of innocent and laudable amusement; and besides,
raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality.
Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddell,
Esq., of Glenriddell, set on foot a species of circulating library, on
a plan so simple, as to be practicable in any corner of the country;
and so useful, as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman,
who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species, whom
chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artisan,
a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddell got a number of his own tenants, and farming neighbours, to
form themselves into a society, for the purpose of having a library
among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement, to abide by it
for 5 years; with a saving clause or two, in cases of removal to a dis-
tance, or of death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings;
and at each of their meetings which were held every fourth Saturday,
sixpence more. With their entry money, and the credit which they took
on the faith of their future funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of
books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase, was
always to be decided by the majority. At every meeting, all the books,
under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be
produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation.
He whose name stood, for that night, first on the list, had his choice
of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his
choice after the first, the third after the second, and so to the last.
At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding
meeting, was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on,
through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement, the
books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves; and
each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as
he chose to be a purchaser or not.
At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddell's patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of 150 volumes. It will be guessed, that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library, were Blair's Sermons, Robertson's History of Scotland, Hume's History of the Stewarts, the Spectator, Idler, Adventurer, Mirror, Lounger, Observer, Man of Feeling, Man of the World, Chrysal, Don Quixote, Joseph Andrews, Etc. A peasant who can read, and enjoy such books, is certainly a much superior being to his neighbour, who, perhaps, stalks beside his team, very little removed, except in shape, from the brutes he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much merited success,
I am, Sir, Your humble servant,

A Peasant

Robert Burns apparently took his duties as secretary to the book society seriously, for on the second of March, 1790, he sent to Mr. Peter Hill, an Edinburgh bookseller, the following order for books:-

To Mr. Peter Hill. Ellisland, 2nd. March, 1790.

At a late meeting of the Monkland Friendly Society, it was resolved to augment their library by the following books, which you are to send us as soon as possible: - The Mirror, The Lounger, Man of Feeling, Man of the World (these, for my own sake, I wish to have by the first carrier); Knox's History of the Reformation; Rae's History of the Rebellion of 1715; and a good History of the Rebellion in 1745; A Display of the Secession Act and Testimony by Mr. Gib; Hervey's Meditations; Beveridge's Thoughts; and another copy of Watson's Body of Divinity. This last heavy performance is so much admired by many of our members, that they will not be content with one copy...

R. B.

In view of the explosive nature of some of the literature which the revolutionary temper of the time was producing, it was inevitable that the greater distribution of reading matter which had been described, should lead occasionally to awkward situations. It is not unknown today for certain works of a particular social or political virulence to disappear under the counter of a cautious public librarian. In much the same way,

the Public Library of Greenock, established in 1783, provoked young John Galt to a heated protest. In his Autobiography, Galt gives his version of the incident as follows:

During the French Revolution, when party spirit ran high, the committee who had the management partook of the excitement, and, at their suggestion, at a public meeting, the library was purged in some degree of the tainted authors: namely, Holcroft, Godwin, Etc., and the books were transferred from the library-room to the custody of Mr. John Dunlop, the grandfather of my friend the Doctor. From this unheard-of proceeding in a Protestant land, great wrath was nursed in the bosoms of the young men connected with the library: mine was inflamed prodigiously, and I never spoke of Mr. Dunlop by any other name than the Khaliph Omer.... But to return to the library, to which I will ever consider myself as greatly indebted. The fracas of banishing "the pestiferous books" had the effect, as might be expected, of bringing them into notice, and Godwin's Political Justice attracted my attention; in consequence, I read it....

But the Public Library of Greenock was not the only source of young Galt's intellectual nurture. In 1797, his friend William Spence was the instigator of a small literary society in which Galt took an active part. Galt's description of the society, which follows, tells all that is known about this organization:

During this period, (i.e. 1797), some half a dozen or fewer of my companions formed a monthly society, at the instigation of William Spence. We read all sorts of essays about every sort of subject, from the "cedar tree that is on Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall", and afterwards discussed philosophical topics, and then had a supper. But we were not so wise when we broke up, which was after midnight, as when the sederunt commenced at seven o'clock. I was the youngest member, and certainly not the best writer; both

Spence and Park were superior; but it is curious to observe how early innate character begins to manifest itself. The essays of William Spence were very astronomical; we thought them profound; they were all about planets and comets, the cosmogony of the earth, the infinite divisibility of matter, and the boundless nature of premundane space; any thing of this world was too gross to enter into his speculative theories.

Park's essays were different; they inculcated propriety and prudence as virtues above all laud, and when ill health afterwards weakened his energies, no man could conduct himself with such a judicious estimate of the effect of his character.

My essays were rigmarole things; with the single exception of an allegory on Indolence and Industry, they were the most shocking affairs that ever issued from a pen. Yet crude as were the studies and the incursions of this society, it lasted several years, and undoubtedly had an important influence on the development, if not the formation of the minds of the members. At this day, I must claim for it the merit of having been very wisely conducted, especially when it is considered that it was composed of striplings, and some of them in after life distinguished for the ardour of their minds.

Besides the mental occupation which the library generated and the society stimulated, we began at this period to take a decided predilection for literature. Spence, with his mathematics and music, maintained a mystical predominance; Park and I were addicted to belles lettres and poetry. He was nearly a year older than me, and on my seventeenth birthday presented me with a congratulatory ode, which was as common-place as any ditty in a young lady's album.

"The assembly lasted for several years; and as the meetings were held once a (month), were doubtless of some use, not only in stimulating to research, but in developing intellectual powers which might otherwise have remained latent."

1. Biographical Memoir prefixed to John Galt's Annals of the Parish, page viii. As much as I agree with the sentiment expressed in the quotation I have used above, I must point out that its author was lamentably inaccurate. He not only described the society's meetings as being weekly affairs, (Galt says, in his Autobiography, that it was a "monthly society"), but he states, directly in the teeth of Galt's own testimony to the contrary, (Autobiography, Vol. 1, page 42), that "Galt steered clear of the 'contamination of those pestilential writers Godwin, Walstonecroft, Holcroft, and Thelwall.' The only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that he had never read the Autobiography.
During the same period that the Pantheon, the Speculative Society of Dundee, and the Canongate Debating Society were offering their debates as a form of public amusement, and the provincial clubs were no longer restricted to the aristocracy, the gentry, or the literati, there were further signs that a gradual breaking away from the classical type of eighteenth-century literary society had begun. There is evidence of this breaking away, for example, in the number of newly-organized unincorporated societies which were devoted to the pursuit of a single art or science. This tendency toward specialization was, as has already been explained, antithetical to the intellectual inclusiveness which was responsible for the development of the Rankinian Club, the Philosophical Societies of Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and the Select Society of Edinburgh with its many imitators. These new societies, however, were not a complete departure from the traditional form of organization. The subject-matter which had been general, had now become particular, but belief in the validity of group discussion and in corporate judgment still persisted and did much to vivify these associations as it had done for others in the past.

The first specialized society to make its appearance shortly after 1770, was the Juridical Society of Edinburgh. It was organized in 1773

1. See Chapter 1, page 1, above.

2. There was a society of law students about 1766 called the Forum Debating Society. "While prosecuting his studies for the Bar, Henry Erskine became a member of the Forum Debating Society; and in it took part in the discussion of many of the high questions which Scotch law students have, in each generation, proposed and answered to their own satisfaction, such as the "Justifiability of Suicide," upon which, in Sir Walter Scott's time, there was a minority of eight who voted in the affirmative; "the Guilt, or otherwise, of Queen Mary," and such topics. In these discussions he acquired a power of extempore speaking which was the foundation of his future success as a pleader." (Fergusson: Henry Erskine, page 92.) Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, page 383, Vol. 2, has confounded this society with the Pantheon, for which see above, page 228 f.
"for the encouragement of the Study of the Law." "On Saturday, 27th February, 1775, the following twelve Gentlemen, viz:-

John Russell junior. Alexander Alison.
Marie Guthrie junior. Phineas Hall.
John Farquharson. Thomas Macdonald.
John Lesley. Charles Stewart.
John Buchan. George Sinclair.

from a consideration, as their minute bears, of the many advantages resulting from Societies in general for the cultivation of any science, associated themselves into a Society for the study of Law." At the first meeting, Mr. John Russell, the senior member, read an introductory discourse which laid down the plan of the institution, and offered "suggestions on its utility." One object of the Society was "to go through a regular course of Scots Law." The book chosen as the basis of this course was Erskine's Institute, which was published in 1773, the same year the Society was organized. For five years, the Society made it a regular practice to appoint each member in turn to prepare a discourse on a specified section of this text. "After the discourse had been read, every member in his turn was required to deliver his opinion on the subject and also on

2. History of the Juridical Society, page 1. For a complete list of members see the "General List of Members" which appears as an Appendix to the History.
6. Ibid. This work was An Institute of the Law of Scotland in the order of Sir George Mackenzie's Institutions of that Law, 2 volumes. By John Erskine of Carnock, Professor of Scots Law in the University of Edinburgh.
the manner in which it had been treated." Another proposed function of
the meetings proved to be unworkable, but as the reason for this failure
has only been explained in legal terms, and is, therefore, incomprehen-
sible to me, I must rely upon the account given in the History of the
Society:

The next regulation was passed with a view to giving members a
competent knowledge of the forms practised in the Courts of Justice,
and of all the steps of procedure necessary in any action. It pro-
vided that there should be two persons appointed by the Society to
act as agents for a pursuer and defender; that the pursuer's agent
should libel a summons upon any point of law, which should be tabled
and called in the usual form; that the agents should also appoint
persons to counsel for the parties, who should sign a regular
outgiving and defence; and that this process should be carried on
through all the various steps before the rest of the Society, who
should judge of and determine the merits of each particular case
which might come before them. This part of the business was highly
eulogised in the introductory discourse, and so important was it
considered that a provision was made in the laws for the contingency
of the Society finding it inconvenient to take the merits of any
such question into consideration at an ordinary meeting, in which
event an extraordinary meeting was to be called for the purpose.
It is not easy to see how any question of law could be satisfactorily
discussed where both pursuer and defender had it in their power to
shape their facts according to the case which they were desirous to
establish. In the circumstances, it would be a difficult matter to
frame either a relevant summons or a relevant defence, and the con-
sultations between the agent and counsel for either party would
more often be as to what facts should be imagined, with a view to
their being averred, than what principles of law are applicable to
given facts. It is not surprising that the plan was found to be
unworkable, and that in little more than a year a resolution was
passed to the effect that the regulation for carrying on a process
should be considered as a part of the laws.

A third regulation provided that once a fortnight there should be "a
discussion of questions of law previously handed out." "In June 1775, it

2. Ibid, pages 4 - 5.
was resolved to debate a case every night, instead of once a fortnight as at first, and in 1782, when the discourses were abolished, an additional case for debate was substituted for the discourse of the evening so that there were then two cases discoursed each night."

In addition to following these provisions for conducting the business of the regular meetings, the members also made it a practice to submit to the society for discussion "any points of difficulty or interest occurring in their own practice. These questions, which were taken up at the close of the meetings, formed no part of the stated business and came up without notice, and it was optional to the members to remain during consideration of them."

The members of the society, who were drawn "almost exclusively from Apprentices to Writers to the Signet" met at first at seven o'clock on Saturday morning...in the Scots Law Class-room in the College." But the Law Class-room was not the only place of meeting, for it is known that a considerable portion of business was transacted in other places - "John's Coffee House, Forrest's Coffee House, and the Exchange Coffee House, being constantly mentioned in the older minutes."

Shortly after it was established, the members of the Juridical Society adopted two additional functions which placed "subsequent members under deep obligations to them." The first of these was the establish-

5. Ibid, page 16.
ment of a legal library, and the second was the "conception and execution of the System of Styles." The library was begun, on a very moderate scale, in 1775, "when the Society recommended the Treasurer to purchase a copy of Mr. Erskine's Small Institute, (i.e. Erskine's Principles), for the use of members present at the meetings." From this small beginning, the Society's library, which still exists, grew until it became a valuable asset to the organization.

The compilation of a system of styles used in legal documents after the practice of the "first men of the profession", became one of the most important as well as one of the most valuable activities of the society. At first the styles were gathered and compared solely for the use of the members of the Society, but in 1786 the society prepared a volume of Heritable Styles for publication. The preface of this volume shows, in the Society's own words, the aim and scope of the undertaking as contemplated by the original compilers:

The Juridical Society has existed for about thirteen years. The improvement of the members in the knowledge of Law and of Conveyancing, was the original design of this institution; an object which, being in itself important, has been invariably prosecuted by the society.

To attain the knowledge of Conveyancing, no method appeared more proper than to collect the Styles commonly used on the same subjects by the ablest and the best employed conveyancers; to compare them together; to select the excellencies of each; and to form from the whole a system of Styles. This the Society were enabled to do with considerable advantage, as there were few writers of eminence in Edinburgh whose practice was not known to one or other of the members.


2. Ibid, pages 36 - 38. This work was entitled Collection of Styles, or a Complete System of Conveyancing, Adapted to the present Practice of Scotland.
It falls therefore to be remarked that although the present collection is offered to the public through the medium of the Juridical Society, yet the Styles are not properly the production of its members—they are rather to be ascribed to the abilities and experience of the first men of the profession. The arrangement and selection, only, belong to the Juridical Society, with the labour of collecting the Styles and reducing them to the form in which they now appear. In this employment, though apparently simple, much time has been spent and considerable attention bestowed; with what advantage, it is now the province of the public to determine.

The path of the Juridical Society, as one of the first specialist organizations to appear at this time, was far from smooth. At a time when

1. The Society was admired by at least one correspondent to the Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, (Vol. 22, Thursday, October 21, 1773, page 103 f.) "To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine. Sir, When we consider the nature of men, and the many active and intelligent powers implanted in him by his beneficient Creator, we must certainly be convinced of this important truth, that they were not meant to lie in a state of inaction, but were bestowed upon him for the best and noblest purposes; and that, in proportion as he aims at improvement in knowledge, by the proper exertion of these faculties, he acts a part suitable to the dignity of his nature.

"It must likeways be observed, that the qualifications of mankind in this particular are various and different. To some Nature has been very liberal of her favours; to others she has dealt them out more sparingly: but to all such dispositions and abilities are given as may enable them to act some particular character in life with applause.

The great difficulty lies in discovering that particular bent of the mind which appears more or less in almost every character, and may be properly termed Genius; for, like a diamond in a mine, this may lie for a considerable time unobserved even by its possessor until called forth by accident or time, and like it too, must then require the polish and refinements of education, to render its worth and value fully conspicuous.

"Among the various methods adopted for the cultivation and improvement of youthful minds, there are none, in my humble apprehension, more effectual than by encouraging a free communication of their sentiments, however rude and indigested they may appear. This will not only be a means of discovering, but also of improving genius, than which nothing can be of more importance either to society or individuals.

"I have been chiefly led into these reflections by the many societies of young gentlemen presently established in this place; and it gives me very great pleasure that they are so prevalent, when their sole aim is actual instruction and improvement. But, although the investigation of general and speculative subjects must afford ample field for ingenuity and entertainment; yet, at the same time, I cannot help giving the preference to that particular choice of subjects, which is more necessarily connected with the profession to be followed in life. This proves of real utility and service, while the other tends
the tendency was still predominantly toward inclusive interests, the
narrow concerns of a society which had as its sole purpose the study of
law had little appeal to others than a few legal apprentices. Because of
its restricted interests, it was inevitable that the Juridical Society
should be subject to periodic withering as successive generations of ap-
prentices blossomed and died away, and it should come as no surprise to
the reader who has followed the argument thus far to learn that the So-
ciety was frequently in a state of near collapse because of the total

only to indulge the fancy and imagination. Sensible of this
truth, I find there are several societies in this city entirely
calculated for the improvement of its members in that branch of
business they are bred to and mean to prosecute.
"Upon looking over the news-papers, I observed an advertisement for
a meeting of the Juridical Society, which, from its name, I apprehend
is composed of students of law. I must say that such an institution
reflects very great honour on the gentlemen concerned in it, more
especially so from the many difficulties to be met with in a study
which has been always reckoned extremely laborious. The good
consequences of such an association must soon be evident. It will
not only be a very great benefit to the student himself, but also
to the public in general. The character of a man of business in
the law ought to be strictly inquired into; for, as matters of the
greatest moment are often intrusted to his care and management, it
is absolutely necessary that he be well versed in the duties of
his profession, that he may act with honour to himself, and safety
to his clients. A gentleman thus qualified despises the low mean
artifices of trick and chicanery, which are with too much justice
laid to the charge of many of the practitioners of the law; he acts
from liberal and disinterested motives; and, while he consults his
own interest, he at the same time considers it as subservient to
his honour and reputation as a gentleman.
"If what I have advanced may prove any encouragement to young
gentlemen in so laudable a practice, I shall think my observations
well bestowed. I am, Sir, Yours, etc., Mentor. Edinburgh, October 8."Mentor's suggestions did bear fruit. "To the Publisher of the Weekly
Magazine. Sir, In one of those juvenile societies alluded to by your
ingenious correspondent Mentor, I had occasion, some time ago, to
deliver the following thought upon a question proposed, with respect
to the real advantage of learning to society. If you think they merit
a place in your Miscellany, please insert them and oblige, Yours, etc.,
Juvenis. Edinburgh October 27." (There follows this an essay on
elegance.) The Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 22,
Thursday, November 4, 1775, page 172.
absence of members. The first sign of a chronic institutional anemia came in 1778 when it was often impossible to find a quorum (seven members, which was soon reduced to five) to make up a meeting. For three years, until 1781, no meetings were held. Upon its revival, a more equitable distribution of work among new members did much to reduce the risks of another failure; but in the session of 1796 - 1797, "it was found necessary, in consequence of the decayed state of the Society, to appoint a Committee to consider what steps could be taken to secure the attendance of Honorary Members, and to induce new members to enter, only three having been added to the Roll in the course of the two previous years. The Committee gave the matter very careful consideration, and in their report, besides making suggestions as to entry-money, etc., recommended that, if possible, a union should be effected with the Logical Society - a society which had been instituted rather more than three years previously for purposes similar to those of the Juridical Society."

All that is known of the Logical Society is contained in a short account which appears in the work which I have been quoting. This account reads as follows:

"The Logical Society was founded in 1793, its objects being the cultivation both of law and general literature, the laws requiring that at each meeting the Society should hear an essay read, and should debate a question of law, or of a moral, literary, or political nature.

Applicants for admission were attested by two members who had attended the Society at least one year, the attestation bearing "That the Petitioner's character and abilities sufficiently qualify

2. Ibid, page 22.
him to become a Member of the Logical Society, and that he is a
student of law," or "has been and still continues in the profession
of the law," but there was no restriction of membership to any par-
ticular branches of the profession. The admission of members was by
ballot, the member on the first night of his attendance subscribing
the Rules of the Society, and paying half a guinea as admission money.

The meetings of the Society commenced on the first Monday after the
meeting of the Court of Session in November and May, at eight o'clock
in the evening, and continued to be held every Monday at the same time
till the last Monday of each Session, excepting the first Monday after
Christmas, and Christmas itself if it fell on a Monday.

The business of the Society was conducted by three Presidents, who
officiated in rotation, and a Secretary. These office-bearers had the
usual powers, but the laws provided that it should be in the power of
any member to call the President to account for his conduct after he
had left the chair, "and if found by the Society to have been deficient
in his duty he shall be fined one shilling; but if not, the member who
hath so called him to account shall be liable in the same penalty in
case such complaint be found frivolous and vexatious.

An Ordinary Member was entitled to be elected as Honorary one after
three years' regular attendance and punctual performance of the business
allotted him by the Society during that period, provided fifteen ordinary
attending members should remain on the roll. The election of Honorary
members was made by ballot, it requiring two-thirds of the members to
confer the privilege, and ordinary members alone voting.

The essay read at each meeting was on a subject intimated to the Sec-
retary at the previous meeting, and when read was subjected to the
criticism of the members present, the author having an opportunity of
replying after every one else had delivered his sentiments. The essays
were read by each member in rotation, in the order in which their names
stood on the roll. There seems to have been no restriction on the sub-
jects of essays. At each meeting, also, a question of the nature pre-
scribed by the laws was discussed. At the previous meeting two members
were appointed to debate the question, which was fixed on by him whose
name stood first on the roll, the other having the liberty of choosing
his side, which was opposed by the member fixing the question. A law
question was debated at least once in three weeks.

In 1794 - the year after its foundation - the Society had nineteen
names on the roll, and at least ten more joined before March 1797,
at which time it had seventeen members, several of the senior mem-
bers having in the meantime died or resigned.

Such is all that can be learned of the Logical Society. Its Minute
Books, extending to four quarto volumes, were preserved in the Library
of the Juridical Society in 1812, but seem to have been lost before
1836. This may probably be accounted for by the Society having been
compelled between these years frequently to remove to different pre-
mises.
On the twenty-seventh of February, 1737, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Juridical Society, the Logical Society and the Juridical Society joined forces. The reason for this union, as given by the historian of the Juridical Society, is interesting:

It is curious to observe that at the time of the last depression in the prospects of the Juridical Society a similar depression was felt by its only senior still in existence—the Speculative. In the history of that Society it is recorded that "the eight Sessions from 1789 to 1796 inclusive mark themselves into a separate portion of our narrative chiefly by the great depression of the Society. In the course of these eight years there were only forty-three new members, that is, about five annually, and the meetings were frequently prevented from taking place by the want of a quorum." The compilers of the History of the Speculative Society attempt to explain this state of matters: "This apparent deadness," they say, "appears, from the remedies suggested, to have been owing almost entirely to the political condition of the times. The Revolution in France and its consequences brought all free discussion into discredit; and there were then some circumstances in the state of Scotland which caused even the association of a few young gentlemen assembling weekly for private debate, under the control of an ancient established College, to be looked upon by many with no very kindly eye." Without doubting that the causes here referred to would tend to have such an effect as is attributed to them, it appears that equally effective causes are to be found nearer home. The Juridical Society, from which all political questions were excluded, was in as languishing a state as the Speculative, while the Logical Society, which admitted political discussions, and which would have been equally if not more liable to be affected by the political condition of the country, was comparatively flourishing. The Speculative Society had always allowed political discussions very sparingly, and in 1794 had altogether banished them from its business. One at least of the causes that would have the most effect on both the Speculative and Juridical Societies is to be found in the institution of the Logical Society, which held out from its mixed program inducements which could not be offered by either of the other Societies, and which, immediately on its foundation, had a large roll of members all chosen from the class of gentlemen who, but for its existence, would, in all likelihood, have attached themselves either to the Speculative or to the Juridical Society.

It seems clear from this account that any unnecessary restriction


2. For the Speculative Society, see Chapter 6, page 580, below.
placed on the subjects for discussion, or any unnatural narrowing of the field of interest, was still regarded with disapproval. This observation, in view of the analysis which has already been given of the essential differences between learned societies of the eighteenth and of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is an indication that the tendency toward inclusive interests still existed in Scottish intellectual societies until the end of the eighteenth century.

When the Logical and the Juridical Societies joined forces, the joint Society retained the name Juridical, and published the following regulations:

Chapter V. Of Business.

1. Every ordinary member shall lodge with the Secretary, two or more cases in law, and two or more speculative questions, with his name adhibited to each, at least three weeks previous to the rising of the Society each Session, under the penalty of Sixpence for each Case and Question not so given in.

2. A Committee, consisting of five members appointed at the meeting on which the cases are lodged, shall select and determine what Law Cases and Speculative Questions so given in, are proper to be debated by the Society the ensuing Session, and shall appoint the Gentlemen who are to open and answer the Cases and Questions, and those who are to read the answers and essays after-mentioned, according to the order of the roll; the judgment of the Committee shall, in this respect, be final, and not subject to the review or control of the Society.

3. If the number of Law Cases and Speculative Questions approved of by the Committee, be not sufficient to supply the ensuing Session, they shall have to order those Members, whose Cases or Questions are rejected, to lodge new ones within ten days after notice; and any Member not complying with this order, shall pay Sixpence for every Case and Question rejected.

1. The Laws of the Juridical Society (established in 1775), a pamphlet.

2. The contents of the pamphlet are as follows:—Chapter I, "Constitutional Laws"; Chapter II, "Of Ordinary Members"; Chapter III, "Of Honorary and Extraordinary Members"; Chapter IV, "Of Attendance and Fines"; Chapter V, "Of Business"; Chapter VI, "Of Presidents"; Chapter VII, "Of the Secretary"; Chapter VIII, "Of the Funds of the Society"; and Chapter IX, "Miscellaneous Laws".
4. The Members shall open and answer the Cases and Questions, as appointed by the Committee, under the penalty of Two Shillings and Sixpence; unless such Members are sick, or out of town, and procure others to act for them.

5. In case any Member, appointed by the Committee to open or answer a Law Case or Speculative Question, or to read an Answer or Essay, leave the Society, the Presidents shall, as soon as this is known, appoint another Member to do the duty for him.

6. A Law Question shall be debated at the first meeting of the Society each session; A Speculative Question the night following; and so on, each alternate meeting; and the Committee shall arrange them accordingly.

7. The night on which a Law Case shall be debated, an answer thereto shall be read to the Society, but not till all the Members have delivered their sentiments; unless the majority of those present wish to hear it read sooner.

8. When the answer has been read, and the Society have delivered their sentiments upon it, the votes of the Members shall be taken, and the Case determined by a majority of those present.

9. The Member appointed to answer the Case, shall lodge his answer with the Secretary on or before the second following that on which such Case is debated, written upon paper of uniform size with that formerly used for this purpose, with proper margins for binding; and he shall date and subscribe his answer, prefix to it a written copy of the Case, and subjoin the decision of the Society thereon, under the penalty of Two Shillings and Sixpence, at our performance.

10. There shall be an Essay read that night on which the Speculative Question is debated, and the author shall have the choice of his subject.

11. These Essays shall be delivered by the Members appointed by the Committee, in manner above mentioned, in the order their names stand in the roll; so that each of these Members shall read an Essay in his turn, or find some one to do it for him, under the penalty of Two Shillings and Sixpence.

12. The Member appointed to read an Essay shall intimate to the Secretary the subject of it, on the meeting previous to that on which the Essay is to be delivered, under the penalty of Sixpence.

13. The Essay, when read, shall be subjected to the criticism of the Members present, and the author shall only have an opportunity of replying after every one has delivered his sentiments.

14. No person shall speak more than once in the course of the criticism, without leave from the President.
15. The Member who is appointed to read the Essay, shall lodge a copy of it with the Secretary, within a month after the night of reading it, written upon paper of the same size with that used for the Answers, with proper margins for binding; and he shall date and subscribe his Essay, under the penalty of Two Shillings and Six-pence, attour performance.

16. Every motion that is made and seconded, must lie on the table till the meeting subsequent to that on which it is proposed, and then be determined by vote.

17. No member shall speak twice upon any one branch of private business, without leave of the President.

18. No private business shall continue after nine o'clock, without leave from the President.

19. The names of the members who deliver their opinions upon the Law Cases and Speculative Questions under discussion, shall be entered in the minutes of each meeting.

20. The business to be taken up in the following order:
   1. The Roll to be called.
   2. Minutes read, and reports of Committees considered.
   3. The list of arrears to be read, and disputes relative to fines taken up and considered, and fines collected.
   4. Motions made at a former meeting discussed.
   5. Petitions received and ballotted.
   7. The Essay read and criticised, if the night of a Speculative Question.
   8. Law Cases, or Speculative Questions, opened, debated, and decided by vote.
   9. The answer read before the vote is taken, if the night of a Law Case.
  10. The Roll called a second time, and the meeting adjourned by the President.

Although the interests and activities of the Juridical Society were, through the consolidation of that organization with the Logical Society, now of a more general nature, there was apparently still some need felt for a society which was organized on the broad lines of the Rankenian Club, the Belles Lettres Society, or any of the other speculative societies which were typical of the eighteenth-century type of literary society. In the same year that the Juridical and the Logical Societies joined forces, a new society was organized under the name of the Philalethic Society.
These "lovers of truth" were bound together for the now time-honoured purpose of reading essays and debating all questions except those "of an abstruse, theological, or political nature." The regulations of the new society were as follows:

I. That the Society be named the Philalethic Society.

II. That the number of Members do not exceed twenty-five, exclusive of Honorary Members.

III. That the Society shall meet every Saturday evening at seven o'clock, and shall be constituted with prayer by the President within five minutes after the hour of meeting.

IV. That no person can be admitted a Member of this Society, who has not attended two years at college.

V. That before any person can become a Member of this Society, he shall present a petition, expressing his desire of Admission, and that petition must be signed by at least two of the Members, who, from personal acquaintance with the petitioner, can vouch for his abilities and moral character. This petition must lie a week before the Society for consideration.

VI. That every Member, whether present or absent, shall contribute his share towards defraying the expenses of the Society, and upon admission, shall pay Five Shillings.

VII. That at the opening of every Session, four annual Presidents and a Secretary, who shall also hold the office of Treasurer, be elected from among the ordinary Members of the Society, and that each President preside in rotation.

VIII. That the Secretary shall mark down the name of each Member in the list, the time of his admission into the Society, his departure from town, and his return.

IX. That immediately after the Society is constituted, the Secretary shall call the roll, and every Member not present to answer to his name, shall incur a fine of three-pence; if

---

1. Regulations of the Philalethic Society. Edinburgh: Printed by James Muirhead, 1808. This is a pamphlet which, in the collection of the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library, is bound together with a MS. list of members of the organization.

2. Ibid.
not present till half-past seven o'clock, sixpence; and if not present till eight o'clock, he shall be considered as totally absent for that night, and incur a fine of one shilling; and that if any Member be absent from the Society three whole nights successively, without producing a sufficient excuse, he shall be expelled from the society.

X. That the Secretary mark down the names of those Members, late or absent; and next night call for the excuses: and that a list of the fines unpaid be read over every night after the debate.

XI. That Private business, such as examining excuses, discussing motions, etc., be postponed till after the debate.

XII. That each Member shall in rotation produce an Essay, the subject of which he may chuse for himself; but shall communicate its title to the Society on the night of meeting previous to that on which it is to be read; and in case of failure, shall be subjected to a fine of sixpence.

XIII. That the Essay do not take up more than half an hour, nor less than ten minutes; and that it be subjected to the remarks of the Society.

XIV. That two Members be appointed in rotation, to support each a particular side of the question to be debated; that the other Members be allowed to speak on whatever side they think proper; and when all the Members have spoken, or declined speaking, the chief speakers may again rise in support of their respective sides, after which ordinary Members may speak if they chuse. No speeches are to be read.

XV. That the subjects of debate be chosen two weeks before the discussion takes place; that these be read out to the Society every night previous to its discussion; and that no questions be selected of an abstruse, theological, or political nature.

XVI. That there shall be no debate, later than a quarter after ten o'clock, that any Member may then depart, but shall be bound by any determination of the Society made during his absence.

XVII. That every Member may know the business to be discussed, motions shall be made immediately after the Essay is read; but no discussion shall take place, and no motion shall be passed, till the night after it is proposed.

VIII. That, if when a motion is discussed, the Members seem desirous of delivering their opinions, the President shall read over their names as they stand in the List; and that none shall speak till his name be called.
XIX. That should the acting President, Secretary, Essayist, or Chief Speaker be absent, he shall incur a double fine, unless an excuse can be produced, which the Society shall sustain as sufficient. But if the absent Essayist have sent his essay, or the absent Speaker have sent his speech, or provided a substitute, he shall not be considered as liable to a double penalty. Every member shall be required to state clearly, and without equivocation, the nature of the circumstances that prevented his attendance, as far at least as these can be disclosed consistently with propriety.

XX. That order be always observed at the command of the President, under such penalties as he shall deem adequate.

XXI. That a Committee be appointed once in three months to examine the state of the funds and to select questions for the three following months.

XXII. That after three years regular attendance, a member shall be entitled to an Honorary Medal, and exempted from the ordinary business of the Society. But when an Honorary Member undertakes any part of the business of the Society, he shall be liable, in case of failure, to the usual penalties; and that every Honorary Member shall always wear his medal when in the Society.

XXIII. That if an ordinary member during his absence transmit essays regularly once in three months, or produce the requisite number at his return, it shall be reckoned equivalent to half attendance.

XXIV. That no strangers be allowed to visit the Society, unless introduced by the acting President, the Secretary, the Essayist, the Chief Speaker, or by the Honorary Members, and that they depart as soon as the debate is concluded.

The Philalethic Society, though it was rather slow to develop at first, was very successful. The members of the organization, from 1797, the year of its institution, to 1800, were as follows:

1. It continued at least until May 1822, by which time 296 members had been admitted.

2. This list is taken from the MS. list of members which is bound with the pamphlet containing the Regulations, (described on page 299, note 1, above), which is owned by the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.
List of the Members of the Philalethic Society 1797 - 1800.

(entered) (departed) (returned) (honoured)

James Brewster Decr. 1797 Jan. 4, 1800.
John Cormack Decr. 1797 Feb. 1, 1800.
James Sadle Jan. 1798 May 1798 Nov. 1800
Alexander Stewart April 1798 Jan. 17, 1801.
William Grant Sept. 1798 Nov. 28, 1801.
William Hamilton Decr. 1798 March 17, 1804.
Andrew Balfour Jan. 1799 Nov. 28, 1801.
Andrew Minian March 1799 May 2, 1801.
Donald Bain March 1799
George Simpson June 1799 Nov. 28, 1801.
George Dunbar Nov. 1799
William Leitch Decr. 1799
David Brewster May 1800
Peter Simpson Decr. 1799, (extraordinary).

The experiment of specialization which was carried out by the Juridical Society, in spite of its limited success, was the first sign of a new intellectual spirit which may be summed up in the motto "divide and conquer."

From 1775 to 1780, a number of small societies were organized which pursued but one science. The short lives of these organizations indicates that their efforts were premature, but as a sign of things to come, their impulse toward specialization is of decided interest. The situation which prevailed in Edinburgh at this time, and which was responsible for the multiplicity of these societies, has been described, rather disapprovingly, by the historian of the Royal Medical Society who was writing in the year 1820:

The great and increasing number of Students, which the rising celebrity of the Edinburgh School of Physic attracted to that University, during the last forty years of the eighteenth century, gave birth to many scientific associations, analogous in constitution and design, which, under the powerful excitement of mutual example, maintained an ardent and honourable contest for

1. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, pages xlv and xlv. This passage has been repeated by the historian of the Speculative Society, History of the Speculative Society (1845), page 10 f.
fame and independence. The restlessness of activity, the desire of selection, the preference for particular studies, and in some instances, perhaps, the partiality of national, or even of personal feeling, were the probable causes of the minute distribution of labour and interest which now took place, and to a certain extent, no doubt, the detached exertions and liberal emulation of communities, as well as of individuals, may be productive of mutual benefit. But experience has shown, that the social stream, if branched out into too many channels, becomes languid and inefficient. Like the fasces of authority, which lose their force and dignity by separation, so the talents and resources, which might command prosperity in the aggregate, are found unequal to secure stability, when broken into feeble detail. Accordingly, the greater part of the societies which multiplied during the period above-mentioned, after a longer or shorter career of vigour and activity, proportioned to the importance of their objects, and the ability with which they were conducted, unable to sustain the intervals of depression, to which all establishments of this kind seem occasionally liable, either finally dissolved, or, resigning their form and title, still preserved the connexion of their members, by gradually reuniting into a single and accumulating body.

The organization which finally absorbed the majority of the independent and specialized societies of this period was the Physical Society, or, as it became known after its incorporation in 1788, the Royal Physical Society. This society was, itself, the outcome of the union of two similar associations, the Medico-Chirurgical, formed in the year 1767, and the Physico-Chirurgical, established in 1771, which combined under the title of the Physical Society. The newly constituted

1. The records of the Royal Physical Society are kept in the Reference Room of the Edinburgh Public Library. There is no adequate history of the Society, but brief accounts are contained in the following works:- Hunt: Learned Societies, page 173; (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xlv; History of the Speculative Society, page 10; Comrie: History of Scottish medicine, Vol. 1, page 340; and Bower: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 5, page 567, Appendix.

organization was far more successful than either of its components could have hoped to be. By May 1788, the roll of Honorary Members included the names of many famous scientists and men of medicine. At the same time, the Society was playing a leading role in Scotland's scientific and medical development. In 1786, the Physical Society, as it was still known, was joined by James Mackintosh who was then a medical student at the University of Edinburgh, and he read a paper "on the instincts and disposition of animals" before the Society on 23rd February of that year.

1. The following is a list of "Honorary Members admitted into the Physical Society from the period of its Union with the Chirurgico-Medical in 1782 till May 1788" which appears in the Laws of the Royal Physical Society, page 38 f.

   Daniel Bryan, M. D.
   William Haws, M. D. London.
   Robert Cleghorn, M. D.
   Stephen Dickson, M. D. Inst. Prof. in Coll. Dublin.
   Joseph Fox.
   Gilbert Blane, M. D.
   Charles Steuart, M. D.
   Charles White, M. D. Manchester.
   Andrew J. Iife.
   Sir (Nathaniel) Barry, M. D.
   William Nicoll, M. D.
   Longfield, M. D. Cork.
   Edward Allanson.
   Thomas Henry, Manchester.
   Thomas Park.
   Binns.
   William Shippen, M. D. Anat. Prof. in Univ. Pennsylvan.
   James Hunter, M. D.
   James Russell, Edinburgh.
   Alexander Barron, M. D. Charleston, South Carolina.
   Graham, M. D. Stirling.

   (this list is continued at the bottom of the next page.)

The Royal Physical Society, because of its Charter from the Crown, became by far the most stable organization of its kind to rise during the period under consideration. In 1796, the Chirurgo-Physical Society and the American Physical Society, "having in vain sought security by a coalition," both joined the Royal Physical Society. This was only

John Logan, M. D.
Ross, M. D.
William Irving, M. D. Chem. Prof. Glasgow.
John Adams, L.L.D. Boston, N. A.
Benjamin Franklin, L.L.D.
Daniel Rutherford, M. D. Bot. Prof.
Wilson, Glasgow.

Richard Pearson, M. D.
Groschee, M. D.
Callanan, M. D.
Houston, M. D.
B. G. Baumgarton, M. D. Copenhagen.
Percival Fott, London.
John Dawson, Sedberg.
Adam Kuhn, M. D. Nat. Med. Prof. in Univ. Pennsyl.
Benjamin Rush, M. D. Chem. Prof. do.
John Morgan, M. D. Prax. Med. Prof. do.
Samuel Foart Simmons, M. D. London.
Gerard, M. D.
Robertson, M. D. Perth.
Brandreth, M. D.

Barry, M. D.
John Richardson, M. D.
Andrew Wardrobe, M. D. Edinburgh.
Tucker Harris, M. D. Charlestown, South Carolina
Michael Renwick, Liverpool.
Phythian, M. D. do.

Thomas Butler, M. D.
James Hay, M. D. Edinburgh.
Earl of Dundonald.
Earl of Buchan.
John Clark, M. D. Newcastle.
Henry Royse, M. D.
David Ramsay, M. D. Charleston, South Carolina.
Donald Macleod, M. D. Savannah, Georgia.
Peter Rayssoux, M. D. Charleston, South Carolina.

1. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xlvii.
the first of such amalgamations. The Hibernian Medical, in 1799, the Chemical Society, in 1802, the Natural History Society, in 1812, and the Didactic Society, in 1813, all joined forces with the Royal Physical Society. It is interesting to note that all these societies were organized before 1800.

Details concerning the small societies which joined with the Royal Physical Society are not readily obtainable, and there is a real need for a history of the scientific organizations of this period. I have been able, however, to provide one or two facts regarding each of them, and that must suffice for my contribution toward such a history.

The earliest notice I have discovered of the Chirurgo-Physical Society was published in the Glasgow Courier in November 1791. This notice reads as follows:-

Edinburgh, Nov. 28. Chirurgo-Physical Society.

Friday night, the following gentlemen were elected Annual Presidents of the Chirurgo-Physical Society for the present session viz:-

Dr. Onofrio Cassi of Italy.
Mr. Alexander Edgar of Hamilton, Lanarkshire, re-elected.
Mr. Hugh Munro, surgeon, of Ferrintosh, Ross-shire.
And Mr. Caleb Crowther of Leeds, Yorkshire.

1. Hume: Learned Societies, page 173; Comrie: History of Scottish Medicine, Vol. I, page 540; History of the Speculative Society (1845), pages 9-10; Laws of the Royal Physical Society, page 37 f., (contains lists of members of each society when it joined with the Royal Physical); and (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xlvii. This last work has an interesting note on other societies which were active at this same time. "Besides those already enumerated, an American Medical, an Hibernian Physical, and a Chirurgo-Obstetrical Society, are said to have held regular meetings in the Year 1792." (History of the Medical Society, page xlvii, note.) I have been unable to discover anything further regarding the societies mentioned in this note.
Mr. William Orane of Lincolnshire, was re-elected Tres., and Mr. Aitchison of Edin, was re-elected Sec.

The Society, at the same time, as a mark of their respect for Dr. John Lorimer, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Physician to the East-India Company, etc., and Dr. Blance, F.R.S., Physician to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, etc., unanimously elected these Gentlemen Honorary Members of the Chirurgo-Physical Society.

Besides this notice of November 1791, similar notices appeared in the same newspaper in December, 1792, and January, 1794.

At the time the American Physical Society joined with the Royal Physical Society, in 1796, it consisted of the following members:-

John Murray. James Hulme, M. D.
James Vernon, D. M. Samuel Lowdon.
John Heddle, D. M. James Hamilton.
John Adams, M. D. Thomas Mills, M. D.
Charles Sugrue, M. D. James Hill.
Marcus Hardiman, M. D. Robert Buchanan, M. D.
James Jones, M. D. John Kirkpatrick.
Robert Magrane, M. D. Hill Morgan.
William Tazwell Edmund Painbridge.
James White, M. D. Robert M. Haig, M. D.
Bartholomew Carter, M. D. Edward Thomas.
James Sheehy, M. D.

The earliest mention of the American Physical Society occurred in January 1790, when, in conjunction with the Royal Physical Society and the Hibernian Medical Society, the American Physical Society presented an address to Dr. Cullen on the occasion of his being honoured by the Lord Provost, the magistrates, the Town Council, and the professors and


2. Laws of the Royal Physical Society, page 68. For an account of the American medical students at the Edinburgh Medical School, see the University of Edinburgh Journal, Autumn 1950, page 126 f.
students of the University.

The Hibernian Medical Society, which I have just mentioned as being one of the societies which presented an address in honour of Dr. Cullen in January, 1790, consisted, at the time of its union with the Royal Physical Society, nine years later, of the following members:

John Loy.
William Anthony Russell, P. A.
William L. Sayers, P. A.
David O'Callaghan.
Robert Bissnerd.
J. Aiton.
Frederick T. Lynch, M. D.
William Lynch.
Dennis M'Carthy.
William Armstrong.
Philip Johnston.
J. Carey.
J. B. Bennet.
P. M'Keagh.
Galway.
J. Latham.

J. Finn.
R. Purdan.
W. Lawder.
Elliot.
Kirby.
Cramer.
Niblock.
C. Ross.
Bowen.
Lawlar.
Wall.
Fitzpatrick.
Norcott.
Hawker.
Saunders.
S. Gothen.
W. H. Smyth.

My researches have turned up very little information regarding a Chemical Society in Edinburgh before 1800. There was, it is true, such a society in existence in 1786, but, as I shall presently explain, it is unlikely that this was the society which joined forces with the Royal Physical Society in 1812. Regarding this early society, I have discovered only one brief notice which reads as follows:

The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany.

The Chemical Society of this city chose their annual Presidents, when the following Gentlemen were elected to that office:

Mr. John Haslam.
Mr. Theobald M'Kenna.
Mr. William Lecky.
Mr. James CARMICHAEL.

2. Laws of the Royal Physical Society, page 70.
3. Vol. 4, November 18, 1788, page 481.
As for the Chemical Society which was united with the Royal Physical Society in 1812, it was undoubtedly an offshoot of the Natural History Society. The following letter from the biography of Dr. Sallen tells of plans which were being made, in 1800, to revive the Natural History Society by transforming it "into a chemical society:

In January 1800, writing about the condition and prospects of the "The Natural History Society," he says: "Various plans of relief were proposed, and I at last suggested the turning the Society into a chemical society, that should provide itself with an apparatus and occasionally make experiments. The proposal has since been talked of among the members, and is, I believe, universally approved of. In mentioning it to Horner, he proposed an alliance with the Academy of Physics. Brougham, in the mean time, came home, and has entered keenly into our views.... Perhaps I am too sanguine; but I conceive that if I can give to the infant society a good organization, it may become an institution which you will have pleasure in patronising. We shall be able to draw into it all the young men of the place who have any turn for physical researches. It is proposed to meet in summer. Brougham is to write you in a day or two. He looks well, and his present appearance would give you much satisfaction. Horner and he are both particularly anxious that you should approve of the plan of a chemical society.

The Natural History Society, which we have just seen as being in difficulties in 1800, was organized in 1782, and the first essay was read before the Society on Dr. Harvey's birthday on April 12th. A beautifully prepared volume of the Society's transactions in manuscript may be seen in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library. This volume contains discourses on the following subjects:

1. "Letter addressed to John Allen, in biographical notice of Dr. Thomson prefixed to his Life of Sallen, page 16." Quoted in Brougham: Life, Vol. 1, page 550, appendix XVIII. Chemistry was a very fashionable study at this period. Francis Jeffrey, Henry Brougham, and all their acquaintances were very keen on it. See Cockburn: Life of Lord Jeffrey, Vol. 1, page 103 f., and see also Chapter 6, above, under the "Academy of Physic", on page 335.

2. See the account of the Harveian Society on page 312, below. I do not know if this date was intended, or was only a coincidence.
Transactions of the Society for Investigating Natural History, 1782 - 1783, Vol. 1

1. An Account of the Capra Ibex, and Capra repicapria Linnoi: Read 12th April 1782 by Dr. John Conrad Stocknar, from Switzerland.


4. On Calcareous Earth: Read 26th April 1782 by T. Hardy of Lincolnsire.


6. Some observations on the Melioration of Phlogisticated Air by Vegetables. Read May 10, 1782 by Francis Buchanan, A. M.

7. On the Preservation of Birds; Read 10 May 1782 by William Thornton of Tortola.


9. The Natural History of the Elephant: Read the 7th June 1782 by Herron: Died. He^marus of Hamburg. (Not complete - title only.)

10. On Water-Spouts: Read on 14th June 1782: by Richard Kentish, of Bridlington, Yorkshire.


12. Particulars as Part of the Communications given into the Society on the 24th Day of May 1782 by Wm. Thomson.


14. Communications by the Earl of Buchan Read by W. Thomson the 26th June 1782.

15. On Electricity; Read 6th November 1782 by William Bache of Birmingham.


18. On Evaporation: Read 5th December 1782 by Edmund Somers of Dublin.


22. A Description of some Plants found growing without cultivation in Scotland. Read 16th Jan. 1783 by Francis Buchanan.


27. An Essay upon the Flowers of Muscous Plants. Read Febry. 20th 1783 by John Walker, D. D. Hist. Nat. Prof. "N. The Above Paper was first read before the Philosophical Society the 4th January 1780 and the Following Report made upon it according to the custom of that society by Dr. Cullen."


30. A Dissertation on Air, particularly with a view to explain some of the most important uses of the atmosphere and the changes which daily take place in it. Read March 20th 1783 by William Kinnaird of Edin.


32. A Description of the Herring. Read 10th April 1783, by William Archdeacon of Newcastle upon Tyne.

At the time of their union with the Royal Physical Society, the Natural History Society, and its subsidiary, the Chemical Society, consisted of the following members:

Honorary Members admitted in virtue of the Union of the Natural History and Chemical Society with the Royal Physical Society, 13th June 1812.

John Stuart of Luss.
P. A. Augustus Troussonet of Paris.
Baron Alstroemer of Sweden.
Marquis Hippolito Durezzo of Genoa.
Thomas Blacklock of Edinburgh.
John Burgess of Kirkcudbright.
John Lightfoot.
Sebaldus Justinus Brugmano of Leyden.
S. F. Pallas of Petersburg.
Carolar Thunberg of Upsal.
Abraham Guiot of Paris.
Casimir Gomez Urlega of Madrid.
Nicolaus Josephus de Jacquin of Vienna.
Andrew Murray of Gottingen.
George Shaw of London.
John, Earl of Bute.
Francis Garden, Lord Gardenston.

Be S. Sage.

Dr. Mougemon, Professor of Anatomy, etc., Bonn, Germany.
John Hall, M. D. Manchester.
Charles Stewart, M. D. Edinburgh.
Andrew Coventry, M. D. Professor of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh.
George Baird, M. D. Principal of the University of Edinburgh.

Dawson Turner, Esq. Yarmouth.
Humphrey Davy, Esq. London.
James Edward Smith.
Henry Brougham.

1. Laws of the Royal Physical Society, pages 43, and 76, note. For other accounts and notices of the Natural History Society, see the following works:—Hogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 5, page 203; Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, November 6, 1784, #9852; The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany, Vol. 4, December 7, 1788, page 468; Vol. 6, November 1787, #35, pages 335-357; Vol. 10, December 1789, page 85, (Appendix); and the Glasgow Courier, Vol. II, #200, Saturday, December 8, 1792.
Very little is known regarding the Didactic Society which joined the Royal Physical Society on 17th May, 1813, except the members who belonged to the Society at that time. In 1813, the list of members of the Didactic Society read as follows:

J. Shank More.  
George Brodie.  
David Wight.  
Thomas Barclay.  
Charles MacClean.  
John Symons, M. D.  
Edward Carbutt.  
William Ritchie.  
Charles Baird.  
William M'Allan.  
John Tennant — Expelled, for not paying his debts.  
James Alexander Oswald, M. D.

J. Shank More.  
George Brodie.  
David Wight.  
Thomas Barclay.  
Charles MacClean.  
John Symons, M. D.  
Edward Carbutt.  
William Ritchie.  
Charles Baird.  
William M'Allan.  
John Tennant — Expelled, for not paying his debts.  
James Alexander Oswald, M. D.

In addition to the small societies of specialists which I have just described, there were, at this period, a number of associations of a kindred nature which were organized on professional lines. These societies, namely the Arveian, the Celsian, the Galenian, and the Asculapian, had social as well as scientific interests.

The Arveian Society, or the Circulation Club as it was known until 1829, an organization erected for the purpose of celebrating

1. The History of the Speculative Society (1845), page 13, contains an account of a Didactic Society which reads as follows:— "An institution with exactly similar objects with the Speculative, and which drew its members from the same class of students, was founded in 1802, and was dissolved about 1827. Its application for a charter or seal of cause, created some alarm in the Speculative Society in 1810." But this student's debating society, as it continued until 1827, could not have been the one which was absorbed into the Royal Physical in 1813.


the anniversary of the birthday of Dr. Harvey, and "to commemorate
the discovery of the circulation of the blood by the circulation of the
1
glass", was one of a number of convivial medical clubs which were formed
in the eighteenth century, the others being the Celsian, the Galenian,
2
and the Aesculapian. The Harveian Society and the Aesculapian, however,
were distinctive in that they both offered prizes "for an essay on
3
some scientific subject." This practice was begun by the Aesculapian,
which had been formed in 1773, and was continued successfully by the
Harveian when that society was officially organized on April 12, 1782.


2. For the Celsian and the Galenian, see History of the Harveian Society,
page 2. For the Aesculapian, see The History of the Aesculapian Club;
Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, page 569; The Scotsman,
Wednesday, January 30, 1884, "Old Edinburgh Clubs — Medical Clubs";
and the Edinburgh Evening News, Wednesday, February 9, 1949, "Old
Dining Clubs: ... Exclusive Aesculapian."


4. Although there is a general agreement that the Harveian Society was
not established until 1782, there was an organization of the same
name in existence as early as 1780. See the Edinburgh Evening Courant,
Monday, April 17, 1780; and the Glasgow Mercury, April
13 - 20, 1780, Vol III, # 130. According to the author of the
History of the Harveian Society, (or the Harveian Club Record),
the prizes which were announced in these notices, were those being
offered by the Aesculapian Society under the name of the Harveian
Society, a name which that organization assumed for such purposes.
I take this to mean that although we find notices of a Harveian
Society in 1780, they actually applied to the Aesculapian. For
other accounts of the Harveian Society, see the following works:-
Hume: Learned Societies and Printing Clubs, page 177; Duncan: An
Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the late Dr.
Alexander Monro, Secundus, Delivered as the Harveian Oration in
Edinburgh, for the year 1818, by Andrew Duncan. (There are a
number of these orations in the collection of the Edinburgh Room
of the Edinburgh Public Library.); Caledonian Mercury, Saturday,
April 17, 1784, #7/75; Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany,
Vol. 7, April 1788, pages 55-56, (Appendix); and the Scots
The object of the prize essays was "to foster a spirit of experimental inquiry among students at the School of Medicine." The prize essays which were sponsored by the two organizations were as follows:

List of Essays and Successful Candidates.

1777. On the best criterion for distinguishing Matter from Mucus as discharged by expectoration. Mr. Charles Darwin of Lichfield.

1778. An enquiry into the cause of the red colour of the blood. Dr. Edward Stevens from St. Croix.

1779. An experimental enquiry concerning the nature and properties of the coagulable lymph or gluten of the blood. Dr. Arthur Broughton from Bristol.

1780. An enquiry concerning the nature and properties of the serum of the blood. No dissertation of sufficient merit presented.

1781. An enquiry concerning the nature and properties of the bile. Mr. Jonathan Stokes of Worcester.

1782. An enquiry concerning the nature and properties of the milk. The judges not being agreed, two prizes were conferred, one on Mr. Richard Rentish of Yorkshire, and one on Mr. Samuel Ferris of Wiltshire.

1783. An enquiry concerning the nature and properties of the Peruvian bark, and the comparative powers of the red and quilled bark. Two prizes were given: one to Mr. Ralph Irving, and one to Mr. Thomas Skeete of Barbadoes.

1784. An experimental enquiry concerning the nature and properties of Ipecacuanha, concerning the comparative powers of different kinds of it and of different parts of the root. Mr. Ralph Irving from Langholm.

1785. An experimental investigation of the nature and properties of Opium; of its different constituent parts and of their effects on the human system. Mr. John Leigh from Virginia.

1. Hume: Learned Societies, page 177. Hume states that the society was instituted in 1752. This error is probably due to a mistaken reading of his notes on the society.

1786. An experimental enquiry into the nature and properties of the Hyoscyamus Niger of Linnaeus: its effect on the human system, the comparative power of different parts of the plant, and their use in the cure of disease. Mr. Benjamin Smith Barton of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania.

1787. An experimental enquiry concerning the chemical and medical properties of those substances called Lithonryptics, and particularly their effects on the human calculus. Mr. Joseph Pinto Azaredo of Brazil in South America.

1788. An inquiry into the nature and properties of the Nicotiana Tabacum of Linnaeus, into the different active constituent parts of this vegetable, their effects on the human body and their use in the cure of disease. No essay of sufficient merit received.

1789. An inquiry into the nature and properties of those medical products which are obtained from a combination of ardent spirit with acids. No essay of sufficient merit received.

1790. Same as 1788.

1791. An experimental enquiry concerning the nature and properties of Camphor. It does not appear that a prize was awarded on this occasion.

In the Medical Commentaries for 1795 it is stated that the custom of Prize questions had been for some years interrupted, in consequence of particular circumstances, and that it was now proposed to resume the practice. The following questions were set for the ensuing six years.

1796. An Experimental enquiry demonstrating the effect produced on the human body, in a state of health, by the cold bath, where the heat of the water is below seventy degrees: the diseases in which it may be employed with advantage; and the bad consequences which are to be dreaded from it in certain affections.

1797. An experimental enquiry demonstrating the effects produced on the human body, in a state of health, by the tepid bath, where the heat of the water is from 70 - 90 degrees in Fahrenheit's thermometer: the diseases in which it may be employed with advantage, and the bad consequences which are to be dreaded from it in certain states of the system.

1798. Question in the same terms concerning the effects of the hot bath, where the heat of the water is above 90° F.

1799. Similar question concerning the effects of the vapour bath.

1800. Similar question concerning the effects of the medicated vapour bath.
The prizes offered for the best essay were, as at first offered by the Aesculapian, a cash sum of five guineas, but as the Aesculapian was only a small organization, it found the financial burden too heavy, and this was one reason for organizing the Harveian "with a wider membership." The Harveian Society offered either a silver medal, or "a quarto edition of Dr. Harvey's works." But the value of these prizes is not as significant as the persons who won them. The list of prize essays clearly demonstrates another aspect of the Period of Recognition, and that was the growing reputation of the Edinburgh Medical School. Prize winners came from England, the West Indies, Brazil, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The reputation of Scottish scientists and medical men, and the success of their teaching, drew students from many countries.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the three incorporated learned societies which lend distinction to the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. It is interesting, and even curious, that the first society to be distinguished by a Royal Charter should be a society of amateur antiquarians. The Scots, however, as has been observed by Gregory Smith in his Scottish Literature, its Character and Influence, have long

2. Ibid, page 17.
3. See the list of Prize Essays on pages 314 and 315, above.
4. "The number of Medical Graduations at Edinburgh, during the first 40 years of its School, was 188; during the last 40 years of the century, 1014; shewing an increase during the latter period of more than 5 to 1." (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xlv, note.
evinced a strong antiquarian interest in the past:-

Like Captain Grose, the Scot has "Ta'en the antiquarian trade." It is another of those striking contrasts in character, that with the keenest appreciation of what is called, in blessed epithet, the "practical" value of things there is found such zeal for the things that are merely old. It is like finding a Yale lock on a thirteenth century ambry. There is no relic-hunter and relic-worshipper like your Scot.... Scotland is a land of monuments, and in one of these is national sentiment commemorated so bravely as in this literary cairn, to which so many hands have contributed. Is there a parallel to be found in any other small country, or, in like proportion, in any of the greater? The good folk of Edinburgh could finish their Valhalla on the Calton Hill with the shelf-loads of quarto and octavo gatherings from every nook of Scottish history and literature, which the printing-clubs and learned societies of the east, west, and north have added to the labours of single-handed venturers. We say "history and literature," for though the Scot has been partial to political and personal history and has an unsatisfied craving for the mysteries of the "tribe of Macfungus," he has not forgotten the poets. The early issues of the Edinburgh Bannatyne Club and the Glasgow Maitland Club bear testimony to an interest already aroused by collectors and commentators like Hamsay, Hailes, and Pinkerton.  

The antiquarian interest described in the passage above reached a high point shortly before the Society of Antiquaries received its charter, and, indeed, the incorporation of such a society was, in itself, an indication that considerable corporate enthusiasm had been excited. The intensity and effectiveness of the activities of the enthusiastic amateurs may be seen in the ridicule they excited. The Wig Club of Edinburgh, for example, published the following letter in the Edinburgh Evening Courant for Wednesday, February 21, 1781:-

1. Gregory Smith: Scottish Literature, page 47.
2. The "Printing Clubs" which became such a success in the nineteenth century, (See Terry: Scottish Historical Clubs, and the continuation of his subject by Astheson: Scottish Historical Clubs.), were in the air at this time, (i.e. 1780 - 1800), and to Lord Suchan goes the credit for the first suggestion for such an organization, (see Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, page 102.) The same idea had occurred to John Pinkerton. See his Literary Correspondence, Vol. 1, page 102.
Sir, — I am informed from good authority that, among the many valuable remains of antiquity that will soon be presented to the Antiquarian Society, none will be more admired than that invaluable relic now in possession of the Wig Club. This precious ornament was a gift from Cleopatra, the wife of Ptolemy Dionysius, to her lover, Mark Anthony. She, observing that his Worship was become rather bald, assembled her handmaids together, in order to deliberate how this defect might be supplied; they resolved unanimously to furnish each a ringlet from their beautiful tresses to adorn the amorous chief. The council broke up; and the Wig was soon completed. The moment Anthony assumed this delightful covering, he felt a rejuvenescence which agreeably surprised Cleopatra; — in short, he constantly wore it until the day preceding the fatal naval engagement of Actium which lost him the world — and his wig! It had been put on board a galley with some other baggage, and was carried by Augustus in triumph to Rome. It occasionally adorned the head of many an emperor, until Constantine, that pious Christian, removed the seat of Empire from Rome to Byzantium. He that year (viz. 328) made a present of it to the Bishop of Rome.

The wig, at this period, underwent as great a conversion as Constantine did himself; for the clergy maintained it to be the gift of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. But I will not fatigue you with a minute detail of all the wonders it performed, after it came into possession of the Church. There it mostly remained till Pope Clement X. sent it as a bridle to our very amorous monarch, Charles II, who was so delighted with the present that I am afraid he ever afterwards was assoun Catholic in his heart. Be that as it may, he wore it often, and never visited the Duchesse of Portsmouth without it. His brother James seldom wore it, but always considered it as a holy relic, and at the Revolution carried it with him to France. There it remained until his grandson, Charles Edward, undertook the conquest of these kingdoms. It composed part of his Négalía, and accompanied him upon that expedition. Into whose hands it fell after the battle of Culloden, with other matters, shall be the subject of a future discussion. — I am, etc.,

A. B. C.

Harry Cockburn, whose account of the Wig Club in his Old Edinburgh Clubs is excellent, explains what lay behind this rather strange letter:

Now this letter is interesting for several reasons; it shows that the club was in possession of a somewhat extraordinary wig, which we shall see presently had belonged to the Earl of Moray, but it is obviously impossible that it could have been a wig actually woven from the tresses of Cleopatra's hand-maidens, and passing through so many vicissitudes for nearly eighteen hundred years, as stated in the letter! Why, therefore, were the members said, by A. B. C, to be so anxious to announce their intentions of presenting it to the Society of Antiquaries? The reason probably was that 'A. B. C.', the writer of the letter, was a practical joker, anxious to delude this newly-formed society into accepting a spurious antiquarian gift. The Society, founded in 1783, was in many ways unpopular, and was perhaps rather a laughing-stock at the beginning of its career. So much was it in disfavour that on their petitioning the King for a Royal Charter, (granted in March 1783), the University, the Advocates' Library, and the Philosophical Society actually presented counter-petitions praying that it should not be granted on the ground that each of them were quite capable of treasuring the antiquities of Scotland; requests that were, however, ignored.

Notices of the Club appear in the Edinburgh Evening Courant for November 9, 1776; December 1, 1779; Saturday, February 12, 1780; Wednesday, March 8, 1780; Monday, April 3, 1780; Wednesday, June 21, 1780; Monday, January 29, 1781; and Wednesday, February 21, 1781. See also the Caledonian Mercury for Wednesday, January 28, 1784. The following letter, which appeared in the Edinburgh Evening Courant for December 6, 1779, is not without interest:—

"To the Printer of the Edinburgh Evening Courant, Sir, - The natives of this island, have often been accused by foreigners, particularly the French, of being unsociable; but I believe unjustly: witness the numberless societies that meet under the denomination of Clubs. There is hardly a village but has its club; at the same time, the whimsical titles which they assume, and which they affected to be distinguished by, strongly mark the character of the good people of these kingdoms. I suppose the antiquarians a century hence will be as much puzzled to discover the meaning of the different terms by which these knots of men chose to distinguish themselves, as to explain an Egyptian hieroglyphic. Some of them, however, may be understood; the Revolution Club all may comprehend; the Poker may be guessed at; it is an instrument, typical of stiffness (even to a proverb) or inflexibility; and occasionally serves to stir up a flame: the Capillaire, I believe, was instituted in garrison at Gibraltar, by a noble peer, remarkable for sobriety; they meet on the first day of the week, to denote their piety; and drink syrup of capillaire, deluted with water, to evince their sobriety. The mysterious rites performed at the Wig Club I am ignorant of: I was, however, entertained yesterday, by the effect that the perusal of an advertisement produced upon a young Frenchman, a prisoner here upon his parole, and who understands English tolerably well. I happened to place myself near him in the Coffeehouse, he had a newspaper in his hand, which he soon threw down and exclaimed,
The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland was first proposed on
14th November, 1780, by the Earl of Buchan. According to William

"on Dieu c'est pour deroger de noblesse!" "what is the matter
mon ami?" says I; "See, See," replies he, with truly Gallic vivacity,
"here is a general officer president of a society of barbers; with
a mi-lord monte en croupe." In fact, I saw a meeting of the Wig
Club advertised for the 6th of December. It was in vain that I
told him, the members were neither wig makers nor hair-dressers,
but gentlemen of rank and abilities. God help me, I might as well
have attempted to convince him that Augustus Van Kappel beat the
French fleet. I gave up the point; but could not help thinking
that our advertisements must occasion many such mistakes abroad,
and that we are considered as a nation of oddities. My French-
man made a quick transition to the Caledonian Aunt; and asked me if
we had any wild bears in this country. But, Mr. Printer, I shall
take up no more of your time at present, as I intend soon to send
you a well-digested history of clubs. I am, Sir, your constant
reader, Carolus." The Soul Club of Glasgow (1786) also had an

1. For accounts of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland see:
- Smellie: Account of the institution and Progress of the Society
  of Antiquaries of Scotland: a second part of the history appeared
  in 1784. See also: Archaeologia Scotia, Vol. 3, Appendix, for
  the history of the Society from 1784 - 1830, (Archaeologia Scotia
  is the name of the publication of this Society as it was published
  in 1681). See also: Kerr: Life of William Smellie, Vol. 1, pages
  Wilson: Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Times, Vol. I., page 233,
  and Vol. 2, page 214; Kay: Portraits, Vol. 1, part 2, pages 211,
  Lives of eminent Scotsmen, by the Society of Ancient Scots, pages
  145-146, Vol. 4; and Hume: "earned Societies, pages 16 and 179. A
great deal of information concerning the Society is contained in the
Scots Magazine. The issue for May, 1774, pages 268-9, contains an
article which reflects the growing antiquarian interest of the period;
December, 1780, pages 621-623, contains extracts from a "Discourse,
delivered by the Earl of Buchan, at a meeting for promoting the
institution of a society for the investigation of the history of
Scotland, and its Antiquities, November 14, 1780."; the same issue,
page 671, contains a list of officers of the new society; Buchan's
Discourse is contained in an Appendix to the Volume for 1780, pages
690-693; the number for January, 1781, pages 50-51, contains a
notice of a meeting; in the issue for May, 1782, page 211, appears
a letter to the Secretary of the Society which accompanied a copy
of Dr. Gilbert Stuart's History of Scotland which he sent as a gift
to the Society, (for Stuart, see page 351, below, and Chapter 8,
page 473.); November, 1782, pages 613 - 614, contains an Anniversary
emellie, the following circumstances had brought the project to the attention of the public:

Not many years have elapsed since the jealousies of the two nations were succeeded by a warm and mutual attachment to the same family and constitution. During this short period, however, it will be allowed, that the progress of the Scots, in every species of art and of science, has been rapid. Neither have the researches of the Antiquary, notwithstanding the many disadvantages he had to encounter, been altogether neglected. But the labours of individual Antiquaries, unassisted by powerful patronage, and deprived of proper repositories, have hitherto produced no great emolument to the public. "hey, however, excited a taste for inquiries of this nature, which, for some years past, has continued to diffuse itself over the nation.

Address by the Earl of Buchan; August, 1783, page 445, a notice of the incorporation of the Society; November, 1783, announced a present sent from the King of Denmark to the Society; and the Appendix to the Volume for 1783, pages 673 - 681, contains a copy of the petition to the King for a Charter, together with a memorial, (unfavourable), from the Principal and Professors of the University of Edinburgh, a "Letter from some of the Curators of the Advocates' Library," and a memorial from the Philosophical Society, together with the answering memorial from the Society of Antiquaries; the issue for October, 1784, pages 511 and 512, contains a "Letter from Lord Buchan on the Antiquities of Scotland"; October, 1785, pages 469 - 471, an address by Lord Buchan on the Death of Dr. Gilbert Stuart read before the Society; and, finally, an Appendix to the volume for 1787 contains "Extracts from a Discourse delivered by the Earl of Buchan, to the Society of Antiquaries, on the 14th of November 1787, being the seventh anniversary of its institution." Notices of the Society also appear in the following places: Edinburgh eveningcourant, Saturday, December 28, 1780, and Monday, January 5, 1781; Edinburgh magazine, or Literary miscellany, Vol. 6, July, 1788, page 102; and Vol. 6, (new series), May 1785, page 325. The Society is also briefly mentioned in the following works: Dalzel: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 1, memoir, page 59; Carlyle: autobiography, page 229, note; Thomson: Scottish men of feeling, page 289; Boswell: Life of Johnson, Vol. 5, (Jour of the Hebrides), page 518, note; Irving: Lives of Scottish Poets, Vol. 1, page 406; Miller: Andrew Crabbie, page 16; Curiosities of a Scots Charta chest, page 122; Chambers: Traditions of Edinburgh, Vol. 1, pages 71, 83, and Vol. 2, (walks in Edinburgh), page 184; and Tange: Art of Scotland, page 49. There are a number of letters to Lord Buchan, one from Horace Walpole, in the Laing MS., in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, (see the Historical MSS. Commission's report on the Laing MS., Vol. 2, pages 501 f., and 515. ).

In the ordinary progress of human affairs, it was soon perceived, that this taste for investigating the Antiquities of our country could not receive any adequate gratification without the aid of a public establishment. An association, accordingly, similar to that of the Antiquarian Society of London, was projected by several gentlemen of eminence and learning, some of whom had made private collections, and were anxious that these, and others which they knew to be scattered through the country, should be preserved in a secure and permanent repository. The time, they found, was now arrived, when such a society might be instituted, without any apprehension of those consequences to national union which had formerly subsisted. They considered, that some useful materials, which had been amassed by eminent Antiquaries, were now perishing in the possession of persons who knew not their value; that others, still existing in public libraries, depended upon the fate of single copies, and were subject to obliteration, to fire, and other causes of destruction; and that it was an object of national importance to bring all these, either in their original form, or by accurate transcript, into one great repository, which should be rendered accessible to the republic of letters.

Though these, and many other advantages, were to be derived from an institution of this nature, the project continued to be the subject of speculation only, till the Right Honourable the Earl of Buchan, zealous to have it carried into execution, invited the following nobleman and gentlemen to his house, where he explained, to such of them as attended, the general plan and intention of the proposed association.

Right Hon. Lord Hope.  
Hon. Henry Erskine, esq.  
* Allan M'Comnochie, esq.  
Hon. Lord Ailes.  
Hon. Lord Hailes.  
* William Tytler, esq.  
* Hugo Arnot, esq.  
Sir John Dalrymple, bart.  
David Erskine, esq.  
John Davidson, esq.  
Rev. Doctor Blair.  
James Colquhoun, esq.  
* Mr. William Smellie.  
Hon. James Erskine, esq.  
* Mr. James Gummyng.  
* Mr. John Balliery.  
John Jaw, esq.  
* Mr. John Williams.  
James Boswell, esq.  
Sir James Steuart-Denham, bart.  
* Mr. John Syme.  
Hon. Mr. Baron Hailes.  
Sir William Forbes, bart.  
John Swinton, esq.  
* Andrew Croshie, esq.  
Geo. Clerk Maxwell, esq.  
Sir James Fouls, bart.  
Rev. Doctor Henry.  
* Charles Hay, esq.  
* Mr. John M'Cowan.  
* Alexander Wight, esq.  
Mr. George Paton.  
Doctor Gilbert Stuart.  
* Mr. William Crouch.  
* Mr. Alexander Brown.  
* Mr. Thomas Philips.  
* Mr. John Donaldson.

* These members on the list attended the first meeting.
After explaining the purpose of the meeting he had called together, and the reasons for it, Lord Buchan read a discourse to the fourteen individuals who had assembled. This discourse, in typical Buchan style, is a long, maundering, affair which covers the antiquarian history of Scotland from the Roman conquest to the accession of King James VI. But parts of it are worth quoting as they give some indication of the motive and purpose of the proposed organization. Lord Buchan began his discourse as follows:

Gentleman,

It has long been a subject of regret, that no regular Society for promoting Antiquarian researches has subsisted in this part of Great Britain. I have used the liberty to solicit your appearance here, with a view to the establishment of Regular Meetings at my house, or elsewhere, of such Persons, in this city and neighbourhood, as are attached to the Study of the Antiquities of Scotland.

Some apology will be expected, and it is really due from me, for having ventured to take the lead in a Literary Association of this nature. And, without any false or affected humility, I can express my being truly sensible of the superiority of many of my countrymen in the knowledge of the subject, for promoting inquiries into which we have here met together. I likewise know, that there are many persons much better qualified for suggesting a plan of a Regular Society for the investigation of the subject proposed, and for connecting it with inquiries into such articles as are of more extensive utility to the public. I beg leave, therefore, to solicit the Gentlemen present to prepare their opinions on this subject for the next meeting. In the mean time, I shall take the liberty to throw out a few loose thoughts concerning what has been already done, and what yet remains to be explored, in the line of our Scottish History and Antiquities; to which I shall add the outlines of a plan for the institution of regular meetings for these pursuits, and suggest some of the various objects of inquiry which might be usefully brought within the compass of such an undertaking.

1. Wally: Account of the Antiquarian Society, pages 4 - 5. Extracts from the discourse were reprinted in the Scots Magazine, December, 1750, pages 621-623.
As a part of his Discourse, Lord Auchan proposed the following rules and regulations for the organization and governance of the new society:

1st. It is proposed that a Society be instituted, by the name of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland.

2nd. That such new members as may be added to the present association be elected by ballot; that St Andrew's day be appointed for the annual choice of the officers of the Society, if on a lawful day, and, if not, on the Tuesday which shall immediately follow that day: that the ordinary days of meeting shall be twice a month, on every other Tuesday, during the sitting of the Court of Session for the winter, which will make eight or nine ordinary meetings in the year, and one extraordinary: That the officers shall consist of a President, Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, to be elected by ballot, both in the first instance, and hereafter.

3rd. That the proceedings of the Society be regularly entered by the Secretary, in a minute-book to be by him kept for that purpose; and that such communications as shall be made to the society shall be ordered to be correctly copied for the use of the members, and the originals returned, if desired.

4th. That, on St Andrew's day, immediately after the business of choosing the officers is concluded, the Society shall, by ballot, choose a committee of seven of their number, being constituent and ordinary members, who shall, from time to time, prepare the communications which are received (and agreed to be made public by the authors) for the press; but that no expense shall arise to the Society from these publications, which must be undertaken by such associations among the members as shall think fit to publish them, and who shall have a joint profit from the sale of such volumes or volumes of the Transactions; and, further, that the Society shall cause to be prefixed to each of these volumes of Transactions, as advertisement, intimating that they are not published by the authority, or in the name of the Society, any further than the mode of publication may imply.

5th. It is easy to perceive the inconvenience which would attend the institution of a Society of this nature, to be supported by certain fixed annuities, liable to be paid by the members, on pain of expulsion, as is enacted by the Society of Antiquaries at London. Such regulations could not fail of giving disgust to many useful and worthy members, who, from occasional non-residence in the capital, or the neighbourhood, or from neglect,

---

might fall into arrears, which accumulating, might frustrate the intention of small annual contributions for extraordinary charges attending the Society. The idea, the wish, and even the expectation of the proposer of this plan is, that, by the seal and good will of some opulent lovers of their country, and of such commendable pursuits, a joint purchase, in the person of a trustee, will be made of a house for the use of the Society, where the Secretary would reside gratuitously, and where he would have the care of such books, records, and antiquities, as might accrue to the undertaking. A house of 750 or 800 pounds value, upon a neat, and as we Scotsmen choose of late to call it, a self-contained plan, and about 200 pounds for fitting it for the use and reception of the Society, would answer the purpose. As to the expenses attending lighting the room of meeting, the small dues of the house to the corporation or proprietor, and other little incidental expenses, a very small voluntary aid from the members would suffice, and would, I am persuaded, be no less cheerfully granted.

6to. It is proposed, that the number of ordinary and constituent members of the Society shall not exceed fifty; and that by them the officers, committees, and members, constituent, honorary, and correspondent, shall be chosen by ballot.

7mo. That the objects of the Society be the antient, compared with the modern state of the kingdom and people of Scotland; the antient manners, customs, numbers, territorial divisions; the geography, hydrography, chorography, and topography of the country; the antient state of agriculture, and antient unpublished manuscripts relating to that subject; the language of the antient inhabitants, with the limits of the different dialects; mines, minerals, fossils, natural productions of every kind, and a topographical mineral map of the coal country of Scotland; the antient dresses, amusements, and music of the people, and a complete collection of the undecorated, simple, melodious, or warlike airs of the Scots and Gaels; the privileges of the people; the King; his prerogatives, court, great officers of state, household, demesne lands, palaces, hunting seats, justice aires, genealogy, regalia, council of state, mint, and the royal standards thereof, together with the various collateral inquiries connected with the same; the assemblies of the great barons, afterwards called parliaments; the nobility, with their antient tenures; and the gentry, or lesser barons, with their tenures and lesser jurisdictions; association of man-rent; curious unpublished local conventions and customs; antient and curious deeds hitherto unpublished, from private as well as public repositories; private missive letters; weights and measures; antient prices of provisions, and regulations of market and police; seals of office or arms; noble sports and amusements; the antient castles, houses, and mote-hills of the nobility, greater and lesser; accounts of their families; biographical gleanings of illustrious persons, with drawings of their unengraved portraits, and proofs of their authenticity; the
army, or array of the great vassals of the crown; the courts of honour or of arms; tilts and tournaments, weapontaking, and military exercises; the antient military weapons; the two handed sword, the claymore, the durk, the spear, the shield, the Lochaber ax, the mace, the Jedburgh staff, and others; the church, its influence, revenues, laws, festivals, and illustrious members; its foundations, religious houses, churches, monuments, rubrick; drawings of unengraved remains of its antient magnificence; the arts and sciences; the first patrons of them in Scotland; drawings of the most antient specimens of the arts in Scotland; and, in general, every thing that may tend to compare our antient with our modern attainments.

"When the discourse was finished, Lord Buchan moved, that another meeting should be held at his house on Tuesday the 28th of November, to consider the propriety of forming a Society upon the plan suggested in the paper he had now read. This motion received an unanimous approbation."

The meeting held on 28th November, "after canvassing the utility of the proposed association, and the mode of its regulation," resolved to meet again on 18th December "in order to form... a regular and permanent body, under the designation of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland."

On the day appointed, the Society met in the hall of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge and elected the following officers:

President, the Right Honourable the Earl of Bute.
1st. Vice-President, the Right Honourable the Earl of Buchan.
2nd. Vice-President, Sir John Dalrymple-Hamilton Mc'Gill, Bart.
3rd. Vice-President, John Swinton of Swinton, Esq.
4th. Vice-President, Alexander Night, Esq.
5th. Vice-President, William Tytler of Woodhouselee, Esq.
Treasurer, Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Bart.
Secretary, Mr. James Cummyng.

The constitution which was adopted at this time was based largely on Lord Buchan's proposals. One aspect of the organization, however,

is worthy of special attention as it was not only a little unusual, but was a reflection of a widespread interest among the Scots in the development of their country, and also a definite anticipation of the work done so admirably by Sir John Sinclair in his Statistical Account of Scotland. Smellie has described this aspect of the Society of Antiquaries activities as follows:

... To excite a taste for Natural History among our countrymen, the following plan was printed and dispersed, by order of the Society, through the different parishes of Scotland.

Account of the Parish of A.

Section I. The situations and boundaries of the parish, geographically and topographically described, with the names, antient and modern, of the parish, and the principal places in it; the latitude, longitude, and number of acres in the parish; how watered, etc. accompanied by two maps, one geographical, and the other representing a bird view of it, with a delineation of the nature of the ground, the boundaries of the different baronies or estates, courses of mines and minerals, etc.; heights of hills, the quality of their rocks, and, when practicable, trace the succession of their strata. In the geographical map, the boundaries of city and borough property, royalties, commons, etc.; remains of antiquity, fields of battle, antient seats, antient churches and chapels, etc. These maps to be on a scale of three inches to a measured mile of 5280 feet.

Section II. Nature of the soils in the parish of A; size of the farms; state of agriculture; the mode of husbandry; the rent of land; ordinary endurance of leases; some particular clauses and prestations in them; the ordinary produce of the best land in the parish; prices of labour, provisions, and tools of husbandry; how are the women and children employed?

Are there any farming clubs? the extent of the villages; fairs, markets, customs, amusements, dresses where singular, plantations of wood, the price of timber, how conveyed to a market, how rendered more easily transported, what diseases infest the trees, what remedies applied.

The number of inhabitants, taken from actual survey. Proportion of the births to the burials for ten years past. An account of the improvements that have been carried on lately in the parish, and by whom.

---

Section III. State of the high roads, bridges, navigable canals, etc.; expences attending them; what tolls? what materials for repairing? statute labour what? give drawings of any remarkable bridges, etc.; how supported?

Section IV. Mines, minerals, and fossils; stone quarries; prices of stone, lime, marle, etc.

Coal-mines. Give an accurate account of the time and manner they have been wrought, by whom, and to what extent; number and thickness of seams, quality, dip, and rise; how trending; metals cut through in shafting; depths of pits; machinery used in draining them. All accompanied by subterraneous sections, sections, representing the state of the mine, quantity of coal sold annually, etc.

Iron, lead, copper, cobalt, and other minerals discovered, in the same accurate manner. Accompanying these descriptions with specimens of the different articles.

In all pits, wells, quarries, and other excavations, mark the successive strata from the surface to the bottom, describe the materials of which they consist, and measure their respective thickness. Examine, particularly, where lime-stone appears, whether there are any shell moulds of shells, or any regularly figured bodies, and mark the depths at which they are found. Observe, likewise, what pebbles, ores, or singular stones, occur in the beds of rivers, etc.

Section V. Police, trade, and manufactures; description of the nature and extent thereof, whether increasing, or otherwise; number of hands employed: fisheries, where any, to be particularly described, and the promoters of these to be particularly and honourably mentioned.

Section VI. The antiquities of the parish, with drawings of such as are any way remarkable; as churches, monuments, obelisks, engraved stones, antient arms, old castles, or fortifications; together with transcripts of any inscriptions that are curious, antient, or throw light upon particular events or genealogies.

Give a drawing of the church on a scale of ten feet to an inch, with an account of its foundation, antient name; chapels, succession of ministers till the revolution, and other particulars relating to ecclesiastical history.

Section VII. Miscellaneous observations may conclude the account of the parish; and it will be proper to take notice of any remarkable decorations in the parish of gentlemen seats, such as noble mansions, elegant gardens, uncommon trees or vegetables; curious portraits of illustrious or learned persons, and remarkable instances of longevity; of the salubrity or insalubrity of the climate; and, in general, of such matters as could not be properly
introduced into the former part of the work.

Accounts of the parishes in Scotland, properly given on such a plan, when deposited in the Museum of the Society, each account, with its accompaniments, being contained in a drawer or repository marked with the name of the parish, and the whole arranged alphabetically, would exhibit a noble and complete survey of this part of the united kingdoms, and enable any remote or collateral heir to an estate, who could not reap any advantage from his predecessor's experience and observation, to have access at once to every necessary elucidation toward the improvement of his property; and, at the same time, this collection would be a most interesting and useful national attainment.

This projected survey, which was later carried out by Sir John Sinclair in the last decade of the eighteenth century, was the final stage in the movement for national improvement. The survey was, in effect, an accounting of the progress which had been made during the Age of Improvement. It is interesting to observe that even at this closing stage, it was a corporate society which first undertook to evaluate the gains that had been made, largely through the efforts of 1 "improving" societies, throughout the century.

1. Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791 - 1799, was not undertaken, so far as I am aware, under the auspices of any public society. But this lack of public control did not escape without criticism. "There have not been wanting different individuals, public spirited indeed, but perhaps of too sanguine dispositions, who, struck with the subserviency of parochial distinction to the advancement of both civil and natural history, have addressed letters to the different parishes in Scotland, and particularly the clergy, inviting them to correspondence on whatever might appear most curious and interesting in their respective divisions. These gentlemen do not reflect that there is no individual, however distinguished by genius, rank or fortune, or even by a happy or rare union of all these advantages, who can possibly be considered by a whole nation, as a fit centre of such general co-operation. "A permanent project, on experiment to be continued for ages, an exploration that embraces so wide a space and so many particulars within the circle, should be placed under the management of a permanent body, and the countenance and protection, as well as the control of the nation."
The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland were now well and truly launched, and its enthusiastic reception by the public, and the donations from private collectors, as described by Smellie, insured its success. The Society undoubtedly owed its existence more to Lord Buchan than to any other individual. This amateur antiquary and meddler in literary affairs is an interesting if not a very attractive figure. He had been, according to Thomas Somerville, a disappointment to his friends because of the rather unusual development of his talents, and it is true that his mode of thought appears to have been largely egocentric in an age when egocentricity was regarded as the most deadly of intellectual sins. One aspect of Lord Buchan's peculiar genius may be seen in the following address which he read before the Society of Antiquaries on the occasion of the Death of Gilbert Stuart:

"If we did not know from experience how prone literary societies are to become the heads of factions; and how academicians, with a preposterous vanity that reflects satire and disgrace on themselves, are sometimes more ambitious of the fellowship of titled than of learned men; it would naturally occur, that the administration of such a national academy, such a mass of continued experiment and observation as is proposed, could not be placed in better hands than in those of the Royal Society either of London, or Edinburgh, or perhaps a Select Committee appointed by both. That faction might be suppressed, the false vanity of academicians controuled, such honours and rewards as might be held forth to merit fairly adjudged, and justice in all points done to all, I would widen the basis of the literary republic, by forming a General Council to be chosen annually by Delegates from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the University, the Royal Burghs, the Counties, and above all the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, on the individual exertion of whose members, the success of the scheme in question would chiefly depend." (Notes: Prospects and Observations, page 427 f.)

2. See Chapter 4, page 209, and note #1.
3. For a glimpse of Stuart's character see Chapter 8, page 473, and notes.
Gentlemen,

I am sorry to be obliged to acquit myself of the melancholy duty of informing you, that our eminent associate, Dr. Gilbert Stuart, died at his father's house in Fisherv-row, of a dropsy and deep decline, on the 15th of this month (August 1786).

It is fit that I should do honour to the memory of a man who was attached to this Society in its infancy, and was useful to it in its progress; and I shall acquit myself of this duty with pleasure, for I think myself peculiarly fortunate in being able either to praise or to censure without being suspected of partiality; and this happy posture I have obtained by having been the uniform friend of Learning where-ever I have found it, and by shunning the prejudice and the violence of party.

Dr. Gilbert Stuart, Gentlemen, was a man of great abilities and of high attainments; but he was unfortunate, and his misfortunes and his disappointments pressed upon his genius, his temper, and his character.

Is it possible that it could be otherwise? Show me the man who is not irritated by insidious jealousy and opposition, and by losing the road to professional fame and fortune, and I will shew you that he is not worthy of your care.

It was Stuart's misfortune to miss a situation in the University of Edinburgh, for which he was highly qualified, and in which, I think, he would have outshone his associates. This disappointment drove him to display his talents at the expense of a group of our literary men in Scotland, who, by puffing one another, had contrived to damn every man of letters who was not willing to range himself under their standard.

These men bore down everything before them, and forced their enemies either to leave the country, or to submit to be pointed at in the street as literary Drawcansirs.

How disagreeable is it to remember, that the good-natured Hume, whose classic works will be read after the memory of these little men, who abused his friendship, shall be completely washed away by the tide of time, was at the head of this despicable club?


2. Buchan refers here to the Select Society of Edinburgh, for which see Chapter 4, page 138 f.
The personality of Lord Buchan, and his attitude toward the
Edinburgh literati, as revealed in the passage quoted above, was undoubtedly responsible for much of the opposition which the Society of
Antiquaries met with when they petitioned for a Royal Charter on 21st
May, 1782. As soon as it became known that the Society of Antiquaries
had made its petition for a Royal Charter, three memorials were sent to
the King requesting that the Charter be denied. One memorial, bearing
the signature of William Robertson, was on behalf of the "Principal and
Professors of the University of Edinburgh. Another, bearing the signature
of William Cullen, was from the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. And
a third represented the objections of the Curators of the Advocates
Library. All three memorials were prepared in December 1782. The
Society of Antiquaries, in their reply to the memorials, wisely, and
correctly, argued that although they "have the appearance of being
tree... they are really one." This was a recognition of the fact
that the opposition to the Society of Antiquaries came from the Edin-
burgh literati, which was composed of the city's leading lawyers and
judges, the Professors in the college, and the members of the Philosophical
Society. The Society of Antiquaries, therefore, answered all three
memorials with the same arguments.

It had been argued by the University, and seconded by the Curators
of the Advocates Library and the members of the Philosophical Society,
that the new society was unnecessary, that it threatened the privileges
of the University, and that their own plan for a society which would

"have for its object all the various departments of Science, Erudition, and Belles Lettres," to be called the Royal Society of Scotland, was preferable. To this the Antiquarians replied that as their society already existed, it was to be assumed that there was a need and a place for it in Scottish intellectual affairs. They rejected the University's claim that the country was "too narrow" to support two such societies, and denied that they had any intention of violating the privileges of the University's monopoly of teaching certain subjects. As for the alternative plan for a Royal Society of Scotland, they found that they themselves had some objections to it:—

The Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland mean not to insinuate any objection against the erection of this new-projected Society. They may be indulged, however, with a single remark. The University admit the good intentions of the Antiquarian Society; and the liberality of the public has insured it success. The University likewise admit, that our limited plan comprehends two material branches of their more general and diffused project. Let the University, in these circumstances, answer the following query: Why is the Antiquarian Society, which includes antiquities and natural history, not comprehended as a branch of the intended Royal Society? Besides, this magnificent project of a Royal Society was never heard of till the Antiquarian Society had subsisted for near two years. It is much to be suspected, my Lord, that the scheme was invented by a few members of the University, for the sole purpose of giving a decent colour to an opposition which appears to have been dictated by an ill-founded jealousy.

The final outcome of this exchange of rather petty jealousy and conflict of personalities was that the Society of Antiquaries received their Charter on 29th March, 1785, and that the literati then immediately applied for a Charter for their own projected institution, and the

Koyal Society of Edinburgh was incorporated 29th March, 1783, and held its first meeting on 23rd June of that year.

The Koyal Society of Edinburgh, which, as we have just seen, was the rather negative result of the activities of the Society of Antiquaries, was an obvious continuation and culmination of the activities of the Philosophical Society. Shortly before the Koyal Society of Edinburgh was formed, the Philosophical began to show signs of renewed vigour. This new burst of activity on the part of the members of the Philosophical Society led to the establishment of a small club which is not without interest. An account of this organization, which bore the name of an earlier society in which William Smellie and others were active, is as follows:-

In the year 1778, a new society was instituted under the name of the Newtonian Club, which appears to have been in some measure connected with the Philosophical Society, the original of the present Koyal Society of Edinburgh. The members of this new society were Dr. Andrew Duncan, senior, present Professor of the Institutes of Medicine; - Dr. James Gregory, present Professor of the Practice of Medicine; - Dr. Daniel Rutherford, present Professor of Botany; - Ruggald Stewart, Esq. emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy; - Mr. James Russell, present Professor of Clinical Surgery, - all in the University of Edinburgh; - Dr. Andrew Macdonald, Surgeon in Edinburgh; - Alexander Keith, Esq. of Balston; - the late Dr. John Hope, Professor of Botany in the University; - the late Dr. John Gardiner, Physician in Edinburgh; - and the late Mr. William Smellie was Secretary. Of this club or society nothing is now particularly known, except by the two following short entries in their sederunt book, now in the hands of Mr. Alexander Smellie:

1. Leig: Life of Robertson, page lx. Chambers: Traditions of Edinburgh, (walks in Edinburgh), Vol. 3, page 41 makes the very curious statement that "the Royal Society was instituted in 1718, by the masters of the High School of Edinburgh, and Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, whose reputation as a scholar must be familiar to every stranger."


3. See page 338, below.

Edinburgh, 7th May 1778.

Sederunt:— Dr. Andrew Duncan.
      Dr. Andrew Wardrop.
      Mr. James Russell.
      Mr. William Smellie.

At this meeting Dr. Duncan was chosen president, and Mr. Smellie secretary. It was then resolved that every member of the Philosophical Society may, on or before next meeting, become a member of the Newtonian Club, if they choose to apply; and that regulations should afterwards be formed for the admission of future members, and for the proper management of the club.

June 16th 1778.

Sederunt:— Mr. James Russell, elected President.
      Dr. Andrew Wardrop.
      Mr. Alexander Keith.
      Mr. Andrew Duncan.
      Mr. William Smellie, Secretary.

The meeting adopted the following regulations, under the name of

Law for the Newtonian Club.

1. That as a multiplicity of laws has a direct tendency to produce confusion instead of order, it is resolved to limit their number as much as possible.

2. That no person be admitted unless he be a member of the Philosophical Society.

3. That the number of members shall never exceed twenty.

4. That one black ball shall exclude any candidate; and if only one black ball, there shall be a reballot.

5. The Newtonian Club shall meet immediately after the dismission of every meeting of the Philosophical Society.

6. That, as this club consists entirely of Philosophers, it would therefore be ridiculous to make any laws for its internal police.

The revived activities of the Philosophical Society had also a direct bearing on the movement of interest in the direction of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and was, in fact, largely responsible for
the resolution among the Edinburgh literati to establish their own incorporated society. In its official history, the Royal Society of Edinburgh traces its descent from the Philosophical Society:


The institution of societies of learned men who have united their labours for the cultivation of philosophy or of literature, is of an ancient date in several polished nations of Europe. It is, however, for the honour of Great Britain to have set the first example of an institution for these purposes, incorporated by charter from the Sovereign, and carrying on its researches under his patronage. A hint of this kind, to the Prince then reigning, is found in the works of Lord Bacon, who recommends, as one of the opera vera basilica, the establishment of Academies or Societies of learned men, who should give, from time to time, a regular account to the world of their researches and discoveries. It was the idea of this great philosopher, that the learned world should be united, as it were, in one immense republic, which, though consisting of many detached states, should hold a strict union, and preserve a mutual intelligence with each other, in every thing that regarded the common interest. The want of this union and intelligence he laments as one of the chief obstacles to the advancement of science; and, justly considering the institution of public societies, in the different countries of Europe, under the auspices of the Sovereign, to be the best remedy for that defect, he has given, in his fanciful work of the New Atlantis, the delineation of a Philosophical Society, on the most extended plan, for the improvement of all arts and sciences; a work which, though written in the language and tinctured with the colouring of romance, is full of the noblest philosophic views. The plan of Lord Bacon, which met with little attention from the age in which he lived, was destined to produce its effect in a period not very distant. The scheme of a Philosophical College, by Cowley, is acknowledged to have had a powerful influence in procuring the establishment of the Royal Society of London, by charter from Charles II.; and Cowley's plan is manifestly copied, in almost all its parts, from that in the New Atlantis. The institution of the Royal Society of London was soon followed by the establishment of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris; and these two have served as models to the Philosophical Academies of highest reputation in the other kingdoms of Europe.

In Scotland, similar associations for the advancement of science and of literature have, even without the benefit of Royal Patronage, and with no other support than the abilities of their members, attained to no common degree of reputation.

In Edinburgh, a Society was instituted in 1731, for the improvement of medical knowledge, by collecting and publishing Essays and Observations on the various branches of Medicine and Surgery, written by the members themselves, or communicated to them. The Secretary of this Society was the elder Dr. Alexander Monro, the first professor of Anatomy in the University of Edinburgh, and the founder of the medical school which has since attained to such eminence and celebrity. Under his care, the transactions of this society were published at different periods, in five volumes 8vo., with the title of Medical Essays and Observations, etc.; a work which has undergone many editions which has been translated into many foreign languages, and is honoured with the encomium of Haller, as one of the most useful books in the sciences of Medicine, Anatomy, and Surgery.
Soon after the publication of the above-mentioned volumes of Medical Essays, viz. in 1739, the celebrated Mr. Maclaurin, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, conceived the idea of enlarging the plan of this Society, by extending it to subjects of Philosophy and Literature. The institution was accordingly new-modelled by a printed set of laws and regulations, the number of members was increased, and they were distinguished, from that time, by the title of The Society for Improving Arts and Sciences, or, more generally by the title of The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. They chose for their President James Earl of Morton, afterwards President of the Royal Society of London; Sir John Clerk of Penncuik, one of the Barons of Exchequer, and Mr. John Clerk, were elected vice-presidents; and Mr. Maclaurin and Dr. Plummer Secretaries of the institution. The ordinary members were some of the most distinguished men of letters in Scotland at that time.

A few years after the Society had received its new form, its meetings were interrupted, for a considerable space of time, by the disorders of the country during the rebellion in 1745; and no sooner was the public tranquility re-established, than it suffered a severe loss by the death of Mr. Maclaurin, whose comprehensive genius, and ardour in the pursuits of science peculiarly qualified him for conducting the business of an institution of this nature. The meetings of the Society, however, were renewed about the year 1752; and the new Secretaries, who were the celebrated Mr. David Hume and Dr. Alexander Aunro junior, were directed to arrange and prepare for the press such papers as were judged worthy of being submitted to the public eye. The first volume of the Transactions of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh was accordingly published in 1754, under the title of Essays and Observations Physical and Literary; the second volume was published in 1756, and the third in 1771.

It has always been observed, that institutions of this kind have their intervals of languor, as well as their periods of biliency and activity. Every associated body must receive its vigour from a few zealous and spirited individuals, who find a pleasure in that species of business, which, were it left to the care of the members in general, would be often reluctantly submitted to, and always negligently executed. The temporary avocations, and, still more, the deaths of such men, have the most sensible effect on the societies to which they belonged. The principle of activity which animated them, if not utterly extinguished, remains long dormant, and a kindred genius is required to call it forth into life.

From causes of this kind, the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, though its meetings were not altogether discontinued, appears to have languished for some time, till about the year 1777, when its meetings became more frequent, and, from the uncommon zeal and distinguished abilities of the late Henry Hume, Lord Kames, at the time elected President of the institution, its business was conducted with renewed ardour and success.
About the end of the year 1782, in a meeting of the professors of the University of Edinburgh, many of whom were likewise members of the Philosophical Society, and warmly attached to its interests, a scheme was proposed by the Reverend Dr. Robertson, Principal of the University, for the establishment of a new society on a more extended plan, and after the model of some of the foreign academies, which have for their object the cultivation of every branch of science, erudition, and taste. It appeared an expedient measure to solicit the Royal Patronage to an institution of this nature, which promised to be of national importance, and to request an establishment by charter from the Crown. The plan was approved and adopted; and the Philosophical Society, joining its influence as a body, in seconding the application from the University, his Majesty was most graciously pleased to incorporate the Royal Society of Edinburgh by charter.

The first general meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh was held, in terms of that charter, on Monday the 23rd day of June 1783, and the Right Hon. Thomas Millar of Barskimming, Lord Justice Clerk, was chosen President of the meeting.

It was then unanimously resolved, that all the members of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh should be assumed as members of the Royal Society: And it was likewise resolved, that the Lords of Council and Session, the Barons of Exchequer for Scotland, and a select number of other gentlemen, should be invited to a participation of the Society's labours.

At the second general meeting, the Secretary gave in a list of those noblemen and gentlemen who had accepted of the invitation to become members. He also informed the meeting, that he had been directed by the Vice president and members of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh to deliver their minute-book, and all such dissertations and papers as were in their Secretary's hands, to the Royal Society. The minute-book and papers were accordingly received, and given in charge to the General Secretary.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh, after the fashion of the Continental societies upon which it was patterned, was originally a literary society

not only in the eighteenth-century sense of the term, but in the twentieth-century sense as well. By this I mean that one phase of its activities from

---

1. Small: Adam Ferguson, page 42; *as: Adam Smith, page 375; and Cleig: Life of Robertson, prefixed to Robertson's History of Scotland, page lix.

2. The reader will recall, from Chapter 1, page 2 and following, that to the eighteenth-century mind, a "literary society" was any institution devoted to intellectual pursuits.
1782 to 1800 was entirely devoted to literary interests, and it was only after the end of the eighteenth century that the Royal Society became what it is today, predominantly a scientific organization. The original plan of the Society was that it should consist of two groups, and, after the fashion of the Philosophical Society from which it developed, the Royal Society designated these divisions as Physical and Literary. The Literary section, which is of primary interest here, was intended to cover "literature, philology, history, antiquities, and speculative philosophy." The two sections met separately under the chairmanship of one of their four presidents, and each confined their inquiries to the subjects of their branch of learning. The meetings of the literary group were small and informal, and in them we may see the Edinburgh literati at their time honoured occupation of exchanging information in a corporate literary association. There is a pleasant anecdote which gives us an intimate glimpse into one of

1. "The Society at the outset was divided into two classes, one of which, the Literary class, had for its department 'literature, philology, history, antiquities, and speculative philosophy.' That class ceased to appear after Vol. 4 of the Transactions, (1798)." (Terry: Scottish Historical Clubs, page 157.) "The subjects treated of and the character of the members were formerly of two kinds, Physical and Literary; but from the scarcity of literary communications, the division has been abandoned." (Hume: Learned Societies, page 170.) See also Chapter 1, page 3; Thompson: Scottish Man of Feeling, page 286; "Ae: Adam Smith, page 375; Lockhart: Life of Scott, Vol. 5, page 290; Forbes: Beattie and his Friends, page 195; and Schmitz: Hugh Blair, pages 28 and 118.

2. "(Adam) Smith was one of the four presidents of the Literary class." (Ae: Adam Smith, page 375.) "In 17th November the literary class held its first meeting. Blair was elected one of the four presidents in charge of the literary half of the society. The others were Clay Campbell, Dr. Robertson, and Lord Elibank." (Schmitz: Hugh Blair, page 118.)
these meetings. The story is told by Samuel Rogers who, on a visit to Edinburgh in 1789, attended a Royal Society meeting with his host Adam Smith:

We (Adam Smith, Henry Mackenzie, and James Hutton) went to the Royal Society. Only seven persons there. Mr. Anderson read an essay on debtors and the revisions of the laws that respect them, written by himself, very long and dull. Mr. Commissioner Smith fell asleep. Mackenzie touched my elbow and smiled.

One of the activities of the literary class of the Royal Society was of special significance in this period of recognition. Until well past the end of the century, "it was customary to give in their Transactions the lives of deceased members who (had) attained distinction by their works." This practice was, in effect, the second aspect of recognition which the Royal Society could give to Scottish men of letters. Membership itself was a token of merit, and the preparation of a competent biography for its outstanding members was the best kind of recognition of accomplishment that such a society could give. The best examples of the Royal Society's biographies are probably those written by Augald Stewart who prepared Lives for William Robertson, Adam Smith, and Thomas Reid. In his preface, Stewart tells his readers of the motives behind the biographies:


2. Brougham: Lives of Men of Letters, Vol. 1, page 312. Compare the following: "It has been the custom of this society to commemorate, by memoirs or biographical notices, recorded in its Transactions, the most eminent of its deceased members — a custom which serves to gratify the feelings of friendship, as well as that curiosity naturally felt by the world to become acquainted with the pursuits, occupations, and habits of men who have distinguished themselves in the commonwealth of letters." (Hogg's Instructor, Vol. 8, 1852, p. 46.)

3. Stewart: Life of Smith, Robertson, Reid, Preface.
The three Memoirs contained in this Volume, were written in compliance with a practice, which, after the example of some foreign Academies, the founders of the Royal Society of Edinburgh were anxious to introduce at the time of its first establishment. In forming this design, they indulged the hope of being able, not only to preserve, in their Transactions, such notices with respect to the lives of their more distinguished Colleagues, as might be of use to future Biographers; but to record, while facts were yet recent, and recollections lively, the impressions which their characters and manners had left on the memory of their surviving friends.

But biography was not the only contribution which the Royal Society made to literature in its early days. Alexander Carlyle, for example, was instrumental in rediscovering a lost ode by Collins on the Superstitions of the Highlands, and for reintroducing it to the world through the medium of the Royal Society's Transactions. The circumstances of this literary find have been described by John Hill Burton in his continuation of Carlyle's Memoirs as follows:

On the establishment of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1783, Carlyle made, through its Transactions, a very acceptable gift to literature. Johnson, in his Life of Collins, referred to the loss of an ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands, which Dr. Warton and his brother had seen, and "thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found." A poem so wild and sweet - so far beyond the bounds of the conventionalities of the day, and so full of imagery drawn direct from nature in her highest and most wayward flights - was not likely to be quite forgotten by any one who had seen it. Carlyle remembered having read it in 1749 with Home, to whom it was addressed, and John Barrow, who had been one of Home's fellow-prisoners in Doune Castle. After a search, Carlyle found the actual manuscript of the ode in an imperfect state. He and Henry Mackenzie set themselves to filling up the lacunae, and presented it in a complete shape to the Royal Society. Soon afterwards the ode was published from what was said to be an original and complete copy, which of course deviated from the other on the points where Carlyle and Mackenzie had completed it. This copy was, however, printed anonymously, and its accuracy has not passed unsuspected. The editor of Pickering's edition of Collins says: "The Wartons, however, had read and remembered the poem, and the anonymous

editor dedicated the ode to them, with an address. As this called forth no protest from the Cartons, it is to be presumed that they acknowledged the genuineness of the more perfect copy; and it has for that reason, though not without some hesitation, been adopted for the text of this edition."

This method of recovering "lost" poems had its dangers. Henry Mackenzie, who had assisted Carlyle in restoring Collins's ode, also read before the Society "some stanzas which he possest as written by Burns in a fit of indignation at the wood on the river Nith being cut down by the Duke of Queensberry." This jeu d'esprit, however, became rather more serious than Mackenzie had intended. "On being told that (Dr. Currie) proposed inserting those verses in a new edition of Burns, I thought it right to undeceive him as to their author. To my letter containing the real state of the matter the Doctor wrote a very kind and complimentary answer, and it procured me his acquaintance and correspondence."

Mackenzie's contributions, however, were not all of so frivolous a nature, as his biographer Harold W. Thompson has related:-

But far more important than (the discovery of Collins's ode) was the discovery recorded in Mackenzie's Account of the German Theatre, read before the Society on 21 April 1788 and subsequently published in the second volume of the Society's Transactions, Papers of the Literary Class, pages 154 to 192.

This enthusiastic praise seems to have begun the real appreciation of German literature in Britain. In his German Influence in the English Romantic Period, the most recent study of the subject and the best, Mr. J. Stokoe follows a General Introduction with an entire chapter entitled Henry Mackenzie's Lecture, a chapter which develops the theory stated in the Preface, that Mackenzie's paper "marks conveniently for our purpose the beginning of a new era in the relations of the English public to German literature, and

2. Ibid.
helped, no doubt, to hasten the change". Other contributing factors are easily to be found, of course; there is particularly the growing distrust of France in the period of Revolution, the increasing importance and power of Prussia, the alliance against "hauty Gaul". So that when Mackenzie's Account was copied into magazines there was already a public in Britain willing to learn of German excellence. The chief preparation for German romanticism, however, as has been shown, was the British sentimental movement plus Scottish curiosity.

Walter Scott told Lockhart how Mackenzie's paper started him on his literary career and set a number of young men to studying German with a Dr. Willich, who conducted a class in Edinburgh between 1782-4. Scott's own earliest translations from German did not appear until 1796, but two of the older Scottish literati preceded him in publication. In 1782 Alexander Fraser Tytler brought out his translation of Die Sauener, with handsome acknowledgement to Mackenzie's paper; the Fourth London edition of this translation, that of 1809, has an advertisement by the publishers attacking another translation by the Rev. William Render, and states that Tytler's had had no less than three "editions" in London and three in Dublin.

Henry Mackenzie, who "was specially honoured with the duty of preparing the early volumes of the Transactions of both classes" of the Royal Society, was also a leading member of another organization which, though it may strike the reader as being difficult to imagine as being of a similar nature as the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries, also had literary interests. This society, the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, was organized in 1784, and Henry Mackenzie was one of its founding members, and "wrote the introduction for its Prize Papers and Transactions, and besides many other services headed the committee which in 1805 rendered a famous Report on the authenticity of MacPherson's Ossian." Mackenzie's

1. For a description of the publications of the Society in the eighteenth century, see Terry: Scottish Historical Clubs, page 137.
connection with the Highland Society, and the general situation which
brought the Society into existence, has been ably described by his biographer Thompson:-

At about the time when Mackenzie was helping to found the Royal Society of Edinburgh, before which his paper on the German Drama was read, he was a leading spirit in establishing the Highland Society of Scotland, which represents his other chief discovery of the time. The important contributions of the Highlands to Scotland's Golden Age have been stated well by Lecky: "The union between the Highlands and Lowlands was perhaps an even greater influence on Scottish national life and character than the union of Scotland and England. The Highlands brought a strain of romance to blend with the logic, and a temper of loyalty to colour the passion for liberty, of the Lowland Scotch; and the mixed genius of the Scottish people, which curiously united the sentimental with the practical, is largely the result of this blending and colouring."

1. Thompson: A Scottish Man of Feeling, page 293 ff. For other accounts of the Highland Society see the following works: Ramsay: History of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland; A. M. MacKenzie: Scotland in Modern Times, page 45 ff.; and Grant: Old and New Edinburgh, vol. 1, page 294. The Scots Magazine contains a great deal of detailed information as the following chart serves to indicate:

---

1. Thompson: A Scottish Man of Feeling, page 293 f. For other accounts of the Highland Society see the following works: Ramsay: History of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland; A. M. MacKenzie: Scotland in Modern Times, page 45 ff.; and Grant: Old and New Edinburgh, vol. 1, page 294. The Scots Magazine contains a great deal of detailed information as the following chart serves to indicate:

---

Scots Magazine, Appendix to Volume for 1784, page 697, notice of the foundation of the Society.

- March 1783, pages 105-108, premiums offered by the Society.
- August 1786, pages 409-410, report of a general meeting.
- August 1789, pages 403-404, report of a general meeting.
- October 1790, page 489, report of the Society's committee on Shetland wool.
- January 1791, page 46, report of a general meeting.
- February 1791, page 90, list of premiums distributed.
- January 1794, page 45, report of a general meeting.
- July 1794, page 440, do.
- January 1795, pages 64-66, do.
- June 1795, page 438, do.
- February 1796, page 141, do.
- July 1796, page 504, do.
- January 1797, page 66, do.
- July 1797, page 590, do.
- January 1798, page 55, do.
- March 1798, page 208, do.
- July 1799, page 503, do.
- January 1799, page 71, do.
- July 1799, pages 491-492, do.
- August 1799, page 274, notice of prize competition in piping.
Though the Celtic Revival in letters began to flourish in Mackenzie's boyhood, the Highland Celts themselves were in wretched condition. The old hereditary jurisdictions were annulled after the '45, and the kilt was proscribed; for a time there was such harrying by the brutal Cumberland that even the Highland chieftains protested. The elder Pitt's wisdom and magnanimity in enlisting Highland troops for his campaigns removed a little of the economic pressure from a region where every year 10,000 men enlisted in the army as the only escape from starvation. But the almost total failure of crops in the Highlands in 1762 brought matters to a head, and in the following year men like Mackenzie decided upon an organization which has proved of the utmost practical value, not only to the Highlands but to the Lowlands as well, and to the cause of scientific agriculture throughout the world. In Canada to-day and in the United States we are profiting still from the founding of the Highland Society of Scotland in February 1784.

In the first volume of the Society's Prize Essays and Transactions, not published until 1799, Mackenzie as editor gives the principal objects of its founders:

1. An inquiry into the present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and the condition of their inhabitants.

2. An inquiry into the means of their improvement, by establishing towns and villages - by facilitating communication through different parts of the Highlands of Scotland, by roads and bridges - advancing agriculture, and extending fisheries - introducing useful trades and manufactures - and, by an exertion to unite the efforts of the proprietors, and call the attention of Government towards the encouragement and prosecution of these beneficial purposes.

3. The Society shall also pay a proper attention to the preservation of the language, poetry, and music of the Highlands.

The idea of a society devoted to the interests of the Highlands and its inhabitants was not new. A charitable organization, which bore the title of the Highland Society of Glasgow, was established in January 1727. The Highland Society of London, instituted in 1778,
had held the first of its many bagpipe competitions in Scotland at Falkirk in 1781, and the Gaelic Club in Glasgow, established in 1780 by charter from the London Highland Society, had already been established by the Highland gentlemen of Glasgow "to remind them of Ossian, the melodious and noble prince of poets, as well as to converse as friends in the bold and expressive language of heroes in ages past."

In keeping with this interest in Highland traditions, and as a fulfillment of their resolve to "pay proper attention to the preservation of the language, poetry, and music of the Highlands, the Highland Society, soon after its institution, appointed "a bard, a piper, and a Professor of the Gaelic language." These efforts were followed up by essays on the Gaelic language, and the project of preparing a Gaelic dictionary. And the Society did not neglect the great issue of the day, the question of the authenticity of the poems of Ossian. Shortly after Macpherson's

---


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid, page 152 f. For the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland and the Ossian controversy see the following works: Report of the
death, Henry Mackenzie proposed a motion, which was accepted, that the society should "recommend to the Committee of directors, to take such measures as shall to them seem most proper and effectual for elucidating and ascertaining the History and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian."

What followed upon this resolution is perhaps best presented in the words of the historian of the Society:—

**Ossian Inquiry.**

The same spirit which led the Society to appoint the (bard and the Professor of Gaelic) induced it to assent to an inquiry, by a Committee of its members, regarding the Poems of Ossian. The poems issued by Macpherson in 1762, 1765, and 1765, had been read with avidity and translated into various European languages, but their authenticity, as is well known, was loudly questioned by Dr. Johnson, David Hume, Malcolm Laing, and others. The resolution authorising the inquiry was adopted at a meeting in July 1797, a year after the death of Macpherson, at a time, therefore, when a semi-official inquiry could be made without reference to personal feeling. The question submitted to the Committee was of a twofold character. The Committee itself defines the inquiry to be first, "what poetry, of what kind, and of what degree of excellence, existed anciently in the Highlands, and which was generally known by the denomination of Ossianic, from its universal belief that its author was Ossian, the son of Flingal; and secondly, how far the collection of such poetry, published by Macpherson, was genuine?" The Committee issued circulars containing queries which were addressed to such persons in the Highlands and Islands as seemed likely to afford information regarding the poems. It also obtained from Dr. Blair some correspondence he had had with various persons when instituting a like investigation. The report, which...
is from the pen of the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Henry Mackenzie, is a most elaborate document, and must have entailed a great deal of labour in its preparation. Owing to its length, it was not given in the Society's Transactions, but was published separately in 1806. It fills an octavo volume of upwards of 300 pages, of which one-half consists of an appendix of documents and correspondence.

It is unnecessary here to enter on the argument of the report, which is almost judicial in its impartiality; but the conclusions at which the Committee arrived may be stated. With respect to the first branch of the inquiry — the existence in the Highlands of poetry known as Ossianic — the Committee states "with confidence that such poetry did exist; that it was common, general, and in great abundance; that it was of a most impressive and striking sort, in a high degree eloquent, tender, and sublime." The second question, as to "how far the collection of such poetry published by Mr. James Macpherson, is genuine," the Committee observes "it is much more difficult to answer." It goes on to say — "The Committee is possessed of no documents to show how much of his collection Mr. Macpherson obtained in the form in which he has given it to the world. The poems and fragments of poems which the Committee has been able to procure, contain often the substance, and sometimes almost the literal expression (the ipsissima verba), of passages given by Mr. Macpherson, in the poems of which he has published the translations. But the Committee has not been able to obtain any one poem the same in title and tenor with the poems published by him. It is inclined to believe that he was in use to supply chasms, and to give connection, by inserting passages which he did not find, and to add what he conceived to be dignity and delicacy to the original composition, by striking out passages, by softening incidents, by refining the language, in short, by changing what he considered as too simple or too rude for a modern ear, and elevating what in his opinion was below the standard of good poetry. To what degree, however, he exercised these liberties, it is impossible for the Committee to determine. The advantages he possessed, which the Committee began its inquiries too late to enjoy, of collecting from the oral recitation of a number of persons, now no more, a very great number of the same poems, on the same subjects, and then collating those different copies or editions, if they may be so called, rejecting what was spurious or corrupted in one copy, and adopting from another something more genuine and excellent in its place, afforded him an opportunity of putting together what might fairly enough be called an original whole, of much more beauty, and with much fewer blemishes, than the Committee believes it now possible for any person, or combination of persons, to obtain.

The Ossian controversy has long been a dead issue, but it would perhaps be well to record at this point the conclusions of Sir Walter Scott who was, on this score, as reasonable as he was in most things.
In recording his opinion of the authentic nature of the poems, Sir Walter wrote:

Ossian's poems, in particular, have more charms for youth than for a more advanced stage. The eternal repetition of the same ideas and imagery, however beautiful in themselves, is apt to pall upon a reader whose taste has become somewhat fastidious; and, although I agree entirely ... that the question of their authenticity ought not to be confounded with that of their literary merit, yet scepticism on that head takes away their claim for indulgence as the productions of a barbarous and remote age; and, what is perhaps more natural, it destroys that feeling of reality which we should otherwise combine with our sentiments of admiration. As for the great dispute, I should be no Scotsman if I had not very attentively considered it at some period of my studies; and, indeed, I have gone some lengths in my researches, for I have beside me translations of some twenty or thirty of the unquestioned originals of Ossian's poems. After making every allowance for the disadvantages of a literal translation, and the possible debasement which those now collected may have suffered in the great and violent change which the Highlands have undergone since the (collection) of Macpherson, I am compelled to admit that in calculably the greater part of the English Ossian must be ascribed to Macpherson himself, and that his whole introductions, notes, etc., etc., are an absolute tissue of forgeries.

Besides, there is something in the severe judgment passed on my countrymen - "that if they do not prefer Scotland to truth, they will always prefer it to enquiry," when once the Highlanders had adopted the poems of Ossian as an article of national faith, you would far soon have got them to disavow the Scripture than to abandon a line of the contested tales. Only they all allow that Macpherson's translation is very unfaithful, and some pretend to say inferior to the original; by which they can only mean, if they mean any thing, that they miss the charms of the rhythm and vernacular idiom, which pleases the Gaelic natives; for in the real attributes of poetry, Macpherson's version is far superior to any I ever saw of the fragments which he seems to have used.

The Highland Society have lately set about investigating, or rather, I should say, collecting materials to defend, the authenticity of Ossian. Those researches have only proved that there were no real originals - using that word as is commonly understood - to be found for them. The oldest tale they have found seems to be that of Porthula; but it is perfectly different, both in diction and story, from that of Macpherson. It is, however, a

beautiful specimen of Celtic poetry, and shows that it contains much which is worthy of preservation. Indeed how should it be otherwise, when we know that, till about fifty years ago, the highlands contained a race of hereditary poets? Is it possible to think, that, among perhaps many hundreds, who for such a course of centuries have founded their reputation and rank on practising the art of poetry, in a country where the scenery and manners gave such effect and interest and imagery to their productions, there should not have been some who attained excellence? In searching out those genuine records of the Celtic muse, and preserving them from oblivion, with all the curious information which they must doubtless contain, I humbly think our Highland antiquaries would merit better of their country, than by confining their researches to the fantastic pursuit of a chimera.

As the reader will recall, one of the provisions of the Society of Antiquaries was that, in addition to their inquiries into the nations antiquities, the natural resources of the country should be surveyed and developed. In the Highland Society, the latter activity, which we saw in the guise of the movement for national improvement at the beginning of the century, became once again the primary concern of a Scottish "improving" society, and matters of antiquarian or literary interest assumed a subordinate role. In other parts of the country, however, the combination of the improving spirit and the widespread interest in Scottish antiquities which we have seen in connection with the Society of Antiquaries of Edinburgh, gave rise to a number of provincial societies of a similar type.

The first of such societies was that instituted in Perth in 1784 "for investigating the history and preserving the antiquities and records of Scotland generally, and more particularly of that portion of it of which the City of Perth may still be considered as the capital."  


2. The Society issued only one volume of Transactions in 1827, (Terry: Scottish Historical Clubs, page vii.)
When Robert Heron wrote of his visit to Perth in 1792, he described the Society as follows:

Perth is likewise distinguished by possessing an Antiquarian Society. This was instituted in the year 1784. The plan was, I believe, framed and suggested by the Reverend Mr. Scott, senior clergyman of the city. At a meeting of gentlemen, disposed to these pursuits, on the 16th of December, in the year above named, he communicated his plan for the institution and regulation of such a society. He accompanied this communication with an excellent discourse on the state of the Scottish history; on the original monuments remaining, by an examination and comparison of which it may yet be corrected and elucidated; and on the probability, that skilful and diligent investigation may yet recover many facts in our early history which are, at present, supposed to be irrecoverably lost in oblivion. Those gentlemen accordingly formed themselves into a society for the investigation of the antiquities of their country. Their numbers have since been occasionally augmented by the accession of ordinary, honorary, and correspondent members. They hold their ordinary meetings on the last Tuesday of every month. They have one annual meeting at which a particularly punctual attendance of all members is expected. They have since, on the 25th of January 1787, extended their plan to the cultivation of philosophy, polite literature, and the fine arts in general. And, it must be confessed, that they have prosecuted the objects of their association with a degree of diligence and success which is highly honourable to them, and proves them to have been in earnest when they formally commenced Antiquarians. It is hoped, that they may be persuaded to favour the public with occasional volumes of their memoirs and transactions. Perth will then rank with Manchester in literature, as in manufactures.

As a reflection of the general interest in such institutions, Heron's comment upon the Library instituted in Calloway is revealing:

I should like to see the respectable and intelligent gentlemen of these parts, - add, as they easily might, to this laudable establishment of a public library, ... the institution of a Society for Improvements: and for the Investigation of the Antiquities of Calloway. Such an institution would naturally

1. Heron: Journey through the Western Counties, Vol. 1, page 141; see also, Hume: Learned Societies, page 185.
2. See note 2 on page 351, directly above.
3. Heron: Journey, etc., page 195, Vol. 2.
connect itself with the establishment of the Library. It should be select. Its meetings need not be frequent, but might correspond with the meetings of the Presbytery, — of the Quarter-Sessions, — or of the Commissioners of the Land-Tax and Supply; all which are held in Kircudbright. I despair not of living to see such a Society instituted here.

Although he was to be disappointed in his immediate hopes for the particular area of which he wrote, Heron certainly lived to see a number of societies of the type he described organized throughout Scotland before he died. But as the movement did not reach that stage until well into the next century, I shall leave the task of reporting on them to a future student who, if any such there be, wishes to continue this inquiry into Scottish clubs and societies which were organized in the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER SIX.

STUDENT CLUBS AND SOCIETIES.

During the eighteenth century, the Scottish Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews, were the centers of that intellectual foment which has since been called the Scottish Enlightenment. For this reason, if for no other, the associations formed by students who were caught up in the intellectual excitement of the times would be of great interest and significance. But the student societies which I shall endeavour to describe in this chapter are interesting for other reasons as well. In one respect, such organizations, though composed of immature youths, are interesting because they demonstrate in microcosm the intellectual attitudes and interests of more mature associations. In many of these student organizations, therefore, we shall discover delightful miniatures of the clubs and societies which have been described in preceding chapters.

From another point of view, Scottish student organizations appear as a reflection of certain peculiarities of Scottish intellectual life. Debating societies, which are dearly beloved of all students who have received the taint of the Western democratic tradition, were even more of a speciality of Scottish students. Several circumstances of their

national background combined to bring this about. For one thing, the two leading professions in Scotland, the Church and the Law, both were fields in which an ability to speak in public was a tremendous advantage. Scottish courts of law were a splendid arena for the display of natural talents, and the Scottish legal profession had the added prestige of containing within its ranks many of the men of letters who had established a literary reputation which, although it was independent of the profession, reflected glory upon it. The National Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a kind of ecclesiastical parliament, presented another opportunity for those who wished to distinguish themselves in public debates. And the clerical profession, which included such men as Hugh Blair, Alexander Carlyle, and William Robertson, was a shining example and a lure to ambitious young Scotsmen. It is little


2. "In the absence of a Scots Parliament, the Assembly was looked upon and used as the nursery for orators and politicians, and there was to be found almost as good speaking in it as in the House of Commons." (Graham: Social Life in Scotland, page 359.) For remarks in a similar vein, see:– Lover: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 3, page 213; Thomson: Scottish Man of Feeling, page 10 f.; Incaird: History of Edinburgh, page 120; Ferguson: Henry Erskine, pages 86 f.; Carlyle: Autobiography, pages 259 and 265; Mathieson: Awakening of Scotland, page 52; and Lugald Stewart: Life of Robertson, page 275 f.

3. For the position occupied by the clergy, as leaders in intellectual matters and as men of letters, see:– Cockburn: Memorials of his Time, page 223 f.; Watson: Scotsmen of the Eighteenth Century, page 171 f.; Millar: Literary History of Scotland, page 554; Graham: Scottish
wonder, all these things considered, that the art of elocution was a national Scottish pastime, and that ambitious young men regarded it as a form of sport in which excellence brought success, fame, and popular applause.

But oratory was not merely an idle pastime of the students. At the beginning of the century, the office of Regent in the University of Edinburgh was bestowed upon the victor in a public debate. And in their college lectures under Hugh Blair half a century later, Scottish students in the same University were given the following advice regarding the benefits and dangers to be expected from their debating societies:

Exercises of speaking have always been recommended to students, in order that they may prepare themselves for speaking in public, and on real business. The meetings, or societies, into which they sometimes form themselves for this purpose, are laudable institutions; and, under proper conduct, may serve many valuable purposes. They are favourable to knowledge and study, by giving occasion to inquiries concerning those subjects which are made the ground of discussion. They produce emulation; and gradually inure those who are concerned in them, to somewhat that resembles a public assembly. They accustom them to know their own powers, and to acquire a command of themselves in speaking; and what is, perhaps, the greatest advantage of all, they give them a facility and fluency of expression, and assist them in procuring that copia verborum, which can be acquired by no other means but frequent exercise in speaking.

---

But the meetings which I have now in my eye, are to be understood of those academical associations, where a moderate number of young gentlemen, who are carrying on their studies, and are connected by some affinity in the future pursuits which they have in view, assemble privately, in order to improve one another, and to prepare themselves for those public exhibitions which may afterwards fall to their lot. As for those public and promiscuous societies, in which multitudes are brought together, who are often of low stations and occupations, who are joined by no common bond of union, except an absurd rage for public speaking, and have no other object in view, but to make a show of their supposed talents, they are institutions not merely of an useless, but of an hurtful nature. They are in great hazard of proving seminaries of licentiousness, petulance, faction, and folly. They mislead those, who, in their own callings, might be useful members of society, into fantastic plans of making a figure on subjects which divert their attention from their proper business, and are widely remote from their sphere in life.

Even the allowable meetings into which students of oratory form themselves, stand in need of direction in order to render them useful. If their subjects of discourse be improperly chosen; if they maintain extravagant or indecent topics; if they indulge themselves in loose and illiberal declamation, which has no foundation in good sense; or accustom themselves to speak pertly on all subjects without due preparation, they may improve one another in petulance, but in no other thing; and will infallibly form themselves to a very faulty and vicious taste in speaking. I would, therefore, advise all who are members of such societies, in the first place, to attend to the choice of their subjects; that they be useful and manly, either formed on the course of their studies, or on something that has relation to morals and taste, to action and life. In the second place, I would advise them to be temperate in the practice of speaking; not to speak too often, nor on subjects where they are ignorant or unripe; but only when they have proper materials for a discourse, and have digested and thought of the subject beforehand. In the third place, when they do speak, they

in defence of Christianity, or eloquent illustrations of every branch of Christian doctrine and morals. Who have wrote the best histories, ancient and modern? - It has been clergymen of this Church. Who has wrote the clearest delineation of the human understanding and all its powers? - A clergymen of this Church. Who has written the best system of rhetoric, and exemplified it by his own orations? - A clergymen of this Church. Who wrote a tragedy that has been deemed perfect? - A clergymen of this Church. Who was the most profound mathematician of the age he lived in? - A clergymen of this Church. Who is his successor, in reputation as in office? Who wrote the best treatise on agriculture? Let us not complain of poverty, for it is a splendid poverty indeed! It is paupertas facunda virorum." (Carlyle: Autobiography, page 558, Burton's continuation of Carlyle's life.)
should study always to keep good sense and persuasion in view,
rather than an ostentation of eloquence, and for this end, I would,
in the fourth place, repeat the advice which I gave in a former Lecture,
that they should always choose that side of the question to which,
in their own judgement, they are most inclined, as the right and
true side; and defend it by such arguments as seem to them most
solid. By these means they will take the best method of forming
themselves gradually to a manly, correct, and persuasive manner of
speaking.  

When all this emphasis on the art of elocution is considered, it is
little wonder that even before they entered the University, Scottish
students were preparing themselves for the ordeal of public debates.
When Henry Brougham was attending the High School of Edinburgh, he and
two or three other students "used to meet of an evening and hold a debate
on some subject which (Dr. Adam) had handled in his class." And James
Mackintosh, while still a student in grammar school was the leading
figure in a juvenile debating assembly.

Despite the predominance of debating societies among student's
organizations, however, not all such clubs and societies were of so
serious and so practical a purpose. Conviviality, which has always
been associated with student life, had a strong following among Scottish students,
and was a reflection of the convivial spirit which permeated eighteenth-
century social life. In order to clear the way for more businesslike
associations, therefore, I shall begin my account of student organizations

1. I have quoted this advice of Dr. Blair's as note #2 on page 207, above.
  1, page 8, note. The young Mackintosh called his group the "the
  House of Commons", and he spoke in it in the person of the leading
  political figures of the day.
with a brief description of a rather pleasant convivial society which was composed of students from Marischal College in Aberdeen.

In the early years of the eighteenth century, Aberdeen was the scene of an extravagant student's drinking club which called itself the Collegium butterense. This Society has been so admirably described by Robert Chambers that I shall not run the risk of spoiling its tradition, but offer the reader an extract from Chambers's account which, indeed, contains all that is known concerning this youthful and imaginative group of bibbers:-

Notwithstanding the many serious and the many calamitous things affecting Scotland, there was an under-current of pleasantries and jocularities, of which we are here and there fortunate enough to get a glimpse. For example, in Aberdeen, near the gate of the mansion of Inver, there looks out upon our view a little cozy tavern, kept by one Peter Butter, much frequented of students in Marischal College and the dependants of the magnate here named. The former called it the Collegium butterense, as affecting to consider it a sort of university supplementary to, and necessary for the completion of, the daylight one which their friends understood them to be attending. Here drinking was study, and proficiency therein gave the title to degrees. Even for admission, there was a theme required, which consisted in drinking a particular glass to every friend and acquaintance one had in the world, with one more. Without these possible thirty-nine or more articles being duly and unreservedly swallowed, the candidate was relentlessly excluded....

A diploma conferred upon George Durward, doubtless not without very grave consideration of his pretensions to the honour, is couched in such the same strain as the theses:

To all and sundry who shall see this,
What' er his station or degree is,
We, masters of the buttery College,
Send greeting, and to give them knowledge,
That George Durward, praeventum later,
Did study at our Alma Mater
Some years, and hated foolish projects,

But stiffly studied liquid logics;
And now he's as well skilled in liquor
As any one that blows a bicker;
For he can make our college theme
A syllogism or enthymeme...
Since now we have him manumitted,
In arts and sciences well fitted,
To recommend him we incline
To all be south and north the line,
To black and white, though they live as far
As Cape Good-Hope and Madagascar,
Him to advance, because he is
Juvenis bonae indolis, etc.

We have, however, no specimen of the wit of this fluid university
that strikes us as equal to a Catalogus Librorum in Bibliotheca
Butterensi; to all external appearance, a dry list of learned
books, while in reality comprehending the whole paraphernalia of
a tavern. It is formally divided into "Books in large folio,"
and "Lesser Volumes," just as we might suppose the university
catalogue to have been. Amongst the works included are:
"Maximilien Malt-kist de principiis liquidorum - Kircherus
Kettles de oden themate - Bucket's Hidrostaticks - Opera
Biblii Parrelli, ubi de conservatone liquoris, et de vacuo,
problematic disputator - Constantinus Chopinus de philosophicis
bibendi legibus, in usum Principalis, cura Georgii Leith
(described in a note as a particularly assiduous pupil of the
college) 12 tom. - Compendium ejus, for weaker capacities -
Barnabius Beer-glass, de lavando gutture - Manualis Gideonis
Gill, de syllogismis concludentibus - Findlay fireside, de
circulari poculorum motu, etc." One may faintly imagine how
all this light-headed nonsense would please Mr. Pitcairn, as he
sat regaling himself in the Greping Office, and how the serious
people would shake their heads at it when they perused it at
full length, a few years afterwards, in Watson's Collection of
Scots Poems.

In later years the University of St. Andrews was the scene of a
student's convivial society known as the Nine Tumbler Club, "a club
that became extinct because, so the story was, no candidate could be
found to pass the test qualification of 'drinking nine tumblers of
whiskey toddy, and then saying, Bib-lic-al Crit-ic-ism.'"
At the twin colleges of Aberdeen, however, not all the student's organizations were devoted solely to student "high-jinks." In 1742, for example, we learn that Dr. (George) Campbell and others joined together in "the first Theological Club found in Marischal College." And when Sir James Mackintosh attended King's College, together with Robert Hall he formed "a little debating society in which one of the subjects of dispute was ... the Duration of future Punishments." Hall, who became a dissenting minister, defended the "rigid", and "ackintosh the more lenient" opinion. This club "was jocularly designated 'the Hall and Mackintosh Club.'"

Still later in the century, in 1789, the Aberdeen Medical Society was founded by "a band of medical students" from both colleges under the leadership of James McGregor. "In its early days the Society was really a mutual improvement circle, a student's debating club that met weekly in the houses of its members. Later the meetings were transferred to the Greek Classroom and then to a hall provided by an early friend of the young Society, Dr. Livingston, Professor of Medicine in Marischal College." 

---

3. Ibid.
5. Afterwards the "Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society" from 1811.
7. Ibid, page 32. See also Scottish Notes and Queries, March 1880, page 150; and Coutts: History of the University of Glasgow, page 555.
It is to Edinburgh University, however, that we must look for the majority of our examples of student societies of the eighteenth century. The Scottish metropolis not only contained the largest of the five Scottish Universities, but it was the centre of that intellectual foment which I have described in previous chapters. Edinburgh, too, was the home of the Select Society which, as the supreme example of the age's faith in public discussion, was an example which was followed, in 1764, by the most successful student's debating society ever to be formed, the Speculative Society. But while the Select Society was the immediate example followed by the Speculative, the Scottish student's infatuation with oratory was displayed in a number of debating societies which were organized before 1764.

The historical background of the first student debating societies is interesting, and it is nowhere traced so expertly as in the History of the Speculative Society. The authors of this work describe the situation which led to the formation of the first of these societies as follows:

It was about the time of Rollock, that it became customary, in graduating as Master of Arts at the University of Edinburgh, to publish a philosophical thesis, which was submitted to public disputation. The theses were originally prepared by the Regents of the University, the candidates being required merely to maintain the doctrines advanced in them. This custom was liable to many obvious objections; but there can be little doubt that it tended to sharpen the faculties, and prepare the disputants for more successfully engaging in public controversial discussion. More recently, the inaugural dissertations were prepared, as well as defended, by the students; and many of these, still extant, are

1. There are two Histories of the Speculative Society. The first one was published in 1845, and the second in 1905. I have made a distinction by mentioning the date of publication in my references.

remarkable for ingenuity and elegance. The practice, however, fell gradually into disuse; and only a small number of these addresses bear a date later than the middle of last century.

In course of time, the practice of declaiming and disputing in presence of a Professor, and of publicly defending an inaugural dissertation, was abandoned, and the statutes requiring it fell into desuetude. But it was succeeded, after an interval, by one much better calculated to promote originality of thought and independence of opinion — that of private meetings for discussion and debate. It is worthy of remark, that the first trace of these private associations was in connexion with specific objects of scientific research; those which took a more daring flight into the regions of general speculation in philosophical and political topics, were of a later date....

"In the year 1720," the author of this history continues, "a Society was founded in Edinburgh among the students of natural philosophy, for the cultivation of subjects falling under that branch of science." Little more is known of this organization except that it made "a collection of books relating to physical science" which, upon its dissolution, it left to the college library.

The next society to appear, the Medical Society, later the Royal Medical Society, is, because of its long history, deserving of a more

1. history of the Speculative Society (1845), page 7.
2. Ibid.
point which must be made clear concerning the "student organizations" which have been included in this chapter.

It has been brought to my attention that several of the societies which I have included in this chapter are not now student societies in the strictest sense. And it is true that if I were to describe the Royal Medical Society and the Speculative Society as they exist today, I would undoubtedly place them in a more general category, for their memberships include many men who have long since finished their student days. But, even so, I believe that there is a strong tendency to regard these organizations as essentially student's societies, and this, or so I believe, is correct. If we compare the organization and membership of the Royal Medical and the Speculative Societies to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Society of Antiquaries, and to the many mature learned societies which exist at the present day, their special qualities at once become apparent. Fortunately, however, these rather devious ways are unnecessary for the purpose I wish to fulfill in this thesis. My point of view throughout has been an eighteenth-century one, for what I have of the Society appear in the Scots Magazine, April 1775, pages 221-222; August 1775, page 416 f.; June 1775, page 333; February 1779, page 106; and see also the Indexes of the individual volumes; Edin. magazine and Review, June 1775, Vol. 3, page 334 f.; Caledonian Mercury, Monday, April 29, 1776; Glasgow Mercury, Thursday, January 21, 1779; Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany, Vol. 10, Dec. 1789, page 85; Glasgow Courier, Vol. I, Tuesday, November 29, 1791. The Society has also been mentioned briefly in R. Mackintosh: Life of J. Mackintosh, Vol. 1, page 25; Forster: Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. 1, page 47; Smallie: Literary and Characteristical Lives, page 8; an article from the Proceedings of the American Physical Society, Vol. 94, No. 3, June 1950, entitled "Some American Students of 'That Shining Oracle of Physic,' Dr. William Cullen of Edinburgh, 1755-1766"; Coutts: History of the University of Glasgow, page 487; Ayr: Portraits, Vol. I, part 2, page 248; and Grant: Old and New Edinburgh, Vol. 3, page 511-512.
been trying to discover is what these societies meant to the men who organized and were active in them. From this standpoint, because of their student origin, I am certain that there is every justification for placing the Royal Medical Society and the Speculative Society in the special category of student's organizations.

The Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh is the oldest eighteenth-century society which is still in existence in Scotland. It developed from a small beginning in 1754, when seven students met in a tavern and agreed to come together for the purpose of hearing and judging a dissertation which was to be written by one of the members. The following account of the origin of the Society, and of its first meeting, is from the information of "one of its first and most respectable members":-

In the latter end of August 1754, the following gentlemen, viz.: Dr. Cleghorn, Dr. Cuming, Dr. Russel, Dr. Hamilton, Mr. Archibald Taylor, and Dr. James Kennedy; then fellow-students in the Schools of medicine at Edinburgh, who had been long familiarly acquainted, and entertained a reciprocal regard for each other, after having employed themselves during the three preceding weeks in the dissection of a body in the Anatomical Theatre, agreed to spend a social evening together at a tavern. After supper it was proposed by one of the company, that this little Society should meet once a fortnight, early in the evening, at their respective lodgings; that a dissertation in English or Latin on some medical subject at the choice of the Society should be composed and read at each of these meetings, to which such objections as occurred to the rest of the company should be made, which the author was to obviate in the best manner he could. This proposal was cordially assented to by all present, and Dr. Cuming was appointed by the other members to prepare a dissertation for the first meeting, "On the Signs, Causes, and Method of Cure, of the Habies Caming."

1. "Probably Dr. Cuming." (Stroud: History of the Medical Society, page xvii, note.) The passage I have quoted is from Lettsom, (J. C.): Life of Dr. John Pothergill, prefixed to his Works, 4to. Lond: 1784, page lxvi and lxvii, quoted in Stroud: History of the Medical Society, page xvii f.
This he accordingly did, and read to the Society on (Friday) the 20th December following; Dr. Aussel followed in one, "De Gonorrhea Virulenta;" then came Dr. Cleghorn, "De Epilepsia"; Kennedy, "De Fluxu Sensuum," etc. This Association continued during that Winter and the ensuing Spring; but in the Summer of 1755, the members of this little Society were dispersed, and Cleghorn alone remained, to continue, with his respected Sethergill and some others, this Association during the subsequent Winter. This was the humble and fortuitous commencement of a Society, that has since become highly respectable by its obvious utility, and the names of many learned and eminent physicians which it records in the List of its Members, and it is now incorporated by Royal Charter.

The Medical Society, however, was not firmly established until 1737, from which time it claims its descent "under the Title of the Medical Society of Edinburgh." During its first official session, the Society consisted but of ten select Students, who seem to have combined with the more general object of professional improvement, the subordinate one of preparing themselves for Graduation, by the performances of exercises similar to those prescribed at Universities." The Society's early records show that the weekly meetings were held in a tavern.

"The literary duties of Members consisted in their presenting, in the order of seniority, a Discourse on a professional subject of their own selection; and when the whole of these were concluded, - a Consultation on an actual Case of Disease, followed by an Answer to a Medical Question, both previously allotted."

---

1. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xviii.
2. Ibid, page xxii.
After an interruption which was caused by the Rebellion of 1745, the Society continued to meet under its original constitution. In 1763, the taverns of Edinburgh were forsaken as meeting places, and an apartment in the Royal-Infirmary being provided by the officials of that institution, the Medical Society was enabled "to devote the money formerly employed in defraying (its) expenses at a tavern, to the preferable purpose of purchasing books." The library of the Medical Society soon became a very valuable addition to the organization, and as its size grew in proportion to the expanding membership of the association, the members determined to build a hall for their own use. Subscriptions for the erection of the building were opened in 1771, and the building itself was completed in 1776. In their project of erecting this hall, the members of the Medical Society were generously assisted by donations from non-members. As a part of the fund-raising scheme, the following notice was published in two Edinburgh periodicals:

Some Account of the MEDICAL SOCIETY of Students in the University of Edinburgh.

The members of this society, all of whom are of some standing in the study of physic, hold weekly meetings; at which they read, in rotation, discourses on medical subjects previously assigned. But before any discourse be publicly read, it is communicated in writing to every member; and some are appointed to impugn, if necessary, the doctrines which it contains. From these circumstances, the author of every discourse is induced to take the utmost pains to render it as complete as possible; and

1. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xxxii.
2. See Duncan: Account of the Buildings of the Royal Medical Society; (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xxxii f.; and, for a description of the hall and of the opening ceremony, see Caledonian Mercury, Monday, April 29, 1775; Scots Magazine, April 1775, pages 221-222; and June 1776, page 339.
the other members have an opportunity of coming prepared to point out every other view in which the subject can be considered. Thus a spirited emulation is excited, genius is called forth, the judgement is exercised, and the utmost industry produced; and, by a mutual communication, much information is obtained, mistakes are corrected, and farther necessary inquiries pointed out.

At these meetings, every opinion which has at any time prevailed, or which subsists with any credit, in the system of physic, is examined with great freedom. Among others, the doctrines delivered by the professors in the university are considered, and canvassed, with modesty, but without reserve. By this means these doctrines are more fully understood and, when adopted, are received, not on the mere authority of a professor, but as the result of the student's own deliberation and judgment.

Such an institution may hereafter be of use in securing the diligence of professors, and the attention of students. And it is acknowledged by all who are acquainted with the university of Edinburgh, that the assiduity and ardour in study which is so remarkable in the greatest part of the students of medicine, has been especially excited and supported by the medical society: and, in this manner, it has contributed not a little to the prosperity and present flourishing state of this school of physic.

So great have been the advantages derived from this institution, that it has now subsisted without interruption for about forty years. The present professors of medicine in the university, and many others of the most distinguished names in physic, have been members of it. All of them have shown themselves no less ready in acknowledging the benefit they had received from it, than warm in expressing the affection they still retain for it; and there is this proof of both, that these gentlemen, many of whom are now at a great distance, as often as they have had occasion to advise a young man to resort to this university for the study of physic, have at the same time directed him to become a member of the Medical Society, and have employed all their interest to obtain his admission, considering it as a chief means of his progress and improvement.

As this society has been of so considerable utility, it is unquestionably an object of consequence to remove any inconvenience

1. "Dr. William Buchan to Mr. William Smellie, from Ackworth, 18th January 1762. Dear Willie, ... If you are not a member of the Medical Society, I would advise you to enter immediately, as one never fails to pick up something in these clubs, let them be ever so stupid...." (Aerr: William Smellie, Vol. 1, page 245, ltr. #619.)
under which it has hitherto laboured, and to given it all possible stability and permanence. The members have not hitherto possessed any convenient place, under their own command, in which their meetings might be held; and while, with great pains and expence, they have acquired a considerable library, they have had no room proper for its reception. At present it is in a situation very ill adapted for allowing them to have the proper use of their books.

To remove these inconveniencies, they propose to make a building suitable to their purposes, which is intended to afford them a room for their library, a hall for their weekly meetings, a repository for curious subjects in natural history or anatomy, and a place for chymical experiments. Such a building will give many and great advantages in carrying on the business of the society. It will enable the members to prosecute their studies with more convenience; it will allow them to engage in inquiries which they could not otherwise pursue; and, by farther uniting them in a common property, it will secure the permanency of the institution.

For defraying the expence of this building, the present members have contributed according to their abilities. And they have had this particular approbation of their design, that many gentlemen, long since settled in distant countries, have cheerfully subscribed to the undertaking.

These contributions, though they have enabled the society to begin work, are by no means sufficient for completing it. They have therefore published this account of their situation, that gentlemen who wish well to literary establishments, may have an opportunity of encouraging an institution which has had, and is likely to have, a great share in advancing the reputation of the school of physic, which has flourished so much to the honour and emolument of the city of Edinburgh.

Contributions, for this purpose, are received by Drs. Cullen, Hope, and Duncan, physicians in Edinburgh; and these gentlemen, with the annual presidents of the society, are intrusted with the conduct of the building now carrying on. Contributions are also received at London, by Mr. John Murray, bookseller, No. 32 Fleet-street; and at Dublin, by Mr. T. Ewing, bookseller, Cope-street.

The Medical Society of Edinburgh, now that it was in possession of a meeting-hall and of a considerable library, sought, from the Town Council, a town charter which would ensure its stability and permanence, and afford some protection to its property. This new effort has been described as follows by one of the Society’s historians:
Hitherto (the Medical Society) had existed only as a voluntary Association, united indeed by mutual agreement, but unknown to the laws, incompetent to form coercive regulations for its internal government, unable to nominate legal representatives, and consequently incapable of obtaining complete titles to its property, or of defending itself from injury and loss. To remove these disabilities, to confer permanence and solidity on the Institution, and to confirm to it those possessions which the stated or spontaneous contributions of its members might procure, it was necessary that it should become a Body Corporate, and thereby be empowered without need of renewal, or danger of interruption, to maintain a perpetual succession.

To effect this essential purpose, it was unanimously determined, at a very full meeting held about the end of the Fortieth Session in 1777, to apply to the Magistrates and Town-Council of Edinburgh for a Charter of Incorporation. The Petition of the Society was signed by many of the most respectable practitioners in town, and, among others, by seven of the Professors, and having no other object than the security of literary property, and the extension of literary usefulness, a favourable issue was at first confidently anticipated; but, owing to an unexpected opposition, encouraged in some measure by the University, and suggested, as it would appear, by a groundless apprehension that the views of the Students were ambitious, and tended to an undue encroachment on the authority of their superiors, it ultimately miscarried....

Conscious of its intrinsic merit, and of the reasonableness, and indeed necessity, of its object, the Society, superior to repulse, determined, as soon as its funds would permit, to make an application to the higher powers, and dedicated the ensuing Summer access to the prosecution of this affair. After some fruitless negotiation with the University through the medium of Principal Robertson, the case was submitted to the consideration of those eminent lawyers, the Lord Advocate Henry Dundas, and the H.n. Henry Brakine, who recommended in the strongest terms a petition to the Crown, as a measure, at once adequate to the purpose, and likely to be accomplished. The advice thus powerfully urged having been as promptly embraced, a Petition, prepared by Drs. Duncan, Clerkland, and Wardrop, was unanimously adopted on the 4th August 1778, and transmitted to Mr. James Chalmers, a solicitor in London, with directions to forward the business in the accustomed manner.

This application to the Crown proving fortunately more successful than the former one to the Town Council, a Royal Charter of Incorporation, granted by his late Majesty, George the Third, was signed at St. James's on the 14th of the following December, announced to the Society from the Chair on the 2d of January 1779, and sealed at Edinburgh on the 12th of the same month. That the
expense of this proceeding, amounting to nearly One Hundred Pounds, might not prevent the completion of the still unfinished parts of the building, a subscription was set on foot, to which many former contributors, including those constant benefactors of the Institution, the Medical Professors, liberally annexed their names. Thus was an Association of Students, the respectability and usefulness of which had been fully demonstrated by the experience of more than forty years, erected to the dignity and independence of a permanent Corporation, and endowed with powers and privileges, which, however ample and uncommon, were applicable only to the salutary purposes of forwarding the education of themselves and their successors, of co-operating with the efforts of their teachers, and of thereby augmenting the reputation of the University, and, perhaps also, of the Profession, to which they belonged.~

Two activities of the Medical Society of Edinburgh, which had now become, by Royal Charter, the Royal Medical Society, are deserving of notice. The first of these, undertaken in 1778-1779, was the compilation and publication, in the form of a Thesaurus Medicus, of the Inaugural dissertations given by the students in the Edinburgh Medical School.

This compendium, in a manner more convenient than complimentary, undertook to compress, within the limits of two moderate volumes, the best dissertations of the Edinburgh School between the years 1725 and 1759, when the system of Loempaie chiefly prevailed. To exhibit the improvements of the succeeding period, two other volumes were afterwards added, in which, with a succinctness still less flattering than before, the Series is continued to the beginning of the year 1785. Anxious to render the selection as judicious as possible, by a reference to competent authority, the Editor obtained the assistance, on the first occasion, of the Medical Professors, on the second, of the Medical Society. The latter, favouring the design, appointed two successive Committees for its execution, the one in November 1785, the other in the following year, and it was under their exclusive direction that the two last volumes of the Thesaurus were arranged. However

1. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page xxxviii to xli. See also the Glasgow Mercury, Thursday, January 21, 1779; and the Scots Magazine, February 1779, Vol. 41, page 108.

2. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page lx f.
humble and unassuming such a task may be esteemed, the inquiring student will applaud the useful diligence, which has superseded the labour of sifting the grains of instruction from the chaff of insignificance, and diffused, at a slight expense, some of the choicest flowers of medical literature. 1

The second activity of the Royal Medical Society was the establishment, in 1784, of "an annual Prize-Question, for the encouragement of experimental inquiries on subjects more or less directly connected with Medicine." The first questions were "on the General and Medical Properties of the different Species of Air," (1784), and "On the Nature and Varieties of Fermentation," (1785). To the successful candidate went a prize


2. "These questions evince the interest excited by the brilliant discoveries in Pneumatic chemistry, which distinguished that period." (Stroud: History of the Medical Society, page lvii.)
"of a medal of Twenty Guineas value."

From a literary standpoint, the most interesting member of the Medical Society was Oliver Goldsmith. Before Goldsmith's time, in 1740, Mark Akenside had also been a member. In later years James Mackintosh and Henry Brougham spoke at several of its meetings. Among the most famous of the professional men who were active in the Society were William Cullen, and Andrew Duncan. John Hope, and Francis Home, who afterwards became known for their work in medical science, were also members.

a very respectable assemblage of the medical students, took the task from his hands, by publishing, in two other successive volumes, a similar selection, from 1759 to 1784, both inclusive. As in all these four volumes, besides the theses selected for publication, there are full lists of the whole graduates who acquired the degree of doctor in each successive year, together with the titles of all their theses, or the subjects of their respective dissertations, these four volumes exhibit a curious and interesting view of the progress of the University of Edinburgh in acquiring celebrity as a school of medicine, in which its character is now, and has long been, unrivalled."

1. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, page lvii.

2. "He (Goldsmith) became a member of the Medical Society, and on his admission appears to have been exempted from the usual condition of reading a paper on a medical subject." (Forster: Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith, page 47, Vol. 1.)


Despite its respectable membership, and its general beneficial effect on the development of Scottish medicine, the Royal Medical Society did not escape without serious criticism, and criticism, too, which seems to have been fully justified. About 1775, Dr. John Brown, "who was long a member, and three times President of the Society," devised a new theory of medicine which he modestly described as "equal, if not superior, in value to the philosophy of Newton." The easy perspicuity of (his) doctrine, its mathematical and scientific aspect, the respectable portion of truth which it contained, and even the confidence with which it was enforced, all conspired to revive the passion for hasty generalization, which repeated experience of its delusive tendency had weakened, but not extinguished, and procured for the Brunonian theory a degree of popularity and admiration frequently bordering on fanaticism." The effect of this on the Edinburgh Medical students has been described by one who experienced it, the young medical student who afterwards became Sir James Mackintosh:

This new doctrine had great charms for the young; it allured the speculative by its simplicity, and the indolent by its facility; it promised infallible success, with little previous study or


2. (Stroud): History of the Medical Society, pages lxxix-lxxx. "The great error of the students of the Edinburgh University, in their societies for mutual improvement, long was the perpetual search for theories and hypotheses, which they mistook for science." (Marr: Life of William Smellie, Vol. 1, page 132, note.)

experience. Both the generous and the turbulent passions of youth were flattered by an independence of established authority. The pleasures of revolt were enhanced by that hatred of their masters as impostors, and even as tyrants, with which all the power of Brown's invective was employed to inspire them. Scope and indulgence were given to all their passions. They had opponents to detest, as well as a leader to admire, without which no sect or faction will much flourish. Add to all this that Brown led the way in Bacchanalian orgies, as well as in plausible theories and animating declamation. It will not seem wonderful that a man who united so many sources of influence should have many followers, independently of the real merits of his system, which were very great, but which has a small share in procuring converts. It ought not to be omitted that some of the most mischievous and effectual of the above allurements arose not from the subject, but from the teacher. Among these, every one will number personal invective; and it is equally true that the system must have been grossly misunderstood, before it could have been supposed to favour idleness or intemperance, though, as it was taught, it did in fact promote these views.

I was speculative, lazy, and factious, and predisposed to Brunonianism by all these circumstances. The exciting cause was an accident which I will shortly mention. During a fever with which I was attacked, Mr. Alexander, a very excellent young man, the son of a physician at Halifax, visited me. He was a zealous Brunonian. By his advice I swallowed a large quantity of wine, and by that prescription I either was, or seemed to be, suddenly and perfectly cured. I suddenly became a Brunonian. I was elected a member of a society which met weekly for the discussion of medical questions, under the somewhat magnificent title of "The Royal medical Society." It was then divided into Galenians and Brunonians - the Catholic Church and the Heretics. The first was zealously supported by the timid and the prudent; and it might also comprehend some lukewarm sceptics, who thought it better to practice a lukewarm conformity to the established system, than, at the expense of their own and the public quiet, to embrace doctrines somewhat more specious indeed, but perhaps equally false. The Brunonians were, as usual, more active and enterprising than their opponents of the establishment; and whether they had any natural superiority or not, they had at least more active power.

1. "He accompanied a friend to the medical society in the capacity of a visitor. Having listened for a time to the discussions going on, he asked permission to speak, which he did to such a good purpose, that forthwith he was elected a member by general acclaim. When I rejoined him next year in Edinburgh, I found him President of the Royal medical Society." - Principal Jack's Letter. (Ibid, Vol. 1, page 25.)
So ardently was this contest pursued that duels between members of the contending factions were not infrequent, and in 1789 Francis Foulke, then President of the Medical Society, fell on the field of honour. The struggle was, as a matter of course, carried into the meetings of the Royal Medical Society, with the following results:

The lyceum of social investigation was converted into a turbulent arena, where rival factions struggled for superiority, and the dispensers of health to others engaged in a sanguinary warfare among themselves. "Here," says Dr. Cullen Brown, "the partisans of both doctrines used to assemble weekly, and the debates on each side were conducted with such vehemence and intemperance, that they very commonly terminated in one member calling out another to the field. Such encounters had so frequently disgraced the Society, that, in order to prevent the growing evil, it became necessary to pass a law, by which it was enacted, that any member who challenged another in consequence of what had been said in the public debates should be expelled from the Society."

The end of all this misguided effort was exactly what one would expect. The Medical Society, which was capable of performing so much that was useful to the profession, brought discredit upon itself, and upon medical societies generally. A visiting Englishman, for example, when he wrote of his visit to Scotland, spoke for the generality:—

That the lawyers, whose business for life is necessarily to be employed in wrangling, and disputes, should, from their early youth, accustom themselves to that kind of verbal warfare, is natural, and can scarcely be termed improper: the Divines, in former times, were under the necessity of making themselves masters of casuistry, and all the quirks of the Aristotelian Logic; though this is now much neglected, if not despised by men

of real abilities. But it is a misfortune, that the students of Physic, a science which depends so much upon experiment, should be misled; first, by framing visionary theories in their own brains, and then producing and tenaciously defending them in their public Societies; where their object, like their fellow students of the Law, is often victory rather than for the discovery of truth.

Long before the Royal Medical Society had become enmeshed in the Aesculapian warfare which raged about it, another debating society was organized by a group of university students among whom William Robertson was the outstanding figure. This Society, of which little is known, must certainly have been one of the most unusual of its kind, in so far as the talent of its members was concerned, for it contained not only Robertson, but John Home, Hugh Blair, Alexander Wedderburn, Alexander Carlyle, and William Wilkie. This list of names reads, in fact, like a roll call of the Edinburgh literati who afterwards played so prominent a part in the Select Society, and in Scottish literary affairs generally. Other young men in the group were "Dr. William M'Ghie, an ingenious young physician, afterwards well known in London; Mr. William Cleghorn, afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh; (and) Dr. John Blair, late Prebendary of Westminster." The activities of William Robertson


4. For the Select Society, see Chapter 4, page 153 f.

a member of this society convinced him of the utility of such organizations, and had, when he later became principal of the University, a fortunate result for the student societies which were organized in later years:

Dr. Robertson took an early and an active part in the discussions which were introduced on these occasions, and distinguished himself among his comrades by the superiority of his powers, the readiness of his elocution, and the taste he showed in the essays he delivered. He retained through life a conviction of the utility of such societies, during his principality constantly encouraged their institution, and in the most condescending manner, when applied to, kindly entered into the views of the members and communicated such advice as was admirably calculated to promote their prosperity.

It has been claimed, probably mistakenly, that the debating society which Robertson, Blair, Carlyle, Home, Wilkie, and Wedderburn were active, "afterwards became merged in the Speculative Society, which still exists in unimpaired efficiency." Whether this claim is valid or not, however, it makes an admirable lead to the next society which intend to deal with— the Speculative Society of Edinburgh.

The Speculative Society of Edinburgh is the venerable aristocrat among the many student societies that were formed in the eighteenth century. No other society has had such a long and useful life, and attracted so many talented individuals, or received so much praise and attention. It may be claimed, of course, that the Speculative Society

Small: Life of Adam Ferguson, page 2. Small made this statement in 1854, and although the first part of it is suspect, the latter applies to-day as much as it ever did.

There are two excellent histories of the Speculative Society, one was prepared in 1846, and the other in 1905. For other accounts see: "Letters from John Bonar to William Creech concerning the
soon ceased to be merely a student's organization, as one of the original provisions of its constitution was that members were not to be dropped when they had progressed beyond ordinary attendance at the university, but were to be encouraged to remain within the organization, and to take an active part in its proceedings. From the beginning, also, there was no restriction as to the age of entrants. Although the greatest number of members entered between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, some were admitted before, and many after those limits. But this should not disguise the fact that the normal approach to ordinary membership in the Society, and the ordinary members did all the work, was as a student at the university. And this, of course, was the intention of the founders of the organization who were all, at the time they combined to organize the Speculative Society, students at the University of Edinburgh.

formation of the Speculative Society" (from the book of the Old Edin.
Club, Vol. 5, pages 165 to 190); R. Mackintosh: Life of Sir J. Mack

• History of the Speculative Society (1845), page 51.
The Speculative Society was instituted on the 17th of November 1764, by six young gentlemen, who were pursuing their studies at the University of Edinburgh, the eldest of whom had not attained majority. They were:

William Creech.
Allan Maconochie.
Alexander Belshes.
John Bruce.
John Bonar.
John Mackenzie.

The first ordinary meeting was held on Friday, the 23d of November, when Mr. Creech read an essay on the advantages of literary institutions; and the first rude draft of the laws was approved of.

The intention of the six founders, of whom William Creech was the moving spirit, was that the new society should be devoted to "improvement in Literary Composition, and Public Speaking." The features of its constitution which have distinguished the Speculative Society from others of its class, "the limited membership, admission by ballot, compulsory duty, and the rigid exclusion of strangers, were all established from the beginning." The original members worked hard, and established a tradition.

Matheson: Life of Henry Dundas, page 17, refers to Dundas as a member of the Speculative Society. This is an error. Matheson should have said the "Belles Lettres Society", see Chapter 4, page 200, above.

Mackenzie: Anecdotes and Epitomes, page 35, has made the same mistake, but his editor, (Thomson), has corrected him.

History of the Speculative Society, (1845), page 16.

Ibid.

I of serious regard for the obligations of membership. Details of the early activities of the Society are contained in a series of letters which John Bonar wrote to William Creech. The subjects of the Society's debates, from 30th November, 1764, along with a list of members and the titles of the discourses they read before the Society, are contained in the *History of the Speculative Society* which was compiled in 1845. Any of the subjects debated in the Speculative were also debated in the other debating societies which were active at the time.

In 1769, the Society obtained permission from the Town-Council, then patrons of the University, to erect a hall upon a part of the college grounds. A building was erected at a cost of 164 pounds, and was paid for partly out of the Society's funds, and partly by subscriptions among the members. The "hall" had a "Coach Roof", arched windows, and was 25 feet long by 19 feet wide. In 1775, permission was obtained to enlarge the hall by adding a lobby. This building was occupied by the Speculative Society until it was demolished to make way for the...
construction of new college buildings.

The acquisition of a meeting hall was a stabilizing influence on the Society, and there does not seem to have ever been a serious threat that the chronic ailment of student's debating organizations, failing interest and a drying up of sources of new members, ever seriously threatened the existence of the Speculative. But this is not to say that the organization did not have its periods of depression and anxiety. From 1774 to 1780, despite the fact that the Society was able to subscribe one hundred pounds to the fund for raising a corps of Edinburgh Volunteers, its members fell off to the point where it was necessary to appoint a committee - "a familiar symptom of ill-health" - "to consider how it might best be restored to its former flourishing state." In 1784, a library was started which acted as additional ballast to insure the stability of the organization, and a series of "fat years" ensued. But in 1789 to 1796 the fit of depression returned. Few new members joined, and meetings often failed for want of a quorum. It has been suggested that this was "owing almost entirely to the political conditions of the time," but this has been

1. This happened in 1817, (History of the Speculative Society, 1845), page 18.
2. Compare the Cape Clubs of Edinburgh and Glasgow, Chapter 9.
4. Ibid.
called to question elsewhere. The measures suggested by a Committee "that the Society at the present juncture should be cautious in admitting as subjects of discussion or debate, the political topics of the day," however, indicate that feeling in the meetings ran high, and that it was felt that political arguments were interfering with the proper work of the association. This feeling was fully justified by the events which followed. The crisis came in 1799, after a period which has been described as "the most brilliant period in the Society's history." The episode which led to a schism in the membership of the Society, and which was entirely due to a recrudescence of political feelings, has been described as follows:—

In 1799 political feeling brought about a serious crisis. The explosion was caused by Alexander Maconochie, afterwards the second Lord Meadowbank ("Lord Meadowbank also"), who on January 22, 1799 was reported to the Society as having said, "though advised by Mr. Fullarton to refrain from such words as they might lead him into a scrape"; "In future I shall sit in the Society not only as a Member but as a Spy upon the conduct of the Society for the University."

"Mr. Maconochie," says the minute-book, "being called upon from the Chair to answer to the charges of having used such expressions, made the following declaration, which was taken down by the Secretary, viz.:—That in conversation with Mr. Fullarton he mentioned to him that he intended to be a Spy on, i.e. to take down the words of this night's debate, if they interfered with

3. "The membership was full, and included Lord Henry Petty, afterwards third Marquess of Lansdowne, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer at five-and-twenty, Henry Brougham, Francis Horner, John Archibald, Charles Kinnaird, James Moncreiff, and Henry Cockburn." (History of the Speculative Society, 1805, page 11.)
questions of modern politics, in order that he might summon a general meeting of the Society, for the purpose of considering the propriety of resigning the privileges of the Society into the hands of the University, as such discussions being permitted were likely to produce within the walls of the University a political Society, perhaps a Jacobin Club."

Brougham was instantly on his legs, and moved a resolution, which, after setting forth Maconochie's misdeeds, declared "that Mr. Maconochie has been guilty of an high insult to the honour of the Society, and has avowed the assumption of an office utterly inconsistent with the character of a Member of this Society." After a long and fierce debate the motion was carried.

A terrible storm followed. Many senior members took fright at the idea of being connected with so dangerous a body, and a shower of resignations came in. Ultimately a joint committee of the Town Council and the Senatus Academicus exculpated the Society from all blame. A resolution of 1794, prohibiting political debates, which had been rescinded in 1799, was restored.

A lengthy address, framed by Jeffrey and Horner, was issued by the Society to its honorary and extraordinary members, narrating the whole story. It is printed in full in the History of 1845.

That the Speculative Society emerged from its ordeal, "which nothing but its native vigour could have enabled it to survive," even stronger than before speaks well for the determination and ability of its members. And it is, after all, the calibre of its members which has raised this Society to the reputation which it has enjoyed for over one hundred and fifty years. The list of members reads like a roll of honour of Scottish men of letters. William Smellie, Alexander Tytler, Hugo Arnot, Dugald Stewart, James Mackintosh, Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, Henry Brougham, Francis Horner, and Henry Cockburn, have all done honour to Scotland and to the Speculative Society in their works. But not only has the Society the reflected glory of such members, many of them have left behind them

2. Ibid, page 36.
glowing words of praise for the society which was the nursery for their talents. A chapter in the History of the Speculative Society of 1845, is devoted to "Testimonies to the Value of Debating Societies, and in particular to the Speculative." In this chapter one may read the favourable opinions of Sir Walter Scott, Sir Gilbert Blane, Sir James Mackintosh, Benjamin Constant, Francis Horner, Lord Jeffrey, Lord Murray, and Lord Cockburn.

It is only to be expected, however, that not all the notice taken of this vigorous society should have been favourable. William Smellie, his according to biographer, though "only a little more removed from a boy than the original instigators of the Society, looked down upon them as triflers." And at the time of the crisis which occurred because of the political feelings of its members in 1799, it was thought in some circles that the Speculative Society was a hot-bed of sedition. It was suspected, and no doubt with some justification, that Jeffrey, Horner, Arnald, and Brougham favoured the cause of the French Revolutionists. Professor David Hume, a staunch Tory, was accused of having said publicly that "Those young men, like their masters the French, are evidently skilled in political arts." The quartet of

2. See also A. Mackintosh: Life of J. Mackintosh, Vol. 1, page 26 f.
3. Quoted in Radier: La Jeunesse de Benjamin Constant, page 165 f.
young radicals, "who probably revelled in their reputation," were called before Principal Robertson who "gently administered" a "reprimand (which) was perfectly justified" to Henry Brougham who was the only one who was well enough to attend. Aside from these minor detractions, the opinion of outsiders as well as that of the members was overwhelmingly favourable to the Speculative Society.

The Speculative Society has made a number of appearances in fiction. Sir Walter Scott's young lawyers, of whom he wrote so well and so convincingly, carried in their pockets "old playbills, letters respecting a meeting of the Faculty, rules of the Speculative Society, syllabus of lectures - all the miscellaneous contents of a young advocate's pocket, which contains everything but briefs and bank notes." And Robert Louis Stevenson, who, in his own day, thought the Speculative Society "about the best thing in Edinburgh," used it as an important part of his plot for Aair o' Hermiston, a novel with an eighteenth-century setting.

2. Jeffrey was "out of town," and the others were "too ill to attend," (Brougham: Life, Vol. 1, page 52.)
3. Scott: Heart of Midlothian, page 20. In his Life of Scott, Vol. 1, page 303, John Gibson Lockhart quotes this passage in a context which suggests that it came from Jedgauntlet. "(Scott) like the young heroes in Jedgauntlet, 'swept the boards of the Parliament house with the skirts of his gown; laughed, and made others laugh; drank claret at Wyle's, Fortune's and Walker's, and eat oysters in the Covenant Close.' On his desk 'the new novel most in repute lay snugly entrenched beneath Stair's Institute, or an open volume of Decisions;' and his dressing-table was littered with 'old playbills, letters respecting a meeting of the Faculty, Rules of the Speculative, Syllabus of Lectures - all the miscellaneous contents of a young advocate's pocket, which contains every thing but briefs and banknotes.'
In 1776, at a time when the Speculative Society was suffering a fit of depression, the students of divinity of the university of Edinburgh organized a Theological Society, the subject of which was to discuss questions interesting to the Faculty of Divinity. The early records of this society have been lost, but it has been claimed that "the names of some of the most distinguished ministers of the Church of Scotland" were to be found on its list of members.

The Dialectic Society, established in 1787 and still in existence, claims to be the oldest University Society. In the History of the Dialectic Society, the distinction is drawn that whereas the Royal Medical Society and the Speculative Society "have their own halls, libraries, and other property," they have no "special connection with the University, though naturally it is from its past and present students that their members are chiefly drawn." This distinction enables the Dialectic Society to claim itself to be "older by twenty-eight years than the oldest of its sisters."

The Dialectic Society has suffered the same misfortune as the Theological Society, in losing its early records. The names of the first members, however, are known, and they are given, with the subjects of the essays they read, in the list of members appended to the History.

4. Ibid, page x.
5. Ibid, (the list of members begins on page 135.)
The subjects of debates from 1791 are also listed in that volume, and may be compared with interest to those which I have included in the 1 Appendixes to this thesis.

The "rules of the Society, as "adjusted and approved by a resolution 2 of February 18th, 1792," were as follows:


1st. That the Society shall meet every Saturday evening at six o'clock and dismiss at nine.

2nd. That this Institution is principally intended for the benefit of Students who attend the University; but other gentlemen, of whose ability and moral character the Society is amply satisfied, may be admitted. A written petition must be given in before any gentleman can be received as a member.

3rd. That the Society shall at each meeting discuss a Philological, Moral, or Political Question, and choose another for the subsequent meeting. Appointed speakers on each side having spoken once, the Members shall be called to deliver their sentiments in order.

4th. That no Member shall be allowed to speak above ten minutes at once without the Society's special indulgence.

5th. That no personal invectives shall be indulged in the Society, nor anything prejudicial to the character of the Members reported out of it, under pain of expulsion.

6th. That the Members shall preside in regular rotation. The President to constitute the Society by prayer, to deliver an essay not exceeding fifteen minutes in length before the Debate begin, - to preserve order and prevent wanton interruptions of speakers during the Debate, - and to support the dignity of the Society on all occasions. At the end of the Debate the president for next evening shall take the chair, and, in the meantime, he shall appoint the speakers, and close the meeting by prayer.

1. See Appendixes B, D, F, and I.

7th. That the Society shall make their remarks on the President's Essay, but no criticism on Speeches shall be permitted.

8th. That Members who do not come forward within fifteen minutes after the hour of meeting, and those who absent themselves for one or more nights successively without producing a satisfactory excuse, shall pay a fine (in no case exceeding a Shilling) if the Society think proper to exact it. Long absence without a good reason infers expulsion. But the object of this Society supposes that many of its Members must necessarily be absent during summer.

9th. That on ordinary occasions no Visitors shall be admitted without the Society's special indulgence. But it is proposed that this Society in its progress have a meeting once a month or fortnight, at which members shall be desired to introduce as many gentlemen as they please. Visitors shall be invited to deliver their sentiments on the questions they find under review.

10th. That Three Members shall be sufficiently authorised to constitute the Society and proceed to business.

"The backbone of the Society was at this time formed of young men studying for the Relief or Secession ministry, or at all events in some way connected with Dissent." As they were "very much in earnest," the Society, through the subjects of its debates, gives the impression of being a little owlish and overly serious, but such faults as these are ready be forgiven. Youth is sometimes a very serious responsibility.

One provision which the members of the Society stoutly adhered to was that their meetings should be held within the precincts of the College. At a time when the only alternative places of meeting were probably the Edinburgh taverns, this is not to be wondered at. The use of College classrooms for such purposes was frequently suspended, but the Dialectic Society, as the narrator of its history relates, always persisted and

2. Ibid, page xv.
finally prevailed in its requests for the use of such rooms.

From the beginning of 1793, the war with France interrupted the normal intercourse with the continent, and English students, having nowhere else to go, and attracted by the growing reputation of Edinburgh as an intellectual centre, began to travel northwards. It was also during this period that a group of brilliant young men began their studies at the University of Edinburgh. From 1797 until the end of the century, the Speculative Society had "its most brilliant period," when Henry Brougham, Francis Jeffrey, Francis Horner, and Henry Cockburn were among its members. But the Speculative was not the only society to be stimulated by this remarkable accumulation of talent. In December 1792, Henry Brougham and others established an association which they named the Juvenile Literary Society. Brougham, who had retained the Society's record book, gives the following description of the organization in his autobiography:

"This Society was formed in December 1792; and at the first meeting, on the 22nd day of December 1792, received the name of the Juvenile Literary Society." (Quoted from the record-book)

Then follows a list of the members, twenty-one in number, headed by my name as founder and first president. Among the first members

1. For other accounts of the Dialectic Society see:— History of the Speculative Society (1845), page 10; and Grant: History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, page 435.
were Horner, Henry Mackenzie (afterwards Lord Mackenzie), John Forbes (afterwards Lord Medwyn), James Keay, who rose high at the bar; Andrew Wauchope, who distinguished himself in the Peninsular war; and Andrew Thomson, the eloquent preacher and leader in the Church Courts.

The laws were very strict. Absence without excuse, to be inquired into by a committee, was fined. Coming late, half an hour beyond the time of meeting, was also fined; and occasionally, though very rarely, expulsion was inflicted for repeated breach of the rules. The laws were sometimes revised by a committee of inquiry, and altered upon its report. At the end of the session and commencement of the six months' vacation a commission was appointed, on the model of that in the General Assembly, to look after the affairs of the society. The meetings were on Saturday morning, when there were no college classes. The members presided in rotation, and an essay was read from the chair, and submitted to criticism. The questions were put into a list, upon the report of a committee. One was given out for each meeting, and a member appointed to debate it on each side; any other afterwards taking part in the discussion. Many of the speeches were read, but sometimes an extempore debate was had on a question proposed by the president, without any notice. The politics of the day were generally excluded; but from a letter from Forbes (Lord Medwyn), addressed to the secretary in 1794, there appears to have been an apprehension of their introduction.

I see one debate was on theatrical representations being injurious to virtue, and decided in the negative by four to one. One the question whether Elizabeth was justified in putting Mary to death, I stood alone against Elizabeth, which shows that the answer I gave at Edinburgh two years ago had not been an opinion recently formed. Having attended the drawing-room given by Lady Belhaven (his Grace the Lord High Commissioner's wife), in Holyrood House, I was taken to see the chamber in which Mary had been murdered, and the queen's bedroom adjoining; and on my expressing the natural feeling of horror at the assassination, and the outrage also to her feelings, with some observation upon the conduct of Elizabeth, they said, "then of course you consider Mary as innocent of all that has been laid to her charge." I answered, "quite the contrary; I regard her conduct in the worst light possible as regards Scotland, my only doubt being upon her share in Babington's conspiracy."

On the question whether the lawyer or the divine is more useful to society, it was given in favour of the divine, - all the lawyers voting in the majority! That Brutus was unjustifiable in killing Caesar, was decided in the affirmative, as I well recollect, after an excellent speech by Horner on that side of the question. "Whether the prodigal is a worse member of society than the miser:" - I voted with the majority, Horner the other way. "Whether men is happier in a rude than in a civilised state;" - both Horner and I voted in the minority; I grieve to say, the
decision being for the civilized state. "That benevolence is a stronger principle of action than interest," - Horner voted with the majority, I with the minority.

On looking over the rules and the proceedings of this society it is very remarkable to find the extreme regularity with which the business was conducted, and the order which prevailed; so that the example of these boys might be a lesson to their seniors in other assemblies.

From the Juvenile Literary Society, Brougham and a number of his friends graduated to the Literary Society which had been in existence at least since 1789, when Walter Scott was an active member. But this collection of talented and energetic students was not content merely to participate in the opportunities which already existed. New ideas and new interests led to the organization of new societies, and Henry Cockburn has left an account of how he joined the Academical Society which has just been formed when he entered as a student at the University of Edinburgh:

The Academical rose in 1796, and, after a short though very active life, died of decline about 1816. It met in Playfair's class-room, which was then the great receptacle of youthful philosophers and orators. There were more essays read, and more speeches delivered, by ambitious lads, in that little shabby place than in all Scotland. If it had been preserved it would have been near the centre of the new library. No part of my training did me so much good as this society. The Speculative, which I joined a few years later, was a higher and a more serious field; but it was the Academical plough that first opened the soil. It was here that I got my first notions of composition and debate, and that delightful feeling of free doubting and independent discussion, so necessary for the expansion and manliness of young minds, was excited.

1. Compare these questions with those listed in Appendixes B, D, E, and I.
From the Literary Society, in January 1797, there also arose another discussion society, this time of a scientific cast, which was called the Academy of Physics. An excellent and detailed account of this organization has been written by David Welsh in his biography of Thomas Brown, who was one of the outstanding members of the Academy:

In 1797 a few of the members of the Literary Society formed themselves into another association, more select, to which they gave the name of the Academy of Physics. The object of this institution was somewhat more ambitious than that of the former, and is set forth in the minute of their first meeting to be "the investigation of nature, the laws by which her phenomena are regulated, and the history of opinions concerning these laws." At this meeting, which was held on the 7th of January, there were present Messrs. Brakine, Brougham, Reddie, Brown, Hogerson, Airbeck, Logan, and Leyden. These gentlemen were afterwards joined by Lord Webb Seymour, Messrs., Horner, Jeffrey, Smyth, Gillespie, and many others.

For some time the society proceeded with great spirit, and in the papers that were read, and in the conversation that took place upon them, were sown the germs that afterwards developed themselves in works that have occupied much of the public attention. Among the most active of the members were Messrs. Brougham, Horner, and Dr. Brown; and the institution owed much to the truly philosophic spirit and excellent sense of Mr. Reddie. Dr. Brown having been secretary to the society at the time it was dissolved, the various documents connected with it were found among his papers. From these documents some extracts will be found at the end of this volume, which will be read with interest, not merely as calculated to afford information respecting the early studies of Dr. Brown, but also as affording materials for the literary history of the age.

The meetings of the society continued with considerable regularity about three years, when, from various causes, the interest that was taken in it began to decline. The last entry in the minute book is of date 1st May, 1800. It is written in pencil, and is as follows: "Present, Lord Webb Seymour, Messrs., Brougham, Reddie, Copland, Horner, Brown, Bennett, Craig, Lang. Some articles were read from the Memoirs relating to Egypt by the learned men who accompanied the French expedition."

2. I have included these extracts as Appendix J, page 646 f.
The Academy of Physics will be interesting in the history of letters, not merely on account of the distinguished names that are to be found in the list of its members, but also as having given rise to a publication which has been conducted upon more liberal principles, displayed a greater proportion of talent, and exercised a greater influence upon public opinion, than any other similar work in the republic of letters. It can scarcely be necessary to add, that I allude to the Edinburgh Review.

Wish now begins to quote from the records, giving the details of the first of the resolutions which led to the organization, and a transcript of the rules and regulations:

The following gentlemen having resolved to form themselves into an association, for the investigation of nature, the laws by which her phenomena are regulated, and the history of opinions concerning these laws, and to consider preliminary business.

Mr. Erskine, President.
Mr. Brougham.
Mr. Heckie.
Mr. Brown.
Mr. Rogerson.

The following associated gentlemen were absent:

Dr. Robert Anderson, Honorary Member.
Mr. Robert Robertson.
Mr. Craig, Corresponding Member.
Mr. Lang.

After the Meeting was constituted, it was resolved that the Association should be denominated the Academy of Physics.

Mr. Brougham proposed to the Academy a plan of business, which was adopted with a few modifications.

Section I.

The objects of the Academy shall be,
1. Pure Mathematics, or the Philosophy of Quantity.
2. Mixed Mathematics, or the Philosophy of Motion and its Effects, comprehending subjects in which the data are inductive, and the reasoning mathematical.
3. The Physics of Matter, or the Philosophy of Body, in which the data and reasonings are both inductive.
4. The Physics of Mind, or the Philosophy of Mind, excluding religious controversies and party politics. Mind is either general or individual, the physics of the former we term general politics.
The Academy shall consist of Ordinary, Honorary, and Corresponding Members.

1. The duty of Ordinary Members shall be to attend the Meetings of the Society, to communicate observations on papers read, and to share with the Academy their discoveries, improvements, and inquiries, especially on scientific subjects. Every Ordinary Member must attend at least once a month under penalty of writing a paper, on the refusal of which he incurs the penalty of ten shillings, and sixpence. Attendance on business shall not be compulsory farther than thus specified; but if any Member accept an office, he shall attend under the penalty of five shillings for every willful omission. Every Ordinary Member shall give in his paper the Meeting before it be read, and shall announce it the Meeting before he gives it in. He must write it on paper of a certain size, that it may be bound up, if voted; and the paper must circulate among the Members the week before it is discussed, and the last Member must leave the paper in the Academy room on the day of meeting, under the penalty of half a crown. The Academy may request any Member or Committee of Members, to investigate any particular point in such subjects as their studies or taste may have led them particularly to pursue. In like manner, a committee may be named to examine any new and interesting publication, discovery, etc., and report on such to the Academy. On a motion to that purpose, a Committee may be named to try any new and instructive experiment or experiments, or course of experiments which the Society shall please to institute. If any of the Academicians wish to perform an experiment of his own, he must perform it before the Academy at his own expense. To the account of new experiments undertaken by the Academy, the name of the proposer or proposers shall be affixed, unless it shall have suffered such alterations as to render it the property of several. The new conclusions drawn from old facts and experiments, shall render the experiment in a great degree the property of the arguers or reasoners.

2. The duty of Corresponding Members shall be to communicate to the Academy such observations as shall seem worthy of its attention. They shall be elected unanimously from gentlemen well known for their abilities. Two dissenting voices shall exclude an Ordinary Member; no ballot shall be admitted, but reasons of opposition and support may be stated.
Section III.

The order of business shall be,
1. Minutes of last meeting read and revised.
2. Private business, as funds, etc., settled, reports of the business of Committees received.
3. Philosophical news discussed, and notices of new publications given in.
4. Committees of inquiry and experiment named.
5. Reports of Committees of inquiry and experiment received.
6. Regular papers read and conversed on.
7. Communications of correspondents considered.
8. Papers noticed, given in, and appointed.

Section IV.

Office-bearers shall be named at the first Meeting of the Academy, and continued during pleasure.
1. A President to superintend.
2. A Secretary to take concise minutes of what passes, to correspond officially with those gentlemen who shall be elected Corresponding Members, or other correspondents not members, and to superintend the binding of papers, etc.
3. A Treasurer to keep the cash-account of receipt and expenditure, and to give out such sums for experiments, books, etc., as the Academy shall vote.

Section V.

1. Every member on admittance shall pay five shillings.
2. Every member shall pay sixpence weekly.
3. Donations of apparatus, books, etc., shall be received.
4. Books purchased shall be proposed by the Committee, and then voted by the Academy.

Messrs. Leyden and Logan were appointed Secretaries, and Mr. Lang Treasurer; it was resolved to choose Presidents pro tempore every Meeting.

Messrs. Brougham, Rogerson, and Birbeck, were appointed a Committee to examine the Philosophical Transactions of London for 1796, p. ii.

Mr. Birbeck was appointed to examine Priestley's Experiments on Atmospheric Air.

The Academy then adjourned to Saturday 14th January.¹

¹ For the minutes of subsequent meetings, see Appendix J, page 646 f.
At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the town of Glasgow, which an English visitor described as "the most uniform and prettiest" he had ever seen, was, with its population of 12,500, scarcely more that a large village. It had, moreover, "a reputation for sanctity to keep up," as "the covenanting spirit had ever been keenest in the West Country." These circumstances combined to make the intellectual and social surroundings of the College of Glasgow much narrower than in the Scottish capital. It was undoubtedly for this reason that the student clubs and societies in Glasgow had, until well past the middle of the century, a much more tempestuous reception than those which were organized in Edinburgh. But it was not only the narrowness of its scene that tended to create "alarms and excursions" whenever the subject of student's clubs was mentioned. Glasgow was among the first Scottish towns to feel the full impact of new ideas, just as she was the first to feel the effects of the new opportunities for wealth which had been opened by the Treaty of Union in 1707. In accepting new techniques, new trades, and new commercial enterprises, the western town could not exclude, nor, indeed, did it seriously attempt to do so, the new attitudes and interests which accompanied them. The arrival, in 1726, of Francis Hutcheson, "the dean of the Scottish enlightenment," a teacher who "disputed no dogma, and taught no heresy as he discussed the beauty of moral virtue, descanted on the harmony of the passions, and the

2. Graham: Social Life in Scotland, page 156. See also, to capture the spirit of the early century in Glasgow, "Odrow: Analecta, passim."
dignity of human nature, "was symbolic of the many changes which had come to Glasgow.

But even before Hutcheson's arrival, the impact of new systems of thought were being felt, and new interests were being stimulated among the students of the College. Student's discussion groups, which were a normal result of the new ideas and the new interests, became a source of anxiety to the "orthodox" divines of the town and its College. And the College authorities themselves, feeling perhaps that their authority was somehow being questioned and criticized, adopted a repressive policy toward these societies, and, as a result, a situation rapidly developed which reflected little credit upon those who were involved in it.

In the year 1720, the students of the College attempted to produce two plays, Cato and Tamerlane. When one considers the seventeenth-century Presbyterian attitude toward the theatre, an attitude which still largely persisted, it is little wonder that the students and the College authorities soon fell out over the issue. A series of misunderstandings ensued, in which neither the College's actions nor the student's attitude of defiance had any large claims to reason.


2. The students eventually succeeded in producing one play. See the Prologue and Epilogue to Tamerlane: Acted in the Grammar School in Glasgow, December 30th, 1720: by the Students of the University. Glasgow: Printed by William Duncan, 1721. See also the pamphlet described in note 2, page 399, below. The College authorities had provoked the students by first granting permission to produce the play within the College, only to rescind their permission afterwards.
The student's protests, however, also included an extremely sensible criticism of the Professor of Anatomy who refused to teach because he was not provided with an operator. An Irish student by the name of John Arbuckle, who had already had some success as an author in his prologue to *Tamerlane*, in which he twitted the College Faculty for their reluctance to permit the play to be staged in the College, now produced a pamphlet in which all the student's grievances were reviewed.

Arbuckle's pamphlet presents a long and involved story in which the author appears in the role of a champion of student's rights, and the Principal of the College and the Professor of Divinity, John Simson, appear as his persecutors. When he comes to the subject of student's societies, one of which seems to have been, under Arbuckle's leadership, responsible for most of the trouble, he writes as follows:

1. See the pamphlet described in the next note.

2. "A Short Account of the Late Treatment of the Students of the University of G____w." by (James Arbuckle). Dublin: Printed in the year, 1722. For Arbuckle's prologue to *Tamerlane* see the publication of the play described in note 2, page 598, above.

3. The Principal at this time was John Carmichael. Simson, who was not above suspicion of heterodoxy himself, and who was several times called before the Synod of the Church of Scotland on questions concerning the doctrine he taught, "was unpopular with the students who considered him overbearing and an enemy to the clubs. He and some other members of the Faculty were anxious to dissolve them, but no ground for so doing could be found." (Murray: *Memories of the Old College of Glasgow*, page 512.)

4. "A Short Account etc.," page 20 f.
friendly Societies they might have among them: One they had heard of, which for some time had been a great eye-sore to them; and that in a particular manner, because several of the Students who had signalized themselves in defence of the Liberties of the College, were members of it. This Club met once a week, and with no other design in the world than to discourse upon matters of Learning for their mutual improvement. The nature of their business and the numbers of their members, necessarily excluded every thing, either Political or personal, from their Conversation. In such promiscuous Company, it would have been both imprudent and unmanly to obtrude upon them any thing of that nature. The evidence they had given for a considerable Time, of their being not only a harmless, but a profitable Society, were such, that several Gentlemen of good Characters in the City of Glasgow, thought it no ill Complement to be received as members. And even some Ministers of the Church, were not only pleased to honour the Club occasionally with their Attendance, but to take a Part in the Business of it, by imparting their thoughts in writing upon some Questions of Importance that happened to be handled in it. All this, one would have thought, might have secured it from the Malice of any one, against particular members. Only People of such penetration as the P____l, and P____r of D. could have discovered any thing dangerous, or Criminal, in their Meeting. But the true Reasons of their declaring against it were disguised, and a great Uterty raised, that the members, who were at first chiefly English and Irish men, were a set of Latitudinarians, Free-thinkers, Non-subscribers, and Bangorians, and in a word, enemies to the Jurisdictions, Powers, and Divine Authority of the Clergy. This was a heavy Charge, but because it could not be well supported, it was judged necessary only to whisper these things among friends, that so the neighbouring People, might receive ill Impressions of them, and such members as were Students in the P____r of D____'s Hall, frightenend from Further Attendance on the Club. Whatever Success they might have in the first of these designs, they were very far from succeeding in the second. For the members of the Club, instead of being deterred from coming to it, were by this means the more strongly fixed in their Resolutions of sticking by it.

This Scheme for hindering meetings among the Students failing, the P____r of D. found it necessary to go a greater Length, and discharge all his Scholars, on the first Convention of his Hall, from joyning in any Clubs or private Societies whatever, under the severe Penalty, of being turned out of his Hall. And in his Speech he gave such broad hints against that particular Club, that they thought fit to send him the Deputation of two of their members, to know his reasons for treating them in such an ungentlemanly manner. He protested to them that he had nothing to charge them with; and that he believed them to be a very profitable and useful Society, but he would suffer none of his Students to go into a publick House, or if they did he would immediately expel them, it being against the express Laws of the College. This the Gentlemen knowing not to be true, took the freedom to deny, and therefore acquainted him with their Resolution of still keeping up the Club, and standing the utmost Censure he
could inflict upon them. The professor finding nothing was to be
done this way, and sensible he could not put his threats in
execution, there being no Law to hinder students who had passed
their course of Philosophy in the College, from meeting together
as often as they pleased; it became necessary in order to demolish
the Club, as they phrased it, to procure a Law to be passed in
faculty discharging all such meetings. The heads of such a Law
were accordingly brought in, under the grave Title of an Act to
Suppress Immorality. The reasons alleged for it were chiefly
that it would strengthen their former rules, under which they
had laid the students in the lower classes; and that seeing those
students were bound by such regulation, it was fit the more
advanced students, and particularly those of divinity, should be
brought under the same, because their example gave encouragement
to the younger boys to haunt publick houses. To this it was answered,
that their laws were already sufficient to prevent immorality, by
punishing it when ever it appeared; that it was a hardship to
hinder gentlemen who were come to the years of discretion, from
enjoying their innocent diversion, and the conversation of their
friends, which in their own reason were among the most important
businesses of life; that people might be justly punished for the
abuse of liberty; but to take liberty away to prevent its being
abused, was a tyrannical practice that ought not to take place
among a free people; and that the example of the elder students could
no more influence the younger sort than that of the masters, who
by this rule of reasoning, ought in like manner to be hindered from
going into a tavern, or drinking a glass of wine with their friends.
But these were arguments of very little weight, with people
resolved to carry their point, right or wrong. The last of them
indeed they were forced to find a solution for, which was, that
the masters had a power to make rules for their scholars, but
were not obliged to confine themselves to them.

Great endeavours were used to get this law passed, and several
faculties held about it, but the students making a general murmur
against it, the committee who were appointed to draw it up,
brought in a favourable clause, allowing them the liberty of going
sometimes to a tavern, provided one or more of the masters were in
company with them; which was saying in effect, that the students
should drink no claret, without giving them a share of it. However
the scandal of these proceedings, and the resolution of the students
not to submit to their impositions, had such effect upon the
majority of the masters, that they could not agree about the law,
but laid it entirely aside, to the no small mortification of the
professor and professor of divinity.

The attitude of the orthodox to these student organizations has been
faithfully recorded by Robert Rodrow, a tireless but never a tiresome author,
First rumours of impending changes came from Edinburgh where the

Rikenian Club had been active for a number of years:-

I find it is suspected that there was a designe at the last
Communion at Glasgow in getting a peculiar set of helpers,
that there has been a club at Edinburgh for some years, Mr.
Wishart, Mr. Telfer, Mr. Wallace, were all members of it, who
were of opinion that we're in a way of too narrow thinking in
this country; and that some of the younger students inclined to
have some greater freedom of thoughts; and a tryall was to be
made how notions of liberty and searching (ie. into the theological
questions) would go down. But Mr. Telfer failed, and only Mr.
Wallace came. What is in this, time must discover.

Year later, Wodrow takes note of a student's organization which he
tells the Triumpherian Club:-

January, (1725) - At Glasgow the debates among the students
continue, and make no little noise. There seems to be a humor
growing among them of opposing Confessions, and exalting reason,
under pretence of search after truth. The Triumpherian Club,
(Wodrow afterwards calls it the "Triumpherian Club", see below),
say there has been renewed with new vigor there, and they talk Mr.
Harvey is writing in defence of Mr. Wallace's sermon upon Reason.
They say Mr. Wishart meets with that Club; which, if true, is a
strange step, and he is ill-advised. The Non-subscribers in
Ireland give it out that he is the minister of Scotland they
have their eye most upon, and one of the brightest men in it.
Some thing in his extemporary tryalls begin (now) to be talked of.
Mr. George Campbell interrogated him upon the equality of the
son with the father. He gave an answer in the words of others, not
his own, that a subordination was spoke of by many ancient writers.
At the approbation, Mr. Campbell declared his dissatisfaction as
to what he had spoken the words of others, and not his own...

The next report tells of some difficulties which the Professor of

Wodrow: Analecta, Vol. 3, page 175 (year 1724). Compare the names
which Wodrow mentions to those contained in the list of members of
the Rikenian Club given on page 69, Chapter 3, above.

Wodrow: Analecta, Vol 3, page 178, (year 1725). See also Murray:
Memories of the Old College of Glasgow, page 512; also Murray's
notebooks, (in manuscript), in the Murray Collection in the Glasgow
University Library, especially Volume 3, page 1610, where he quotes
Wodrow: Analecta, 4, p. 180, to the effect that "Hutcheson declined
to go to the clubs."
was John Gimson who was accused several times of divergence from the accepted creeds of the day, but was always absolved of blame. Wodrow writes:

February 1725. — On the first Wednesday of this month, the Presbytery of Glasgow, after dinner, when the Professor was present, fell a talking upon the rumors going about the students inclining to looseness. Ther wer severall harsh expressions uttered by the Professor to Mr. Gray, who bore all. He said, "that matter lay not before the Presbytery." Upon which the Act of Assembly about him was read; and he said, "Mr. Gray was about to take up Mr. Webster's cudgell;" and he defyed him. The butting temper that appears, I doubt (will) breed confusion. I find many displeased at the Professor's carriage, and he complaines of Mr. G(ray) and H(arvey?) spreading groundles storys of him throu the country ministers and threatens to pursue them. He said he would rather burn the cases than lay them before the Presbytery; which is very ill taken. The case about Original Sin, and that about Impartial Search after Truth, that on the vii of nomber, was corrected by the Professor, and that about hardning Pharaoh's heart is talked of. The Professor says, some years since ther wer cases that might have made noise as well as now; as that in defence of the Lauffulness of Officious Lying, which he amended; and that of the Unlauffulness of the oath to the Gibeonites, which he corrected; that might have made noise as well as what is at present. The Principal and Professor have the case about Original Sin in correction. But the origo mali is suffering these rar, unripe youths, to medle with what they are unequall to, without a presses able, to keep them right; which was never allowed in my father's time.

The Triumpherian Club, now called the Trinampherian Club by Wodrow, again appears, along with others, in a further account of the iniquities of the student's clubs:

(February 1725). — I hear of new Clubs setting up in Glasgow, or new names given to former Clubs. The Trinampherian Club, known since by the name of Mr. T. Mary's Club, now in honour of Mr. Wisheart, have taken the name of the Sophacardian Club,


2. I do not pretend to understand Wodrow's obscure theological references, but I seem to recall reading somewhere that these cases were set before the students by Gimson as a test of their reasoning and powers of argument. The arguments were undoubtedly carried over into the clubs, where conclusions might possibly diverge from the accepted standard, hence Wodrow's concern.
Buchanan's name for Mr. George Wishart. They have, I hear, given to Mr. Wishart that subject, "The Rule of moral goodness," and his brother, Mr. (George) at Edinburgh, "Whether it was possible for God to make this system of the sun better than it is." The students, who affect to be persons of bright parts, have a Club they call the Bleatherian Club, and some others affect the name of the Anticapodian Club, because the Capadocians were willing to surrender their libertys tamely to the Romans. The Clubs are like to have very ill influence on Religion. People meet in them without any solid grave person to moderate, and give a loose to their fancy and enquiries, with(out) any stated rule of them or any solid principles. They declaim against reading, and cry up thinking.

From some members of some of these, I hear a farce is writ on the Ministers of the town, and what has happened of late about the Professor; where the principal gets the name of M____b____o; the Professor of whiller; Mr. Gray, Archy; Mr. L_______, Holy; Mr. Goat, Carly; and Mr. Webster, the President; and some of them are brought in as opposing reason. It's a dull heavy thing, and is to be sent over to Arbuckle, they say, to revise and correct, and print. Matters are come to a sad pass, when people begin openly to mock and ridicule Gospel Ministers; that saps and stricks at the root of all religion!

A final lament on the wickedness of Glasgow youth comes from Modern in 1729:-

March 1729. - I hear lamentable accounts of the growth of most corrupt and loose principles at Glasgow among the young people, merchants and others; and do not wonder at it. There is little care taken in their education and founding in the principles of religion; they never wait on catechising; they have multitudes of corrupt books among their hands; and clubs, where every thing that is serious is ridiculed. And at Edinburgh, they say, there are many turned heists, and that it's exceeding common ther to mock at all religion and seriousness.

By the time that Alexander Carlyle attended the University of Glasgow, fourteen years later, student societies had become a tolerated if not an accepted part of the student's social and intellectual life. Carlyle, who is extremely nice as to the details of the societies

of which he was a member, has given us accounts of two student organizations which were active in the years 1743 and 1744:

I was admitted a member of two clubs, one entirely literary, which was held in the porter's lodge at the College, and where we criticised books and wrote abridgements of them, with critical essays; and to this society we submitted the discourses which we were to deliver in the Divinity Hall in our turns, when we were appointed by the professor. The other club met in Mr. Dugald's tavern near the Cross, weekly, and admitted a mixture of young gentlemen, who were not intended for the study of theology. There met there John Pradefoot, afterwards minister of Dunsiare; James Leslie, of Kilmarnock; John Robertson, of Dunblane; James Hamilton, of Paisley, and Robert Lawson, of London Wall. There also came some young merchants, such as Robin Hogle, my relation; James and George Anderson, William Sellar and Robin Craig. Here we drank a little punch after our beefsteaks and pancakes, and the expense never exceeded 1s. 6d., seldom 1s.

Our conversation was almost entirely literary; and we were of such good fame, that some ministers of the neighbourhood, when occasionally in Glasgow, frequented our club. Hyndman had been twice introduced by members; and being at that time passing his trials as a probationer before that presbytery in which his native town of Greenock lay, he had become well acquainted with Mr. Robert Raton, minister of Renfrew, who, though a man well accomplished and of liberal sentiments, was too much a man of worth and principle not to be offended by licentious manners in students of divinity. Hyndman, by way of gaining favour with this man, took occasion to hint to him to advise his nephew, Robert Lawson, not to frequent our club, as it admitted and encouraged conversation not suitable to the profession we were to follow. He mentioned two instances, one of which Lawson said was false, and the other disguised by exaggeration. Lawson, who was a lad of pure morals, told me this; and as the best antidote to this injurious impression, which had been made chiefly against me, I begged him to let his uncle know that I would accept of the invitation he had given through him, to pass a night or two with him at Renfrew. We accordingly went next Saturday, and met with a gracious reception, and stayed all next day, and heard him preach, at which he was thought to excel (though he was almost the only person who read in those days, in which he truly excelled); and being a very handsome man, his delivery much enhanced the value of his composition. We heard him read another sermon at night in his study, with much

satisfaction, as he told us it was one of his best, and was a
good model; to this we respectfully assented, and the good man
was pleased. When we took leave on Monday morning, he politely
requested another visit, and said to me, with a smile, he was
now fortified against talebearers. These societies contributed
much to our improvement; and as moderation and early hours were
inviolable rules of both institutions, they served to open and
enlarge our minds.

By 1768, however, Glasgow students were once again antagonizing
their masters. In this year there were two clubs active. One, called
the General Society, was a harmless debating society; but the other,
the Parliament of Oceana, "the parliament of a fictitious republic,"
soon had the entire College in an uproar. The trouble started when a
student named David Woodburn stated that "more good was to be got by
attending the theatre, than the drowsy shops of Logic and Metaphysics." 1
The latent resentment of the Glasgow Faculty against the student clubs
was, by this offhand remark, once more provoked, and a majority of
that respectable body determined on bringing the speaker on trial
before the Rector's court, "and raked up a number of disrespectful things
which Woodburn had said: - that adversity is more favourable to virtue
than prosperity, that pulpit sermons were too doctrinal and that
morality might be better taught by the theatre, that the merchants of
Glasgow were sordidly avaricious and their ladies sat up too late
playing cards." 2 This was the situation of 1722 all over again, and
both sides were distinguished only by their bad manners and mutual
resentments. "After a nine day's trial," David Woodburn "was found

3. Ibid, page 517.
"The substance of this trial is given by the Rev. William Thom of Govan in The Trial of a Student at the College of Clutha, in the Kingdom of Oceana."

Nine years later things had apparently cooled down once more as there were, "in 1776, ... three societies, the Eclectic, the Dialectic, and the Academic."

John Jamieson, the author of the Scottish Dictionary, was a member of all three, "and records that the meetings were held in the college class rooms and were well attended by students and visitors 'and sometimes the professors graced the ingenious youths with their presence and encouraged to diligence.'"

Another ten years was to prove, however, that the feelings between the Faculty of the University of Glasgow and the members of student's societies were to be a perennial problem for nearly the whole of the century. In 1767, when Francis Jeffrey, then a student at the University, was a member of two societies, The Historical and Critical, and the Elocution, he left the College with bitter memories of the actions of the Faculty. Jeffry's biographer, Lord Cockburn, describes his career as a student and as a member of the two student societies as follows:

Some of the pupils (of Jardine's class) formed themselves into the Elocution Society, which met every Monday evening, for their improvement in recitation. From recitation to acting is but a short step, and, accordingly, they meant to have performed Tancred and Sigismunda, when Principal Macfarlane was to have shone.

1. Printed in Glasgow, 1768, (Murray: Memories of Glasgow College, page 138.)

2. Murray: Memories of Glasgow College, page 318. See also his Notebooks, in the Murray Collection in the University of Glasgow Library. The Eclectic Society was in existence as early as 1771. See the speech "spoken before the Eclectic Society in Glasgow upon the celebrated question whether the rude or civilized state is most to be preferred." (Scots Magazine, June 1771, pages 290 - 292.)

as Adolfo, and Jeffrey as Sigismunda. But as an apartment within the college was to have been the theatre, the academical authorities stopped the scheme, to the rage of the disappointed actors. On the last page of his notes of Professor Arthur's lectures, Jeffrey sets forth that, before finally leaving the college, he had one thing to "advise, to declare, to reprobate, to ask, and to wish." - "What I have to advise is, Mr. Arthur and the Principal to pay a little more attention to the Graces in their respective modes of lecturing and praying." - "What I declare is, that the faculty has acted in the meanest, most illiberal, and despicable manner with regard to the Discursive Club."

In his second session he disclosed himself more satisfactorily. Principal MacFarlane says "He broke upon us very brilliantly. In a debating society called, I think, the Historical and Critical, he distinguished himself as one of the most acute and fluent speakers; his favourite subjects being criticism and metaphysics.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, the poet Campbell was a student at the University of Glasgow. Campbell was very active in the student societies of the day, and, indeed, is credited with having been the founder of the Discursive Society which was "much frequented by the students of the Law and Logic classes." The Discursive, however, was preceded by an earlier society which Campbell's biographer describes as follows:

In the course of the winter session, an original debating club, out of which sprang the "Discursive", was formed among the students. The members assembled once a-week at each other's lodgings, but chiefly in those of Mr. Hamilton Paul, then studying Theology. "Campbell," says this gentleman, in his recollections of those meetings, "was a strenuous supporter of this club; and, although the youngest among us, was the most fluent speaker." But a difference took place on account of some warm and unguarded "speeches," and threatened the dissolution of the society. Mr. Paul, however, wrote a poem which reconciled the belligerents. It described a levee of the heathen gods, held on Mount Olympus. A keen debate commenced, and a quarrel ensued. The speeches were given: - Campbell was Cupid, Paul was Mercury, and the other divinities were personated by several of their class-fellows. Cupid's

speech was greatly admired:

"They all confessed 'twas wondrous in a child!"

and Campbell himself thought he had never listened with half so much pleasure to any "imputed speech." Harmony was restored; but the club languished, and, at length, died of sheer inanition. At this stirring period, the spirit of rivalry was at its height among the young students. By incessant cultivation, all the powers of intellect were quickened, like hot-house plants, into premature growth and activity. Other clubs were soon organised; and other excitements, to friendly competition among the younger Academics as quickly followed. The oratorical displays of the evening — often prolonged till midnight — were the almost exclusive topics of the following day's conversation in the class-rooms, and on the College Green.

Campbell himself wrote of the Discursive Society, in which he was a "popular orator", as follows:

There was, moreover, a debating society called the "Discursive," (Campbell was speaking of the same College Session as above), composed almost entirely of boys as young as myself; and I was infatuated enough to become a leader in this spouting club. It is true that we had promising spirits among us; and in particular could boast of Gregory "att, son of the immortal "att, a youth unparalleled in his early talent for eloquence. With melodious elocution, great acuteness in argument, and rich, unfailing fluency of diction, he seemed born to become a great orator; and, I have no doubt, would have shone in Parliament had he not been carried off by consumption in his five-and-twentieth year...."

The Discursive Society was induced by Campbell to challenge the Juridical Society, an organization of law students, to a public trial of their powers of debate. Henry Duncan, a member of the Juridical Society of Glasgow, relates how this was accepted by them:

---


The students of the Law class to which we belonged, were the seniors of those who attended the Logic class by one or two years; and we, regarding this challenge as presumptuous and insulting, indignantly rejected it. This, on the other hand, mortified the pride and excited the anger of our opponents; and in a few days the whole college was ringing with a satirical effusion written by Tom Campbell, in which every member of the "Juridical" - myself included - was held up to ridicule in no very measured terms.

In looking back upon his experience in the student organizations of his time, Duncan, who was writing to Thomas Campbell's biographer, expresses the general view of the purpose and the value of such societies in the Scottish Universities:

Having been yourself an Edinburgh student, you are well aware of the literary societies and debating clubs which prevail in our northern Universities; and which, I believe, form a peculiar feature in our academical employments. They are, as you know, voluntary associations among the students themselves, with which the Professors in no respect interfere - except, perhaps, occasionally in the case of individual students, in whom they may chance to have a peculiar interest. The object of these associations is literary discussion, on given topics; and their effect is to call forth and stimulate the talents of the young men, and excite among them a salutary emulation...

And with this fine tribute to a deserving class of eighteenth-century literary societies, I close this chapter.

1. Beattie: Life of Campbell, Vol 1, pages 81-82.
Despite the perfectly valid objection that can be made that academies of Art have little or nothing to do with literary societies, I have determined to include a short chapter on them in my thesis. Fundamentally, this decision has been made on the basis of personal inclination. It could easily be shown that if I elect to deal with these organizations, I should also devote some space to musical society’s as well. My answer to this, and I fully realize its shortcomings, is that I am interested in painting, but not in music. The reader must decide for himself whether it is more reprehensible in me to include only half of the logical extension of my inquiry, or to omit it altogether.

There is, however, a slight argument in my favour. Musical societies, perhaps because of their social nature, have received considerable attention by other writers, but as far as I am aware,
a systematic treatment of Scottish Academies of Art has never before been attempted. And the lack of a comprehensive survey of these organizations has been, in general, unfortunate; it has left many interesting and curious facts concealed, and it has resulted in a number of false impressions regarding the paucity of artistic endeavours in Scotland in the first half of the eighteenth century.

There is, for example, a very wide belief that the Academy of Fine Arts which was established in the College of Glasgow in 1753 by the well-known printers Andrew and Robert Foulis was the first of its kind in Scotland. But the Foulis Academy was neither the first of such Academies not even the first to have rooms in a Scottish University — nor the most interesting. But this is not all, the function and the purpose of the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts, though the institution is as well known as the brothers who founded it, have been almost universally misunderstood.

Society, Rules and List of Members, with an Introductory Sketch of the Early History of the Society; The Edinburgh Harmonists Society, by J. F. McDonough (a typescript in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.); A List of the Members of the Musical Society at Edinburgh; 1795; A List of the Members of the Musical Society at Edinburgh; May 1, 1775; A Musical Entertainment, Performed by a Society of Gentlemen in Edinburgh, Upon the Anniversary of the Birth-Day of James Thomson, Author of the Seasons, etc.: 1770; Funeral Concert, Performed by the Gentlemen of the Musical Society of Edinburgh, 22 of November 1771, on the Death of Sir Robert Murray, Bart., one of the Directors and William Douglas Treasurer to the Society.

1. "In a rapid sketch of the achievements in literature and art throughout Scotland during the period embraced by this history, art obtains the precedence, on account of the distinct and narrow limits which it at once presents to the eye. National art was in a miserable condition. There were artists who were Scotsmen, and works of art were brought into Scotland; but, taken in the stricter sense of works produced by Scotsmen for a Scots public, National Art is nearly a blank from the Revolution to the middle of the eighteenth century." (Burton: History of Scotland, Vol. 3, page 596.)
The first Academy of Art to be established in Scotland in the eighteenth century was the Academy of St. Luke which was organized by the poet Allan Ramsay, his son the painter, and a number of other gentlemen in Edinburgh on 10th October, 1729. The details of this organization are given in an indenture which was signed by all the founding parties. This indenture reads as follows:

At Edinburgh the eighteenth day of October A. Dom. MDCCXXIX.

The subscribers PAINTERS and LOVERS of PAINTING, Fellows of the Edinburgh School of St. Luke for the encouragement of those excellent arts of PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE, etc. and ENJOYERS of the Students: have agreed to erect a publick Academy, whereinto every one that inclines on application to our Director and Council, shall be admitted on paying a small sum for defraying Charges of Figure and Lights, etc. for further encouragement some of our members who have a fine collection of Models in Plaster from the best Antique Statues are to lend the use of them to the Academy.

To prevent all disorder the present Members have Unanimously agreed on the observation of the following Rules.

I. To meet annually on the eighteenth day of October, being the feast of St. Luke our Patron, to choose a Director, Treasurer and Secretary, and four common Councillours for the ensuing Year, of which Council of Seven ther shall ever be four Mr. Painters. This said Council to be chosen yearly, and may or not be rechosen, but upon no account to continue above two Years at a Time.

II. That the Sederunts of the Society be Registrated in a book to be kept by the Secretary for the time being.

III. The Academy to meet on the first of November (one thousand seven hundred) and twenty-nine years, and to continue till the last of February, four times a week, viz. on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, at five o'clock at night, and to draw the space of two hours. To meet again on the first of June, and continue till the last of July, on the for said days of the week, but the two drawing hours to be

---

2. Ibid. An essay on Art in Scotland (1837)
in the morning from six to eight. The Summer Season being chiefly designed for drawing from Antique Models, and Drawings of the best Masters of Foreign Schools by a Sky Light; for which purpose, a large Portfolio to be kept in the Academy for preserving all curious Drawings already given, or that may be given for that end.

IV. On placing of every new figure, those present to draw lots for the choice of their seats.

V. That every member according to his seniority shal be allowed in his turn to place or put the figure in what ever posture he pleases, or have it in his power to depute another to do it for him, and to have the first choice of his seat.

VI. All noblemen, gentlemen, patrons, painters, and lovers of Painting, who shall contribute to carrying on the designe, (if they do not incline to draw themselves) shall have the privilege by a written order to our Directors, to assign his right to any young artist whom he is pleased to patronize.

(signatures)

S. Balfour. John Alexander. Secretary. 

The first instance of an Academy of Art being granted the privilege of using rooms within the walls of a Scottish University occurred
in Edinburgh on 6th January, 1751. The Edinburgh Town-Council Records for this date contain the following minute:

The which day the Council upon application of the praeses and other members of the Academy for Drawing the Council with the Extra Deacons do for their encouragement give to them the use and possession of one of the Rooms in the college commonly called Hortounhall Chamber rent free during the Councils pleasure.

Unfortunately it is not revealed in the minute just quoted whether the Academy of Drawing was Ramsay's Academy of St. Luke. The reader will note, however, that the establishment of that organization, and the granting of University chambers to an "Academy of Drawing" was separated by the space of only sixteen months. The circumstance of the application having come from the praeses of an Academy of Drawing coincides with the organization of the Academy of St. Luke. The chain of circumstance may be flimsy, but I feel that it is at least possible that the Academy of St. Luke was the "Academy of Drawing" which was granted the use of "Hortounhall Chamber".

The next substantial effort to forward the arts was that pursued by Robert Foulis, his brother Andrew, and several Glasgow merchants whose combined activities led to the establishment of the Glasgow Academy of Fine Arts in the College of Glasgow in 1755. This Academy, which was active for over twenty years, was the first large-scale attempt of its kind in Great Britain, and it is certainly much to the credit of the citizens of Glasgow, the merchants of that city, the directors of the College, and to the determined efforts of Robert Foulis, that the Academy was established and continued so successfully.

As a reflection of the "improving Spirit" applied to the fine arts, the Glasgow effort is worthy of our attention, and if the Academy was successful in no other way, we must certainly regard it favourably as an example to be followed by the rest of Great Britain.

As I have already mentioned in my introductory remarks to this chapter, there has been, in the past, a widespread misconception of the origin and the success of the Toulis Academy of Fine Arts. The opinion of Robert Toulis's contemporaries, that his project was extremely whimsical, has persisted down to the present day. There has also been an almost universal lament that he should have forsaken his printing and publishing business, in which he had produced so many creditable works, and abandoned a lucrative trade in books for

1. "The Glasgow Academy had been, during fifteen years, established previously to the formation of that in Somerset-house London (i.e. the Royal Academy)." (Chapman: The Picture of Glasgow, page 260.) The Trustees' Academy of Edinburgh did not begin activities until 1760. See my account of this institution on page 455 f., below.

2. "It was a splendid gesture in the face of indifference, but it ruined the Toulis brothers and produced no very notable results." (Vinlay: Art in Scotland, page 85.) "The whole scheme seems generally to have been considered romantic, and we have Toulis's own testimony that 'there seemed to be a pretty general emulation who should run it most down.'" (Strange: Glasgow and its Clubs, page 51.) "Glasgow had even the privilege of enjoying the advantages afforded by an Academy of Art from the establishment of that institution in 1755 until its long-threatened collapse in 1776. Yet the arts cannot be said to have flourished in Glasgow during this period." (Craig: Scottish Periodical Press, page 30.) "It was not only the plebeians of commercial Glasgow who shook their heads over the venture, for members of high society were ready to do likewise." (Outt: History of the University of Glasgow, page 230.) Mackay: Scottish Painting, p. 17.

3. "The Edinburgh Society for encouraging arts, sciences, manufactures and agriculture in Scotland awarded their silver medal to Messrs. Toulis in 1755 for their Callimachus, and in 1756 two
the impecunious one of training artists and dealing in pictures and
other artistic merchandise. These two notions have led to a general

silver medals for their "Grace of 1758, and their folio Iliad,
others in 1757 and 1758 for their Odyssey and the "Minor works of
Homer." (David Murray: A. and A. Foulis; their Glasgow Press
and Academy of the arts, page 29.) "During all this period the
only successful rivals of the Folilises were Hamilton, Balfour,
and Neil, of Edinburgh, who in 1758, gained a prize for their
edition of Terence, got up under the care of the late Mr. Alexander
Murray, at that time the corrector of their press." (Maitland
Club: notices and documents illustrative of the Literary History
of Glasgow, page 31.) See also Chapter 4, page 114, note #2,
and page 147 above.

1. Some years ago the Printing-office at Glasgow was a formidable
rival to that at Edinburgh; and had the two celebrated Printers
there pursued their business, they might have carried away the
whole trade of Scotland to themselves. But, alas! "Men are but
men," as Tristram Shandy observes, "and the best have their
weaknesses." An unfortunate desire seized these two gentlemen
of instituting an academy of painting, and of buying a collection
of pictures; forgetting that the place where this academy was to
be instituted was amongst a society of tradesmen, who would
throw away no money on such subjects. With this idea they
bought paintings which nobody else will buy again, and which now
lie upon their hands in high preservation. During the rage of
this fancy, they forgot their former business, and neglected an
art which, from their editions of Homer and Milton, might have
made them immortal, to run after paltry copies of good paintings,
which they had been informed were originals.

When I visited these gentlemen I had heard of their Printing, but
never of their Academy. It was in vain that I asked for books;
I had always a picture thrust into my hand; and like Boniface,
though they had nothing in print worth notice, they said they
could show me a delicate engraving. You may well imagine that
this ambition has prevented their former success: for though
Poetry and Painting may be sister arts, I never heard that Paint¬
ing and Printing were of the same family; if they are, their
interests have been very opposite." (Topsham: Letters from Edin¬
burgh, page 160.) For complaints in the same vein see David
Murray, A. and A. Foulis, &c.; "Advice of Friends," page 73 f.;
Maitland Club: notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary
History of Glasgow, page 19 f.; Coutts: History of the University
of Glasgow, page 221. (There is considerable repetition in the
latter three works. Typical advice came from Charles Townshend
"who took a kindly, if not strong, interest in the Folilises," and
the Earl of Northumberland, both of whom advised the brothers
to "print and prosper." )
tendency to depreciate all the activities of the Academy, and, in effect, in the minds of many the failure of that institution was a foregone conclusion. In my opinion, however, neither of these assumptions is warranted by the facts. The Foulis brothers never abandoned their printing business, and, in fact, the Academy was of material assistance to their activities in that direction in the matter of providing illustrations. Nor did they neglect the profits of one business for the pleasures of starving in another. If there was any whimsicality mixed with the scheme for the Academy, it was certainly in the other direction. It appears obvious to me that the two brothers anticipated a source of profits from their artistic endeavours which they had failed to realise in the printing of Greek and Latin classics. And if the word whimsical applies to anyone, it must certainly be far more suitable to those who have so unconcernedly written off twenty years of successful propagation of the arts in Scotland as a "failure." What I shall attempt to demonstrate in my short account of the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts, therefore, is that it was a hard-headed business proposition which, like so many of its kind in other fields of manufactures and commerce, failed to produce the anticipated dividends.

In order to approach the plans for the establishment of an Academy of Arts as Robert Foulis approached them, it is necessary to shed the preconceived idea that his successful printing business was necessarily a lucrative one. Although he has failed to connect the scheme for the

---

1. "Robert Foulis, in the memorial of the Printers and Booksellers of Glasgow, of 25th April, 1774, tells how useful he found the Academy in preparing diagrams for mathematical books; and at the same time enlarges on the work and results of the Academy." (David Murray: A. and R. Foulis, their Glasgow Press, etc., page 81.)
Academy with the lack of profits to be found in printing Plato and
ome, David Murray, in his Robert and Andrew Foulis: Their Glasgow
ness and Academy of Fine Arts, has faithfully recorded the fact that

"money had to be borrowed for the printing and publishing business,
and it is doubtful whether it did more than pay its way." Although
the Foulis correspondence has been lost, and the extracts which were
taken from it by that bungling amateur antiquarian Lord Buchan are
generally unsatisfactory, it is possible to catch some reflection of
Robert Foulis's ideas of the utility of such an establishment, and of
the possibilities of making of it a profitable business. It will be
noted, in the extract which follows, that Foulis gives predominantly

economic reasons for the desirability of an Academy of Arts:

In the years 1756 & 1757, having gone abroad, and resided for
several months at each time at Paris, we had frequent opportuni-
ties of conversing with gentlemen of every liberal profession,
and to observe the connection and mutual influence of the arts
& sciences upon one another & upon society. We had opportunities
of observing the influence of invention in drawing & modelling
on many manufactures. And 'tis obvious that whatever nation
has the lead in fashion must previously have invention in
drawing diffus'd, otherwise they can never rise above copying
their neighbours.... In the year 1751, I went abroad for the
4th time in company with a younger brother, and spent near two
years; the first months were spent in Holland in exchanging
books of our own printing whether Greek, Latin or English, and
in enquiring after assistances for adorning an edition of
Plato. Before this journey was undertaken, the scheme of an
Academy had been pretty well digested, and often the subject of
debate in private conversation....

2. (re. Lord Buchan) "His lordship had little insight, and was
unable to discern what it was in Foulis that he respected and
appreciated... (but) it is to Lord Buchan's industry and to his
collections for his projected work, that we are indebted for the
greater part of what we know of Robert Foulis." (Ibid., page 107.)
3. Wilsden Club: notices and documents Illustrative of the Literary
The reasons for Robert Foulis's optimistic anticipations of success are not difficult to imagine. At the time when the Academy was being seriously considered there was a fad for collecting works of art.

"Works of the old masters were in great demand at this time, and were eagerly sought after, particularly if they could be traced to some great collection." The following analysis of his resolute determination to proceed despite the discouragements offered by many of his fellow citizens sets forth his position quite clearly:

The field which Scotland then afforded for such an undertaking was extremely limited, and the country was at that time only recovering from the effects of the recent rebellion. But Foulis probably felt confident that were such an institution once established, its ultimate success might be considered as almost certain, — and that those who should acquire a taste for the arts might "inspire the same love and relish for the beautiful in those that are near them, and they in others." The very fact that there was then no other Academy for the Arts in Scotland seems to have operated powerfully in inducing him to commence the undertaking. The field was entirely unoccupied, and those who were willing to encourage the rising institutions of their country could not plead the number or variety of those which required their patronage as an excuse for withholding their assistance from it. He had, besides, hopes of meeting even with royal patronage, — hopes which were soon blasted by the untimely death of the Prince of Wales.

Of two alternative plans proposed for the support of the Academy, Robert Foulis chose the one which leaves little doubt as to his financial expectations. The two plans were as follows:

Two plans seem to have been proposed for the support of the Academy. The first was, to submit the scheme to some person of high rank; but this idea was, after mature consideration, abandoned. The second, to use Foulis's own words, was to

2. Aird: Club: Notices and Documents... of Glasgow, page 82 f.
3. Ibid, page 83. See also Woutts: History of the University of Glasgow, p. 260.
communicate it to some merchants of spirit, and represent it to them as a finer kind of manufacture, that would take a longer time to come to a bearing and produce profit, but that in the end would make full amends for the delay, by affording more ample profits, because the manufactures were not produced from dear materials, and the productions were considered not so much according to the quantity of labour they contained, as according to the degree of genius and art well conducted...

The latter plan was the one that was adopted, and, in a letter written to Robertoulis by Sir John Dalrymple, we catch sight of some of the commercial aspects of the Academy's operations. Such phrases as "undersell the London mercate here," and "be able to supply the mercate at Edinburgh while the iron is yet hott," are significant of the business-like approach to the arts which was in no way in opposition to Robertoulis's own ideals:

"Your lads ought to copy the Pictures that they see exactly, in the dimensions that they see them, instead of trusting to themselves to make a little thing of a large one, or a large thing of a little one. The holy family of widows scholar is beloved, and Cochran's saint admired, but the things that will take most, by which I mean that will sell best, are Lanscapes. The most ignorant can judge of the impropriety of a human figure or a human passion, but it must be only one accustomed to look at the beautys of nature, who can judge of a false step in a Lanscape. A Lanscape, too, hits the present taste of ornamenting a room, by which I mean, making it more ugly than it naturally is; for which reason I beg that you would employ your boys in doing the best of your Lanscapes because I can make you certain that these are the things that will sell best...

The Paris-Painter work seems to me a solid scheme, if you contrive your prices so as to undersell the London mercate here, and yet to make money to yourself...

It is of consequence to you to be able to supply the mercate at Edinburgh while the iron is yet hot; for that reason I beg you will send in one copy of every good past that you have to be Shown in Fleming and Sir's Shop, and besides that, with all the expedition you can that you will likewise send in two more copies of each to be kept in boxes in some wareroom till people make their choice of the different pasts,
for it is in these chiefly that I expect sale. I once thought it would have been best for you to have allowed commissions to be sent to you to Glasgow, but I see now that will not do, as people are impatient to have their things directly, and will take if delivered immediately what (they) will not take if delivered eight days after this. Likewise send a few more copies of your Pictures to be sold as any body offers; send catalogues too of the masters, the boy's name, the price, and likewise of the name of the bust and the price. None of these things are done hitherto... I am, Sir, your etc.,


Now that I have gone so far in one direction, I hasten to assure the reader that I do not imagine for one moment that the profit motive was the only reason that Robert Foulis persisted in his endeavours to promote the fine arts in Scotland. That he was genuinely interested in the arts, and in their cultivation, we know from the papers which he read before the Literary Society of Glasgow. And from his own statement that "private profit is what I have too much undervalued in my other undertakings to regard it in the present circumstances," we know that he persisted in his efforts far longer than he would have done had he been solely interested in the profits of the venture.

1. "Essays read before the Society by Robert Foulis:-
   Novr. 9, 1764. Memoir on the Discovery and Culture of Genius.
   Novr. 14, 1766. Observations on the Knowledge or Science necessary to a Commercial Town or State.
   Decr. 4, 1767. On what reasons founded in nature do the imitative Arts of music, Painting, and Poetry proceed.
   Novr. 10, 1768. On the establishments wanting in this University which are necessary to render education more complete.
   May 4, 1770. Whether Learning, Arts, Sciences and Manners in Europe are upon the whole on the Advance or Decline. (Laitland Club: Notices and Documents etc., page 154-155.) For an account of the Literary Society of Glasgow, see Chapter 4, page 118, and following, above.

out the fact remains that he believed in the financial practicality of his venture, that he expected to profit from it, and when the affair ended in a disastrous final auction of his collection of paintings, after his brother's death and the dissolution of the Academy, it quite literally broke his heart, and he died a few months later.

At every step in the formation and management of the Academy, therefore, we may find indications that Robert Joules was not an impractical visionary. His original scheme for establishing the institution, besides furnishing us with the essential facts, shows that the proposed Academy was to have many of the features which proved to be successful in later attempts of a similar nature:

It is proposed, that a house be taken, with a sufficient number of rooms; two, contiguous to each other, for drawing and modelling from the life; one for architecture and perspective; one for drawing from plaster; one for receiving the works of the school; one for the exhibition of them, and others for a housekeeper, and servants.

That some fine pictures, casts, bustoes, bas relievos, intaglio's, antiquity, history, architecture, drawings, and prints, be purchased.

That there be professors of anatomy, geometry, perspective, architecture, and such other sciences as are necessary to a painter, sculptor, or architect.

---

1. "After meeting charges, the net sum remaining to the unfortunate owner was, it is said, fifteen shillings." (David Murray: A. & A. Joules: Their Glasgow Press, etc., page 99.)

2. "It is needless to refer to the grief and disappointment of the worthy man. He had sacrificed what he prized most highly and loved most dearly. A callous and ignorant crowd had, in his view, taken his treasure, without acknowledging its merits or its worth. He had parted with it and was a beggar... He journeyed slowly back to Scotland a broken man. He reached Edinburgh, and, while in the act of preparing for his journey to Glasgow, suddenly expired on the 2nd June, 1776." (Ibid, page 100.)

3. "Reprinted from the Gentleman's Magazine."
That the professors do read lectures at stated times on the constituent parts of their several arts; the reasons on which they are founded, and the precision and immutability of the objects of true taste, with proper cautions against all caprice and affectation.

That living models be provided of different characters, to stand five nights in the week.

That every professor do present the academy with a piece of his performance at admission.

That no scholar draw from the life, till he has gone through the previous classes, and given proof of his capacity.

That a certain number of medals be annually given to such students as shall distinguish themselves most.

That every student, after he has practised a certain time, and given some proofs of his ability, may be a candidate for a fellowship.

That such of the fellows as chuse to travel to their own to complete their studies, do make a composition from some given subject, as a proof of their abilities, and he who shall obtain the preference, shall be sent, with a salary sufficient to maintain him decently a certain time; during which he is to be employed in copying pictures, antique statues, or bas relieves, drawing from ancient fragments or such new structures as may advance his art; such pieces to be the property of the society.

That other medals of greater value, or some badges of distinction, be given publicly to those who shall manifest uncommon excellence.

That some professors should be well skilled in ornaments, fruit, flowers, birds, beasts, etc., that they may instruct the students in these subjects, which are of great use in our manufactures,

That drawing-masters for such schools as may be wanted in several parts of the kingdom be appointed by the professors, under the seal of the academy.

That a housekeeper shall continually reside at the academy, to keep every thing in order, and not suffer any piece to go out of the house without a proper warrant.

As is well known, the proposal that "a house be taken" was obviated by the fact that the College of Glasgow extended its support to the Academy by permitting Coulis to use two rooms in the College buildings.
In 1759, the Scots Magazine published "A Proposal for encouraging, by subscription, an academy for Painting and Sculpture, now instituted at Glasgow," which gives a more detailed description of the Academy as it was finally established. The "Proposal" reads as follows:

As the following proposal doth not proceed from the person who is interested in it, the public will not be surprised to find him treated with marks of personal esteem, as well as a zeal discovered for the object which he has pursued with uncommon spirit.

Mr. Robert Foulis of Glasgow, printer to the university, conceived a design, some years ago, of erecting a school for Sculpture and Painting; and he flattered himself, that such an institution, hitherto wanting in every part of this kingdom, might favor the early propensities of such as are endowed with talents for those arts, and bring to view some examples of a happy genius, which are frequently concealed under the pressure of indigence and obscurity. The talents indeed which qualify men for attaining great eminence in those arts, are very uncommon; and we must, on this account, more regret their being frustrated by a want of those occasions which discover them, and excite their application. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon this point, and we have indulged ourselves so far only, because we are convinced, that this consideration furnished the principal motives for the institution of that academy which we have now in view; and we shall only add, that it is likewise uncommon, to find a person who is willing to engage himself in a design so remote from the ordinary views of interest. Such an institution required not only the inspection of proper masters, but seemed to lay the founder under a necessity of procuring from abroad such a collection of pictures as might communicate the first ideas to his scholars, and excite their emulation. Neither the expense of this collection which is very considerable, nor the disappointments he has met with in the choice of masters, have discouraged him from continuing to educate boys who have a proper disposition to those arts; and he has been happy in the choice of several, who have already made considerable progress.

His boys are occupied in the different branches for which they appear most qualified, either Painting, modeling, or engraving; and he has lately employed some hands in moulding busts and figures from casts of the best statues.

The productions of this academy are already very considerable, and deserve to meet with such reception, as would enable the undertaker to prosecute his plan with less detriment to his private interest. But in this he hath to struggle with what is too frequent among mankind, a prepossession against every new attempt, and against every production of their own country, compared with what is brought with more expense from a distance. He hath to cope with the expectations of an age already, in some measure, familiar with the perfection of this art in the productions of foreign masters; and who are apt to reject, with disgust, the first essays of an infant academy. The following proposal is intended, if possible, to obviate these difficulties, and to procure some encouragement to those arts in our own country, which have been carried so far by, and done so much honour to foreign nations.

PROPOSAL —
The productions of Mr. Foulis's academy being exposed to view at Edinburgh, in the shop of Mr. Robert Fleming, and at Glasgow, in the gallery appointed for them in the college; it is proposed that such gentlemen as are willing to promote this design, shall advance certain sums annually, for any number of years they think proper; during which time they are to choose among the prints, paintings, models, or casts, which are the productions of this academy such lots as may amount to the value of the sums respectively paid by them, signed either by Mr. Foulis at Glasgow or Mr. Fleming, his trustee, at Edinburgh. Gentlemen may withdraw their subscriptions when they please.

The policy of Robert Foulis in relation to his pupils was somewhat unusual. "I receive no gratification," he explained, "from the young men bred to be artists in the academy, but I give them wages from the beginning, so that they are taught on easier conditions than they would learn the ordinary mechanic trades. They also receive little rewards or prizes occasionally to stir them up to outdo themselves or their companions. These are proportioned to their condition and my ability." The fact that his students were supported by Foulis suggests to me that the academy was intended to be supported, in turn, by the sale of their work. This method of operation made, in effect, a factory of art out of the academy, but this was perfectly in keeping

with the plan originally advanced by Robert Foulis, and was, in fact, exactly what he had intended.

From 1759 to 1775 the Academy continued to use the rooms provided by the College. During this period, it appears to have been regarded as an ornament to the city, and as a show-place. In the Autumn of 1771, James Boswell visited it in company with Paoli and the Polish Ambassador, Count Burzynski. The following account of the visit of these three "notables" was obligingly supplied by Boswell to the publisher of the Scots Magazine:

An authentic account of General Paoli's tour to Scotland, Autumn 1771.

... On Friday, Sept. 6, they walked about and viewed the beautiful and flourishing city of Glasgow without being known. But by the time they got to the university, the report went that General Paoli was in town; and then everybody was in motion, crowding to see him. Their Excellencies viewed the elegant printing and academy of painting, sculpture, etc., of the Scottish Stephanii, the Mess. Foulis, who were transported with enthusiasm to see such visitors. The university was not sitting; but there luckily happened to be there the Professors Moor, Muirhead, Anderson, Trail, Wilson, Reid, and Stevenson, who shewed the university to great advantage, and entertained their Excellencies, and a number of other gentlemen of distinction, with wine and sweet-meats in the library....

Despite its reputation, however, the Academy did not become as profitable as Robert Foulis had anticipated, and its financial difficulties were persistent and seemed rather to increase than to diminish. In September 1775, the active supporters of the institution, and particularly Robert Foulis, were brought to the realization that they could no longer continue when Andrew Foulis, who had become a partner to his brother on 21st February 1758, died suddenly. The Academy was closed,

2. Robert Foulis was assisted in his endeavour by three Glasgow
and the picture collection was sent to London for auction. In preparation for the coming sacrifice of his beloved pictures, Robert Foulis lovingly prepared an extensive and elaborate catalogue. The catalogue consists of three volumes, and the preface to the first volume contains the best account of the Academy which I have seen, though it is very seldom quoted by those who sit in judgment on the Academy. Robert Foulis's account of his own endeavours reads as follows:

The pictures mentioned in the following Catalogue having been visited by many persons, both British and foreigners, the occasion of collecting them is perhaps sufficiently known.

Many who have seen them, and who expected nothing in Glasgow of the kind, were not a little surprised on finding so many pictures of the first order of every school; and were still more surprised on seeing a number of young men applying themselves to the different branches of the fine Arts; to drawing, modelling, moulding, painting, and engraving.

Those who have seen them at different periods, know the feebleness of their beginnings, and the progress that has been made in every branch; namely, in portraits, in history-painting, in engraving, and in the application of drawing to many useful arts, both civil and military.

*Note: See his original proposal on page 421, above.*

The 'two merchants of spirit in Glasgow,' who provided funds for the enterprise, were John Glassford of Dougallston (1715-85), a Virginia bon, and Archibald Ingram (1704-70), his brother-in-law, calico-printer and banker, Provost 1762-64, both of whom had been associated in the printing of Ambrose's Works in 1737, John Campbell of Clathie, a prominent merchant, Provost 1764-66, and a well-known figure in Glasgow society, now joined with them in assisting Foulis (i.e. in 1752) (David Murray: R. & A. Foulis, page 60.) For the part played by Andrew Foulis in the Academy, see *ibid*, page 78.

1. A Catalogue of Pictures, Composed and Painted chiefly by the most admired Masters of the Roman, Florentine, Parmian, Venetian, Flemish, and French Schools. In which many of the most capital are illustrated by Descriptions, and critical Remarks.... By Robert Foulis. 3 Vols. London: Sold at the place of Exhibition, and by T. Cadell, 1776.
But all that can be done by any attempt of private persons is temporary. Human life is too short for bringing to perfection those arts, which require permanent establishments to prevent their decline. This is the case with history-painters; to whose studies no limit can be set; but whose encouragement is of all others the most precarious.

When this enterprise was begun, there was little prospect that any thing of the kind would so soon be undertaken in any part of the Island. The hope of finding royal patronage were frustrated by the death of the Prince of Wales; who had it much at heart to establish a royal academy, well furnished with the most capital pictures, and every other means of advancing the arts: for he knew their intrinsic value, and that they are essential in bringing all ornamental manufactures to perfection.

His present Majesty was then of an age too early for the public to form any judgment concerning his inclinations to encourage and protect the arts. It is now to be hoped, that Parliament will concur with him in his intentions of this kind, so frequently and so graciously displayed; and when they find leisure from business that admits of no delay, will give that countenance to artists, which is consistent with the improvements of a manufacturing country. The establishment of a magnificent museum, for the advancement of true knowledge, encourages this pleasing hope.

As the Sciences and Philosophy are the foundation of every useful and ornamental art, it were to be wished, that every professor of any branch of the fine Arts had a competent knowledge of them; and were able to read, in their original languages, those authors who are the models of elegance and taste; and whose writings form the soul to a relish for what is beautiful and good in all things.

A few establishments for giving a liberal education to such as had given proofs of genius for the arts, would in time have been productive of good effects. Even those who failed in the expectations they might have excited would still, by help of a liberal education, have found use for their talents in other honourable employments.

Attention to the culture of virtuous dispositions is more general in the middle ranks of life than in the extremes; and this culture, perfected by a liberal education, would form artists judge of, and attached to all the decorums of life. The liberal arts would become more generally honourable by the manners of those who professed them.

It was proper, on many accounts, that this undertaking should be brought to a period. Two persons of five who were originally concerned in it, are already gone, and only one remaining who
could take the trouble of superintending a concern so full of cares. He also too far advanced in life to flatter himself with hopes of doing much more service by prolonging; and being acquainted with the particulars of the collection, it was judged proper by all his friends, that he should charge himself with the disposal of the whole.

Nor would perseverance be of the same importance as before; the arts being now under the special protection of His Majesty, and the care of a Royal Academy in the capital of the British Empire.

Yet as learning and virtue are so necessary to artists, and a taste for the elegant arts so necessary to complete a liberal education, it is to be wished, that all Universities were also Academies; in order that artists should never be without learning, nor learned men without a taste for those arts, that in all enlightened ages, have been deemed liberal and polite.

Some ages before the restoration of antient knowledge, learning became barbarous; and was for the most part confined to monasteries and to cells. But since the revival of genius, learned men have mingled more with society, artists have become more learned, their tastes more refined, and their ingenious labours, by promoting the conveniences and ornaments of life, have become more externally useful.

The undertaking that has been carried on in this city, cannot perhaps be entirely justified upon the principles of the selfish system, if the pleasure that arises from endeavouring to do good be counted for nothing; and if the consciousness of acting with benevolent meaning does not follow us to the other world.

What has been already done, makes it fully evident, that the more the arts are cultivated, they will become the more perfect, and the more diffused.

David Allen, who laid the foundation of his education here, is, perhaps, the first Briton who contended for the prize of history-painting at Rome. This contention was not with young men like himself: but with painters more advanced in life. He gained the first prize; and distinguished himself no less by his Prova, done in public, than by this finished picture.

The pastes, by Mr. Yassie, in imitation of precious stones, are now generally known, as well as his casts in sulphur. Nor does he confine himself to mechanical parts, but imitates original nature with success. Yet this artist began by drawing, modelling, and moulding at Glasgow.

The art of engraving has been so little diffused in Scotland, that Mr. Strange was the first that distinguished himself; and
he undoubtedly gave specimens, before he went abroad, that promised that reputation he has since acquired. There have been attempts here in the same art.

The essays in landscape that were done by Robert Paul, a little before his death, have that simplicity, which promises superior excellence. His view of the West Street, called the Trongate of Glasgow, is the most capital, as it is the last of his works; and was finished after his death by William Buchanan.

There are a considerable number of prints in Raphael's Bible, done by the late William Buchanan, that shew his ability as a drawer and engraver. His Paul preaching at Athens, and the other cartoons he engraved; and last of all Raphael's Transfiguration, which he had near finished when he died; done from the picture reversed in a mirror, are convincing proofs of his merit.

Nor can I neglect, on this occasion, to do justice to James Mitchell; who, although the nearness of his sight disqualified him for a common profession; yet, in a few weeks made a surprising progress; and his engravings, after he attained experience, have been favourably received by the public. Several of his performances in Raphael's Bible, are much superior, both in conception and execution to Wapperon. His print of Daniel in the den of lions, after Ruben's picture in his Grace the Duke of Hamilton's collection, has been well received. He engraved also four of the Cartoon, Mount Parnassus, and the School of Athens, and has laboured with success both after Raphael and Correggio.

The essays in original history-painting that have been finished are not numerous; but there are some which were done at Rome by Messieurs Cochrane and W'Lauchlane, that do them honour; although their manners are so different, that their works cannot be compared with propriety.

There are some drawings and pictures by David Allen, before he went abroad, that are done with invention and spirit; and are surprising, especially at so early a period.

But I shall conclude this subject, least, by prolonging it, I become tedious. Nor shall I presume, at present, to mention the names of the illustrious persons, whose protection has done honour to this attempt; least it should seem to proceed more from vanity than from gratitude.

As I have already said, the auction of his pictures, which Robert Foulis had so laboriously collected, was a disastrous failure. There is every indication that until the very end he had expected that their sale would allow him to discharge his financial obligations. When it
became known that the public regarded, for the moment, his collection as worthless, Robert Foulis must certainly have felt that all his years of struggle had been worthless.

It is most reprehensible and unnatural that the efforts of this public-spirited man should ever have been repudiated. And yet it is as it was in the beginning; when the matter of the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts is considered, "there (seems) to be a pretty general emulation who should run it most down." A more flagrant example of civic ingratitude, for example, could hardly be found than that of the Maitland Club's account of the Academy, which contains the stinging words, "The Academy has always, and deservedly, been considered a failure." Such a statement, despite all the qualifications which may be placed upon it, is an affront not only to the memory of a worthy man, but is not even in keeping with the facts. Among Glaswegians, it was left to David Murray, a Glasgow lawyer and antiquarian of a later period, to express a deep appreciation and generous admiration in his final survey of the efforts of Robert Foulis to promote the arts in Scotland. Murray writes:

1. "Professor Richardson stated, on an authority on which he felt disposed to rely, that a picture, sold for twenty-five pounds, afterwards brought five hundred." (David Murray: R. & A. Foulis: Their Glasgow Press, and Academy of Fine Arts, page 128.)


The Academy was an unfortunate venture from a commercial point of view, but it was a grand conception. It was planned on a great scale, and excellently organised, and was carried on for more than twenty years with amazing energy under enormous difficulties. Such a scheme nowadays would be possible only with the aid of a handsome endowment, or of a state or a municipal subvention; but Robert Poulis undertook it practically single-handed, and achieved what must be considered a marked success. The formation of his gallery of paintings was a big undertaking, and their presence in Glasgow must have been a great educative influence. "within the college," says the editor of Camden's Britannia, "is the printing-house of the two brothers Robert and Andrew Poulis, to whom the learned world owes many elegant and convenient editions of the Greek and Roman classics, and their native city has no small obligation for the Academy by them established for the arts of design and sculpture, though not attended with all the success they expected." Misfortune overtook the Academy, but not from any defect in plan or fault of management, but simply because the funds for carrying it on were inadequate, and the public did not give it the support that was expected...

As a part of the history of the fine arts in Glasgow, it is interesting to record that toward the end of the century notices of two Academies of Drawing appeared in the Glasgow Courier. These academies were, of course, due to the enterprise of private individuals, and both reflect, even more so than the Poulis Academy, the predominating commercial interest in the arts of the period. The first of these academies, that of Gallaway and Williams, must have opened in 1793. The tenor of its notice in the Courier suggests that the projectors had at least some interest in the fine arts:

Gallaway and Williams return grateful thanks to the Public for the encouragement they have received since the opening of their Academy; and trust, that no exertions on their part shall be wanting to merit their farther patronage.

As a number of their friends have been solicitous about the opening of their Winter evening Classes, they beg leave to

acquaint the Public, that about the 1st of October, they mean to open their evening Classes, for the accommodation of those Gentlemen who cannot attend through the day.

Miniature Painting by Mr. Gallaway, and Views of any Particular Place, Taken from Nature by, Mr. Williams. Specimens to be seen at the Academy.

The second academy, that of Roeburn, Neilson, and Hastie, was more in the nature of a training school for craftsmen. The notice of this academy reads as follows:-

Roeburn, Neilson, and Hastie, most respectfully inform their friends and the Public in general, that they have fitted up an Academy, at the head of the laigh-Airk Gloss, Trongate, for teaching Drawing in Architecture, Cabinet Work, Land Surveying, Perspective, etc.

Likewise measure Masons, Wrights, Bricklayers, Plaisters, Painters Work, etc., etc.

Goods of every kind bought and sold upon commission, and also act as accountants.

A. N. and H. return their most grateful acknowledgments to their friends who have already honoured them with their employment since they commenced business, and they flatter themselves, by unremitted attention, to merit their favours in the different branches they profess.

N. B. Architectural Plans, and Draughts and Patterns for all kinds of Household furniture, with their just proportions, done on the shortest notice, and upon the lowest terms.

During the time that the Foulis Academy of Art was active in Glasgow, a School of Design was established in Edinburgh by the Board of Trustees for Manufactures in Scotland. While there is no positive evidence that the Glasgow experiment was directly responsible for the decision to establish a similar institution in Edinburgh, it is


reasonable to assume that both Academies were a reflection of the widely held belief in the necessity of promulgating the arts in a manufacturing nation. As the reader will recall, Robert Foulis expressed this belief when he was explaining his motives for the establishment of the Glasgow Academy of Fine Arts.

The Edinburgh Trustee's Academy was an outcome of one of the provisions of the Treaty of Union of 1707. This historical background of the Academy has been very ably traced by Sir William Stirling Maxwell in an address to the Royal Scottish Academy:

By the fifteenth article of the Treaty of Union, concluded between England and Scotland in 1703, amongst other provisions for giving some equivalent to Scotland for an increase of duties of Customs and Excise, it was agreed that 2000 pounds a year should for some years be applied towards encouraging and promoting the manufacture of coarse wool in those shires which produced wool, and afterwards wholly employed towards "encouraging and promoting the fisheries, and such other manufactures and improvements in Scotland as may most conduce to the general good of the United Kingdom." In 1718 this 2000 pounds was made payable for ever out of the Customs and Excise in Scotland. In 1725 an addition was made to this sum by an act which provided, that when the produce of threepence per bushel to be paid on malt should exceed 20,000 pounds a year, such surplus should be added to it, and applied to the like purposes. The year following, the Crown was empowered to appoint twenty-one trustees, who were named in 1727 by letters-patent, which prescribed their duties and the plan of expending of the funds at their disposal in the encouragement of fisheries, and of the woollen, linen, and hempen manufactures. Under these trustees and their successors the business of the Board was carried on for about a century, until 1828, with little change of system...^3

1. See page 419, above.
2. Harvey: Notes on the Early History of the Royal Scottish Academy, page 162, Appendix II.
3. The Trustees were named as a part of an Act of Parliament entitled "An Act for Encouraging and Promoting Fisheries, and other Manufactures and Improvements in that Part of Great Britain called Scotland, (George I, year 13). This act was a direct result of a
The board's...School of Design...had its origin in 1760. On the 27th of June of that year, in pursuance of previous deliberations of the Board, as our records inform us, a "scheme or scroll of an advertisement anent the drawing-school was read, and it was referred to Lord Kames to take evidence of the capacity and genius for drawing of persons applying for instruction before they be presented to the drawing-school, and to report when the salary of Mr. Delacour, painter, who had been appointed to teach the school, should commence." This we believe to have been the first School of Design established in these kingdoms at the public expense.

Any account of the Trustee's Academy of Design must be rather thin as the records of its early career have been lost. Despite this regrettable circumstance, it is possible to piece together an outline of the history of the institution during the years 1760 to 1800. The central fact which emerges, that the Academy was little more than a school for manufacturer's apprentices until nearly the end of the century, makes the lack of records for this period less keenly felt.

The Trustee's Academy, as it was first instituted in 1760, was for the promotion of a taste in the arts of design as applicable to manufactures." It is important to bear the commercial nature of the Academy in mind, for it persisted until 1798, or right up to the end of the period which I intend to cover. This practical purpose of the Trustee's new establishment was reflected in their choice of the first master, a Frenchman by the name of William Delacour, whose "principal qualifications for the mastership of a...
school of design was his experience as a decorator. Dela Cour was succeeded by another Frenchman, Pavillon, in 1765. M. Pavillon was followed, in 1771, by a Scotsman, Alexander Hunciman. At this time the salary of the master, who taught in "two apartments in the college" which had been granted by the Town-Council, was 120 pounds, and the Board of Manufacturers "bestowed 15 pounds yearly, to be distributed among the scholars by way of premium, for the first, second, and third best drawings." The course under Hunciman was four years, which "was deemed sufficient for any boys or girls of moderate capacity, acquiring a knowledge in drawing sufficient to assist them in their respective occupations, this institution being solely appropriated for the use of manufactures, not intended as an academy of painting."

---

6. Ibid.
After Hunciman's death in 1785, he was succeeded by another Scot, David Allan, who had received his early training in the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts. Allan continued to teach in the Old College until 1790, when "the Academy was removed to an apartment, taken by the Board of Trustees, in Mint Court, from which it was afterwards transferred to a room at the top of a house in the High Street, rented at five guineas per annum." After this, David Allan continued as master of the Academy until 1796, when he was succeeded by John Wood who had the appointment only to suffer the disappointment of being "dismissed for incompetence after about a year's service." After Wood's dismissal, "the Trustees had the good fortune to appoint, from among nine or ten candidates, John Graham, under whom the work was greatly extended, and a collection of casts from the antique was formed."

It was under the direction of John Graham that the Trustee's Academy underwent a metamorphosis which transformed it from a school

---


4. Gaw: Scottish Painting, page 36. As will shortly be explained, this was the first indication that the nature of the school had changed. Until Graham's appointment, the Trustee's Academy remained what it had been at the beginning, a school of crafts. I mention this at this time, for I feel that the nature of the Academy has been frequently misunderstood. Such misunderstanding usually occurs through assuming that the nature of the Academy in the eighteenth century was the same as it was in the early nineteenth. Such an assumption is completely unwarranted.
for craftsmen and manufacturer's apprentices to a true Academy of the
fine arts. The influence of Graham, which began to be felt soon after
his appointment as master in 1798, has been described in the following
terms:-

Very little change or improvement in the instruction given
took place until after John Graham's appointment. Originally
founded with the intention of fostering design for manufactures,
it was in fact a school of applied art. At first its work was
directed to making designs for linen fabrics, and later its
scope was widened to include other industries; but under
Graham it definitely assumed the position of a school of
artists as well. The "examples of fruit, flowers, and
grottoes ornaments," which were previously the only models set
before the students, were supplemented or superseded by a good
collection of casts from the antique, pictorial composition
was taught, and painting introduced as a definite study. To
the premiums already given for drawing, others for painting
were added, and the subjects for these compositions being chosen
from poetry and history, Wilkie, like David Allan, started his
career by winning a prize for a classical composition. Graham
was a capable and enthusiastic man, his own work is not unworthy
of respect, and his influence upon his pupils, of whom Wilkie,
William Allan, and Watson Gordon are the more important, and
through them on Scottish Art was great and salutary....

As I have attempted to make clear, because of its plebian nature
the Trustee's Academy of Design in Edinburgh had little influence on
the development of the fine arts in Scotland until the end of the
eighteenth and the beginning of nineteenth centuries when David
Wilkie, William Allan, John Watson Gordon, John Burnet, and the elder
Fraser, the artists who formed the Scottish School, entered as pupils.

1. Caw: Scottish Painting, pages 67-68; see also Tonge: Arts of
Scotland, page 48; Mackay: Scottish School of Painting, page 99;
and Cunningham: Sir David Wilkie, page 35.

2. Caw: Scottish Painting, page 68; Cunningham: Sir David Wilkie, page
34 f.; and British Painters, Vol. 3, pages 210-211; Armstrong:
Scottish Painters, page 20; Mackay: Scottish School of Painting,
page 99; Mackintosh: History of Civilization in Scotland, Vol. 4,
page 474; and Finlay: Art in Scotland, page 86.
It is significant, for example, that the finest artist of the period, Sir Henry Raeburn, had no connection with the Trustee's Academy. Unlike the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts, however, the Edinburgh School of Design did not have any soaring aspirations, and has consequently escaped the censure which has fallen upon the unrealized ambitions of Robert Foulis. But this in no way alters the fact that as far as making an effort to develop Scottish art during the eighteenth century, Edinburgh must be ranked as secondary to Glasgow.

At the end of the century, however, signs other than the appointment of John Graham and the expansion of the Trustee's Academy indicated that the fine arts were being taken more seriously in Edinburgh. In November of 1797, the Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany printed the following notice of a new society:

At an earnest desire of many artists of Edinburgh, a society has recently been formed in that city, the object of which is National Improvement in the Fine Arts. It is thought by its founders that such a society may, in due time, conduce to render Scotland no less distinguished for works of genius than for its acknowledged progress in science. Mr. Nasmyth has been appointed the first president and Mr. A. Campbell, the secretary.

While it is not known whether the Society for National Improvement in the Fine Arts was responsible for the appointment of John Graham as master of the Trustee's Academy, and for supporting his policy of expansion, it is certain that the newly-formed Society would have done much to create a favourable attitude toward his efforts to improve that institution. And such support was badly needed, as

the Edinburgh manufacturers were not enthusiastic supporters of Graham's rather revolutionary introduction of oil painting for the first time into the Academy. "Will oil colours," they said, "as bright as those of Titian, add any lustre to a gown-piece, or a new charm to the flower and leaf on a table-cloth or carpet?" To which a map-engraver added, "Or will my apprentice, when he learns the magic of Rembrandt's colouring, become more skilful in etching the sinuosities of a sea-coast, or in engraving an invitation card?" Despite the carping of these disinterested critics, however, Graham persisted in his attempts to infect his students with a taste for the fine arts. And it was chiefly due to his efforts, beginning in 1798, that the Trustee's Academy finally became, what it has often been described, "an institution which exerted a great and salutary influence upon art in Scotland."

CHAPTER EIGHT

FICTITIOUS CLUBS AND SOCIETIES.

There is no argument which demonstrates the importance of clubs and societies to eighteenth-century life as effectively as that which points to the number and variety of fictitious organizations which appeared in the literature of the period. Whether as a pretext to add weight to a writer's individual opinions, as the product of an author's fertile imagination, or as a mere invention to add spice to anecdotes, clubs and societies were created in an endless variety. The tide of fictional associations, which may be said to have begun in the pages of the Spectator, continued so strongly through nearly all the periodical papers which followed the example set by Addison and Steele that imaginative clubs and societies became one of the literary conventions which characterized those publications. But

1. The following chart will illustrate the number of clubs which appeared in the periodical papers of the century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spectator</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>The Spectator Club.</td>
<td>The Beef-Steak Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Kit Kat Club,</td>
<td>The October Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Two-Penny Club,</td>
<td>The Ugly Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>The Amorous Club,</td>
<td>The Fringe-Glove Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>vii</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>The Sighing Club.</td>
<td>The Ugly Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>ix</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>The She-romp Club.</td>
<td>The Ugly Club,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
this was not the end of it. The fictitious clubs often led to the establishment of real ones, and these, in turn, became so popular that they added to the available material upon which additional essays could be written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spectator</td>
<td>xi</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>The Lazy Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>The Mohocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>The Lawyer's Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>The Moving Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>The Hen-Packed Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>The Rulers of Great Tyrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>A Club at Oxford for re-hearing the Spectator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>The Chit-Chat Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>The Widow's Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>The Rattling Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>xvii</td>
<td>91, 92</td>
<td>The Little Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>The Tall Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>The Silent Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rambler</td>
<td>xxii</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>The Terrible Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurer</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>An Antiquities Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>A Disputing Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>xxvi</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>A Convivial Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idler</td>
<td>xxxiii</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>A Club of Learned Men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looker-on</td>
<td>xii</td>
<td>3, 24</td>
<td>The Looker-On's Club.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The volume numbers above refer to those of Alexander Chalmers collection of British Essayists.)

The activities of the members of the fictitious clubs which appeared in these papers were sometimes considered to be their chief attraction. "The secret charm of the Spectator consisted in interesting the reader in the characters and actions of the several members of the club, and consequently in the dramatic cast given to these essays..." (Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany, Vol. II, new series, January 1798, page 18.)

1. The process of which I have spoken was not confined to Great Britain. In France, Addison's essays had a similar result. "Laurent Bordelon, docteur de Sorbonne et auteur dramatique, (deux qualités qu'on trouverait rarement réunies), au milieu d'une masse de livres, qui souvent n'ont de piquant que le titre, nous a laissé un opuscule peu commun, intitulé: La Coterie des Anti-Faconniers établie dans L. C. J. D. L. S. Relation où l'on traite de l'establishement de cette coterie. Paris, 1715. Dans ce livre, l'auteur traite d'une société particulière qui s'était formée à l'instar des coteries anglaises dont Addison avait parlé dans son Spectateur. Soit que la coterie des Anti-
Fictitious clubs and societies, however, were not confined solely to the periodical papers. The eighteenth century was a period in European culture in which egocentric ideas and opinions were not welcomed. It was much safer for an individual to share his ideas with his fellow mortals, and to speak, as it were, for the group mind rather than to indulge in what was to become the romantic ideal by displaying his genius through his originality. This predilection for a responsible corporate judgment led to a common pretext on the part of individual writers that they were speaking for a group. And a logical development of this intellectual bias for the judgment of men in a society was a gain of prestige for those institutions. As a natural result of this tendency to honour the corporate body, and whenever it was desired to give additional weight to an idea, a proposal for public improvement, or to a new publication, it was very common to indicate that the source of all these good things was "a society of gentlemen." In the same way, it was generally considered legitimate to give an added fillip to any anecdote by arranging matters so that the incident took place in a club or a society.

There are, therefore, three general types of fictitious clubs and societies. The first type consists of those which appeared in periodical publications as the subject of an essay, or as a pretext to give additional weight to the observations of an author.

Faconniers ait réellement existé en France, soit qu'elle n'ait pris naissance que dans l'imagination assez active de l'abbé Bordelon, nous dire quels étaient son but & sa composition, "(Les Sociétés Pedines, Bachi ques, Littéraires, et Chantantes; Leur Histoire et Leurs Travaux, (ouvrage posthume) de M. Arthur Dinaux, revu et classé par M. Gustave Brunet, Vol. 1, page 36.)"
As a variation of this type, we may also include those clubs which were invented as a device for giving parliamentary reports. The second type are those fictitious clubs and societies which were the products of the imagination of writers of fiction. These may be distinguished from the clubs which appeared in the periodical papers in that they did not pretend to be anything else, whereas the fictitious organizations which appeared in the periodical papers invariably made the pretence of having some foundation in reality. The third, and last, type of fictitious organization was that which was the deliberate invention, though offered as fact, of a club or a society to add local colour to an anecdote, or, as in the case of Robert Chamber's many inventions in this manner, to add interest and vivacity to an account of the past. The rather fine distinctions between the three types will become clearer as each is illustrated in its turn.

One of the first fictitious clubs to appear in a Scottish publication as a result of the literary fashion begun in the English periodical papers was the Critical Club which published a volume of essays in the year 1756. This "professed society" consisted of six members, Will Portly, Dick Crotchet, Tom Meanwell, Old Lady Courtly, Miss Jennie (her daughter), and Jack Flyant who acted as the club President. In the first issue it was carefully explained

1. Letters of the Critical Club, containing miscellaneous observations upon men, manners, and Writings. Begun in the month of January, 1756, and published monthly at Edinburgh, Vol. I, from the month of January, to the month of June inclusive; Edinburgh, printed by W. Cheyne. The collected volume was dedicated to Duncan Forbes, Lord President of the Court of Session.
that the organization was not a scandle club, but "a moral rectifier," and that the club’s only aim as "true critics" was that of a “Reformation of Manners.” From the first, in keeping with the established literary tradition, the member’s affairs figured largely in the essays.

Although the organization’s plan had been to publish the papers in single issues in imitation of the Spectator Club, this plan was abandoned, and it was decided to issue the publication in monthly "pamphlets." The reason for this decision was given in an "Address to the Public" which made up the first number:

As there have been several Attempts made in this Place, of publishing Papers of the kind, and frequently with very indifferent success, it may seem impudent and assuming in us to trouble the Publick with these Papers, as if we promised ourselves to succeed better than others have done, and put a greater Value upon our own Abilities and Parts, than those of our Predecessors, who have writ in the same way before us; yet, we beg that the Publick would not put that Construction upon it, and be more charitable to us. We thought maturely on the matter before we adventured it, and, upon Consideration of the double Disadvantage that the Publishers of such Papers ly under, of publishing them in single papers, and paying the Duty, which makes them very dear, so that People grudge to purchase them, and besides laying in too small a Provision before they begin, by which they run out, and the Paper degenerates and turns insipid; we thought, if we could shun these inconveniences, we should probably succeed, for we have laid in, first, a good Provision

1. Letters of the Critical Club, paper number two, page 5 f.
2. Ibid, see especially pages 8, 9, 20, 97, 108, 109, bot. 158, 164, 185, 186, 188, 189, and 530.

The Duty referred to in the "Address to the Publick" was that which had to be paid on all periodicals when they were published at intervals of seven days or less. One of the common methods of getting around the tax was by publishing every eight days.
for the time to come, and then, by publishing them in monthly Pamphlets, we render the Price less, by paying no Duty; we hope the Publick will take this Design in good part, and, if we should not succeed, to put a favourable Construction upon it, as it is commendable, tho' it may be misfortune. And, at the same time, we shall reckon ourselves obliged to any Gentlemen or Ladies, who shall favour us with their Correspondence. The Publick is desired to excuse the Lateness of the Publication of this Pamphlet for January, it being the first, and we not being fully resolved upon the Thing, made us more tardy than otherwise we would have been, but the following ones, if this takes, shall be published sooner.

The March issue of the Letters announced a change in the form of the publication. Because it had been complained that the "pamphlet" for February was too small, it had been decided that "to make up the size in future they would publish, as an appendix, 'such poems or songs as shall come to our hands.'" In general, the content of the essays was in imitation of the Spectator. The publication lasted for about six months.

In January and March, 1742, the Scots Magazine printed a brief exchange of correspondence which demonstrates, in a rather pleasing way, the principle which I have already advanced, that a fictitious club was frequently a pretext by means of which a writer would advance his ideas. The exchange of letters began with an account, which may have been genuine, of a small club of lovers. This account reads as follows:

To the author of the Scots Magazine.

Sir,
I had the following letter some time ago, when I was in

---

the country, from a friend, giving me an account of a club of which he had been lately made a member. I have since been exceedingly pleased with it, as it has a great deal of the spirit of youth and gaiety, and at the same time serves all the ends of the most sober and grave institutions. It would be needless to say any thing in general of these little societies; I think it is evident they have the strongest tendency to cultivate and improve the social temper, to strengthen the natural ties of friendship and affection, and promote the freedom and easiness of humour in conversation. Your giving this a place in your next Magazine, will oblige Yours, etc.,
Favitor.

Dear sir,

Edinburgh 29, Dec. 1741.

In compliance with what you so anxiously require, I shall give you an account of the club I have been lately admitted a member of, which it seems has reached your ears. It consists of Gentlemen whose youth and inclinations lead them to converse on some occasions of that soft insinuating passion which introduces the strongest friendship betwixt the two sexes: 'tis here they have an opportunity of communicating their thoughts to each other, and comparing their sentiments with what the most celebrated geniuses have produced on that subject: this gives a wonderful life to their conversation. The room appropriated for the meeting, has an appearance peculiarly suited to the spirit of the company; and the very meats and drinks are no less calculated for that end. The freedom and intimacy of conversation, on this enlivening subject, amongst persons entirely known to one another, are sure to produce the greatest mirth and good humour.

In this happy disposition, they forget not to recognize every beauty of life, to admire the inward features and proportions of a virtuous mind, and the grace and beauty of actions proceeding from thence, and so pass thro' every other subject of the like nature. Each member at his admission signs certain regulations agreed upon at the original institution of the meeting. For regulating the admission of the members, and preserving a strict sobriety and equality amongst them, every one has a negative in all votes and questions, and the members are admitted by balloting, where the strictest secrecy is enjoined under a severe penalty. As soon as a member is admitted, he wears a gold badge, peculiarly calculated for the society. On the one side is a Venus, standing on a shell, drawn on the ocean by her doves, with this motto, Parum comis sine te iuventas. On the reverse is a Cupid, holding a glass in one hand, and with his other stirring it with an arrow, and this motto inscribed, Non alia bibam mercede. The meetings are held on Fridays, as often as a quorum of the members agree, and the anniversary meeting
is on the first Friday of May. The society cannot at any time exceed twelve. — Here, then, my friend, is harmony, concord, and an entire enjoyment of the sweetest pleasures of fellowship and society, amongst persons sincerely devoted to each other, on the most entertaining, as well as the most instructive subjects.

Here love his golden shafts employs,
Here lights his constant lamp, and
Waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels. —

In the March issue, the following burlesque account of an organization copied after the Cupid's Supper Club came from a correspondent in Glasgow:

To the author of the Scots Magazine.

Sir,

The account in your January Magazine of a club at Edinburgh, has determined some young fellows here to associate once a week, after their example, to enjoy the innocent pleasures of society and familiar conversation. We met for the first time last night, on purpose to concert the name and economy of our club. — Mr. Hairbrain Loveless stood up first, and moved that we should assume the name of the Edinburgh club, which, as he was informed by a correspondent at that place, is called the Cupid's Supper. Mr. Townley Truelove, a very remote relation of his, opposed this notion with abundance of heat; affirming, that we were to be directed, not determined, by their example; that this appellation was, in his humble opinion, neither suitable nor ingenious. It only imports (continued he) that they assembled to sup on meats peculiarly calculated as they term it, for the spirit of the company. By this they seem to distrust the assistance of their little Deity, and rely upon the entertainment of his table; which I should be afraid might provoke his rage, to play the devil some night with his leaden arrows, or prevail on his friend Apollo to withdraw his influence; and then, deserted by love and wit, Cupid's Supper will (alleged he) become very tasteless and insipid to others, however much suited to the spirit and palate of their company. He then affirmed, with an apology for the expression, that by saying too much, they had meant too little: By saying Cupid's Supper Club instead of Cupid's Club, they were fallen into a sort of apostacy from the genuine delicacy of love, and played the part of a clownish guest, who stupidly tells his friend, that he comes to dine, or fill his own belly, not at all to enjoy his company. He then proceeded to state the vote, Supper or Not? — At this several of the unthinking absent lovers
started extremely, imagining he meant to exclude them from the benefit of a good supper and a moderate glass; but being assured that the question only related to the name of their club, not to their practice, the vote was put, and carried by a great majority, no Supper.

Mr. True-love, in the confidence of this sanction given to his first opinion, after a modest apology, next objected to the formality of their method with respect to the admitting of members. — This (said he) will reduce the gaiety and freedom of our love-society (which is neither more nor less than a parcel of young acquaintances assembled to be merry) to the constraint and solemnity of a senate. Nor can I see the wit of admitting by ballot, nor the humour or device of their badge. — Upon the one side, we see Venus, liker a witch than a Goddess, rigged out in an egg-shell, if you will, and drawn along by her doves. Tho' the sea-froth gave birth to Madam Venus, I don't find that she was ever so fond of a sail, as desperately to expose her delicate tender person on so slender a bottom. Her frolick with Mars, when all the Gods were made spectators of Vulcan's cuckoldom, is known; but I do not hear that she ever visited the regions of the deep, to pass a fond night with the stormy monarch of the sea. — On the reverse, Cupid is very busy out of his own vocation; he justles jolly Bacchus out of his office, lays aside his bow and employs his arrow only to stir the liquor. True love, Gentlemen, is not the flashes of a heated imagination; it is a noble passion, a delicate, and soft desire, which smooths the rugged temper natural to man, and exalts the soul. False love is an ignoble base passion, which a dream can improve, and an abandon'd wench can gratify. If they had omitted those devices, and exhibited Venus our sovereign Lady without any folly on the one side, and on the reverse her little darling minion Cupid, I should not have accused them of absurdity. — But, that we may not seem in this neither to depart entirely from their model, whence we proposed to derive the rules of our society, let us wear a badge of distinction as well as they; and that I propose shall be a cheerful and pleasant countenance; let peace and joy bloom in our looks, and unaffected grace and modesty diffuse itself thro' every gesture and motion of our bodies. — Here he ended, and after some few disputes, our meeting dissolved for this occasion.

By inserting this, you'll oblige our club and among the rest,

Yours, etc., A. B.

P. S. We determined, before we parted, that no student of law should be admitted, but he who could afford leisure to be in love, and who solemnly assured us that he should not read above two hours a-day at the Corpus, and not one syllable the day of our meeting, lest he should become too captious and talkative or too serious and solemn.
This mild satirizing is the first of a number of examples of the way in which clubs had become, after the example set by Addison, pretexts for advancing ideas of reform in social behaviour. A second example, which appeared in the same magazine for June 1745, is more obvious in its intent:

Universal Spectator, June 29.

The following plan of a new society is very just, and so well explained, that I shall not add any thing more than a recommendation to such of my readers, who may have need of the discipline there-in instituted, to enter themselves of it immediately. To which end I hope Mr. Grinewell will by his next signify where it is held, and whether it is not proposed that this order, like the Free Masons, Gregorians, and Ubiquarians, should branch itself out into numerous lodges, chapters, or senates, to be held in different parts, not only of this metropolis, but of the whole kingdom.

Mr. Stonecastle,

Your ancestors in speculation have been very copious and entertaining in their descriptions of Clubs, many of which do not now any longer exist; and methinks it should be a part of your business, when any new order arises, that we ought either to hope, or fear, may grow considerable, to give us your thoughts upon it as soon as possible, that we may know how to behave whenever we are solicited to become members.

But, as it is impossible, unless you had two or three invisible Pacolets, (of which one, in former times, could serve old Bickerstaff of merry memory), for you to know what is doing at all parts of the town in this age of invention and society, I think those who are concerned in the foundation of any new community, of which they are not ashamed, should make a merit of giving you as early notice of it as possible, with as much of their constitutions as is necessary to be made publick. And where there is any attempt to establish a scandalous convention, that may be hurtful to society in general, it is the undoubted interest of every one not concerned, to expose and unmask the noxious creatures, before their poison has had too much effect upon the young and unwary. — By this means you will become the Sensor-general of Clubs in Great Britain, an office of late years acknowledged to be much wanted.

In this quality I have directions to salute you by the inexorable order of Pinchers, who have lately incorporated

themselves for the reformation of manners, and of whom I have the honour to be the unworthy President. — We have no secret among ourselves, nor do we desire that our rules may be a secret to the rest of the world; because we are in hopes, that by making them publick we shall save ourselves a great deal of trouble, and that some persons, who have now no guard upon their own tongues, will be always awed, when upon the point of transgressing, for fear there should be a Pincher within hearing.

You must know, Sir, that the original meeting of the first members, who now call ourselves fathers of the society, was not upon our present system. We were about twelve particular friends, whose view in our weekly assembly was our mutual improvement in useful knowledge. But as, in matters of inquiry, disputes will sometimes arise, and disputes are too often productive of heat, it was observed that some members, when pretty much raised, were apt to use unbecoming expressions, or, in plain English, to swear. Now, as this is what I never do myself, I am a constant monitor, in all companies where I can take the liberty, whenever I hear any thing of this nature. I had for some evenings repeated my admonitions against swearing in the club; was every time thanked for my advice, and had a promise of more care for the future. But bad habits are not easily broken off without more than common vigilance over our conduct. This was here manifestly the case, tho' I believe every one of the guilty did actually design amendment. — At last, happening one night to sit near the greatest sinner and most frequent penitent, and perceiving him to lapse several times tho' his monitor was at his elbow, Will, (I said), take it for a warning, I will use no more words about the matter, but the next oath I hear from you, expect a hard pinch upon your arm. Will acquiesed in the condition, and for sometime went on in only plain language.

But in about half an hour, having advanced something that was not admitted, and meeting with pretty warm opposition, my friend's circumspection left him, and he began to rap it again, in the usual strain. I had a curse or two myself for griping his arm, before he recollected his crime, and as I pinched still harder the more he offended, a slap in the face was just ready to follow. But the next right-hand man stopped the blow, and told him the justice of his punishment. — Will, tho' very passionate, is a right good-natured fellow, and can no more bear to give than to receive an injury. He immediately returned thanks to the Gentlemen who had restrained his rashness, and asked my pardon for having intended me the least affront: For the future, (said he), when I am pinched, I shall know the occasion; and, Gentlemen, I beg in general that not one of you would spare me whenever I am culpable.

Will's frank and generous request being a certain sign that he wished in earnest to reform, it was so well relished by the whole company, that they unanimously entered into a pinching association, in which every member has liberty to proceed to immediate execution.
upon his guilty brother. It already has had the desired effect; and some of our greatest swearers, by having their custom broke for three hours in an evening, have found themselves able to discontinue it in other companies, and talk like reasonable creatures. One or two of them, I must confess, complained of sore arms, for the first month; but they all now say, they would not have missed the benefit for double the pain. And their reformation has had such effect abroad, that several common swearers whom we would not have admitted upon any other account, have at their own request been voted members; and are now in a fair way, not only to be quiet inoffensive companions, but to make some discoveries of better understanding than they were before suspected of possessing. We have candidates to ballot for every club-night; and this evening admitted no less than seven.

I should not forget to tell you, that some few, for the first night or two after their admission, tho' it was done at their own request, have been a little refractory under discipline, and even sworn they would not be pinched so hard or so often. But they soon find their obstinacy to no purpose, except to bring down upon them greater punishment; for, if a man refuses to submit to the correction of him who first offers it, three or four are sure to attack him at once; and, if he offends under the rod, the severity is farther heightened, because this is looked upon as the strongest sign of an incorrigible temper.

I am, etc., T. Gripewell. June 24.

But the pretext of speaking as for a society was not only used for the purposes of reforming manners. In December, 1753, the Scots Magazine printed the following proposals for a "society of gentlemen" who purported to have set themselves up as theatrical critics:

To the author of the Scots Magazine.

Sir, Edinburgh, Dec., 31, 1753.

The following piece of dramatic criticism, is the production of a society of gentlemen, who intend, if you find it agreeable to your readers, to publish, in your entertaining miscellany, a paper of the same kind every month while the playhouse continues open; so that the public may have a compleat review of the performances of such pieces as are exhibited on the Caledonian stage; in which the nicest regard will be had for truth and candour and the faults and merits of the principal actors impartially examined, and set in a just light.

The reader may suspect that such a society did, indeed, really exist, and he may be right. The January issue immediately following, however, casts suspicions on the critics:

To the Editor of the Scots Magazine.


In your last magazine you gave us some observations on the principal actors who have appeared on the stage this winter. The design was, no doubt, good; and, if well executed, would, I believe, have given general satisfaction, and contributed not a little to correct the faults of our players; who, had they been certain of applause when they really deserved it, would have exerted themselves to the utmost, and strove to have excelled, each in their particular characters. So far however is this author from proposing to himself the good end I have mentioned, that his criticisms (if they deserve the name) seem rather calculated to mislead the judgment of the town, and to defraud merit of that praise, which, where ever it appears, it claims as its due.... I own he is not equally unjust to all. He has bestowed lavishly on Mr. Lee those commendations which he generally so well deserves; and Mr. Griffith, whose Manly he seems to be so very fond of, has no reason to complain of him.

I speak of this critic in the singular number, because, although his piece is said to be the work of a society, I take it rather to be the production of ... a single person.

This "society of dramatic critics," whether fictitious or not, continued with considerable success, and the entire theatrical season was reviewed in detail. This is an interesting anticipation of the function of the theatrical critic of the present day.

Another example of a "society of critics", though slightly more facetious, appeared in an article in the Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement for 4th March, 1773. The author of the article, "Stephen Standish", who had apparently made other contributions to the magazine,

2. Reviews of theatrical performances appeared in the Scots Magazine for December (page 610 f.), February (page 90 f.), and March (pages 93, 142, and 143), covering the 1754-1755 theatrical season.
after complimenting the publisher on the general excellence of his publication, offers to suggest certain improvements. To add emphasis to his remarks, he employs the device of speaking for a society because, as he himself states, "all essayists generally belong to some particular club." Stephen Standish's description of the "itling Club for which he is the spokesman, is as follows:-

I beg leave... to lay before you a scheme for the further improvement of [your magazine], which, at a late meeting, was warmly espoused by a great majority of the "itling Club, of which (as all essayists generally belong to some particular club) I have the honour to be a member. After informing you of the name of our society, it is perhaps unnecessary to tell you, that we are all sons of the muses; but whether we are of the legitimate or bastard breed, I can neither satisfy you nor myself. The suggestion offered by the Club is that of establishing a department in the Weekly magazine to be known as the Dunce's Pen, "where every scribbling felon, impostor or madman, may be consigned over to public infamy." Standish closes with another appeal to the force of opinion which the pretended club affords him:-

I hope, Mr. Printer, that the arguments I have already used, together with the request of the whole club (and that too, let me tell you, none of the least respectable), will be sufficient to induce you to adopt this salutary scheme, which I have thought proper to communicate to you in this manner, that, should you reject it, my conscience may stand acquitted.

The popularity of debating societies after the 1770's, and the high opinion which the public entertained of their usefulness, led inevitably to many pretensions that an occasional piece had been read before such a society. As an example of this, we find in the

2. Ibid.
Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement for Thursday, October 8, 1772, an essay which claimed to have had its origin in a Sentimental Society in Aberdeen. In an introduction to the essay, a short account of the "society" demonstrates the connection between the Spectator Club and the popularity of all kinds of clubs at this period:—

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

Aberdeen, September 28.

Sir,

It is with the sincerest pleasure I congratulate you on the fame of your Magazine, which daily gains applause in this place, by your judicious selection of the periodical pieces that are sent you from every quarter. — Inclosed you have the introductory essay, which was spoken the first current, at a society of young gentlemen in this place. Numerous indeed are the societies now formed here of every denomination. We have endeavoured to give you a short account of them in the introduction. If both be agreeable and suit your purpose, you may insert them in your Magazine, and you shall soon hear from us again.

Yours, etc.,

L________

Introduction

When o'er the breeches greedy women
Fight to extend their vast dominion;
And in the cause impatient Grizzle
Has drubb'd her husband with bull's pizzle,
And they in mortal battle vanquished,
Are of their charter disfranchis'd —
Hudibras.

Clubs may without any great stretch be supposed to have derived their origin in some measure from the folly and crabbed temper of women quarrelling and striving, as Huidras very archly terms it, for the breeches. The poor man banished his home, by arbitrary and unnatural power, often flies for refuge to company, and repairs to the shrine of the jolly Bacchus as an asylum, there to drown his complicated cares, and comfort himself for his bad usage at home, by a free circulation of the glass; so that clubs, in their original and common practice, seem to be calculated for hardly any other purpose than fostering appetites mankind enjoy in common with brutes, and crushing the bitter seeds of reflections that usually engender in the hearts of man, on account of their own misconduct, or the tyranny of their impatient ribs. Hence floods of unmanning jollity and immoderate mirth are the usual characteristics of societies of men instituted upon such ragged foundations. By degrees, men of reflection, we shall suppose, began to act in their several societies on a more enlarged plan, by converting even their misfortunes, as far as possible, to their advantage, and turning the tide of their humour to useful inquiries and profitable investigations. Whether or not the famous Socrates of old resorted to any club to console himself for the severities of his help-mate the immortal Xantippe, as we have no authority from ancient history to assert any such thing, we shall wisely observe a profound silence on the matter. In the reign of queen Anne of famous memory, the paragon and pattern of useful, and serviceable, clubs seems to have shone forth with inimitable luster: Graced with the respectable names of a Spectator, a Sir Roger de Coverly, Sir Andrew Freeport, and even a Will Honeycomb, this immortal club will flourish for ever with unfaiding beauty and a noble grandeur; The depraved taste of mankind, however, from the capital even to the country village, seems always to have coveted more of the animal than the mental food, and the cherishing the appetites than the refining the taste. From this quarter may be reckoned too many formed on this corrupted plan. From the rulers of our town, that guzzle down the Falernian juice, to the cobler who weekly drowns his cares in bumper of halestone October, we could enumerate various societies of different manners and as different tastes. The Porter Club, Mutton Chop and Tripe ditto, Cow-heel, Sheep-head and Cockold Clubs, Beef and Crab Eaters, Female Societies of all kinds; and many more not mentioned, merely designed for gratifying brutal lusts or propagating scandal. Nevertheless from every general rule there are exceptions; and we can boast of a society of youth, (for the very name of a "club" carries with it too disagreeable ideas), neither compelled by the frowns of females, nor the remorse of gnawing consciences for any misconduct, who speak better things, and are formed on a quite different plan. Subjoined we give you the essay spoke at the meeting of The Sentimental Society of this place the first current, being their first meeting for this season. If such attempt might so far be crowned with success as to induce others to quit the old path, it would be agreeable to every wellwisher to mankind,
and more profitable to themselves. The essay was never designed for the press; the members are but young, and therefore they may justly hope for the indulgence and countenance of the public. Let snarling critics be dumb who are ever alert in finding fault, and dull in the discovery of beauties.

Sentimentalism.

A very similar society, and for an identical purpose, appeared in the Female Cheerful Society which produced two essays on "Cheerfulness". The essays, as well as several letters in reply, some approving, and some not, were published in the *Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement* for 1778. In this instance, one of the letters in reply has detected the fact that the "society" was probably a fictitious one. It is sometimes impossible to determine whether such an organization had any real foundation in fact, but because of the popularity of the device, I have come to the conclusion that an assumption of a fictitious origin is justified in all doubtful cases.

Fictitious debating clubs, however, were not only used to lend prestige to an occasional essay. The purpose for which many such clubs were invented was often satirical. The following account of a Potations Club mocks the "self-improvement" that so often was a part of the plan of the debating societies of this period:

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

Sir, Annam, January 1, 1775.

I was some time ago agreeably entertained with Essays wrote by young gentlemen belonging to private societies in Aberdeen.


2. "Both the papers are evidently the production of the same pen... (but) you modestly give them out as the work of separate societies." (*Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement*, March 25, 1778, page 300.)

The discourses were indeed unexceptionable, but the plan upon which these societies (according to the account given of them in your Magazine¹) were founded, was, in my opinion, too contracted. The cultivation of their own geniuses appeared to be their sole motive for associating together. Now, it is obvious, Sir, that, although they, in a great measure, gained the end proposed, yet the advantages resulting from thence will only redound to themselves, without proving beneficial to the commonwealth in general.

As I am an enthusiastic patriot, I intend to constitute a club here (the principal design of which will be to promote the public interest), under the denomination of the Potation Club. The rules to be observed are indeed very few. Regularity, friendship, brotherly love, and a great many other old-fashioned virtues, so much boasted of by private societies in days of yore, are entirely out of the question, as their opposite extremes will be found much more serviceable for accomplishing our purpose.

The quantity to be drunk at each meeting must be determined by the weight of our purses. As drinking is so much in vogue at present, it will be no difficult task to find members sufficiently qualified to be admitted into our society; but, as I hate prolixity, I shall, with as much brevity as possible, endeavour to show the utility of this club.

In the first place, it will tend to promote the circulation of cash, which will undoubtedly be a very meritorious action, as there is a great stagnation with respect to that article at present.

2dly. It will increase the public revenue, as the greater quantities of spirituous liquors that are drunk, so much the more excise-money will be levied.

3dly. When the fumes arising from hot punch have ascended into the brain, what glorious actions are men then capable to achieve? What elegant efforts of genius do they then exhibit? It is then they can propose the most plausible schemes for clearing the national debt, for settling parliamentary debates, and for placing the affairs of the East-India company upon the most advantageous and respectable footing.

4thly. When men are inspired by the above-mentioned spirit, viz. of punch, their zeal for the public transports them to such a pitch, that they often break windows, household furniture, and sometimes one another's heads, and consequently

¹ For this account, see page 290, note #1, above, or the Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 22, Thursday, October 21, 1775, page 105 f.
afford employment for the glazier, cabinet-maker, surgeon, and sometimes the lawyer, and by that means verify Mandeville's favourite maxim, "That private vices are public benefits."

What strong incitements are these, Mr. Printer, for every benevolent soul to join our society, or one of a similar nature. If you print this, to induce others to follow our laudable example, you may probably, some time or other, be favoured with the president's patriotic speech at the commencement of the club. In the mean time, I am,

Sir, Yours, etc., Sylvander.

In the same vein as the "Potation Club", another fictitious debating society was invented as the talking point of a rollicking lampoon against the fashionable Pantheon and other debating societies. The account of this club, called the Society of Essences and Perfumes in the essay, appeared in the Weekly Magazine for March, 1775:

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

Sir, Pentland-hills, February 6.

Debating societies, pantheons, and clubs, are now become so plenty, that there is scarcely a country village without them. This is good news to you Mr. Printer; what shoals of elaborate essays, orations, and philosophical investigations (if you keep the sluice open), will now float in the channel of the Weekly Magazine? For your further comfort I hereby inform you, that there is soon to be formed a new society on a new plan, and for a new and valuable purpose, under the name of the Society of Essences and Perfumes, and all this not a decade of miles from the assembly-hall. There is a set of men, of whom I have the honour to be one (though many will not allow us to be men, comparing us from the middle downward to a pair of bagpipes, and the other half of us to a monkey), who are known and distinguished, by the name of Macaronies; I, Mr. Printer, and other ten men of the brotherhood; for which we are men, and will be men, and prove that we are men; (by Jupiter my toupee is discomposed); I was going to say, Sir, that I and this honourable decemvirate have formed original laws and regulations for constituting a pantheon of macaronimen. The first meeting of our Society, Mr. Typographer, is to be as soon as the April flowers are blown, and some ships laden with pomatum, powder, and perfumes, which we expect about the same time, are safely arrived in the Thames.

In the interim, we have agreed to display our banner composed of essences, ribbands, ruffles, and fans; and to publish the articles that must be subscribed by every man who wishes to be initiated into our society. Article first, None to be admitted but macaronies, and who can evince that they are men, and gentleman philosophers, by explaining, to the satisfaction of the original members of the society, the essence and pomatum and puffs, and the suction and ebullition of powder bellows. Article second, None to be admitted members who cannot, with the proper distortions of the neck and the muscles of the face, rightly pronounce, No maa! thank you ma'am! Article third, None to be initiated whose breeches are not three times as capacious as the circumference of his thighs, and the tail of his coat must not be above five inches dependent, that so it may project with decency, above his posteriors. Article fourth, None to be admitted who cannot vibrate a lady's fan, and whose toupee does not overtop his pericranium at least four inches. Article fifth, none to be admitted without nose-gaux, hair pins, ruffles, perfumes, and a snuff-box a la mode de Paris.

All macaroni-men who answer the qualifications required in these articles, and choose to subscribe obedience to them, will be allowed to take their seats in this society, which is to commence at the time before mentioned, at . There a capacious room is now fitting up in the most elegant manner, with pictures, perfumes, looking-glasses, and nature's babies. At the first meeting, Mr. Printer, I, in quality of president, am to give an inaugural, elegant, elaborate, philosophical, macaronical explanation of the essence of perfumes, pomatum, butterflies, tea, china-ware, toupees, ribbands, negligees, pin-cusions, ruffles, and fans. The question for the next meeting of our society is to be, Whether is the taylor or the barber the more useful being? After this the following questions are to be discussed successively: Whether is not a macaroni as far above the vulgar, as the butterfly is above her former worship? - Whether is a sword (I tremble, Mr. Printer!), or a lady's fan the more honourable weapon? - Whether are plain or flowered ruffles most handsome? - Whether are looking-glasses, or powder (not gun-powder, Mr. Printer, oh no!), the more valuable commodity? - What is ogling and what lady first practised it? - Whether is an ogle or a frown, the most effective method of killing?

Thus far, Sir, I have, in the paulo post futurum tense, explicated the constitution and design of our society, by which we will convince the world, that we are gentlemen, and philosophers, and not bag-pipes and two-legged mumies, as our inferiors would make us believe. - Now, Mr. Printer, insert this in your Magazine, and whatever discoveries, decisions, and orations, are made in this society, shall, for the public good, be regularly transmitted to you, by

Yours, etc., A complete Macaroni-Man.
Another small piece, which appeared in the *Scots Spy*, or *Critical Observer*, appears to have been intended for a similar purpose. This time the clergy have been singled out for a little harmless satire:—

To the Publisher of the *Scots Spy*.

Sir,

It is generally said, that clubs or social meetings are neither so frequent or numerous in Scotland as they are in England, very probably this may be the case in general, but I can affirm, that in some parts, our countrymen are now endeavouring to imitate their southern brethren in those friendly and convivial meetings, which certainly promote a spirit of love and good neighbourhood; and I am happy in having it in my power to record one instance, wherein the usefulness and happy consequences of this institution is abundantly demonstrated.

In a certain part of the country, a club composed of clergymen has been lately formed; at one of these meetings not long ago, a small dispute arose betwixt two of these reverend gentlemen. Mr. M' alleged that Mr. G was the author of the queries lately inserted in the *Weekly Magazine*, under the signature of Sophia (&). Mr. G expatiated on the cruel foolishness of exposing a young lady, by dating them from the place where such resided. Mr. G warmly replied, Mr. M' called his antagonist gowke-fool, and a number of polite names to the same purpose. This was too much to bear. Mr. G, (whose staple doctrine in the pulpit is, "if a man smite you on one cheek, offer him the other;") jumped up, and a deadly engagement would have ensued betwixt the two worthy brethren, had not the rest of the Gentlemen of the Cloth interposed, and prevented the shedding of innocent blood, I am,

U. Z.

Although "improving societies" were plentiful from 1723 onward, there was, as far as I am aware, but one fictitious society of the type. This society, which began in a magazine called the *Scots Town and Country Magazine* in 1778, was continued in the *Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine*, or *Scot's Town and Country Intelligencer* in 1779. The members of this "pseudo-society" were Sir Harry, a clergymen (nameless), Mr. Heartfree, and the reporting clerk. The subjects discussed by

1. *Scots Spy*, or *Critical Observer*, Friday, June 7, 1776, page 158 f.
the "Improving Club" were, "Whether is Agriculture or Commerce most beneficial to Britain?" and "Whether is Ambition or Luxury the most destructive vice?" When the Scots Town and Country Magazine changed its title, the "Improving Club" also decided to do the same. The reason for this, as it is announced in the new publication, is not without interest:

To the Publisher of the Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine.

Sir,

Our club being met, and the members having taken their respective seats, it was moved by Sir Harry, that "as the name and mode of carrying on your publication is to be entirely altered, and in some manner a new work, it would be proper to make some alteration with respect to the Club, and that instead of the Improving Club, our former title, we should stile it the Improving Society, as the word Club was quite common, and used indiscriminately; and that, instead of the President transmitting our lucubrations to be, we ought to appoint a Clerk solely for that purpose, and allow each of the members in rotation to be President," which motion was unanimously agreed to.

There was one more type of fictitious society to appear before the century ended. This type, which was intended as a burlesque of the democratical political associations which were organized in Scotland after 1789, was a part of the widespread political activity which was stimulated by the events of the French Revolution. The first fictitious society of a political nature to appear in a Scottish publication, to my knowledge, was that contained in the following article which appeared in the Glasgow Courier for the 15th December, 1791:

1. The Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, or Scot's Town and Country Intelligencer, Wednesday, September 1, 1779, page 9. In my chapter on definitions, page 8, I have already drawn the reader's attention to the fact that the term "society" was considered to be a more fitting description of serious organisations than the term "club".

To the Editor of the Glasgow Courier

Sir,

I am a member of a small society of neighbours who club for your paper, and, three times a-week, over a social pot of porter, meet together to discuss the passing occurrences of the times. Like other societies, we are somewhat divided in our political principles, and have had many warm debates upon the French Revolution. But, however much we may differ in our ideas of Government, we all profess one object — the general good.

I have, for one, all along reprobated the innovating improvements of the French Legislators, and have attempted to maintain against my friend Rollo, the Calender, that Kings, even the most despotic, can have no interest separate from the interest of the people.

Upon my arrival this evening at the Club, I found they had just read the Empress of Russia's letter to the French Princes, and which Mr. Rollo, with a significant look, put into my hands. I must confess, Sir, it puzzled me not a little, and I shall be much obliged to you, or to some of your well informed Correspondents, to assist me in answering the following question, propounded to me by the Calender:*

Does the Empress of all the Russias, mean by the common cause of Kings, equal rights inherent in all kings, totally independent of, and no ways derived from the community they govern? — In her zeal to serve this common cause, does she mean to make the king of France abjure his late acceptance of the French Constitution, and join the Royal League? — and, should this kingly combination against the French prove successful, is there no risk, after having obliged that nation to take back their old government (my friend Rollo would never suffer it to be called a Constitution) that they may have a retrospect to our innovations of 1688, and attempt to restore that happy government, enjoyed in this country, under the benign influence of James the Second?

A few hints from you on these points, to enable me to meet friend Rollo upon Thursday evening, will confer a lasting obligation on your admirer."

Peter Pigtail. Duke of York's Tap Room.

The nature these pretended political associations quickly became satirical as the cause of democracy, through the excesses.

1. The hints were never given by the Editor as requested.
of the French revolutionists, lost the sympathies of the majority of people in Great Britain. In the next year, we find that the same newspaper carried accounts which were intended to discredit the agitation for constitutional reform:

At a very full and respectable meeting of the Members of the Antient and Honourable fraternity of Sturdy Beggars, held in Mr. Finchman's, Jamfray's Close, Goosedubs, to consider the present state of the nation, and devise means for a thorough Reform. Robert Randy, President, in the chair, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to and voted with loud applause.

Resolved,

1st. That the present meeting, do form itself into a permanent Society for obtaining by all means constitutional or otherwise, a more equal representation in Parliament, from which our order has been hitherto most unjustly excluded.

2dly. To adopt, as the principle of our conduct, that all men are equal, and that all things should be equally free, and accessible to all men. There can no reason in nature be assigned why one man should have more of the good things of this world than another: we strenuously deny that industry entitles any man to more than his idle fellowmen chuse to allow him to keep.

3dly. As by the present system we are deprived of any share of property, for no better reason than that we prefer going idle to working, so we are resolved for the future, at least after the Reformation is established, that we will no more condescend to ask any thing, but will take it, as if it were our own. Neither will we consider any reform complete that does not embrace this most essential article.

4thly. That no man can be reckoned free, unless he be free from the necessity of working: and that independency can only consist in freedom from such intolerable slavery as manual labour, to which we have the most rooted aversion.

5thly. As a consequence of the above, we resolve that all jails, bridewells, workhouses, etc., are grievances

which ought forthwith to be abolished and demolished, as infringing on the liberty of our Order, in particular, who otherwise would enjoy the most ample, and enviable state of independence.

6thly. As we find by experience, that the laws hitherto in force have been directed against us, and our independency, we resolve, that there shall in future be no laws, to which we do not give our express consent.

Resolved, lastly, that we never will depart from the object of this Society, till a National Convention be called, wherein we shall be fully represented; nor till all the industrious rich become beggars, or all the beggars rich, which we hold to be the true way of reducing all mankind to their natural state of equality.

These resolutions to be inserted in all the newspapers that will take them in, and printed and distributed for the good of the nation.

Robert Randy, President,
Will Stump, Vice-President,
Duddy Jock, Secretary.

These resolutions were instantly followed with the contribution of six-pence from each of the members to the amount of four score and seven sixpences. Further contributions, and subscriptions or marks, will be received at the place of meeting every evening from six o'clock till midnight, by

Duddy Jock.

This rather feeble attempt at strong satire was the first of a series. Whatever their effect was on the readers of the eighteenth century, today, considering all that has occurred in the interval, they sound like a voice from another world.

Political clubs, however, had previously appeared in Scotland's periodicals, but in a different form. Throughout the eighteenth century, parliamentary privilege was understood to mean that a speech

1. For more in the same vein, see the Glasgow Courier, Vol. II, #198, Tuesday, December 4, 1792; also Ibid, #199, Thursday, December 6, 1792.
which was given in the House of Commons or the House of Lords could not be published without a violation of the independence of the member who had been responsible for it. A very common device which publishers employed to circumvent this restriction was the pretext that the debates they reported had been held in a "Political Club". The members of such clubs were given pseudonyms, and with each volume of the magazine, or once a year, a key was supplied to subscribers to aid them in identifying the "members" of the supposed "Club". The Scots Magazine, which began publication in 1739, adopted the practice which had already been established for some years by the London Magazine:

Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Political Club.

Introduction

To alter where there is a probability of excelling, is without dispute commendable; but to change where there is no view of amendment, betrays such a fondness for a writer's own manner as often provokes contempt than procures esteem. 'Tis true, indeed, the love of novelty, so prevalent among the generality of readers, hath given many authors upon altering the method observed by others, in instances where a humble imitation would have been far preferable on every account. This we have considered: The charms of variety are not to be overlook'd; but where an alteration would seem rather the effect of a desire to vary, than of a hope to improve, in such cases 'tis prudence to follow the methods which are most approv'd. Therefore, as we are now to enter on the Political Debates, we shall conform to the plan of the London Magazine, which hath given universal satisfaction, and interest, from the best authorities, such speeches as are made upon affairs of moment, with all the expedition that the nature of a monthly publication will permit, and do all in our power to preserve every argument free from interruption of another subject till the first be finished, endeavouring at the same time to omit no speech worthy of the public attention.

We must here beg leave to inform such of our readers as may be acquainted with the plan we propose to follow, that for several

years the principal speeches made in Parliament were regularly published. But this, it seems, gave offence which made it unsafe to publish them any longer. However, the want of parliamentary debates is effectually supplied by a political Club at London, whose Secretary transmits regularly to the publisher of the London Magazine extracts from their Journal, which, ever since their first appearance, have been received with general approbation. — The Secretary, in his first letter, says, that the Club consists of young Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergymen, and eminent Merchants; who meet at fixed times, and at every meeting appoint some question in Politics, Religion, Law, Trade, or Philosophy, to be fully debated in the next; that as every one of them hath it in his view to be some time or other a member of the legislature, therefore it was agreed to speak and argue as much as possible in the stile and manner of parliament; that every grand question which should come before either house, should be fairly debated in their Club; and that as they had provided themselves with compleat sets of the journals of each house, they would spare no cost in obtaining likewise copies of all estimates, accounts, and other material papers. Instead of the real names of the speakers, which for some secret reason he chuses to conceal, he makes use of those of the ancient Greeks and Romans; but at the same time cautions the reader not to imagine that there is any affinity betwixt the character of the person who speaks, and that of the Grecian or Roman whose name he makes him assume, for by appropriating of such names he hath no intention to give characters, but only to distinguish the several speakers.

— In these debates our readers will find the old saying verified, that great men often fall into the same thoughts: for some Gentlemen that have heard questions debated in Parliament, have observed, upon reading the Journal of this learned Club, that not only the arguments, but even the words also happened to be very near the same....

The "Political Club", as thus described, was a constant feature in the Scots Magazine until 1757, but at that time, for some unknown reason, it was dropped until 1770 when it was once more resumed in the same form.

1. "Political affairs were discussed (in the Scots Magazine) by a Political Club, the members of which masqueraded under classical names, although a key given with each volume showed they were meant to stand for the high politicians and publicists of the time." (Couper: Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. 2, page 72.)

2. During 1747, The British Magazine, or the London and Edinburgh Intelligencer carried, concurrently with the Scots Magazine, a "Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Political Club."
In June, 1770, the Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement began to report the debates of a "Political Club". By October of the same year, the device was made a little more elaborate by the adoption of the new disguise of a Robinhood Society. The members of this new fictitious society went under their own names, although names were never given in full. Thus, in the issue for December 20, 1770, we find a report of "The speech of B____d B____ke, who spoke next to L_____B____n in the Robinhood Society." The same report contains a section devoted to "Proceedings in the Upper Room of the Robinhood Society", and another to the "Proceedings in the Lower Room of the Robinhood Society." These rooms, of course, corresponded to the upper and lower houses of Parliament. In addition to these detailed reports, the same magazine carried, in its column devoted to news from London, occasional news items of doings in the Robinhood Society. On 6th December, 1770, for example, we learn that "Yesterday a motion was made by Mr. D____l, in the lower room of the Robinhood, to lay before the house copies of all intelligence received of the state of the Spanish land and sea forces in the Spanish West-Indies, since the 1st of June 1759, to Sept. last inclusive, which passed in the negative, 94 against 43." It is perhaps needless to point out

---

2. Ibid, Vol. 10, October 4, 1770; also December 6, page 310; December 18, page 341; December 20, pages 374-376; and December 27, page 408.
4. Ibid, Vol. 10, December 6, 1770, page 317; see also the issue of December 13, 1770, page 349.
that this fictitious organization had no immediate connection with the Robinhood Society which was active in Edinburgh in the year 1773.

The reader has now been acquainted with two classes of the first type of fictitious clubs and societies. There remains one more class of this type which I intend to treat briefly. This class of fictitious organizations is akin to the societies and clubs which I have described previously in that it was frequently employed to lend prestige to the efforts of an individual or a group of individuals who were preparing a publication. During the eighteenth century, as I have pointed out elsewhere, it was always more respectable to advance shared opinions and ideas than individual ones. The ideas and opinions of a society had always the benefit of a certain assumption of superior validity. We find, therefore, that it was a common pretext employed by a publisher to offer his publications as being performed by "a Society of Gentlemen." Often, indeed, the "society" was, in a loose sense of the word, genuine enough, though at the present day we would describe it more accurately as the "staff" or the company of the publication. In the strict sense, however, these "societies" may be said to be fictitious. None of them were true publishing societies in the sense that mean when we speak of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Society of Antiquaries, or even one of the many book-publishing societies which were organized at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These publications were, in no sense, the proceedings or transactions of a true society.

2. See page 443, above.
I shall begin with a simple example of the use of a fictitious society to lend prestige to a publication. In 1771, the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica or Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* appeared in three volumes quarto. Although William Smellie had been responsible for "the compilation and entire conducting" of the publication, it was announced as being "by a society of gentlemen in Scotland." According to his biographer, Smellie was not only responsible for "the plan," but "all the principal articles of that Dictionary of Arts, were written or compiled by Mr. Smellie; and he prepared and superintended the whole of that work, for which he only got 200 pounds from its projectors." Such virtuosity would be extremely difficult to accept in any age, and in the eighteenth century in particular, a claim that such a publication had been the work of one man would certainly not have increased its reputation.

The second example of fictitious publishing societies is a bit more complicated than the first. The reader will recall, from previous chapters, that there was a society in Edinburgh, the Medical Society which later became the Philosophical Society, whose members produced and published two series of medical and scientific papers. The first series appeared under the title of *Medical Essays and Observations*

---

1. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica or Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* "by a society of gentlemen in Scotland, printed in Edinburgh for A. Bell and C. Maclaurin, and sold by Colin Macfarquhar at his printing office in Nicolson Street," was completed in 1771 in 3 vols. 4to. containing 2,760 pages, and 160 copperplates engraved by Andrew Bell.


Revised and Published by a Society in Edinburgh; and the second series appeared under the title of *Assays and Observations, Physical and Literary, Read before a Society in Edinburgh*. In 1771, when a new publication was undertaken under the title of *Medical and Philosophical Commentaries*, therefore, it was an established custom for such publications to be the work of a society. In keeping with the tradition, it was announced on the title page of the new publication that it was "by a Society in Edinburgh." This "society", however, never existed, despite those who have claimed the contrary, except in the sense that several different individuals may have made contributions to the publication. In this sense every magazine would be the project of a "society." But only one man was really responsible for the conduct of the *Medical and Philosophical Commentaries*, and that was Andrew Duncan, an Edinburgh physician. The motive for the pretext that the work was the combined efforts of "a society of gentlemen" should be, by now, fairly obvious. The remarkable thing is that Duncan dropped the pretext as quickly as he did. When the seventh


2. Couper: *Edinburgh Periodical Press, Vol. 2, page 122 f.,* implies that the *Medical and Philosophical Commentaries* were a continuation of the *Assays and Observations, Physical and Literary*, which I take to mean that in his mind the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh was responsible for the new publication. But there is no indication, outside Couper's own book, that the Philosophical Society was in any way concerned with the publication of the *Medical and Philosophical Commentaries*. See Wemyss: *A Record of the Edinburgh Harveian Society, page 3*; Bower: *History of the University of Edinburgh, Vol. 3, page 288*; (Stroud): *History of the (Royal) Medical Society of Edinburgh, page 14 f.*; and, above all, Duncan's own statement, quoted on page 472, below, all of which point to him as the sole projector and conductor of the work.
volume appeared in 1760, the title page announced that the work had been "collected and published by Andrew Duncan." In his preface to the volume, Duncan gave the following explanation of this change in the title of the publication:

After six volumes of the Edinburgh Medical Commentaries have been already published, and when it is intended that they shall still be continued on the same plan as formerly, it may seem strange that any change should have been made on the Title of the Work. It cannot be alleged, that any circumstance has occurred which renders this change necessary. But it will perhaps be reckoned a sufficient apology for this alteration, that I have been induced to it by reasons with which I reckon it needless to trouble the reader. - Every one must be sensible, that the merit of the work can neither be increased nor diminished by the Title.

When, however, I am now to take upon myself, what has hitherto been presented to the Public as the work of a Society; it may naturally be presumed, that the abilities of an individual will be found unequal to the undertaking. To remove this apprehension, I may observe, that the compilation of this work will not hereafter be more dependant on my exertions than it has already been....

In a restricted sense, however, the organizations that lay behind certain publications may be said to have been in the nature of a society, if we take the word to mean, as men in the eighteenth century sometimes did, a company or incorporation. The Edinburgh Magazine and Review, for example, was the production of a society in this restricted sense. The members of the company which produced the magazine have been identified by Couper in his work on the Edinburgh periodical press as follows:

1. Medical and Philosophical Commentaries, Vol. 7, 1760, title-page.
3. By his very sensitiveness on this point, Duncan clearly shows an awareness of the disadvantages he will have to face in acknowledging the work as his own. The only change made in the title was
The "Society of Gentlemen" responsible for the appearance of the magazine was composed of certain persons all residents in Edinburgh, - its publisher William Greech, Alexander Ainsaid, who reached the Lord Provost's chair of Edinburgh, William Smellie, Dr. Gilbert Stuart, and William Kerr, who occupied a Government position as surveyor of the General Post office. Kerr was confessedly added to the group so that he "might give every assistance consistent with the duties and privileges of his official situation," and his interest was to end at any time with his death or demission from office. The financial arrangements of the combination were that, of six shares, one was to go to the publisher and Ainsaid together, one each to Kerr, Stuart, and Smellie, in such proportions as might be determined between them.

Gilbert Stuart, who acted as editor, was continually getting the printer of the magazine into difficulties. In one incident, David Hume appears in his usual kindly and beneficent role. The incident is well and fairly described by Smellie, a member of the group, in his short biography of Hume:-

When the periodical paper called the Edinburgh magazine and Review was publishing in the year 1773, the late Rev. Dr. Henry, then one of the ministers of this city, a most laborious clergyman, as well as a facetious and good-humoured companion, brought forth the second volume of his History of Great Britain. Dr. Henry, it was said, applied, in the most earnest manner, to Mr. Hume to give an account of that volume in the Review, to which Mr. Hume gave his assent. When the manuscript appeared, after reading it, the praises appeared to be so high-strained, that the Reviewers, in my presence, agreed that Mr. Hume's account was meant as a burlesque upon the author. It was, therefore, committed to the farther consideration of one of

the substitution of his own name for that of a fictitious society.


their number, who still continued to be of the same opinion, and, accordingly, raised the encomiums so high, that no person could mistake the supposed meaning of the writer. The types of the manuscript, in this last form, were composed, and proof-sheets sent to Mr. Hume for his perusal and corrections. To the astonishment of the Reviewers, Mr. Hume wrote them an angry letter, complaining, in the highest terms, of the freedoms they had used with his manuscript, and declaring that in the account he had given of Dr. Henry's History, he was perfectly sincere. Upon which, Mr. Hume's review was cancelled, and another was written by a member of the Society, condemning the book in terms perhaps too severe; so that Mr. Hume's intention of serving Dr. Henry was not only abortive, but produced an opposite effect.

But this was not the only time that the Society, no doubt inspired by Stuart, had behaved badly. One of the great advantages of the type of organization they had adopted was that it afforded each individual member the protection of anonymity. A complaint from one of the victims of the caustic editorial commentary of the *Edinburgh Magazine* and *Review* makes this very clear:

To the Author of the *Edinburgh Magazine* and *Review*.

You complain that I attribute the compositions of one person to another. I know none of your gentlemen behind the curtain, and so cannot distinguish their productions. I think nothing is more simple than that each should take what praise or blame is his own, and not meddle with what belongs to others. But it is very unlucky for one to receive a stab in the dark from a society of nameless gentlemen, as one knows not whom to complain of, whether Mr. Publisher, Mr. Printer, or Mr. Reviewer, or the whole bundled in conjunction. When a charge is made against one gentleman, another gentleman, who was not charged, nor called, stands forth to defend him, and to deny the fact. This is mighty convenient, but not quite fair. If a society of gentlemen, indicted at the Old Bailey, were to be allowed to witnesses and compurgators for one another, in this manner, it would no doubt save a great many lives.

---

1. Smellie was having a row with Charles Nisbet. Nisbet had made a speech before the General Assembly that the publication had taken strong exception to. This reply of Nisbet's appeared in the *Caledonian Journal* for 20th August, 1775. See also *Kerr: Life of William Smellie*, Vol. 1, page 470.
A number of publications followed the example of the Edinburgh Magazine and Review which, though it was forced to cease publication in 1776 because of the discredit that Gilbert Stuart's literary performances had brought upon it, was relatively successful during a period when few publications had very long runs. In 1777, for example, the New Scots Spy or Critical Observer announced that "a society of Young Gentlemen" had taken over the sole charge of its publication:

To our Correspondents,

A Society of Young Gentlemen by whom the New Scots Spy has been conducted since its commencement, having now assumed the sole concern in that work, and agreed to pay Mr. Williamson, a certain sum weekly, for the printing and delivering of it, they humbly presume to request the favour of the public, to assist them in carrying on a publication which, beside its obvious utility to youth in particular, they shall endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to render worthy the countenance of the public at large. Actuated by no selfish motive, their chief aim is to procure a sufficient number of subscribers to defray the expense attending its publication; an expense which the sale of the Spy has hitherto been far short of refunding to the publisher. They have, therefore, only farther to intiate, that by the interest of the public alone, the Scots Spy must stand and flourish; or fall never more to arise.

After this, in 1780, the Edinburgh Evening Post appeared under the conduct of "a society of independent gentlemen", one of whom was said to be James Tytler.

Toward the end of the century, two religious publications were under the management of "societies". The first, the Christian Magazine, or, Evangelical Repository, commenced publication in 1796.

1. The New Scots Spy or, Critical Observer, Vol. 1, No. 10, Friday October 31, 1777, page 120.


The story of its origin is interesting as it reveals the fact that the "society of Ministers" which was responsible for its direction was, in actual fact, an editorial staff:

Among some brethren who were assisting in the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at Craigmillar in 1796, the Evangelical magazine, then the only religious publication (periodical), having become the subject of conversation, a project of setting on foot a work of the same description in Scotland was conceived, discussed and resolved upon, provided proper and steady coadjutors could be found. With Mr. Gilbertson, the Rev. Messrs. Black of Denfermaine, one of the projectors, Peddie, McOrie, and more of Edinburgh, Whytock of Walkieith, and others were associated as editors.

The second religious publication, the Edinburgh Clerical Review, or Weekly Report of the Different Sermons Preached every Sunday by the Established Clergy of Edinburgh, is interesting for the rather quixotic notion it entertained of making a digest of all the sermons preached in Edinburgh each week. The first issue of the Clerical Review set forth its scope as follows:

At this interesting period, when immorality and infidelity are raging with the greatest violence; when the constitution of our country and the religion of our fathers are assailed by a nation in arms, it is the incumbent duty of every well-wisher to the Government of Britain, and to the Church of Scotland to stand forward in the defence of those establishments which ought to be esteemed the happiest and the best interests of society.

To defend and to publish the doctrines of true Christianity, to inculcate the duties of morality, without which civil establishments cannot exist, is peculiarly the duty of the

---


clergy, and, numerous as the men of abilities are among that body, we may safely presume to consider the clergy as a small indeed, but as a select number of the most learned and pious of their order.

Possessed with this idea, it has occurred to a few individuals, who disdain all connection with sects or parties, that a fair and impartial report of the various sermons delivered weekly in the metropolis of Scotland, with a few critical remarks and candid observations, under the title of the Edinburgh Clerical Review, would be acceptable and useful to the public in general, as well as to the inhabitants of the city.

In his Edinburgh Periodical Press, W. J. Couper, himself a clergyman, gives an interesting and detailed account of this unusual publication which, because of its anecdotal interest and general excellence, I have included. Couper's account reads as follows:

Such child-like faith in the ministers of Edinburgh probably deserved their flattered acquiescence, but "the clergy announced their unanimous disapprobation of the design." What was worse, the reporters who had been engaged took fright at the opposition, and deserted their employers. The unhappy projectors had to fill their first issue with digests of discourses for which they had been forced "to trust to the memory of persons not much accustomed to the exercise of that faculty." No wonder that a correspondent wrote remonstrating at the insertion of at least two "rhapsodies of precious nonsense." The Review attempted to cover all the churches of Edinburgh and Leith, but its career was short: only two numbers were published, which, under the circumstances, was not to be wondered at....

No hint is given as to who the original projectors of the Review were. They are described in their own pages as a "Society of Gentlemen," and as having "no connection with sects and parties." It is perhaps the latter phrase that has given rise to a curious legend in which the names of Thomas Campbell, the poet, Dr. John Leyden and Robert Anderson, the critic and journalist, are associated with the paper. The story is that Campbell had fallen into the company of certain "young men of infidel principles who, vain enough to imagine that they could undermine religious institutions and truth, started a publication which they named the Clerical Review. (Note: Life and

Poems of Dr. John Leyden, edited by Thomas Brown, page xlvi.)

Campbell, the story goes on, allowed the names of Leyden and Anderson to be associated with the enterprise at "the very time they were exerting themselves to crush it." The result was a breach between Campbell and Leyden that never was healed, although the former tried to explain away the part he had played. To all appearance the story is apocryphal. The prospectus expressly declares the purpose of the Review to be the opposite of that mentioned, and it is impossible to regard the little publication as an elaborate piece of sinister satire.

The second general type of imaginative clubs is now to be considered. This type consists of those clubs which have appeared in works of fiction with an eighteenth-century Scottish setting. The greatest master of the genre was, of course, the "Wizard of the North," Sir Walter Scott, and while it may be objected that Scott was primarily a nineteenth-century writer, it is a fact that most of his fictional treatment of clubs was a reflection of the social atmosphere of the previous century. In addition to his many other achievements, Scott was, whether he intended to be or not, an admirable social historian of eighteenth-century Scotland.

In Waverly, his first successful novel, Sir Walter gave his readers a brief but lively picture of the Bautherwhillery Club:-

Miss Bradwardine was but seventeen; yet, at the last races of the county town of ______, upon her health being proposed among a round of beauties, the Laird of Bumperquaigh, permanent toast-master and croupier of the Bautherwhillery Club, not only said more to the pledge in a pint bumper of Bordeaux, but, ere pouring forth the libation, denounced the divinity to whom it was dedicated, 'the rose of 'ully-Veolan,' upon which festive occasion, three cheers were given by all the sitting members of that respectable society, whose throats the wine had left capable of such exertion. Nay, I am well assured, that the sleeping partners of the company snorted applause, and that although strong bumpers and weak brains had consigned two or three to the floor, yet even these, fallen as they were from

their high estate, and waltering — I will carry the parody no further — uttered divers inarticulate sounds, intimating their assent to the motion.

Such unanimous applause could not be extorted but by acknowledged merit; and nose drainedine not only deserved it, but also the approbation of much more rational persons than the Batherwhillery Club could have mastered, even before the discussion of the first magnum.

The custom of drinking "toasts" to a reigning beauty had a foundation in fact and in fancy. The Tatler (No. 24, by Steele) gives the following account of the origin and of the conventions of the practice:

To know what a Toast is in the country gives as much perplexity as she herself does in town: and indeed the learned differ very much upon the original of this word, and the acceptation of it among the moderns: however, it is by all agreed to have a joyous and cheerful import. A toast, in a cold morning, heightened by nutmeg, and sweetened with sugar, has for many ages been given to our rural dispensers of justice, before they entered upon causes, and has been of great and politic use to take off the severity of their sentences; but has, indeed been remarkable for one ill effect, that it inclines those who use it immoderately to speak Latin; to the admiration rather than information of an audience. This application of a toast makes it very obvious, that the word may, without a metaphor, be understood as an apt name for a thing which raises us in the most sovereign degree, but many of the wits of the last age will assert, that the word, in its present sense, was known among them in their youth, and had its rise from an accident at the town of Bath, in the reign of King Charles the Second.

It happened that, on a public day, a celebrated beauty of those times was in the town, and one of the crowd of her admirers took a glass of the water in which the fair one stood, and drank her health to the company. There was in the place a gay fellow half fuddled, who offered to jump in, and swore, though he liked not the liquor, he would have the toast. He was opposed in his resolution; yet this whim gave foundation to the present honour which is done to the lady we mention in our liquors; who has ever since been called a Toast.

In Edinburgh, the "Catch Club" vied with the Batherwhillery Club in their earnest application of the custom. Until the practice was made ridiculous by the poetic exertions of Henry Arskine, the "Catch
"Club" carried on in the following manner:

There was an idiotic custom in force at this time connected with public balls (but more especially with the concerts of the St. Cecilia Musical Society), which was most distasteful to Mr. Erskine, at all times a temperate, and even an abstemious man, as it doubtless was to every one possessed of a vestige of sense. When the ladies had been escorted home... it was usual for the gentlemen to return to the supper-room, where one of them would drink a toast to the name of the lady whom he professed to admire, emptying his glass. Thus challenged, another gentleman would name another lady, and empty a glass in her honour. The first lunatic replied with another glass to his lady, followed in the like manner by the second, with another to his, and so on—till one of the combatants fell unconscious on the floor. Other couples followed in like manner. This vile custom was called "Saving the Ladies:" why, is not quite obvious. It was alleged that some of the fair sex actually took pleasure in hearing the next morning of the prowess of their hard-headed champions in these wretched competitions.

One of the earliest of Mr. Erskine's poetical pieces is a copy of verses, written in allusion to this custom, and printed in the Edinburgh Weekly Magazine of May 1771. The satire of the piece is directed at his musical friends of the St. Cecilia Society, who had the reputation of being proficient in this practice...

The account of the Bautherwillery Club in Haverly was followed, in Scott's next novel, UAV Mannerings, by the invention of a club which must be counted as not only the author's greatest success in this way, but also as a classic of its kind. The club to which I refer is the one in which Colonel Mannerings found Counsellor "Paulus Pleydell" playing at "nigh Jinks" one Saturday evening in Clerihugh's Tavern in Writer's Court in Edinburgh. After setting Colonel Mannerings down at the doorway of Clerihugh's, Scott proceeds with his narrative as follows:

Mannerings looked round him, and could hardly conceive how a gentleman of a liberal profession, and good society, should

---


2. "Verses on the St. Cecilia Watch Club, and the truly heroic custom of Saving the Ladies, intended to be spoken by Mrs. B—r on the stage, entering with a Lady's Concert Ticket in her hand."
choose such a scene for social indulgence. Besides the miserable entrance, the house itself seemed paltry and half ruinous. The passage in which they stood had a window to the close, which admitted a little light during the daytime, and a villainous compound of smells at all times but more especially towards evening. Corresponding to this window was a borrowed light on the other side of the passage, looking into the kitchen, which had no direct communication with the free air, but received in the daytime, at second-hand, such straggling and obscure light as found it way from the lane through the window opposite. At present, the interior of the kitchen was visible by its own high fires - a sort of Pandemonium, where men and women, half undressed, were busied in baking, broiling, roasting oysters, and preparing devils on the gridiron: the mistress of the place, with her shoes slip-shod, and her hair straggling like that of Megaera from under a round-squared cap, toiling, scolding, receiving orders, giving them, and obeying them all at once, seemed the presiding enchantress of that gloomy and fiery region.

Loud and repeated bursts of laughter, from different quarters of the house, proved that her labours were acceptable, and not unrewarded by a generous public. With some difficulty a waiter was prevailed upon to show Colonel Manning and Dimmont the room where their friend, learned in the law, held his hebdomadal carousals. The scene which it exhibited, and particularly the attitude of the counsellor himself, the principal figure therein, struck his two clients with amazement.

Mr. Pleydell was a lively, sharp-looking gentleman, with a professional shrewdness in his eye, and, generally speaking, a professional formality in his manners. But this, like his three-tailed wig and black coat, he could slip off on a Saturday evening, when surrounded by a party of jolly companions, and disposed for what he called his altitudes. On the present occasion, the revel had lasted since four o'clock, and at length, under the direction of a venerable compotator who had shared the sports and festivity of three generations, the frolicsome company had begun to practise the ancient and now forgotten pastime of high links. This game was played in several different ways. Most frequently, the dice were thrown by the company, and those upon whom the lot fell were obliged to assume and maintain, for a time, a certain fictitious character, or to repeat a certain number of iambic verses in a particular order. If they departed from the characters assigned, or if their memory proved treacherous in the repetition, they incurred forfeits, which were either compounded for by swallowing an additional bumper, or by paying a small sum towards the reckoning. At this sport the jovial company were closely engaged, when Manning entered the room.

Mr. Counsellor Pleydell, such as we have described him, was enthroned, as a monarch, in an elbow-chair placed on the dining-
table, his scratch wig on one side, his head crowned by a bottle-slider, his eye leering with an expression betwixt fun and the effects of wine, while his court around him resounded with such crambo scraps of verse as these: 1

Where is Gerunto now? and what's become of him? Gerunto's drowned because he could not swim, etc., etc.

Like the true antiquarian he was, Scott has added the following note 2 to his playful account of the club of barristers:

Convivial Habits of the Scottish bar.

The account given by Mr. Fleydell, of his sitting down in the midst of a revel to draw an appeal case, was taken from a story told me by an aged gentleman, of the elder President Dundas of Arniston (father of the younger President, and of Lord Melville). It had been thought very desirable, while that distinguished lawyer was King's counsel, that his assistance should be obtained in drawing an appeal case, which, as occasion for such writings then rarely occurred, was held to be a matter of great nicety. The Solicitor employed for the appellant, attended by my informant acting as his clerk, went to the Lord Advocate's chambers in the Fishmarket close, as I think. It was Saturday at noon, the court was just dismissed, the Lord Advocate had changed his dress and booted himself, and his servant and horses were at the foot of the close to carry him to Arniston. It was scarcely possible to get him to listen to a word respecting business. The wily agent, however, on pretence of asking one or two questions, which would not detain him half an hour, drew his Lordship, who was no less an eminent bon vivant than a lawyer of unequalled talent, to take a whet at a celebrated tavern, when the learned counsel became gradually involved in a spirited discussion of the law points of the case. At length it occurred to him, that he might as well ride to Arniston in the cool of the evening. The horses were directed to be put in the stable, but not to be unsaddled. Dinner was ordered, the law was laid aside for a time, and the bottle circulated very freely. At nine o'clock at night, after he had been honouring Bacchus for so many hours, the Lord Advocate ordered his horses to be unsaddled, - paper, pen, and ink were brought - he began to dictate the appeal case - and continued his task till four o'clock the next morning. By next day's post, the solicitor sent the case to London, a chef-d'oeuvre of its kind, and in which, my informant assured me, it was not necessary

2. Ibid, page 355 f.
on revisal to correct five words. I am not, therefore, conscious of having overstepped accuracy in describing the manner in which Scottish lawyers of the old time occasionally united the worship of Bacchus with that of Themis. My informant was Alexander Keith, esq., grandfather to my friend, the present Sir Alexander Keith, of Avelstone, and apprentice at the time to the writer who conducted the cause.

One detail of the famous episode, however, has long been a troublesome question. Despite his care in most of the essential details of his sketch, Scott has not made it absolutely clear who he had in mind when he gave voice and motion to Counsellor Pleydell. Or, rather, it would be more correct to say that though Scott did state who one of his models was, his statement has given little satisfaction. In his Journal, Sir Walter records that he had seen "at Luscar... the painting by Raeburn, of my old friend Adam Holland, esq., who was in the external circumstances, but not in frolic or fancy, my prototype for Paul Pleydell." The model for the qualities of "frolic and fancy" has since been supplied by those who have assumed that Andrew Crosbie, an Edinburgh advocate, was in his mind when Scott drew the word portrait of "Paulus Pleydell."

It is interesting to compare Ramsay of Ochtertyre's description of Crosbie with that of his supposed fictional counterpart. Ramsay writes of Crosbie:

"He was all along a member of the "Feast of Tabernacles";"


2. This assumption has, indeed, been general. See, for a few of the writers who have aired this view, Greig: Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 410, note; Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, page 374; Boswell: Life of Johnson, Vol. 2, page 376, note 2; Rae: Life of Adam Smith, page 137, and Ferguson: Life of Laskine, page 182.

and from every account he was one of the great ornaments of that society, both in its frolicsome and serious moments, when any point of taste and literature was to be canvassed. When a little warmed by liquor, nothing could be more joyous and interesting than his discourse, there being a happy mixture of wit and humour and information.

Although there have been at least two serious attempts to resolve this problem, the mystery still remains. Was Grosbie actually the original for "Pleydell"? The only safe attitude one can adopt is probably that of a mild scepticism. There was no real reason for Scott to have disguised the fact that he had used Andrew Grosbie, if indeed he had done so, any more than there was for him to designate Adam Holland as a model even though he had not employed him as such.

Certainly Grosbie and "Pleydell" were very like, but there were, no doubt, other lawyers who were approximations of them both. It would be delightful to know for certain, but one must reconcile oneself to the fact that there are certain literary mysteries which shall probably never be solved.

In The Antiquary, Scott's use of clubs is pervasive rather than incidental. The antiquary himself is an "unworthy member" of "various antiquarian societies," and as the scene is set in the period in which agitation for constitutional reform was rife, and when a war with the French was imminent, the reader is treated with the invention of two political clubs, one of whom of a type which we have seen examples of previously in this chapter. One of the clubs was for the right,


3. See page 462 f., above.
"The Royal True Blues," and the other for the left, "the soi-disant
Friends of the People."

The antiquarian theme was continued in The Monastery where, in a
long introductory passage, we learn that the manuscript which formed
the basis for the story was given by a Benedictine friar to one
Cuthbert Clutterbuck, an amateur antiquary. Clutterbuck's account of
his receipt of the manuscript is typical of the whole episode:

After several attempts to peruse the quires of paper thus singu-
larly conferred on me, in which I was interrupted by the most inex-
plicable fits of yawning, I at length, in a sort of despair,
communicated them to our village club, from whom they found a more
favourable reception than the unlucky conformation of my nerves
had been able to afford them. They unanimously pronounced the
work to be exceedingly good, and assured me I would be guilty of
the greatest possible injury to our flourishing village, if
I should suppress what threw such an interesting and radiant
light upon the history of the ancient Monastery of Saint Mary.

In St. Ronan's Well, Scott returned to the convivial theme with
the mildly amusing invention of two bibbing clubs. The first of these,
which met in the old inn at St. Ronan's was the Whirruping Club which
"contrived to drink twopenny, qualified with brandy or whiskey, at least
five to thrice a week." The old Inn was also the scene of "High Jinks"
of a different sort when it was visited by the young rake-hells of a number of
cubs in Edinburgh. Scott describes the antics of the latter as follows:

These were members of the Helter Skelter Club, or the "Wildfire
Club," and other associations formed for the express purpose of
going rid of care and sobriety. Such dashers occasioned many
a racket in Meg's house, and many a bourrasque in Meg's temper.

Various were the arts of flattery and violence by which they endeavoured to get supplies of liquor, when Meg's conscience told her they had had too much already. Sometimes they failed, as when the croupier of the aelter aelter got himself scalded with mulled wine, in an unsuccessful attempt to coax this formidable virago by a salute; and the excellent president of the wildfire received a broken head from the keys of the cellar, as he endeavoured to possess himself of these emblems of authority. ... Still later in the novel, when the old Inn of St. Ronan's is temporarily cast into discredit by the erection of a new hotel at the wells, the fashionable folk who visited the new resort organized still another drinking fraternity which went under the name of the Clarot Club. Scott must also be credited, in his Letters on Demonology, with the invention of a story which involved the visit of a supposed dead man to his club. This story, as John Gibson Lockhart has pointed out, may have had some connection with an episode which occurred in St. Ronan's Well:—

Another specimen of his (Scott's) talent for representation which struck me forcibly, about the same time, was his telling the story (related in his Letters on Demonology) of a dying man who, in a state of delirium, while his nurse was absent, left his room, appeared at a club of which he was president, and was taken for his own ghost. In relating this not very likely story, he described with his deep and lingering tones, and with gestures and looks suited to each part of the action, the sick man, deadly pale, and with vacant eyes, walking into the club-room; the silence and consternation of the club; the supposed spectre moving to the head of the table; giving a ghastly salutation to the company; raising a glass towards his lips; stiffly turning his head from side to side, as if pledging the several members; his departure just at midnight; and the breathless conference of the club, as they recovered themselves from this strange visit. St. Ronan's Well was published soon after the telling of this story, and I have no doubt that Sir Walter had it in his mind in writing one of the last scenes of that novel.

---

3. The scene to which Lockhart refers is that in which the ghost of
John Galt, an able and worthy contemporary of Sir Walter Scott, was also responsible for the invention of a number of clubs in his novels. Galt, however, was a more self-conscious social historian than his fellow novelist. In his *Ayrshire Legatees*, for example, one of his characters, "Andrew Pringle, Esq.," goes to considerable trouble to record the Scottish opinion of London's "literary fraternities", and to compare them, implicitly and unfavourably, with those of the Scottish capital. And in his best-written novel, *The Entail*, Galt employs a fictitious club as a part of the plot mechanism. His use of this imaginary organization, the *Yarn Club*, may be best illustrated by the following court-room scene:—

The next witness was Mr. Mordecai Saxhere, preses and founder of that renowned focus of sosherie the Yarn Club, which held its periodical libations of the vintage of the colonies in the buxom Widow Sheil's tavern, in "four-milk John's Land", a stately pile that still lifts its lofty head in the Trongate. He was an elderly, trim, smooth, Quaker-faced gentleman, dressed in drab, with spacious buckram-lined skirts that came round his knees, giving to the general outline of his figure the appearance of a cone supported on legs in white worsted hose. He wore a highly-powered horsehair wig, with a long queue, buckles at the knees and in his shoes, presenting, in the collective attributes of his dress and appearance, a respect-bespeaking epitome of competency, good eating, honesty, and self-conceit. He was one of several gentlemen whom the long-forecasting George had carried with him to Grippy on those occasions when he was desirous to provide witnesses, to be available when the era should arrive that had now some to pass.

It was not deemed expedient to cross-question this witness; and another was called, a celebrated professor of mathematics in the university, the founder and preses of a club called the "Anderston Summer Saturday's." The scientific attainments and abstract genius of this distinguished person were undisputed;

Lord Etherington was reported as having been seen in the ball-room.

**Scott: St. Ronan's Well**, page 480.


But his simplicity of character and absence of mind no less remarkable.

It is interesting to note that the second club mentioned in this scene, the "Anderston Summer Saturdays", was as real as the other was fictitious. The mathematician, and founder of the club, of whom Galt speaks, was Robert Simson, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Glasgow. I have given a short account of Simson's Club in Chapter

A worthy successor of Sir Walter Scott and John Galt, in Scottish fiction, was Robert Louis Stevenson. In his Weir of Hermiston, Stevenson, who was writing of the later part of the eighteenth century, makes a liberal use of imaginative and actual clubs. The plot at one point turns upon a speech which young Archie Weir made in protest to the judicial brutalities of his father. The speech was made in the speculative Society of which Stevenson, like his hero, was an active and enthusiastic member. In the same novel, Stevenson has invented the Hell-Fire Club, and the Crossmichael Club which Frank Innes attended the night before his death.

The third and final type of fictitious clubs and societies consists of those which have been the deliberate invention of those who, though

---

1. See page 550, below.

2. For his Judge Hermiston, Stevenson used as a model that fine old reactionary and tool of the land-owning classes, Robert MacQueen, alias Lord Braxfield. (Stevenson: Works, "Weir of Hermiston", page 296, note.)

"I do think the Spec. is about the best thing in Edinburgh." Stevenson quoted in the History of the Speculative Society, page 1. (See also, Stevenson: Works, "Weir of Hermiston," page 154.)

they have pretended to factual accuracy, have used such inventions to embellish an anecdote, to "improve" a historical narrative, or to quicken a bit of antiquarian lore.

For the first example of the type, there is an anecdote concerning Samuel Johnson's visit to Scotland. The reader will note that the point and impact have been considerably heightened through the circumstance that the incident took place in a "fraternity of Sages":

"When Dr. J. made the tour of Scotland last summer, he was admitted speciali gratia into the fraternity of sages, known at Edinburgh by the title of the Physico-Theological-Society. - The conversation, as usual, turned on a very abstract point of metaphysics, viz. "whether man would accept of existence by choice?" or "whether the Deity, to carry on the present system of things must not compel him into existence by necessity?" After many hours spent in the most subtle and acute refinements of logic, the whole company turned their eyes on the doctor, and requested to hear his sentiments. His answer was couched in his usual cynical strain: "For my part, I think the solution of the question ultimately depends on the single circumstance of considering under what denomination of country the supposed subject for existence was to be discriminated. If he was to be an Englishman, he would exist by choice; if a Scotsman - by necessity."

As the "Physico-Theological-Society" has appeared in no other place other than in this pleasant little story, I have assumed that it was fictitious. Such an assumption on my part, of course, does not preclude the possibility of the organization actually having been in existence at some time or other. In my opinion, however, which the reader is free to reject or accept as it pleases him, there is little likelihood of such a society coming to light.

The great difficulty in dealing with these anecdotal-historical-

---

The weekly magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Thursday, March 24, 1774, page 400.
antiquarian inventions is that all the evidence that one can muster against them must, by the very nature of their origin, be negative. It is impossible to bring positive proof against a club or society which has existed only in a man's imagination. All I can possibly say of a particular organization which I suspect to have a fictitious origin is that it is mentioned nowhere else. This principle will be fully appreciated when a more extensive example of literary invention is examined.

When most people think about eighteenth-century Edinburgh clubs, they almost invariably think of them in the terms in which they have been described in the very pleasant antiquarian works of Robert Chambers. This is not only because Chambers's works have had a very wide distribution, with numerous editions, but also because nearly every article or book that has touched on the subject of Edinburgh clubs since his time has been coloured by Chambers's writing. All this, of course, speaks well for Chambers's work, and, in my opinion, he fully deserves his popular success. At the same time, however, I feel obliged to warn the reader that his lively account of the clubs which were active during the period which I have attempted to cover,

---

contains several organizations which were the product of his own imagination. As I have already said, however, this is not going to be easy to prove, no matter how deeply the suspicion is rooted in my mind.

But this should certainly not be taken to mean that all of Chambers's work is suspect. On the contrary, his description of the Cape Club, the Spendthrift Club, the Boar Club, the Industrious Company, the Horn Order, and the New Club, are first rate. It was inevitable, however, that his eager search after the bizarre should

1. Chambers: Traditions of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, page 249. (see also my account of the Cape Club beginning on page 531, below.)
3. Ibid, Vol. 2, page 254 f. (For other accounts of the Boar Club, see The Triller, No. 6, Saturday, January 23, 1796, pages 56-58; as well as all those who have followed Chambers in their accounts, (see note #2 on the previous page). As incredible as it seems, there was apparently a club of "grunters" who met in a "sty", and who leveled fines upon one another for breaches of the strict rules of their piggery. It could be argued, and convincingly enough too, that if there was such a club as this in Edinburgh, that anything was possible. My counter to this is that with so many extravagant clubs to choose from, it was all the more reprehensible of Chambers to invent them for the occasion of his book. (see the following page for a continuation of this argument.)
4. Chambers: Traditions of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, page 261. This may be an invention. It appears in no other work than those which are indebted to Chambers for their information.
6. Ibid, Vol. 2, pages 260-261. (For other accounts of the New Club, see the history of the Club by Harry Cockburn, also his pamphlet entitled The New Club from Its Foundation.)
have occasionally led him to commit excesses. Of the Wig Club, for example, he writes, "The Wig Club was remarkable for eating Souter's Cods, and drinking the old Scotch ale called two-penny, upon which, we have heard old people say, it was possible to get most satisfactorily drunk for a groat." An author of a later day, Harry Cockburn, remarks, rather laconically, that "none of these facts, however, are alluded to in the MS. Minutes of the club which are still extant." And when it comes to swallowing such fanciful organizations as the Skull Club, "the members of which drank their liquor out of a human skull"; the Dirty Club, "none of whom durst appear with clean linen"; and the Black Wigs, "all of whom wore black wigs"; my imagination, for one, rebels. It is all too engaging and too pat. It runs too glibly from Chambers's practiced pen, and I find it impossible to take him seriously. While I would be the last to deny that the Scottish convivial clubs of the day were idiosyncratic in the extreme, I do not believe in these clubs. One of the remarkable things about Chambers's account is that he overlooks so many well-known clubs, all of which were, each in its own way, fully as interesting as those which he appears to have invented. Why did he not give an account of such clubs as the Beggar's Pennison, the Right and Wrong Club, the Sons of Solomon, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Schrochallan Fencibles,

3. Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, (From the Book of the Old Edin Club) p. 166.
5. See my account of this organization on page 245, Chapter 5.

There are a number of good accounts of this organization which
The Mirror Club, the Griskin Club, the Diversionum and the Roker Clubs, the Cowks, and the Congress Hall Club. Surely there was a place in the Traditions of Edinburgh for these organizations?

As a final word, however, I must confess that my responsibilities in this matter have caused me more than a little uneasiness. Except for the imperative obligation to speak the truth as I see it, I would be extremely reluctant, with all my imperfections upon me, to make accusations which must inevitably detract from Chambers's well-earned literary reputation. I have never lost sight of the fact that Chambers's account of the clubs which I have suspected of being mere speculations, if it is true, is all the more important and valuable for being the only one of its kind, and for containing information known to no other author, and available in no other place. Whether it is accurately accurate or not, however, Chambers's Traditions of Edinburgh is one of the most readable books of its kind that has ever been written.

was made immortal through being a favourite resort of Robert Burns. For a list of these works, see my account of the Club on page 540, Chapter 9.

See my account of this organization beginning on page 244, Chapter 5.

See Chapter 9, page 509 f.

See Chapter 9, page 516 f.

Harry Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, (From the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club), page 165 f.

The minutes of the convivial club are in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library. See also a typescript entitled Some Notes on the Minutes of the Congress Hall Club, by Charles E. Doug Watson, (also in the Edinburgh Room) and the Scotsman, Friday, March 28, 1936, "Congress Hall - An Old Edinburgh Club."
CHAPTER NINE.

NON-LITERARY CLUBS AND SOCIETIES OF LITERARY INTEREST.

To a generation which has only partly recovered from the stifling rigours of "respectability", one of the most engaging qualities of Scottish social life during the eighteenth century is its lack of the rigid rules of decorum that we still take very much for granted. But it would be a mistake to overemphasize the importance of the one element of the eighteenth-century way of life which has, above all others, received the most attention. If it is accepted in the right spirit, however, the word "conviviality" may be taken as a symbol for that quality of effervescent participation in the social frolic which is a genuine mark of the eighteenth-century social demeanor. It is important to bear in mind that

1. As an example of the attitude one should not adopt, I will quote one of James Boswell's least forgiving biographers:— "Any advance in social philosophy, accompanied by a wider diffusion of common sense and a more scientific denial of compromise, tends to make the drunkard less amusing. A defence of drunkenness, quite possible and acceptable in the time of Queen Elizabeth, could now only be imagined by some irresponsibly sentimental person trying to palliate his own weakness by a spurious anachronistic exuberance. On the other hand, to crush the poor tippler with pious invective or to shrink from his bloated monstrosity with anger or scorn would be equally unphilosophic and unscientific. We have to regard him as a particularly awkward case, a somewhat elaborate and lamentable piece of wreckage; we are not to meet him with foolish laughter or with indignation." (Vulliamy: James Boswell, page 118.) Compare John Gibson Lockhart, who really knew what he was talking about. "The rule of judging as we would be judged, although an excellent one, surely, in the main, must be taken, I think, with a great sequence of exceptions. It is the besetting temptation of many natures, and honest natures too, to 'Compound for sins they are inclined to, By damning those they have no mind to.' And perhaps few sins are more 'damned' upon this principle than those of the bottle. You might as well attempt to make a deaf man comprehend
Conviviality in the eighteenth-century sense has become largely a lost art in Scotland and the rest of Great Britain since the revolution of manners which took place in the early nineteenth century.

The convivial basis of Scottish social life, and the part played by clubs and societies, has been described many times. It is not the excellencies of Mozart, as to convince some people that it is a venial thing to be fond of an extra glass of claret. Many even of those who take great pleasure in society, can never be brought to understand why people should get tipsy when they meet together round a table. The delight which they experience in company, is purely rational - derived from nothing but the animated and invigorated collision of contending and sporting intellects. They have wit and wisdom for their share, and they have little reason to complain; but what do they know about the full, hearty, glorious swing of jollity? How can they ever sympathise with the misty felicity of a man singing

'It is the moon - I ken her horn!'

I think no man should be allowed to say anything about Burns, who has not joined in this chorus, although timber-tuned, and sat till daylight although married." (Lockhart: Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk, Vol. 1, page 115, Letter No. XI.)

1. This revolution of manners has been described in detail by Cockburn: Memorial of his Time, passim; by Lockhart: Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk, Vol. 1, page 102, Letter No. X; by Sir Walter Scott in his prose works, particularly his review of Henry Mackenzie's Life of home. It is impossible to read very far into the literature of the transitional period of, say, 1790 to 1850, without realizing that a great social change was taking place. Manners softened, excessive drinking gradually became frowned upon, and then a social disgrace; and this after an age in which heavy drinking was regarded as a virtue, (See Dean Ramsay: Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character, passim.)

my intention, therefore, to attempt to treat convivial organizations
as such, but rather to mention those which, through their associations
with literary subjects, or men of letters, have a literary interest.
In my opinion, it would be a serious oversight in this thesis to leave
unconsidered such clubs as the Poker Club, the Cape Club, and the
Club of Crochallan Rencibles; the first of which was the meeting
place of nearly all the Edinburgh literati, the second a club in which
Robert Fergusson played a considerable role, and the third made immortal
by the presence in its festivities of the Ayrshire ploughman-poet,
Robert Burns.

Aside from their literary and biographical interest, the convivial
clubs of Scottish men of letters of the eighteenth century are interesting
because of the effect they had, in the words of Alexander Carlyle, "of
making the literati "less captious and pedantic than they were elsewhere." 1
Carlyle goes on to explain that the conversation at convivial meetings
frequently "improved the members more by free conversation than the
speeches in the (Select) 'Society.'"

1. Carlyle: Autobiography, page 512. Carlyle himself was an inveterate
clubber. He was a member of the Poker, the 'iversorium,' and even
had his own parish club at Inveresk. (Autobiography, page 300.)
2. Carlyle: Autobiography, page 512. Carlyle's statement has been
repeated several times:— Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2,
In the actual propagation of literature, convivial clubs and societies played an occasional part. It is this aspect of their literary associations which brings us to a consideration of the first example of a non-literary club which has a literary interest. In the following extract, the historian of the Royal Company of Archers turns his attention to the literature of that institution:

"Clubs" (using the word in its more ancient sense, and without reference to its modern and comparatively artificial meaning) which promote, directly or indirectly, social intercourse among their members, possess in general a literature of their own. This usually consists of poems either in honour of the society or of individual members thereof, and of songs which may have contributed to the festivity of their social gatherings. The Royal Company of Archers is no exception to this rule, though it was formed, it is true, for the promotion of archery, and its convivial meetings were, at least at first, merely secondary objects of consideration.

The literature of the Royal Company of Archers is of considerable interest because of the fact that Allan Ramsay and Dr. Archibald Pitcairn made contributions to it. In 1726, a small volume of Poems in English and Latin, on the Archers and Royal Company of Archers, by several hands, was published in Edinburgh. "The 'hands' are those of Allan Ramsay, who is too well known to require more than mention; Dr. Pitcairn, the eminent medical man and scholar, better known, perhaps, in his own day as 'Pitcairn the Atheist,' and whose

2. Poems in English and Latin, on the Archers, and Royal Company of Archers, by several hands. Edinburgh: Printed in the year 1725. This volume is often bound with Pitcairn's Poems which were published in 1727 under the title of Selecta Poemata Archibaldi Pitcarnii, Willemi Scot a Thirlstane, Thomae Aincadii et aliorum. Edinburgh, 1727.
character is so delightfully depicted in Chambers's 'Traditions';

Thomas Ainscald, who is styled in the preface to 'Pitcairn's Poems', 'vir supra sortem doctus, et literis humanioribus bene instructus';

Joseph Aer, Professor of Greek in Aberdeen University; and Scott of
Thirlestane." Allan Ramsay, who contributed the best English pieces in the volume, was made "an honorary member of, and appointed bard to, the Royal Company of Archers" in July 13, 1724.

The Royal Company of Archers, which was founded in 1676, has had a long and interesting history. Beginning as an association for "encouraging and exercising archery," the Archers gradually transformed themselves into the "Royal Body Guard for Scotland." Although their claim as being the King's bodyguard was not officially recognized until 1822, when George IV visited Scotland, it was the avowed purpose of the Company as early as 1768, when St. Clair of Roslin, in a speech to the members, declared the nature of the Royal Company of Archers to be as follows:

1. See note #2 on the preceding page.
4. For the history of the Company see Paul: History of the Royal Company of Archers. A new history was published in 1852, but I have not seen it.
By signing the Laws of the Royal Company of Scottish Archers you engage to be faithful to your King and Country; for we are not a private company as some people imagine, but constituted by Royal Charter, His Majesty's first Regiment of Guard in Scotland; and, if the King should ever come to Edinburgh, it is our duty to take charge of his Royal Person from Inchbunkland Brae on the East to Gramond Bridge on the West.

Much later in the eighteenth century, the Royal Company of Archers conferred upon Robert Burns the distinction of membership in their organization. This recognition of Burns's merit has been described as "perhaps the highest honour in appreciation of his genius." It will be recalled by those who are acquainted with the career of the Ayrshire poet, that he had previously received the recognition and support of another non-literary association of a kindred type to the Royal Company of Archers. This association, the Caledonian Hunt, responded generously to an appeal for subscriptions to a new edition of Burns's Poems, and, in consequence, received the following dedication from their poetic countryman:

To the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt:

My Lords and Gentlemen,

A Scottish bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land, those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of


2. Chambers: Works of Burns, Vol. 2, page 71, with what appears to be his usual inaccuracy, claims that the Caledonian Hunt not only subscribed for 100 copies of the new edition, but paid a guinea each (actual price 5 shillings) which was much in excess of the price of the volumes. Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, pages 312-313, quotes the following minute from the Records of the Hunt: "A motion being made by the Earl of Glencairn, and seconded by Sir John Whitefoord, in favour of Mr. Burns of Ayrshire, who had dedicated the new edition of his Poems to the Caledonian Hunt: The meeting were of opinion that in consideration of his superior merit, as
their ancestors? The poetic genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha, at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue. I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under your honoured protection. I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favours - I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen, and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated, and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great fountain of honour, the monarch of the universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may pleasure ever be of your party, and may social joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the justlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native seats - and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the ruler, and licentiousness in the people, equally find you an inexorable foe! I have the honour to be, with the sincerest gratitude and highest respect, your most devoted, humble servant,

Robert Burns
Edinburgh, 4th April, 1767.

*well as of the compliment paid to them that Mr. Hogart (the Secretary) should direct to subscribe for one hundred copies in their name, for which he should pay to Mr. Burns twenty-five pounds upon the Publications of his book. - 10th January, 1767," Rogers has pointed out that the date of the dedication was nearly three months subsequent to the aunt's act of subscribing. The sum paid in excess of the actual cost of the volumes, therefore, was only paid after the minute quoted above, if at all. The aunt's gesture, however, was generous in that at the time of the subscription it had only 60 members. (Rogers: *Social Life*, Vol. 2, page 53b.) For other account of the Caledonian "unt see *A new* history of Edinburgh, page 353 f; Angell: *Life of Burns*, Part 1, pages 232 and 466 ff.
Allan Ramsay, whom we have just seen as the bard of the Royal Company of Archers, was also involved in two non-literary clubs of a different kind. The first of these was The Worthies, "a club to which Ramsay is said to have belonged and to which he read his pastoral (The Gentle Shepherd) during the period of composition." The following account of the Club contains all that is known concerning its organisation and membership, as well as Ramsay's connection with it:

One of the most distinguished of those (clubs) then about Edinburgh, from the great respectability of its members, was called by the citizens THE WORTHY CLUB. Tempted by the convenient walk, the neighbourhood of the links for playing at golf before dinner, the sea air, and fish, they met weekly at Leith, in a tavern kept by a Mrs. Forbes, from the north of Scotland, whose other recommendations seem to have been heightened by her name, the place of her birth near Inverness, and the beauty of her person. Among its members were Duncan Forbes of Culloden, afterwards Lord President of the Court of Session; Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, one of the Senators of the College of Justice, who, with Duncan Forbes, was intrusted by Government with the charge of Scotland; John Forbes of New-Hall, Esquire, depute to his cousin Duncan Forbes when Lord Advocate; William Aikman of Cairnry, Esquire, portrait-painter, and cousin to Mr. Forbes of New-Hall; John Stuart of Innerneith, Esquire; Captain David Kennedy of Craig; and a physician in Edinburgh of the name of Clerk, whose likeness is among those in Surgeon's Hall done by Sir John Median. The portraits of the members were painted in oil, by Mr. Aikman, and, with his own, and that of their beautiful landlady Mrs. Forbes, were hung in the room where they met. During summer, they frequently drew together at New-Hall; where, on his annual visits to Sir David and Mr. Forbes, the Scottish Theocritus had numerous opportunities of hearing the conversations, suggestions, advices, and criticisms, of THE WORTHY CLUB, individually and collectively, of Baron Sir John Clerk, Mr. Forbes's cousin and neighbour, and of Dr. Pennecuik, his predecessor, neighbour, and associate as an author, who was so intimately and personally acquainted with all the hardships and adventures, during the usurpation, of the persecuted royalists, heightened by the embellishments of circulation, and ready for Ramsay's adoption for the plot of his play. "While I passed my infancy," says Mr. Tytler, in his edition of King James's Poems, "at New-Hall, near Pentland hills, where the scenes of this pastoral

---

Burns Martin: Allan Ramsay, page 78, note.

poem were laid, the seat of Mr. Forbes, and the resort of many
of the literati at that time, I well remember to have heard
Ramsay recite, as his own production, different scenes of the
Gentle Shepherd, particularly the two first, before it was
printed. The above note was shewn to Sir James Clerk, and had
his approbation." Sir James was nephew to Mr. William Clerk,
advocate, Dr. Pennecuik's correspondent; and son to Baron Sir
John Clerk, Mr. Forbes's cousin, whom Ramsay celebrates, and
condoles with, on the death of his oldest son, and to whose
second son, Mr. Tytler's witness, before he became Sir James,
an Epistle in verse appears in his works. In New-Hall House,
the apartment in which Duncan Forbes of Culloden used to sleep
when Lord Advocate, is still named The Advocate's Room. In the
parlour called The Club Room, where they used to enjoy each other's
company, and assist Ramsay with their advice, are now to be seen
the portraits, including himself and their landlady, painted by
Mr. Aikman; and on the ceiling, a painting of the poet reciting
to The WORTHY CLUB, "before it was printed," the "scenes of the
Gentle Shepherd, or the History of Sir William Worthy:" whose name
seems to have been suggested by that of the Club, his history
by Dr. Pennecuik, and his character by that of Sir David Forbes,
at whose place "the scenes of this pastoral poem were laid," under
the auspices of these his patrons and preceptors. That the story
communicated to Ramsay was wrought into a drama by the counsel
of his literary distinguished friends, "the literati," is acknowled¬
ged by himself. The following note is subjoined, in his quarto
of 1728, to the first scene of the Comedy: "This first scene is
the only piece in this volume that was printed in the first; having
carried the pastoral the length of five acts, at the desire of
some persons of distinction, I was obliged to print this preluding
scene with the rest."

From all these concurring and satisfactory evidences in support
of the fact, the tradition preserved in the Preface to "Ancient
Scottish Poems, 1782," that "Alexander Pennecuik gave Allan
Ramsay the plot of the Gentle Shepherd," seems to be confirmed
as perfectly correct; for, what also is the history of "Sir
William Worthy," who had fought under Montrose for Charles I.
against the parliament and Covenanters, had "fled" with the
Marquis to "save his head," and afterwards recovered his estate
with the restoration of Charles II. by Monk, but that of one "of
the most eminent of the gentry," referred to in "The Description
of Tweeddale," by him and Allan Ramsay's patron Mr. Forbes,
communicated by Dr. Pennecuik to his brother humourous and
pastoral poet Ramsay, for the ground work of a comedy.1

1. Despite all this ingenious argument, Ramsey's biographer (the most
recent, and, as far as I know, the only reasonably accurate one)
pours cold water on the story. See Burns Martin: Allan Ramsay, page
73.
Some time before the publication of the quarto edition of his poems in 1721, Allan Ramsay wrote a poem entitled "A Petition to the Whinbush Club". In an explanatory note, Ramsay gave some indication of the nature of the organisation to which he desired to be admitted a member:

This club consists of Clydesdale gentlemen, who frequently meet at a diverting hour, and keep up a good understanding amongst themselves over a friendly bottle. And, from a charitable principle, easily collect into their treasurer’s box a small fund which has many a time relieved the distresses of indigent persons of that shire.

Because of his Clydesdale origin, Ramsay was eligible for membership in the Club, and it has been assumed that his petition was granted, and that he was admitted. It is interesting to note that the Whinbush as described by Ramsay must have been an early example of those charitable organisations, usually referred to as "Friendly Societies", which became very popular and very numerous during the second half of the century.

The next order of clubs, those usually designated as "Hell-Fire", or "Atheistical", I have chosen for brief mention not because of their particular literary or biographical interest, but because of the more general considerations of social and historical matter of fact. There is a general quality of unreality pervading the accounts of these Scottish clubs that have come down to us which presents an obstacle to our belief. That associations of grown men were actually formed for the purposes of enjoying "free talk", "ribald verses", and singing "blasphemous songs",

seems, to me at least, a bit too adolescent to be true. But this is obviously due to certain limitations on my part, and because such behaviour runs contrary to my profound belief in the social decorum and social responsibility which is one of the least objectionable traditions in Western-European bourgeois culture. For the reasons I have just given, it was inevitable that my strongest impulse should be to reject the idea that reasonable men would be deliberately wicked in a situation as self-conscious as that which group participation creates. But the literary remains of the Beggar's Bennison, unfortunately, are of such a nature that the existence of Hell-Fire Clubs, of which the Bennison was an example, is established beyond all reasonable doubt.

The first mention of the activities of a Hell-Fire Club comes from Robert Wodrow, who, in the following extract, indicts Dr. Archibald Pitcairn for his deliberate flaunting of the Scriptures:

1. The two examples of the Club's publications which I have seen were of such a downright pornographic nature as to make my soul shrink, and though I have never considered myself as being oversensitive in such matters, my opinion on that score is now under revision.

2. Wodrow: *Analecta*, Vol. 1, page 322, year 1711. Wodrow, who had a sort of grudging fondness for Pitcairn which was as ardent as that held by many Presbyterians of his time for the Devil, mentioned him a number of times in his *Analecta*. The following passage is typical:— "This month (October, 1713), at the close of it, I think, Archibald Pitcairn dyed at Edinburgh. He was the most celebrated physician in Scotland this age, and certainly a man of great skill, and now of long experience. I am told he still spent three or four hours every morning in reading and writing: and some people talk, that evry day he did read a portion of the Scripture, though it seems, he made ill use of it. He was a professsed Deist, and by many allledged to be an Atheist, though he has frequently professed his belief at a God, and said he cou'd not deny a Providence. However, he was a great mocker at religion, and ridiculer of it. He keeped noe publick society for worship, (and) on the Sabbath had his sett meetings for ridiculing of the Scripture and sermons. He was a good humanist, and very curious in his choice of books and library. He gote a vast income, but spent it upon drinking, and was twice drunk every day. He was a sort of a poet."
I hear that profanity, and especially uncleanness, never raged so much at Glasgow as it does among their soldiers. And at Edinburgh, I hear Dr. Pitcairn and several others do meet very regularly evry Lord's Day, and read the Scripture, in order to lampoon and ridicule it. It's such wickedness, that though we had noe outward evidences, might make us apprehensive of some heavy rodd.

Wodrow, who was extremely sensitive to the wickedness of this world, saw, as the expression is, a Hell-Fire Club under every bush.

Two more accounts give further details of these incredible organisations:

1725 - We have sad accounts of some secret Atheisticall Clubs in or about Edinburgh, and I fear they may be too true. They meet, they say, very secretly; and unless they could be proven and prosecut, it may be less speaking of them there be it may be the better. I am told they had their rise from the Hell-Fire Club about two or three years ago at London, the Secretary of which I am well informed was a Scotsman, and came down not long since to Edinburgh; and I doubt not propagat their vile wickedness. He fell into melancholy, as it was called, but probably horror of conscience and dispair, and at length turned, as was said, mad, but no body was allowed to see him, and physicians prescribed bathing for him, and he dyed mad at the the first bathing. So the enemies of God are like to perish. The Lord pity us! Wickedness is come to a terrible height.

1727 - Mr. Walter Steuart, lately come from Holland, informs me at some more length of that vile club at Leyden which is noticed before. It was last winter. They consisted of a few, six or seven, profligat rakes, and mostly Scots, Irish, and Britsh. The two main supporters of it were, one Blair, a student of Medicine, I know not if graduat, son, I think, to one Patrick Blair, a Scotsman; and Hamiltoun, a parson's son in Ireland, both of them imprudently profane. Before my informer left Holland, or soon after, they both, and some other other members, absconded and left the place, in great debt. They endeavoured to bring in young gentmen to their Club. They wer fearfull quarrelsom, Hamiltoun especially. They began their meetings with the villany of pressing all present to drink their own damnation, and the Devil's health. O temporal 0 mores!

It has been stated, and, as I believe, with some truth, that the Hell-Fire Clubs were "reactionary to the rigid austerity prescribed.
by the societies for the reformation of manners, which arose at the
time of the Union." Although, as I have said, it is difficult to
believe, one recourse of the minority which was certain to resent
and abhor the dictatorship of the godly, was the formation of clubs
for the deliberate propagation of vice as a means of flaunting the
tyramous authority of the church and its elders. It is a sad
commentary on human nature, but to those who yearn for a return to the
religious uprightness of a former day, if there be any such, the
organized viciousness of the Hell-Fire Clubs should act as a retarding
influence on their admiration and enthusiasm, for it appears that we
cannot have the one without the other. Of course it has been argued,
contrary to the view just stated, that it was the moral laxity and
rough manners of the period which made the stern repression by the
Kirk necessary. The problem which is posed by such contradictory
interpretations will probably never be resolved, but no matter which
side of the argument one takes, it is important to recognize that
the first half of the eighteenth century, which is sometimes regarded
as a period of almost saintly religious purity, was a time when the
extremes of morality and viciousness existed side by side.

The tradition of the Hell-Fire Clubs long persisted in the
popular imagination of Scotland, and one, at least, of the organizations
of that peculiar order, the Beggar's Bennison, was in existence until
well past the end of the century, although in a vastly different form.

15 f., Chapter 2, above.
2. Watson: The Scot of the 18th Century, passim.
3. For accounts of the Beggar's Bennison, some of which vary greatly,
see Fergusson: Life of Erskine, page 147 f.; Rogers: Social Life
The persistence of this tradition is reflected in a letter written by David Hume in his last days in which he refers, affectionately, to the members of the Ruffian Club as the "Belzebubians". We are told by Henry Mackenzie, in his Life of John Home, that the members of this rake-hall association "were men whose hearts were milder than their manners, and their principles more correct than their habits life."

"All these Belzebubians," wrote Hume of his friend Edmonstone, who had shed tears over him in his last illness, "have not hearts of iron."

Perhaps it was the real terror of Hume's religious scepticism which had frightened the fear of God into them, at least it is an amusing and not too improbable thought.

The next club to be treated, the Revolution Club, had, like the Royal Company of Archers before it, its own club literature. As a reflection of the political event which gave rise to it, the purpose of the Club's annual meetings was to keep fresh the memory of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688. As a part of their activities, the Revolution Club collected and published, some thirteen years after the first evidence of its existence in 1748, a Collection of Loyal Songs.

1. David Hume to John Home, 6th August, 1776 (Hume died on the 25th), (Mackenzie: Life of Home, page 84-85.)
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Scots Magazine, November 1748, page 582. This notice reads as if the Club had been newly formed shortly before, but this is by no means certain.
The Club's publication, which is interesting in itself, contains several rather obscure notes regarding Jacobite clubs of the period. These notes are appended to the first two stanzas of a song which was intended to be sung in Revolution Club meetings:

In Edina's fair city, you have heard how of late
A Club is erected, no offense to the state,
Of Clergy and laymen, all Whigs stout and true,
All willing to fight for old Presbyt'ry blue,
Derry down, down, down, derry down.

By some Jacobite Worthies, I know 'tis pretended,
From the High Court of Justice they're strictly descended:
Some say they're from Babel, but it matters not where,
The toasts that they drink you shall candidly hear.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.

Notes: (No offence to the state...) This is designed by the poet to distinguish it from Jacobite clubs, which have of late been numerous, as the Buck Club, and several others: for which vid. Political History of the Devil, ad finem.

(High Court of Justice...) This was the court that condemned Charles I., compared by some to the infernal club of Milton's Pandemonium. Vid. Sermons on the 30th January, passim.

(Some say they're from Babel...) This opinion is favoured by the Jacobite mystics: but the Free Masons Club came from the same place. Vid. History of the Black Art.

In the year 1768, when the Revolution Club was preparing for its centenary jubilee, a Scots author by the name of John Pinkerton was solicited to prepare a song for its use on that occasion. The song, and the struggles which Pinkerton had in its composition, are related in detail in his Literary Correspondence. Other notices of the doings of this "loyal" organization appear in various periodicals of the period, and several of the Club's manuscript Diplomas are still in

existence.

After the somewhat objectionable task of dealing with Hell-Fire Clubs, and the rather thankless one of trying to make the Revolution Club sound interesting in a literary way, it is with some relief that I turn to the Griskin Club and the vagaries of its members.

This club was a coterie of Edinburgh literati who "dined together at a tavern in the Abbey two or three times, where pork griskins being a favourite dish, this was called the Griskin Club, and excited much curiosity, as everything did in which certain people were concerned." Our interest in this casual association if focused on an incident which took place during the turmoil which accompanied the performance of John Home's tragedy of Douglas in Edinburgh in 1756.

When it became known that a play which had been written by a Presbyterian clergyman, an order which prided itself on its unreasoning resistance to the dramatic devices of the Devil, was to be performed in the holy city of Edinburgh, the public uproar was as frenzied and nonsensical as it was ineffectual. Henry Mackenzie, who, as a small boy, recalled the disturbance and the interest which Home's tragedy aroused, has left us the following account:

1. For notices of the Club see Caledonian Mercury, Edinburgh, Wednesday, November 9, 1763; Scots Magazine, November 1776, page 618; Edinburgh Evening Courant, Wednesday November 13, 1776; Scots Magazine, December, 1738, page 620; Scots Magazine, January, 1791, pages 28-29; and the Glasgow Courier, Vol. 1, #35, Saturday, November 19, 1791. For examples of the Diplomas, see those in the collection of the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.


3. See Chapter 4, page 191, above.

Its rehearsals were attended by that literary party who were the constant companions of the author, and then the chief arbiters of taste and literature in Edinburgh — Lord Elibank, David Hume, Mr. Wedderburn, Dr. Adam Ferguson, and others. Dr. Carlyle, who sometimes witnessed those rehearsals, expresses, in his memoirs, his surprise and admiration at the acting of Mrs. Ward, who performed Lady Randolph. Digges was the Douglas of the piece, his supposed father was played by Hayman, and Glenalvon, by Love; actors of very considerable merit, and afterwards of established reputation on the London stage. But Mrs. Ward's beauty (for she was very beautiful,) and feeling, tutored with the most zealous anxiety by the author and his friends, charmed and affected the audience as much, perhaps, as has ever been accomplished by the very superior actresses of after times. I was then a boy, but of an age to be sometimes admitted as a sort of page to the tea-drinking parties of Edinburgh. I have a perfect recollection of the strong sensation which Douglas excited among its inhabitants. The men talked of the rehearsals; the ladies repeated what they had heard of the story; some had procured, as a great favour, copies of the most striking passages, which they recited at the earnest request of the company. I was present at the representation; the applause was enthusiastic; but a better criterion of its merits was the tears of the audience, which the tender part of the drama drew forth unsparingly. "The town," says Dr. Carlyle, (and I can vouch how truly,) "was in an uproar of exultation, that a Scotsman should write a tragedy of the first rate, and that its merits were first submitted to them."

As Mackenzie has related, the rehearsals for the new play which caused all the foment of interest and of mischief, were eagerly attended by the leading members of the Edinburgh literati. But before the actual rehearsals were begun, the Criskin Club had held one of their own "in the lodging of Mrs. Sarah Ward in the Canongate," the purpose of which was to make her fully apprehend the author's meaning." In the Criskin Club rehearsal, which took place on 4th December, 1756, the characters of the play were portrayed by the following members:

Lord Randolph, — William Robertson, the historian.
Glenalvon, — David Hume.
Old Norval, — Alexander Carlyle, Minister at Inveresk.
Douglas, — John Home, the author.
Lady Randolph, — Adam Ferguson, scientist and historian.
Anna, the maid, — Hugh Blair, Minister at Lady Yester's.

2. Ibid. The date is fixed by a notice which appeared in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, 4th December, 1756.
Dr. Carlyle reports that although the rehearsal was not completed, it was attended by an audience composed of "Patrick, Lord Elibank, Lord Milton, Lord Kames, Alexander Wedderburn; Esq., James Ferguson, Esq., 1 junr. of Pitfour, and suchlike; with Mr. Digges and Mrs. Ward." The company, all but Mrs. Ward, dined afterwards at the Griskin Club, which then met at a tavern in the Abbey.

Although there has been an occasional doubt cast upon the probability of this rehearsal ever having taken place, there appears to be sufficient evidence to convince all but the most determined sceptics. The story has often been repeated, and sometimes with minor variations, though, in substance, all accounts agree. The most pertinent bit of evidence is that appended to Henry Brougham's autobiography. Brougham gives a copy of a letter, which I have already quoted above, written by Alexander Carlyle in reply to a query which had been directed to him by Caroline, Marchioness of Queensberry, regarding the accuracy of an account which


2. Burton: Life of Hume, Vol. 1, page 420 f., discredits the account which he had from an article which appeared in the Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle for 31st January, 1829. Burton gives the name of the clubs as the Erskine Club. His error, whether typographical or careless I know not, was repeated by Wilson: Memorials of Edinburgh in Olden Times, Vol. 2, pages 118-119. The Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle, which, according to Burton, "excited some attention when it first appeared, (and) found its way into some books connected with Scottish literature," has been the basis for most accounts since; see, for example, a reprint of the article in the Gentleman's Magazine; Small: Life of Adam Ferguson, page 7; Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, page 64, 68, and 110; Craig: David Hume, page 226. Somewhere along the line, the story was improved by the addition of the circumstance that the rehearsals took place in a tavern, an invention which was faithfully repeated by all those whom I have just named. The original Chronicle version appears in Schmitz: Hugh Blair, page 38. For a part of the story, see also Carlyle: Autobiography, page 328 f., and for the authentic version, note 1, page 512, below.

appeared in the Edinburgh Daily Advertiser. Carlyle’s reply, which was in the possession of the Earl of Home at the time Brougham wrote, confirmed the story, but corrected the inaccurate details of the version which appeared in the Daily Advertiser.

It would be quite possible, though by no means desirable, to conclude a work on Scottish literary organizations without once mentioning the club activities of James Boswell. Despite the fact that he was an inveterate club-goer, a social busybody, and the finest literary artist of the period, Boswell’s participation in Scottish literary clubs and societies was negligible. As is well known, Boswell was an important member of Johnson’s Literary Club, but he did not enter deeply into the activities of the literati of Edinburgh.

If the literary organizations of the Scottish capital failed to interest him, however, Boswell found clubs of a convivial order very attractive. In his young manhood in Edinburgh, before he had met the subject of his great biography, he was the founder and a very active participant in the Soaping Club. The spirit of the Soaping Club, with

---

1. Carlyle’s letter, as quoted by Henry Brougham, reads as follows:

“The paragraph in the ‘Daily Advertiser’ of September 25 may be partly true, but there are mistakes in it that tend to mislead the public in a matter of importance, and should therefore be corrected. The first rehearsal of the ‘Tragedy of Douglas’ was not at Inveresk, but at the lodging of Mrs. Sarah Ward in the Canongate, and was designed to make her fully apprehend the author’s meaning. The dramatis personae were — (as I have given above, page 510). The rehearsal was not completed. The audience were — (as I have given above, page 511). The company all but Mrs. Ward, dined afterwards at the Griskin Club, which then met at a tavern in the Abbey. Mr. Digges and Mrs. Ward were professional actors of celebrity in their day.” (Brougham: Life, page 540, Appendix VI.) This letter has been the basis of only one other account, that of Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, page 588.

2. See the list of members of the Select Society, Appendix C, page 586; also Chapter V, page 237, note #2, above, under the Pantheon Society.

its motto "Let every man soap his own beard," has probably been caught as well by Boswell himself, in a poem on the subject, as by any of his biographers:

B——, of Soapers the King,
On Tuesdays at Tom's does appear,
And when he does talk, or does sing,
To him ne'er a one can come near.
For he talks with such ease and such grace,
That all charm'd to attention we sit,
And he sings with so comic a face,
That our sides are just ready to split.

B—— is modest enough,
Himself not quite Phoebus he thinks,
He never does flourish with snuff;
And hock is the liquor he drinks.
And he owns that Ned C——t, the priest,
May to something of honour pretend
And he swears that he is not in jest,
When he calls this same C——t his friend.

B—— is pleasant and gay,
For frolic by nature design'd:
He heedlessly rattles away,
When the company is to his mind.
"This maxim," he says, "you may see,
We can never have corn without chaff.
So not a bent sixpence cares he,
Whether with him or at him you laugh.

1. "In 1760, Mr. (Andrew, Capt. Erskine) edited the first volume of a work in quarto, entitled "A Collection of Original Poems, by the Rev. Mr. Blacklock and other Scotch Gentlemen." This publication contained compositions by Mr. Blacklock, Dr. Beattie, Mr. Gordon of Dumfries, and others; it was published by Alexander Donaldson, an Edinburgh bookseller and was intended as the first of a series of three volumes. The second volume was considerably delayed, owing to Mr. Erskine's absence with his regiment, and on Boswell were latterly imposed the editorial labours. As contributors Erskine and Boswell were associated with Mr. Home, author of Douglas, Mr. Macpherson, editor of Ossian, and others. Of twenty-eight pieces from Boswell's pen one is subjoined, (quoted above), eminently characteristic of its author." (Rogers: Boswelliana, page 20.)
B____ does women adore,
And never once means to deceive,
He's in love with at least half a score;
If they're serious he smiles in his sleeve.
He has all the bright fancy of youth,
With the judgment of forty and five,
In short, to declare the plain truth,
There is no better fellow alive.

(Boswell appended the following note to his poem:-
"Who has not heard of 'Every man soap his own beard!' -
the reigning phrase for 'Every man in his humour'? Upon
this foundation B____ instituted a jovial society, called
the Soaping Club.")

Another poetic fragment which may be classed among the Club's
literature, was written to Boswell by a friend whom he had introduced
into the society of Soapers:

You kindly took me up, an awkward cub,*
And introduced me to the Soaping Club,
Where, every Tuesday-eve, our ears are blast
With genuine humour and with genuine jest;
The voice of mirth ascends the list'ning sky,
While, soap his own beard every man, you cry.
Say, who could e'er indulge a yawn or nap,
When Barclay roars for Ship, and Bainbridge Snap.**

Notes: *The Soaping Club - a club in Edinburgh, the motto of
which was, "Every man soap his own beard; or, Every
man indulge his own humour." Their games was that
facetious one, "Ship, Snap, Snorum."
**Barclay and Bainbridge, two members of this Club.

From his associations with the other Soapers, Boswell developed
his ability for "shaving" to a point where, in his own words, it became
a "bad practice". The term "shaving" was a cant term of the Club of
which "the approximate meaning (was) 'to affect deep interest so as to
lead another person on to make himself ridiculous.' The first procedure
(was) 'soaping the victim's beard'; the second 'shaving' or 'applying
the razor'." This delightful social grace, and its effect upon his

reception in fashionable company, is carefully noted by the budding biographer:—

I shaved a good deal (at a party at Donaldson’s). They were very angry at me, and said it was the only fault I had. But it was a great one, as they were kept in continual apprehension and never knew whether to take me in earnest or not. They owned that I shaved inimitable well; but as I had now attained to perfection in the art, they thought I might lay it aside. In reality it is a bad practice, for people cannot talk to one with seriousness and openness when they imagine that they are all the time making themselves perfectly ridiculous in the eyes of him to whom they are speaking. When I get into the Guards and am in real life, I shall give it over.

It seems safe to assume that Boswell soon “gave over” his Soaping Club antics. One gets the impression that had he tried to “shave” the burly Johnson, the robust lexicographer would have strangled him with his bare hands.

Boswell, however, was human enough to be more tolerant of his own social failings than he was of those about him. His criticism of the members of the Poker Club, which follows, shows that side of his nature which loved the pomp and pagentry of living, and which was quick to resent any breach of a customary observance:—

I must find one fault with all the Poker Club, as they are called; that is to say, with all that set who associate with David Hume and Robertson. They are doing all they can to destroy politeness. They would abolish all respect due to rank and external circumstances, and they would live like a kind of literary barbarians. For my own share, I own I would rather want their instructive conversation than be hurt by their rudeness. However, they don’t always show this. Therefore I like their company best when it is qualified by the presence of a stranger.

Like the Soaping Club, the Poker Club had a cant phrase for the

---

2. Ibid, page 36.
type of good-natured raillery that was practised at its meetings. David Hume, in one of his letters to Dr. Blair, mentions his opinion, respecting the Dauphin of France, that he "would be the better of being roasted sometimes in The Poker." It is nowhere defined, as Boswell has done in the case of "shaving", what this "roasting" consisted of, but its essential points are not difficult to imagine.

The Poker Club, of which Boswell disapproved, was, in actuality, a political association of patriotic Edinburgh literati who had joined forces to agitate for a Scottish militia. The Poker is perhaps the best known of all the non-literary clubs of this period, at least it has been written of more time than any other. But whatever it was in the mid-


eighteenth century, the Poker Club has now become so disguised by
name and literary fumbling that it must certainly appear to a great
many people to be something which it never was, nor ever intended to
be.

Nearly all of the petty literary sins of carelessness, inaccuracy,
and deliberate invention or falsification, (which is, of course, the
same thing), have been committed in the name of the poor old Poker Club.
1

Its origin has been mistaken, its place of meeting confused, its

1. Ritchie: Life of David Hume, page 38, began a whole series of blunders
by confusing the Poker Club with the Diversorium. "We have to regret
our unsuccessful inquiries as to the commencement of a literary society,
which bore the illustrious title of the Poker Club, and which was insti-
tuted by the present Dr. Adam Ferguson; but its formation was previous
to that of the Select Society (i.e. before 1754).... It met on Tuesdays
and Fridays during four or five years, at a house called the Diversorium,
in the vicinity of the Netherbow of Edinburgh; and although it is here
dignified with the character of a literary society, the reader will not,
we hope, conceive an unfavourable opinion of it, when he learns, that
the sole object of the members was conviviality. Claret was then sold
at eighteen pence per bottle; and the club might have enjoyed a longer
existence, if it had not been irrecoverably ruined by a rise in the
price of its favourite beverage, Economy was its first and great law;
and we cannot suspect its sobriety, since, besides Hume and several
learned laymen, Robertson, John Home, Carlyle, and many other clergymen
were among its members." Compare the following account of the Diversorium
Club from the pen of Dr. Carlyle:- "It was during this Assembly (i.e.
1756) that the Carrier's Inn, in the lower end of the West Bow, got into
some credit, and was called the Diversorium.... Some of our companions
frequented the house.... Home and I followed Logan, James Craig, and
William Cullen, and were pleased with the house. He and I happening to
dine with Dr. Robertson at his uncle's, who lived in Pinkie House, a week
before the General Assembly, (this note continued on the next page.)

2. In his account of the Poker Club, Alexander Carlyle, who is the final
authority, described the place of meeting as follows:- "We met at our
old landlord's of the Diversorium, now near the Cross...." The reader will
discover from the note above, (i.e. note #1), that the "Diversorium"
was another name for the Carrier's Inn situated near the West Bow in
the Grassmarket in Edinburgh. There has been a peculiar insistency
on the part of a number of authors who have written of the Poker Club
to place the scene of its meetings "in the Diversorium tavern", sometimes
near the West Bow, sometimes the Netherbow, and most often near the Cross.
What strange combination of literal mindedness and invention has prompted
this unnecessary confusion, I have been unable to discover. Perhaps
there was a "Diversorium" at the Cross, and at the West Bow as well,
some of us proposed to order Thomas Nicolson to lay in twelve dozen of the same claret, then £3 per dozen, from Mr. Scott, wine merchant at Leith — for in his house we proposed to make our Assembly parties, for being out of the way, we proposed to have snug parties of our own friends. This was accordingly executed, but we could not be concealed; for, as it happens in such cases, the out-of-the-way place and mean house, and the attempt to be private, made it the more frequented — and no wonder, when the company consisted of Robertson, Home, Ferguson, Jardine, and Wilkie, with the addition of David Hume and Lord Elibank, the Master of Ross, and Sir Gilbert Elliot." (Carlyle: Autobiography, page 333, and see also, Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, 'vol. 2, page 385). Campbell: Lives of the Lord Chancellors, Vol. 6, page 28, not only accepted Ritchie's botted account, but went him one better by adding to the confusion by stating that Alexander Wedderburn, (whose biography he was writing), was a member. But we know for certain, (see the account above, and the notes which accompany it), that the Poker Club was not organized until 1762, and that it came after, instead of before, the Select Society which both Ritchie and Campbell have tried to pretend was organized when the Poker Club was dissolved because the price of claret had gone up. By 1762, Wedderburn had left Edinburgh for good, and it was impossible for him to have been present at the Poker Club meetings as Campbell has stated. Mathieson: The Awakening of Scotland, has charitably suggested that Campbell must have had documentary evidence for his statement that Wedderburn was a member, but the existence of such evidence is hardly likely in view of the facts.

(note #2, continued.) but a "Diversorium" at the Netherbow seems only to have existed in the imagination of Thomas Edward Ritchie (see also Campbell: Lives of the Lord Chancellors, Vol. 6, page 28). It strikes me, however, that the mistake could only have been continued through neglect or misreading of Carlyle's account which well deserves close attention. (Thomson: A Scottish Man of Feeling, bibliography, has described Carlyle, the author of the charming Autobiography which I have quoted so often, as "a Percy, a wit, and a snob." But Thomson's cleverness did not prevent him from falling into the vulgar error of supposing that the Poker Club met in a tavern called "the Diversorium.") Among those who support the idea that the Poker Club met at the "Diversorium Tavern" at the Cross, are Greig: David Hume, page 262; and Rae: Adam Smith, page 187. Graham: Scottish Men of Letters, has muddled the issue completely by giving two contradictory locations for the "Diversorium" tavern. On page 86, following Carlyle, he refers to "the Diversorium, as they nicknamed the Carrier's Inn in the West Bow." On page 112, he says, in regards to the Poker Club, "They met at the Carrier's Inn, which was known as the Diversorium, near the Cross." I suggest that the "Diversorium" was, what Carlyle and Graham said it was, a nickname for the Carrier's Inn in the West Bow. What the name of the tavern at the Cross was, I have been unable to determine, but it almost certainly was not the "Diversorium". Doesn't Carlyle say, "we met at our old landlord's of the Diversorium"? meaning, I take it, the landlord of the former meeting place of the Diversorium Club. It is perhaps safest to refer to the tavern "near the Cross" simply as "Tom Nicolson's".

Burton: Life of Hume, Vol. 2, page 456, saw "no other direct and specific
1. The most flagrant example of this was the claim made by Campbell: Lives of the Lord Chancellors, Vol. 8, page 30, that Alexander Wedderburn (Lord Loughborough and Earl of Roslyn) was a member of the Club, (see note #1, page 513, above). Craig: David Hume, page 261, who should have known better, included Lord Kames, although his name does not appear in the extant Minutes of the Club, nor on any list that I have seen. An article in the Scotsman, (Thursday September 6, 1835), quotes James Nasmyth to the effect that his father was a member, but I cannot allow this, for his name appears nowhere in connection with the Poker Club, but suggest that Nasmyth was actually talking about the Cape Club (see page 537, below). Thompson: Scottish Man of Feeling, page 182, seems to imply that Henry Mackenzie was a member. Mackenzie, name, however, does not appear on any list of members. For lists of members, see Appendix K, page 651 f.

2. The worst offender on this score is Rogers: Scotland, Social and Domestic, page 36, introduction. "The Edinburgh clubs were scenes of dissipation in the most revolting forms. The Poker Club was composed of men of letters, whose joint indulgences ill corresponded with their literary tastes. From the club the members staggered home more or less intoxicated." I can only think that Rogers must have been in an intoxicated state himself when he wrote this, for he has fallen flat on his face, if only in a literary way, in this wildly mistaken judgment of the eminently respectable members of the Poker Club. Rogers demonstrates his ineptitude in dealing with the Poker by applying the following anecdote to one of its supposed members. "Where does John Clark reside?" imperfectly articulated the celebrated advocate of that name, to one of "the guards", at four in the morning. "Why, you're John Clark himself," answered the guardsman. "Yes," said the querist, "but I was not asking for John Clark, but for his house." The falsity of this story is ridiculously easy to prove. John Clark, (or Clark, as the story is given in another, and earlier work, see Mackenzie: Reminiscences of Glasgow, Vol. 1, part III, page 482), was in no way connected with the Poker Club. The Club always adjourned early, (see the M.S. Minutes of the Poker Club, or Carlyle: Autobiography, page 440), and was remarkable for its sobriety, (see Carlyle: Autobiography, page 441.) It is obvious that Rogers merely picked up the story, and, in an unthinking moment, used it in his account of the Poker Club. Rogers's account has had an unfortunate effect on at least one other writer. See the effect of his fictitious piece on Angellier: Life of Burns, Part 1, page 246. The French scholar, who has written what must be the best work on Burns in existence, was apparently convinced that the latter was as potent with a bottle as they were with a pen. While I admit that the mental picture of Robertson, Hume, Carlyle, Blair, and others in a drunken fit is mildly amusing, at the same time I feel obliged to state that I cannot for a moment seriously believe in it.
perspicuity and pluck to see the Poker Club and to describe it as it actually was. John Rae, however, the author of a biography of Adam Smith, leaves no doubt as to the true character of the Club, for he begins his description in the following manner:

Every one has heard of that famous club, but most persons probably think of it as if it were merely a social or convivial society; and Mr. Burton lends some countenance to that mistake by declaring that he has never been able to discover any other object it existed for except the drinking of claret. But the Poker Club was really a committee for political agitation, like the Anti-Corn-Law League or the Home Rule Union.

Rae's description is substantiated by the manuscript account of the club which appears in a volume of Poker Club minutes which are preserved in the University of Edinburgh library. This account, which was apparently written by Dr. Alexander Carlyle, as it contains two thirds of the account which appears in his autobiography, reads as follows:

After the suppression of the Rebellion in 1746, it occurred to many of the noblemen and gentlemen of Scotland that one of the most effectual securities against the recurrence of dangerous insurrections, as well as invasions, would be the establishment of such a militia force as had existed in England ever since the days of Edward I. The same opinion was entertained by the most eminent of the men of letters, and the subject was frequently discussed in county meetings, town councils and other influential bodies. The leading periodicals between the years 1750 and 1762 contained a number of spirited and able articles in support of the same cause, and several highly educated individuals published pamphlets which exercised a powerful influence, and led to the formation of associations for the purpose of kindling and keeping alive the flame of patriotic feeling.
In the beginning of the year 1762 was instituted the famous club called the "Poker," which lasted in great vigour till the year 1784. About the third or fourth meeting the members thought of giving it a name sufficiently significant to the initiated, but of uncertain meaning to the general public, and not so directly or obviously offensive as that of Militia Club would have been to the adversaries of any such object. Professor Adam Ferguson luckily suggested the name of Poker, which was perfectly intelligible to all the originators of the scheme, while it was an impenetrable mystery to every one else.

This association consisted of all the literary of Edinburgh and the neighbourhood (most of whom had been members of the Select Society), with many country gentlemen who were indignant at the invidious line drawn between Scotland and England.

The management of the club was frugal and moderate, as that of every association for a public purpose ought to be. The members met at the tavern kept by Thomas Nicolson (which was the name of their old landlord of the Adversorium), near the Cross. Dinner was on the table soon after two o'clock at the rate of a shilling a head. The only wines used were sherry and claret, and the bill was called for at six o'clock.

After the first fifteen admitted by unanimous nomination, it was resolved that the members should be chosen by ballot, and two black balls were to exclude any candidate.

At every successive meeting a new president was to be called to the chair; Mr. William Johnstone, advocate, afterwards Sir William Pulteney (of Westerhall) was elected Secretary, with the charge of all publications which might be thought necessary by him and two other members whom he was directed to consult.

In a laughing humour, the club appointed Mr. Andrew Crosbie, advocate, to be assassin if in any extremity the services of such an officer should be needed. But David Hume was added as assessor, without whose assent nothing was to be done, so that between plus and minus there was no risk of bloodshed.

This club continued with great spirit to hold frequent meetings six or seven years, and every member being satisfied with the frugal entertainment was not less pleased with the company. According to the testimony of the members who attended most regularly, no approach to insobriety was ever witnessed. About the end of the seventh year an unfortunate misunderstanding between one or two of the members and the landlord occasioned the removal of the club to Fortune's Tavern, the most fashionable in the town, where the day's expense soon became three times more than the usual amount of the bill at Thomas Nicolson's, and the consequence was that many of the members, not the least considerable,
attended much less frequently than they had done while the management was more economical.

A still more unfavourable result was that a number of new candidates were admitted whose views were not congenial with those of the old members. To obviate this disadvantage a few of the original members formed a new club called the "Tuesday," which met at "ommer's Tavern, and continued to flourish about two years, after which time, as the original club had to a great extent dwindled away in consequence of the death of some, and the desertion of others, the most strenuous supporters of the principles of the old club broke up the "Tuesday" meeting and returned to their former friends.

The date of the first meeting of this organization is unknown, for the existing minutes cover only the years from 1774 to 1784, but Carlyle says that "the club was instituted in the beginning of 1762." The activities of the Poker Club, as they are recorded in the Club's book minutes, are easily described. The association met for dinner once each week, chiefly during the winter months, at an Edinburgh tavern, first at Thomas Nicolson's, "near the Cross", and later at Fortune's. An important function of each meeting was the designation (by rota) of two members upon whom was laid the duty of being present at the next appointed meeting. The fine for failure in this imperative obligation is that the offending member had to pay for the entire evening's entertainment. The following laconic entry is typical of the sportiness with which this provision was treated by the members:

Friday 3rd August, 1781.

Present Dr. Robertson, Mr. Fergusson, Mr. Lumsden, Mr. G. Fergusson, Convener. Mr. George Home, the other Convener, not having attended, the bill is to be sent to him - on which the meeting drank a bumper to Mr. Home.
The militia question does not often appear in these extant minutes. Occasionally, however, some allusion to the subject is made which gives the impression that though it was not recorded, the problem was not neglected. On the 26th July, 1782, at a large meeting, the subject of Scottish militia was still being pursued, and this was twenty years after the Club had first been formed:

26th July, 1782.

Sir John Dalrymple and Doctor Blair, Preses.

Attending Members.
Lord Haddington:
Lord Glencairn (cancelled)
Mr. Sinclair.
Mr. Miller.
Baron Gordon.
Mr. (illegible) Adams.
Colonel Fletcher.
Mr. George Ferguson.
Mr. James Ferguson.
Mr. Adam Ferguson.
Mr. Kennedy.
Mr. Carlisle.

Major Rutherford.
Lord Alloch.
Mr. Alexr. Ferguson.
Mr. Cullen.

The meeting elected the Marquis of Graham & Sir James Johnston for members, as the Preses present (was instructed) to write a letter of thanks to the Marquis of Graham for his noble work in the business of the Scotch Militia last session & they appointed the Marquis of Graham, Lord Glencairn, Mr. Adam Ferguson, Mr. Edgar, Major Rutherford, Mr. Kennedy, Colonel Fletcher, Sr. John Nallop & Lord Advocate to be a committee to form a bill for a Scotch Militia.

Lord Anderville & Doctor Black to be attending members for next meeting.

(signed) John Dalrymple
John Campbell.

A further indication of the political and military activities of this group of rather warlike literati appears in the following notices which appeared in the Edinburgh Evening Courant during...

as, "Minutes of the Poker Club, 1774-1784."
February and March, 1780:

Edinburgh Evening Courant, Wednesday, February 9, 1780.

At a meeting of the Antigalican Society on the 31st January last.

Present.


Mr. Fordyce of Aytoun. Mr. Buchan Hepburn of Smeaton. Commissioner Smith. Mr. Kennedy of Dalquharne. Mr. John Home. Dr. Carlyle. Dr. Ferguson.

It was Resolved,
That it is the design of the Society to promote every measure that can tend to strengthen the hands of Government, and contribute to the defence and security of our country against our enemies.

That the members having in particular become sensible, on occasion of the late alarms, from the French and other enemies, on the coast, that the use of arms, and of manly exercises, have been too long discontinued, propose in the following manner to use their endeavours to revive them, viz:--

To set up three prizes within the year:

One to the best Marksman.

Another to the party, not under 5, and not above 20, who shall walk together in the shortest time, over a space of ground, to be assigned by the managers.

And a third to the party, limited ss above, who shall strike with most balls, at 30 paces distance, an elevation of wook or earth five feet high.

The first and third prizes to be shot for with the bayonet fixed.

The walk to be performed full accoutrd and armed.

At the same time resolved, that the competition for any of the above prizes be limited to subscribers, and to householders who pay house-tax within the royalty of the city of Edinburgh, Canongate, South and North Leith, and the parish of St. Cuthberts, and who have a stand of arms their own property.

That no one shall be allowed to compete for any of the above
prizes, who, within the year in which such prize is given, shall have been accessory to any riot, tumult, or breach of the king’s peace.

That, in case of any hostile descent, or landing on any part of the southern shore of the firth of Forth, this Society will give a gold medal, to be worn by any person who shall take or disarm an enemy, within any of the counties contiguous to this shore or coast.

That, to promote the purpose of this Society, a subscription will be opened, not exceeding one guinea yearly.

And that the Society will meet when called by a committee of their number now named, in order to elect five managers who shall carry the above plan into execution.

Subscription-papers will be lodged, in the course of the ensuing week, at - an Balfour’s - Mr. Creech’s, Booksellers; - Fortune’s Tavern; - and Balfour’s Coffeehouse.

The Society flatter themselves, that, although this plan is altogether local, such sports and exercises as prepared, and animate men for the defense of their country, may be introduced and promoted by other Societies of the same nature, in different parts of the kingdom.

At first it may not be obvious what connection all this has with the Poker Club, but I would like to draw the readers attention to a fact which he is probably unaware of, and that is that every member of the Antigalican Society which has been listed above is also listed being a member of the Poker Club. In my opinion, the Antigalican Society was simply a more active form of the Poker Club, and a more public appearance of the Edinburgh literati’s interest in a militia or some alternate form of national defence. Further notices of the activities of the Antigalican Society read as follows:

Edinburgh Evening Courant, Saturday, February 12, 1780.

At a meeting of the Antigalican Society, Lord Glencairn in the Chair, on the 8th day of February, 1780, - upon a report from their committee, that unforeseen difficulties were likely to
arise in the execution of part of the plan at first proposed, it was resolved, that their subscription should be limited to the prize for the best Marksman.

Their managers will advertise the time and place of competition, with the other circumstances that maybe necessary.

Subscription-paper are lodged at Mr. Creech's and Mr. Balfour's, at fortune's tavern, and at Balfour's Coffeehouse.

The final notice, a letter of approbation on the activities of the Antigalican Society, reads as follows:

Edinburgh Evening Courant, Wednesday, March 8, 1790.

To the Publisher of the Edinburgh Evening Courant,

Sir,

Having lately seen in your paper an advertisement from the Antigalican Society, I could not forbear to express my approbation of it, if agreeable to you, even in this public manner. I have always regretted that the use of arms and of manly exercises should be so much neglected in this country, and especially at this period. Agriculture and manufactures, Sir, are excellent things, and ought to be promoted to the utmost. But in neither of these is Scotland ever to make a distinguished figure. The national character has always hinged, and always must, upon arms and letters; and I would therefore say to every true Scotsman, Na tibi erunt artes.

The young nobleman who seems to be at the head of this society, I have never seen, and therefore can judge nothing of him, but from his public behaviour. I can remember a maxim of his grandfather, John Duke of Argyle, that a Scots Peer, to make himself considerable at court, must first make himself respectable at home. The conduct of his grandson brings this maxim fresh to my remembrance. Instead of prowling about the purlieus of St. James's, he has spent two laborious years in forming a regiment for the immediate defence of the country. Instead of giving himself up to the luxuries of his own palace, he goes upon his duty to a distant part of the kingdom, and lives the life of a private soldier. In such sliding times, this is a degree of virtue and patriotism, I highly admire; and when I say so, I speak but the sentiments of all the country around me. Sure I am, it throws indelible disgrace on the mock patriots of our neighbouring kingdom.

Senex.
Although I must insist on the political and patriotic aspects of the Poker Club, there is no point in avoiding the obvious fact that the association was of a dual nature. In other words, although it was a political association as to origin and common aim, it functioned as a convivial dining club as well. Its organization, as shown in the minutes, fully bears out this contention. But this duality of purpose need not surprise us, for good wine, good food, and good conversation were essential ingredients of all types of Scottish organizations from the most exalted to the most humble. There was nothing, until the very end of the century, that was the equivalent of the ponderous and heavy organization under which modern associations, (more particularly those of the "learned" variety), strive to accomplish their ends. When the personality and the intellectual attainments of the members of the Poker Club are considered, it seems obvious that the conversation at their meetings must have been of the highest order, and to describe the Poker as a literary club, as has often been done, is as understandable as it is mistaken. In writing to Adam Ferguson from Fontainbleau in 1765, David Hume expresses his yearning for "the plain roughness of the Poker, and particularly the sharpness of Dr. Jardine, to correct and qualify so much lusciousness." And Alexander Carlyle makes the following reference in regard to the Poker Club meetings:

Although the great object of these meetings was national, of which they never lost sight, they had also happy effects on

---


private character by forming and polishing the manners which are suitable to civilized society, for they banished pedantry from the conversation of scholars and exacted the ideas and enlarged the views of the gentry and created in the several orders a new interest in each other which had not taken place before in the country.

About 1786 or 1787, an attempt was made to revive the old association in the form of a Younger Poker Club. This attempt has been graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in the following terms:

We have heard of a meeting of the Poker Club, which was convoked long after it had ceased to have regular existence, when its remaining members were far advanced in years. The experiment was not successful. Those who bad last met in the full vigour of health and glow of intellect, taking an eager interest in the passing events of the world, seemed now, in each other's eyes, cold, torpid, inactive, loaded with infirmities, and occupied with the selfish care of husbanding the remainder of their health and strength, rather than in the gaiety and frolic of a convivial evening. Most had renounced even the moderate worship of Bacchus, which, on former occasions, had seldom been neglected. The friends saw their own condition reflected in the persons of each other, and became sensible that the time of convivial meetings was passed. The abrupt contrast betwixt what they had been, and what they were, was too unpleasant to be endured, and the Poker Club never met again. This, it may be alleged, is a contradiction of what we have said concerning the Nestorian banquet of John Home's, formerly noticed. But the circumstances were different. The gentlemen then alluded to had kept near to each other in the decline as well as the ascent of life, met frequently, and were become accustomed to the growing infirmities of each other, as each had to his own. But the Poker Club, most of whom had been in full strength when the regular meetings were discontinued, found themselves abruptly re-assembled as old and broken men, and naturally agreed with the Gaelic bard that age "is dark and unlovely."

A supplementary list of members "of the younger Poker Club about the year 1766 or 1787," was added to the list of regular members which was published in the Life of Henry Home, by Alexander Fraser Tytler. His list reads as follows:

2. I have taken the list from Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, page 151, where it was reprinted. For the regular members see Appendix K, page 651 f.
In a number of unessential particulars, the club which I intend
to deal with at this point, the Cape Club, was very similar to the
Poker Club. "Both were formally constituted about the same time, and
both seem to have had at one time a bond of sympathy, in the promotion
of adequate defence for the kingdom of Scotland;" the household poker
figured largely as a symbol in both their activities, and, like the
Poker, accounts of the Cape Club have been a mainstay in many descriptions
of Edinburgh's clubs. "But here the similarity ends, for although the

1. Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, page 154. What Cockburn means is
that in during the American war, the Cape Club donated one hundred
guineas for the funds of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers. (See
Cockburn: Ibid, page 152, and his "Taverns and Clubs of Old
In 1794, when "no less than fifty-five members of the celebrated
Cape Club were enrolled in the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers," (see
December, 1794, page 795.) the members of the Cape Club gave forty
pounds "towards the relief of the widows, etc. of those brave
fellows who suffered in the glorious victory obtained over the
French." (see the Scots Magazine, "August 1794, page 509, and
the Glasgow Courier, Vol. III, #462, Tuesday, August 12, 1794.)

2. Cockburn: "Old Edinburgh Clubs," (from the Book of the Old Edinburgh
Club, Vol. 3, page 154); Ferguson: Works, Appendix I, page cxix f.;
Robert: Robert Fergusson, pages 122-123; Sommers: Life of Robert
Cape, like the Poker, was an organization in which conviviality was an important function, we shall soon see that the Cape Club lacked the dynamic political purpose which characterized the Poker Club.

But this is not to imply that the purpose of the Cape Club, that of providing a congenial convivial atmosphere for its members, is unworthy of our attention. Many particulars of the Club, and particularly as regards its ceremony which was probably intended as a parody on Masonic practices, show some marks of imagination, and the Club is interesting in a literary way because it periodically celebrated the birthdays of famous men of literature. The following accounts give some idea of the nature of these literary occasions:


While the friends of the Buskin were celebrating the memory of the great father of the drama on the banks of his native Avon, his admirers here have not been wanting in testimonies of their respect and reverence for that darling of all the muses. A society of gentlemen in this city, distinguished by the appellation of Knights of the Cape, held a musical festival in honour of Shakespeare, on Wednesday the 6th. An ode, written on this occasion by one of these gentlemen, and set to music by another, was performed, which was followed with a grand concert of music, conducted by the best performers in this country. An elegant cold collation was served up, and a generous glass circled round the company, who spent a truly Attic evening....

The true Bard of the Cape Club was James Thomson. It was a custom of the Knights to commemorate the anniversary of his birthday, once a decade, with a Jubilee Festival. The nature of these celebrations is revealed in a report of the one held on 22nd September, (Thomson's 5th birthday), 1770:—

After the memory of Thomson had been drank by the Sovereign and all the members standing, the entertainment began by Mr. Woods reciting a beautiful occasional Poem, of his own composition, in honour of the Birth-day of Thomson. Several suitable sentiments to the memory of those who were the particular friends of Thomson being given, Mr. Woods proceeded to recite, from a poem of Dr. Langhorn's, the contest of the Seasons, who are represented as appealing to Thomson to decide on their respective merits. At proper intervals, he afterwards, delivered passages from the four Seasons, each being followed by songs applicable to the respective subjects by other members of the Society. Mr. Woods then recited a number of passages selected by him from Thomson's Poem of Liberty. This was immediately followed by another member singing Rule Britannia, who was joined in the chorus by the rest of the company all standing; and which concluded an entertainment, gratifying in the highest degree to every person present.

Those readers who are admirers of James Boswell will recognize that this celebration was the one which he attended in the autumn of 1769.


Scots Magazine, September, 1780, page 460. See also the Weekly Magazine, or Edinburg Amusement, Vol. 10, Thursday, October 24, 1770, pages 114-115; and Vol. 10, Thursday, October 4, 1770, page 52.
The Cape Club was organized in 1763, although there has been an unsuccessful attempt to suggest that it was in existence some thirty years earlier. The derivation of the name of the organization is not certain, but there is a pretty legend which has been accepted as adequate by several authors:

The name of the club had its foundation in one of those weak jokes, such as "gentle dullness ever loves," and such as seemed to keep alive, by their unassisted wretchedness, for many years, the numerous associations which appeared to be nominally founded on them. A person who lived in the suburbs of Calton, was in the custom of spending an hour or two every evening with one or two city friends; and being sometimes detained till the regular period when the Netherbow Port was shut, it occasionally happened that he had either to remain in the city all night, or was under the necessity of bribing the porter who attended the gate. This difficult pass — partly on account of the rectangular corner which he turned, immediately on getting out of the Port, as he went homewards down Leith Wynd — and partly, perhaps, (if the reader will pardon a very humble pun,) because a nautical idea was most natural and appropriate on the occasion of being half-seas-over — the Calton burgher facetiously called doubling the Cape; and, as it was customary with his friends, every evening when they assembled, to enquire "how he turned the Cape

1. Grant: Old and New Edinburgh, Vol. 3, page 125, has confidently stated that the Club was established on 15th March, 1763. His evidence for this would have been more convincing if he had understood it properly. He bases the date of the foundation of the Club on a notice which appeared in the Edinburgh Herald in 1763, which announced a celebration of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Club held on 15th March. But we know from Sommers: Life of Robert Ferguson, that the Cape Club was "instituted in the year 1763; since which, they have held two festivals annually, when they generally sit down to dinner from sixty to seventy members. The last was upon Saturday the 20th of August, being the 75th festival; when there stood on the roll 705 members!" It is easy to see how Grant made his mistake. Not knowing that the Cape Club celebrated its anniversaries every year, he assumed that the Club was nearly twice as old as it really was. Grant's mistake has been followed by Cockburn: "Old Edinburgh Clubs," (from the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 3, page 165), and by the author of an article which appeared in the Weekly Scotman, Saturday, March 27, 1857.

2. The original story is from Chambers: Traditions of Edinburgh, Vol. 2, page 569. It has been repeated, with minor variations, by Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, page 165; Malcolm: "Old Convivial Clubs of Edinburgh,"
"last night," and, indeed, to make that circumstance and that phrase, night after night, the subject of their conversation and amusement, "the Cape," in time, became so assimilated with their very existence, that they adopted it as a title; and it was retained as such by the organized club into which, shortly after, they thought proper to form themselves...

The purpose and intentions of the Cape Club, for which the members met together every night, was, from the beginning, as follows:

After the business of the day was over to pass the evening socially with a set of select companions in an agreeable, but at the same time a rational and frugal manner; for this purpose beer and porter were the usual liquors, from fourpence to sixpence each the extent of their usual expense; conversation and a song their amusement, gaming generally prohibited; and a freedom to come and go at their pleasure was always considered essential to the constitution of the Society.

From a description of the ritual ceremonies of the Cape Club which are in the extant records of that organization, the admission of members was a "solemn" affair. According to this account, incoming members were initiated in the following manner:

The Novice, having made his appearance in Cape Hall, was led up to the Sovereign by the two Knights upon whose recommendation he had been balloted for and admitted, and, having made his obeisance, was made to grasp the large Poker with his left hand, and laying his right hand on his left breast the oath or obligation was administered to him by the Sovereign (the Knights present all standing uncovered) in the following words:

"I swear devoutly by this light
To be a true and Faithful Knight,
With all my might, both day and night,
So help me Poker!!"

Having then reverently kissed the large Poker, the Sovereign raising the lesser Poker with both his royal fists proceeds to


bid, page 157, quoted from the Cape Club records.
the novice by inflicting (or at least aiming) three several blows at his forehead, pronouncing at each blow, audibly, forcibly, and in their order, one of the initial letters of the motto of the Club — C. F. D., explaining their import to be Concordia Fratrum Decus, or, as interpreted by the Knights —

Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well
Together, such as brethren are
In unity to dwell.

The new Knight was then called upon to recount some adventure or "scrape" which had befallen him; from some leading incident in which a title was conferred on him, by which he continued ever after to be designated in the Club.

After being sworn in, each new member was given an elaborate Diploma, about which he was not entitled to the privileges of the Club. The diploma, printed on white satin, presents, in the upper part, between two cupids, escutcheon displaying two pokers crossed, one bearing the cap of the sovereign, together with a wreath, exhibiting the motto of the Order, Concordia Fratrum Decus." Below is a wine-flagon, the emblem of vivacity and friendship. The printed form reads thus:

Be it known to all men,—— That We, Sir ______, the Super-Eminent Sovereign of the Most Capital Knighthood of the Cape, having nothing more sincerely at heart than the glory and honour of this most noble Order, and the happiness and prosperity of the Knight Companions, and being desirous of extending the benign and social influence of the Order to every region under the Cope of Heaven; being likewise well informed and fully satisfied with the abilities and qualifications of ______, Esq., with the advice and concurrence of our Council, We do create, admit, and receive him a Knight Companion of this most social Order, by the title of Sir ______, and of C. F. D. hereby giving and granting to him all the powers, privileges, and pre-eminences that do or may belong to this most social Order, and We give command to our Recorder to register this our patent in the Records of the Order. In testimony whereof, We have subscribed these presents at our Cape-hall, this _____ day of ______ in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and _______.

_______ Sovereign.

_______ Recorder.

One of the peculiar circumstances of the Cape Club which reminds one of the Poker Club was the part played in their initiation ceremony, and on the Diploma which was awarded to each member, by the two pokers. The similarities of the two organizations, the adoption of the household poker as a symbol by both, and the fact that they were contemporaneous, has led to considerable confusion of their traditions. In the following account, although the author thinks he is referring to the Poker Club, it is obvious, to me at any rate, that he is really offering his reader an account of the Cape Club, and he may, inadvertently, be giving us the explanation as to how the Cape Club came to adopt the poker symbol:-

James Nasmyth... gives a different account of the origin of the name (of the Poker Club). He says that the Club was called "The Poker," "because the first chairman, immediately on his election, in a spirit of drollery laid hold of the poker at the fire-place, and adopted it as his insignia of office. He made a humorous address from the chair, or "the throne," as he called it, with sceptre-poker in hand; and the Club was there-upon styled by acclamation "The Poker Club." "I have seen," he adds, "my father's diploma of membership. It was tastefully drawn on parchment, with the poker duly emblazoned on it as the regalia of the Club."

thing that gives away Nasmyth's story is the mention of his father's Club Diploma. The Poker Club did not issue Diplomas, although it has frequently been credited with doing so. This mistaken idea seems to have arisen from the simple fact that crossed pokers appeared on the Cape Club Diplomas. But, as we have seen, the inscription on the Cape Club Diploma gives no doubt that the organization which issued it was a far cry from the Poker Club.

The Scot., Thursday, September 6, 1885, "Old Edinburgh and its Clubs."

Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, page 372, says, regarding the Poker Club that "the parchment diploma (had) a poker emblazoned as the society's symbol." In the Catalogue of the Old Glasgow Exhibition of 1894, we find listed "the Mace of the 'Poker Club.'" (page 308, item No.
In the field of literature, the Cape Club is noteworthy for the reason that one of its members was the poet Robert Fergusson. The rules of the organization required that members were to take assumed names, and Fergusson, who was admitted on 10th October, 1772, took the name of "Precentor". Fergusson, as might be expected, exercised his poetic talents for the benefit of the Knights of the Cape. One of his efforts of this kind of occasional verse was a song which reads as follows:

*Cape Song*

(Tune - "How happy a state does the Miller possess.")

How happy a state does the Cape Knight possess,
With sixpence he'll purchase a crown's worth of bliss,
O'er a foaming green stoup, he depends for some sport;
From a liquid that never can do a man hurt.

What though in Capehall he should gossified spew,
From peaking with porter, no thirst can ensue.
Not so my dear knight, fares the ignorant ass
Who drinks all the evening at burning molass.

Now in the Cape Closet a table's preparing,
With Welsh rabbits garnish'd by good Glasgow herring.
On what caller tippery shall be quaff'd?
And of the Thames water o a terrible draught.

In freedoms gay frolick, we shorten the night
With humorous pitching by songs of delight.
Then who would not rather in Capehall get drunk,
For sixpence, than give half a crown to a punk?

(Note) - Don't shew this to the knights as I would wish to
Surprise them with it.

Yours,

(signed) R. Fergusson.

1881). The huge poker which this entry refers to has since been correctly labeled as belonging to the Glasgow Cape Club. (See page 553, below.)


From a manuscript (Laing II, 354), in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.
There is also in existence a poetic history of the Cape Club in three
books which bears the title of the Capeiad. Bound with this volume are
scores of verses in Fergusson’s handwriting, though it is not known if
he was the author of the larger work.

When the young poet was ill and in financial difficulties, shortly
before his early and tragic death, the members of the Cape Club behaved
creditably toward him, as the following entry in their records bears
witness:

At the Eighteenth Grand Festival, 2nd July 1774.

In James Mann’s in Craig’s Close on Saturday. — It was unanimous¬
ly agreed by the Grand Cape that the remainder of the Fines of the
Absentees from the meeting after paying what Extraordinary charges
may attend the Game, shall be applied for the benefit and assistance
of a young gentleman a member of the Cape, who has been a
considerable time past in distress, and the gentlemen present in
the Grand Cape made a contribution themselves for the same purpose.

As for the subsequent activities of the Cape Club, it continued
active until well past the end of the century. By 1799, it had created
Knights, and, according to Daniel Wilson, “Provincial Cape Clubs,
having their authority and Diplomas from the parent body, were successively
used in Glasgow, Manchester, and London, and in Charleston, South
Carolina, each of which was formally established in virtue of a royal
commission granted by the Sovereign of the Cape. The American off-shoot
of this old Edinburgh fraternity is said to be still flourishing in the
Southern States.”

of Edinburgh Library.


The last meeting was on 29th March 1841, at which time it was decided
to hand over the Club records to the Society of Antiquaries, who, in
return placed them in the National Library of Scotland. (Cockburn: Old
Edinburgh Clubs, page 163.)

Another convivial association which is worthy of treatment in this chapter is that of the Crochallan Fencibles. This club of Edinburgh wits has achieved an immortality which it could never have pretended to had it not been for the fact that Robert Burns was among its members. Like his brother poet Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns has made this rather ordinary convivial society a noteworthy literary monument, and the two clubs which they thus brought to distinction have a place in any work which pretends to discuss eighteenth-century Scottish literary societies.

Although the Crochallan Fencibles Club has been described a number of times, the best account is probably that contained in Kerr's *Life of William Smellie*. Kerr, who undoubtedly had first-hand information from Smellie's son Alexander Smellie, who, with his father, was an active member of the organization, describes the Club as follows:

The spelling of this Club's title is uncertain. Harry Cockburn, who is something of an authority on these matters, gives it "Chrochallan". (Cockburn: "Old Edinburgh Clubs," (from the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 5, page 198.) Kerr, however, in his *Life of Smellie*, page 254 f., Vol. 2, spells it "Crochallan". I have chosen Kerr’s spelling because it is the one which has been most widely adopted.


Mr. Smellie was a member of the Crochallan Fencibles, a convivial club which used to meet in a tavern in Edinburgh, and which consisted of a considerable number of literary gentlemen. The club assumed the name of Crochallans, from the burden of a Gaelic song with which the landlord used sometimes to entertain the members, who chose to name their association Fencibles, because several military volunteer corps in Edinburgh bore that appellation. In this club, most of the members bore some pretended military rank or title, as colonel, major, captain, etc. Mr. Smellie was recorder, and kept a regular journal of their proceedings, in which all new members, the elevation of any of the members to the fancied dignities of the club, all bets which took place during the meetings, and all fines or punishments for imaginary delinquencies, were regularly recorded in an ironical style of assumed consequence and decorum. He was besides invested in the dignified office of hangman to the corps, in the exercise of which it was his duty to execute rigid ironical justice upon all delinquents, which he is said to have performed with much humorous gravity. On the introduction of new members into this club, it was customary to treat them at first with much apparent rudeness, as a species of initiation, or trial of their tempers and humour; and they usually got a friendly hint on this subject, that they might be aware of what was probably to happen. Mr. Smellie was frequently appointed to drill the recruits in this way.

According to Harry Cockburn, the Crochallan Fencibles Club was organized about 1778. The proprietor of the tavern in which the Club met, whose singing gave the organization its name, was Daniel Douglas. The records of which Kerr speaks, in the passage quoted above, have disappeared, but although no list of members exists, it is possible to compile a representative one from the many accounts of the Club.

"Dawney Douglas knew a sweet old Gaelic song, called "Cro Chalien," or Colin's cattle, which he was wont to sing to his customers..." (Grant: Old and New Edinburgh, Vol. 255; for the same story see Rogers: Social Life in Scotland, Vol. 2, page 583; Chambers: Works of Burns, Vol. 2, page 41; and Angellier: Life of Burns, part 2, page 283.)

Cockburn: Old Edinburgh Clubs, page 165.

In compiling this list I have made use of the ten sources indicated below. The numbers opposite each members name refers to the works in which his membership in the Crochallan Fencibles is affirmed.

Sources 1 to 4 are quoted in a similar list which appears in Cockburn.
It was in 1787 that Robert Burns was introduced into the Crochallan Fencibles. An idea of the activities of the Club at the time may be obtained in the following description of its meetings:

"Old Edinburgh Clubs," (from the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 5, page 164-185. See also Cockburn's "Taverns and Clubs of Old Edinburgh," from the Scots Magazine, December 1835, page 220, which, while it does not give a list in the form in which it appears in his other work, contains all the names which Cockburn knew of at the time he wrote.)

8. "A Visit to Mr. Smellie's Printing-Office, etc."

List of Members of the Crochallan Fencibles Club:

Edward Bruce, Writer to the Signet. 4, 8.
Robert Cleghorn of Soughton Mills. 1, 6.
( ? ) Cruikshank. 10.
Alexander Cunningham, Writer. 1, 6.
William Dallas, Writer to the Signet. 4, 8.
William Dunbar, Writer to the Signet. 3, 5, 6.
John Duncas, Writer to the Signet. 4, 8.
Thomas Elder, Esq. 9.
Hon. Henry Erskine. 2, 7, 8.
Lord Gillies. 2, 8.
Hon. Alexander Gordon, Advocate. 3.
Captain Matthew Henderson. 3.
Charles Hay, (Lord Newton). 2, 3, 6, 8.
William Nicol. 10.
Alexander Smellie. 4, 8.
Dr. Gilbert Stuart. 2.
Alexander Wight. 4, 8.
Williamson of Cardrona. 4, 8.

1. There is contradictory evidence as to the person who introduced Burns to the Crochallan. (This note is continued on the next page.)

2. "A Visit to Mr. Smellie's Printing-Office, Foot of the Anchor Close," (taken from a Periodical Publication, March 1845.) I have only seen this article in pamphlet form.
When any member of this corps committed a fault, he was uniformly tried by a court martial, when pleadings were made for and against the panel by the late Honourable Henry Erskine; the celebrated lawyer, Alexander Wight, Esquire; the late Charles Hay, Esquire, afterwards Lord Newton; and an eminent lawyer, Adam Gillies, Esquire, afterwards Lord Gillies, and lately deceased. The late John Dundas, Esquire, W. S., was always the agent for the panel, and the late Edward Bruce, Esquire, W. S., agent for the prosecution. This corps owed its origin to the late Mr. William Smellie, author of the Philosophy of Natural History, and translator of Buffon, who resided in the summer season at some distance from Edinburgh, and who occasionally dined in this tavern. To this corps in 1787 Burns, when in Edinburgh superintending the printing of his Poems, was introduced. As it was customary to handle a new member rather roughly, one of the corps was pitted against Burns in a contest of wit and irony; and Burns said he had never been so "abominably thrashed in all his life;" at the same time he bore it with perfect good humour, and he added that he had never been so delighted at any convivial meeting.

Burns has written of the Club in several of his poems, notably in his description of two of its members, William Smellie, and William Dunbar. His description of Smellie is touched with satire:

Shrewd Willie Smellie to Crochallan came; The old cock'd hat, the gray surcoat, the same, His bristling beard just rising in its might, 'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night, His uncom'd grizzle locks, wild staring, thatch'd A head for thought profound and clear, unmatch'd; Yet tho' his caustic wit was biting rude, His heart was warm, benevolent and good.

Kerr: William Smellie, Vol. 2, page 259, has claimed that Smellie did the deed. Ferguson: Life of Erskine, page 257, however, states that it was Henry Erskine who presented Burns to the Club. Ferguson, whether he is right or not, has the honour of having preserved the tradition of another notable visitor to the corps. He mentions, (Ibid), that Signor Vincent Lunardi, Secretary to the Neapolitan Embassy, and celebrated balloonist, visited the Chrochallans in October, 1785 just after he had made a successful flight in Scotland.

1. The member who administered this "thrashing" was Smellie. (See Kerr: William Smellie, Vol. 2, page 259.)

Burns's poetic portrait of William Dunbar is a little more lively:

As I can by Crochallan,
I cam'nil keekit ben;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Was sittin' at you boord-en',
Sittin' at you boord-en',
And amang gude companie;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Your welcome hame to me.

There are a number of anecdotes which have been handed down regarding the antics of the members of the Crochallan Corps, but only one of them is worth repeating. The story goes as follows:

A comical gentleman, one of the members of the corps, the late Laird of Cardrona, got rather tipsy one evening after a severe field day. When he came to the top of the Anchor Close, it occurred to him, that it was necessary that he should take possession of the castle. He accordingly set off for this purpose. When he got the length of the Castle Gate, he demanded immediate possession of the garrison, to which he said he was perfectly entitled. The sentinel, for a considerable time, laughed at him; he, however, became so extremely clamorous in his peremptory demand, that the sentinel found it necessary to apprise the Commanding-Officer of the circumstance, who came down to inquire into the meaning of such impertinent conduct. He at once recognised his friend Cardrona, whom he had left at the festive board of the Crochallan Corps only a few hours before this occurrence. Accordingly, humouring him in his conceit, he said, "certainly you have every right to the command of this garrison:" and "if you please I shall conduct you to your proper apartment." He accordingly conveyed him to a bed-room in his house. Cardrona took formal possession of the garrison, and immediately afterwards went to bed. His feelings were quite indescribable when he looked out of his bed-room window next morning and found himself surrounded with soldiers and great guns. Sometime afterwards this story came to the ears of the Crochallans; and Cardrona said he was never afterwards left the life of a dog, so much did they tease and harass him on this strange adventure.

2. The other yarns are exceedingly feeble, but the interested reader will discover them in Kerr: William Smellie, Vol. 2, page 257 f.
3. "A Visit to Mr. Smellie's Printing-Office, etc." (See my bibliography of pamphlets.)
"The Chrochallan Fencible Club seems to have had a short but a merry life. In the Reminiscences of the Anchor Close, there is given a copy of the circular issued for the last meeting":–

Headquarters, Queen Mary's Council Chamber, Anchor Close, 10th December, 1795.

A meeting of the Corps of the Chrochallan Fencibles is appointed to be held on Sunday, 13th current. – Sacred to the memory of the late Mustermaster General, Major, and Paymaster.

The Cape Club and the Chrochallan Fencibles, despite the interest aroused by their literary associations and the vulgar appeal of their rather flamboyant dispositions, are not the most important, nor even the most typical of the convivial associations which were joined by Scottish men of letters. And, of course, this is as it should be, for despite their genius, we must recognise that neither Fergusson or Burns were fully accepted into the select circle of the Edinburgh literati.

In a much quieter way, therefore, the Oyster Club of Edinburgh presents a more representative picture of the Scottish philosophers at their ease.

The Oyster Club was founded, about 1778, by Adam Smith, "Black the chemist, and Hutton the geologist." It was a weekly dining club which met "at two o'clock in a tavern in the Grassmarket." Among the constant attenders were Henry Mackenzie, Dugald Stewart, Professor John Playfair, Sir James Hall the geologist; Robert Adam, architect; Adam's brother-in-law, John Clerk of Eldin, inventor of the new system of naval tactics; and


Lord Daer." "Dr. Swediaur, the Paris physician, who spent some time in Edinburgh in 1784 making researches along with Cullen," mentions that McGowan, the antiquary and naturalist and friend and correspondent of Shenstone, Pennant, and Bishop Percy, was also a member. We also know, from the diary of Samuel Rogers, that Bogle, "Laird of Baldowie" was a member. Hugh Blair may have been a member as well, though this is by no means certain. Samuel Rogers also mentions a gentleman by the name of Macaulay as being present at the meeting of the Oyster Club which he attended, but this gentleman has not been identified.

According to Playfair, one of the Club members, "the chief delight of the Club was to listen to the conversation of its three founders (i.e. Smith, Black, and Hutton). As all the three possessed great talents, enlarged views, and extensive information, without any of the stateliness and formality which men of letters think it sometimes necessary to affect, as they were all three easily amused, and as the sincerity of their friendship had never been darkened by the least shade of envy, it would be hard to find an example where everything favourable to good society was more perfectly united, and every thing adverse more entirely excluded." The conversation of the club was often, as was to be expected from its composition,

---

1. Rae: _Adam Smith_, page 334, (this note applies to all the quotes which precede it in the paragraph.)
2. _Ibid._
3. _Ibid._
scientific, but Professor Playfair says it was always free, and never didactic or disputatious, and that 'as the club was much the resort of the strangers who visited Edinburgh from any objects connected with art or with science, it derived from them an extraordinary degree of vividity and interest'.

Adam Smith was also a member of a "Sunday Club" which met for Sunday suppers. This Club has been made the scene for an anecdote which forcibly illustrates the eighteenth-century convention of maintaining a gentlemanly and philosophic decorum in dying:

It is hard to find anything, even in Hume's almost infantine simplicity, more artless and touching than Adam Smith's taking leave of his friends of the Sunday Club when dying,—"I believe (he said) we must adjourn this meeting to another place." It is Dr. Hutton who records the last words of his friend.

Toward the close of the century, young Walter Scott appears as a member of several clubs to which his name has lent a literary interest. One of these clubs, the Mountain, appears to have been little more than a casual meeting of young lawyers who had no other employment. The Mountain is of particular interest as it formed the nucleus of a class in which Walter Scott, John Gibson Lockhart, William Clerk, William Erskine, and Thomas Thomson ardently studied "the popular Petites Lettres of Germany."

3. Compare the story of Hume's dying as told by Burton: Life of Hume, Vol. 2; Mossner: The Forgotten Hume, or any of his biographers.
Scott was also an active member of a dining club which has been described in detail by Lockhart. This association "originated in a ride to Panyculik, the seat of the head of Mr. Clerk's family.... This was called, by way of excellence, The Club...." Lockhart's description of it reads as follows:

The members of The Club used to meet on Friday evenings in a room in Carrubber's Close, from which some of them usually adjourned to sup at an oyster tavern in the same neighbourhood. In after life, those of them who chanced to be in Edinburgh dined together twice every year, at the close of the winter and summer sessions of the Law Courts; and during thirty years, Sir Walter was very rarely absent on these occasions. It was also a rule, that when any member received an appointment or promotion, he should give a dinner to his old associates; and they had accordingly two such dinners from him - one when he became Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and another when he was named Clerk of Session. The original members were, in number, nineteen - viz. Sir Walter Scott, Mr. William Clerk, Sir A. Ferguson, Mr. James Edmonstone, Mr. George Abercromby (Lord Abercromby), Mr. D. Boyle (now Lord Justice-Clerk), Mr. James Glassford (Advocate), Mr. James Ferguson (Clerk of Session), Mr. David Monypenny (Lord Pitmilly), Mr. Robert Davidson (Professor of Law at Glasgow), Sir William Rae, Bart., Sir Patrick Murray, Bart., David Douglas (Lord Reston), Mr. Murray of Simprin, Mr. Monteith of Closeburn, Mr. Archibald Miller (son of Professor Miller), Baron Reden, a Hanoverian; the Honourable Thomas Douglas, afterwards Earl of Selkirk, - and John Irving.

The Club, as Lockhart relates in another place in his biography of Scott, was involved in an incident which makes a delightful anecdote. Scott, who was pleading before the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, in employment which Lockhart describes as "the most important business in which any solicitor had as yet employed him," had, during his trial, the unwelcome support of the members of his Club who had "mustered strong in the gallery." The story continues as follows:

---

Ibid., Vol. 1, page 207, note.
Ibid., Vol. 1, page 201.
He began in a low voice, but by degrees gathered more confidence; and when it became necessary for him to analyse the evidence touching a certain penny-wedding, repeated some very coarse specimens of his client’s alleged conversation, in a tone so bold and free, that he was called to order with great austerity by one of the leading members of the Venerable Court. This seemed to confuse him not a little; so when, by and by, he had to recite a stanza of one of M’Haught’s convivial ditties, he breathed it out in a faint and hesitating style; whereupon, thinking he needed encouragement the allies in the gallery astounded the Assembly by cordial shouts of hear! hear! - encore! encore! They were immediately turned out, and Scott got through the rest of his harangue very little to his own satisfaction.

During the period that the clubs I have just discussed were active, the city of Glasgow was also the scene of many similar organisations. While it is true that the Edinburgh literati outnumbered those of Glasgow, and, as a consequence, their organisations were more varied, more expansive, and more successful, the burghers and merchants of Glasgow, when their fewer numbers are considered, undoubtedly were responsible for forming more convivial, and convivial-literary, societies than those of the metropolis. These Glasgow clubs, in fact, have been made the subject of a very interesting volume of Scottish social history in John Strang’s Glasgow and its Clubs, and the reader is referred to that work for detailed information of Glasgow clubs and their activities.

One of the first Glasgow clubs which Strang describes is the Hodge Podge Club. The Hodge Podge Club, which has had a long and successful history, actually began as a literary society "for the purpose of public speaking, or, at least, in political and literary composition; it being the duty of each member, in rotation, to prepare a question for discussion."

For this purpose, the Club met at seven o'clock once each fortnight at Bruikshanks tavern. "The names of the originators of this afterwards famous brotherhood were James Luke, James Simson, Robert Maltman, Peter Blackburn, Dr. Thomas Hamilton, and Dr. Moore." Dr. Moore, the author of *Zeluco*, was one of the most active members of the Club, and Strang has included with his account of the Club a long poem of twenty-seven four-line stanzas which he surmises was written by Moore "before 1766", but "that additions were subsequently made to it." Strang's book also contains a list of members of the Hodge Podgers.

A well-known Glasgow club of considerable literary interest was that which was formed about Robert Simson when he was Professor of Mathematics at the University of Glasgow. Simson's Club has received considerable attention, and there are some excellent and detailed accounts of it.

The Club met once a week, on a Friday, in a tavern near the college. The first part of the evening was employed in playing the game of whist," of which Simson was particularly fond. "The rest of the evening was spent

---

1. Strang: *Glasgow and its Clubs*, page 44.
2. Ibid.

in cheerful conversation, and as (Simson) had some taste for music, he did not scruple to amuse his party with a song; and it is said that he was rather fond of singing some Greek odes, to which modern music had been adapted."

The best account of the Club, because it comes first-hand, is from the pen of Alexander Carlyle. Carlyle, who was admitted a member of the Club about 1743, while he was still a student at the University, described the Club as follows:

His club at that time consisted chiefly of Hercules Lindsay, Teacher of Law, who was talkative and assuming; of James Moor, Professor of Greek on the death of Mr. Dunlop, a very lively and witty man, and a famous Grecian, but a more famous punster; Mr. Dick, Professor of Natural Philosophy, a very worthy man, and of an agreeable temper; and Mr. James Purdie, the rector of the grammar-school, who had not much to recommend him but his being adept in grammar. Having been asked to see a famous comet that appeared this winter or the following, through Professor Dick's telescope, which was the best in the College at that time, when Mr. Purdie retired from taking his view of it, he turned to Mr. Simson, and said, "Mr. Robert, I believe it is hic or haec cometa, a comet." To settle the gender of the Latin was all he thought of this great and uncommon phenomenon of nature.

Mr. Simson's most constant attendant, however, and greatest favourite, was his own scholar Mr. Mathew Stewart, afterwards Professor of Mathematics in the College of Edinburgh, much celebrated for his profound knowledge in that science....

With this club, and an accidental stranger at times, the great Mr. Robert Simson relaxed his mind every evening from the severe studies of the day; for though there was properly but one club night in the week, yet, as he never failed to be there, some one or two commonly attended him, or at least one of the two minions whom he could command at any time, as he paid their reckoning.

- Trail: Life of Simson, page 76.

- Carlyle: Autobiography, pages 89 to 91.
"A few years after the Rebellion of Forty-Five," Robert Simson founded another club in which he met with other members of the organization I have just described on Saturday afternoons to dine at John Sharpe's Inn in Anderston, a small village about a mile from Glasgow. This Club continued to meet until Simson's death in 1763.

One of the first provincial Cape Clubs to be formed by Charter from the parent organization in Edinburgh was the Glasgow Cape Club. Not a great deal is known about the Glasgow organization, which was formed in 1771, but Strang, who gives a copy of the Club's Diploma, tells that the Glasgow club met in Mrs. Schreid's Tavern, 2nd Flat, Buchanan Court, Trongate, and was patronized by "all the top people of 1785-84." Richard Allan, Junior, of Bardowie was, according to Strang, a leading member of this fraternity. The Club motto was "Concordia Fratrum decus" (the same as the Edinburgh Cape Club's), and the following is a copy of the Diploma, which may be compared with interest to the original issued by the Edinburgh Cape Club:

Be it known to all men, that we, Sir __________, the Super Eminent Sovereign of the Most Capital Knighthood of the Cape, Having nothing more sincerely at heart, than the Glory and Honour of this most Noble Order, and the happiness and prosperity of the Knights Companions; and Being desirous of extending the Benign and Social influence of the Order, to every Region under the Cape of Heaven; Being likewise well informed, and fully Satisfied with the Abilities and Qualifications of __________ Esqr., with the advice and Concurrence of our Council, we do Create, Admit and Receive him a Knight Companion of this Most Social Order, by the Title of Sir __________ and C. F. D. Hereby giving and granting unto him, all the Powers, Privileges and Preaminences, That do or may belong to this Host

2. See page 533, above.
Social Order; and we Give Command to our Recorder, to Register this our Patent, in the Records of the Order. In Testimony Whereof, We have Subscribed these Presents at Glasgow Cape Hall, this ______ day of ______ in the Year of our Lord One thousand Eight Hundred and ______. Recorder. _________.

For many years the giant poker which the Sovereign of the Cape used as a sceptre was on exhibit in the Hunterian Museum in the College of Glasgow incorrectly labeled as belonging to the "Poker Club". The local antiquarians of Glasgow, however, discovered this error, and have made, in addition, a number of curious speculations as to the origin of the Club's name. David Murray, for example, draws attention to the fact that Cap was a name for strong ale. The attendants of the Hunterian Museum, following Murray's suggestion, have suggested that the "Cape" comes from this "Cap", or from the "Cap" of foam on a tankard of ale. It is interesting, but scarcely enlightening, to compare these suggestions with the popularly accepted story of the origin of the name of the Edinburgh Cape Club.

The Glasgow Cape Club, like the one in Edinburgh, supported the military efforts of Scotland. From the Glasgow Mercury for 6th January, 1773, we learn that the Glasgow Cape had subscribed 100 pounds for raising a Regiment for the American War. On the 23rd of the same month,

---

1. See the entry in the Catalogue of the Old Glasgow Exhibition of 1834, page 519, item # 1881, "Mace, of the 'Poker Club', Lent by the University of Glasgow (Hunterian Museum)." This poker is much larger than those which were used by the Edinburgh Cape Club, which may be seen, with other Cape Club regalia, at the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh.

2. David Murray's Notebooks, in manuscript in the Univ. of Glasgow Library, (Vol. II, page 570.)

3. See page 534, above.

4. See also David Murray's Notebooks, MS. in the Univ. of Glasgow, Vol. II, page 570.
"the Sovereign of the Cape, supported by two other members," took part in a patriotic procession in honour of the Glasgow Volunteers.

Among the many clubs which John Strang describes in his book, three are worthy of notice on literary grounds. The first of these clubs, My Lord Ross's Club, was established about 1750. The title of the Club was not a serious one, but was taken from the name of the landlord of the tavern in which they met. The members gathered every evening at six o'clock, and, amidst their conviviality, found time, as Strang tells us, for literary conversation:

The members of My Lord Ross's Club flew at higher game; for they ever seasoned their hours of innocent revelry with discussions on literature or the fine arts. Amid the hopes and fears excited by the closing events of the American War, they could enter upon a criticism of the works of Hume or Ramsay. They knew the merits of Handel, Raphael, and Roubiliac, as well as the burgesses and boatmen knew those of either Dougal Graham or Bell Geordie; and could have pointed out each original picture of Foulis's exhibition in the College-court, on a King's birthday, as easily as the president of the then undreamed of, and since forgotten, Dilettanti Society could once select the sheep from the goats in the Hunterian Museum.

Among the members of the Accidental Club, which met "during the latter years" of the eighteenth century, and "whose evening meetings were characterized by constant sallics of wit, and by not a few sparks of poetical sarcasm", was a schoolmaster named John Taylor. Taylor, a

3. Ibid, page 111.
4. Ibid, page 221.
5. Ibid, page 221.
port of club poet, entered into a fantastic poetic contest with a "Rev. Mr. Gillies", for the leaden crown of wit, the honour to be bestowed for the best poem on "Nonsense". Strang's description of this competition was typical of the tenor of his amiable work:-

The subject chosen, was a poem addressed to "Nonsense," in which the indispensable condition was, that no line should contain an intelligible idea. A leaden crown was the prize proposed to the victor, and to be decided by Dr. Robert Hamilton, Professor of Anatomy. On giving judgment on the efforts of the two who had striven for the prize, the learned Professor said, that "it would have been difficult for him to determine the case, were it a mere question of ability; but, on comparing the poems, it seemed to him that there was something like an idea in one of Dr. Gillies's lines, but that Mr. Taylor's verses, were totally free of any such imputation." Mr. Taylor, of course, gained the crown.*

Another club of the same period, and of a similar nature, has one claim to literary fame in a humorous account written by one of its members of an incident which involved the transfer of French prisoners of war from Greenoch to Glasgow. The club was the Crog Club, and the title of the piece of "literature" which brings it to our notice was The Battle of Marscubs.

The Battle, as printed by Strang, is a long-winded affair of little merit, though he claims that it was reprinted a number of times, and was even plagiarized. Neither the name of the member responsible for the essay, nor of any of the other members of this Club are known. According

---

*Strang: Glasgow and its Clubs, page 223.

"Considerable extracts of this singular poem were printed in Vol. xv of Chambers' Journal." (Strang: Glasgow and its Clubs, page 223.)

Strang included the essay as an Appendix to his work. "This paper was originally printed in the Englishman's Magazine, published in London in 1831. It was afterwards transferred, without the author's knowledge, full of errors, to a collection of 'Original and Selected Papers,' published in four volumes at Glasgow. It again appeared in
Strang, the Club was dissolved when the proprietress of the tavern in which they met, a widow, remarried. Perhaps this is as useful an illustration as any to demonstrate the dependence of these clubs on the taverns in which they met.

I shall close this chapter with another fearsome tale, but this one in real earnest, of the activities of a Hell-Fire Club which was active in Glasgow in the year 1795. The Tron Church of Glasgow was destroyed by fire on the 15th February, 1795. At that time the Session-House was the meeting place of the Presbytery of Glasgow; but was also used for a very different purpose — that of being a guardhouse of the city night-guard, a body composed of the burgesses who took it by rotation. When the watch left the Session-House at three o'clock the morning of the 15th February all was safe; but by seven o'clock the Session-House and the church had been totally destroyed. This sacrilegious conflagration was caused, as the following story reveals, by the diabolical actions of the members of a Hell-Fire Club:—

The guard being out going their rounds, had left a fire as usual in the Session-House, without any one to take care of the premises, when some members of a society, who were the disciples of Thomas Paine, and who designated themselves the "Hell-Fire Club", being on their way home from the club, and excited with liquor, entered

The Pickwick Papers," under the editorship of Dickens, for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Macrone, bookseller; and, in the Appendix to this volume, it now appears with the last corrections of the writer." (Strang: Glasgow and its Clubs, page 359, note.)

MacGregor: History of Glasgow, page 373 f.

Glasgow, Past and Present, Vol. I, page 209. The author of the account which I have quoted from this work, which does not indicate the authors of its various sections clearly, is said by MacGregor: History of Glasgow, page 373, to have been Dr. Matthias Hamilton. Though the story sounds plausible enough, I cannot vouch for its authenticity.
the Session-House in a frolic. While warming themselves at the fire, and indulging in jokes against one another as to their individual capacity to resist heat with reference to an anticipated residence in the headquarters of the Club, they placed what inflammable materials were at hand on the fire to increase it; and ultimately having, in bravado, wrenched off and placed some of the timbers of the Session-House on the ignited mass, they could no longer endure the heat, and fled in dismay from the house which contained much dry wood, as it was seated like a church. It was soon a mass of fire, and the flames caught the church, which was totally destroyed in a terrific conflagration, so that on the north side of the Trongate, between it and Bell Street, where Antigue Place in Nelson Street now is, a quantity of hay in stack was with difficulty saved from the embers, which were wafted through the air from the blazing church.

The parties thus implicated were so astounded at their own folly and wickedness, and so afraid of the consequences, as to abscond and go abroad to different places, where, as was said, most, if not all of them, died miserably, which might have been predicted by any one who was aware of their vicious habits.

Prior to the burning of the church a party of said Club went to one of the churchyards at midnight, and with a trumpet, etc., endeavoured to turn into ridicule the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

Perhaps it is not inappropriate that this account of Scotland and its clubs, both of fact and of fiction, should close with the measure notes of a trumpet in a churchyard at midnight. I fear that by this time he reader will have lost either his sympathy or his patience, and perhaps both. But at this time of judgment, whether it be real or in jest, I hope that my simple faith in my subject will, in the final accounting, 'erweigh my many sins, and that the reader will find that he has just rough charity left to forgive me.

"About forty years ago it was stated by a citizen that he had been a member of the Hell-Fire Club, and though, as he affirmed, not present at the burning of the session-house, yet detailed with proximity the whole transaction; also, that one of the party, Hugh Adamson, who went to the churchyard with a trumpet, etc., was hanged at the Cross on 5th of June, 1805. (Adamson had been sentenced to death for having forged and uttered notes of the Ship Bank.)" (Glasgow. Past and Present, Vol. 1, page 283, note.)
CHAPTER TEN.

CONCLUSION.

The three aspects of the Age of Improvement which I set down at the beginning of my thesis— the resolution of the Scots of the eighteenth century to adopt English examples, to “improve” their country, and to perform both tasks by means of clubs and societies— have been an implicit theme which has pervaded the whole of my discourse. At this point, it will be well to record the effect upon Scotland of this national effort which I have called “the movement for national improvement.”

The rapidity of Scotland’s rise from poverty to riches, both materially and intellectually, has been described many times. These
accounts, however, have invariably overlooked one important aspect of Scotland's development during the early part of the eighteenth century. Few authors have realized that the task of civilizing the Highlands was an important factor in the creation of a desire for national improvement. And it was this desire, as it became manifest in the movement for national improvement, which gave the Age of Improvement its characteristic features.

As those who are familiar with Arnold J. Toynbee's *Study of History* will readily appreciate, the stimulus of the frontier situation plays a considerable part in exciting and liberating national energies. I have already quoted Lecky's statement that the "union between the Highlands and Lowlands was perhaps an even greater influence on Scottish national life and character than the union of Scotland and England." At this point a more detailed account of this important aspect of Scottish national development will be useful. For this purpose I have chosen the following passage from Aylot's *The Making of Scotland*:

---

1. See Chapter 2, page 12, above.
2. See Chapter 5, page 345, above.
3. Aylot: *The Making of Scotland*, pages 501 - 502. I have learned, to my discomfort, that there is a certain sentimental attachment prevalent among present day Scots which provokes them to an acute resentment at any suggestion that the Highlanders were barbarians at least until the Rebellion of 1745. Speaking as an outsider, I cannot persuade myself that such an attitude, as much as I sympathise with it, can in any way alter the plain facts which inescapably suggest that in their social organization, laws, and traditions, the Highlanders were, in the terminology of the Sociologist, in a state of barbarism. As for the sentiment, at least one Scot has seen some danger in it:

"Sentiment is an excellent thing. It is indeed the salt of the world - the cheap defence of nations. But sentiment may be bad as well as good; and then if the light that is in us be darkness, that darkness is intense! It is a bad sentiment, and not a good one, that can make a man look back with sympathy to the epoch of the Clans. Sentiment - deep and even enthusiastic - may well be felt for those changes in our national history which broke down that epoch, and which brought back the character and the genius of the Highlanders within the advancing influences of our national civilization." (Argyle: *Scotland as it was and as it is*, Vol. 2, page 150.)

---
After the Forty-five, a series of influences began to work in the Highlands, analogous to those which had changed the civilization of the Lowlands centuries before. The task of the Hanoverian Government was in some respects more difficult than that of the descendants of Malcolm Canmore. In the interval, the clan organization had greatly developed, and clan loyalty had assumed the force of an extravagant devotion. The church, which had helped to anglicize the Lowlands, was adverse to the process when at last it reached the Highlands. The translation of the Bible into Gaelic secured the permanence of Gaelic as the language of Highland religion, and trade and commerce were of too little importance to render much assistance to the English tongue. On the other hand, the Jacobite risings had weakened the Highlands, and introduced elements of disunion, and the strongest support of the clan system, the joint ownership of land, had already been destroyed by the feudal laws which ignored its existence, and regarded the chief as the sole proprietor. The clan, as a military unit, ceased to exist when the Highlands were disarmed, and as a unit for administrative purposes, when the heritable jurisdictions which successive Kings of Scotland had deplored as the ruin of the country, were abolished in 1747. A change of civilization, without a racial displacement, has been taking place in the Highlands since the reign of George II. By 1775, it had made such progress that Dr. Johnson thought that there had never been "any change of national manners, so quick, so great, and so general."

The Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, as many authors have observed, mark the end of a period of struggle after which the nation, now fully aroused, could direct the national effort to measures of internal development. Henry Craik, for example, prepares his reader in advance for his account of the momentous changes recorded in his 1

Century of Scots History as follows:-

The generation which follows the Jacobite rebellion thus shows us a Scottish national life, open to outside influence, freely reaching after outside experience, adapting itself to changing conditions, enlarging the bounds of traditional creeds and habits, and striving with much enlightenment to cope with new difficulties. Within its own sphere of influence it was bold, and in some respects almost revolutionary. It soon learned to find - nay, its poverty compelled it to seek - every opportunity for sharing in the larger destinies of the Empire. But at first its work was chiefly new modeling its own domain.

and John Watson, who is familiar to many Scottish readers as the novelist Ian Maclaren, sums up the achievements of the Scot of the eighteenth century as follows:

Mr. Lecky has not over-stated thing when he says "No period in the history of Scotland is more momentous than that between the Revolution and the middle of the eighteenth century, for in no other period did Scotland take so many steps on the path that leads from anarchy to civilization."

It was difficult to find a more inspiring record of progress, than between the year 1700 and the year 1800 in Scotland. At the beginning of the century Glasgow was a dwindling town of about 12,000 inhabitants, with only a few ships, and none able to make a distant voyage. Edinburgh would have about 50,000 people, all confined in the old town. The nobles had piled, either ruined or ruining themselves in London. The country swarmed with beggars who had reasoned, it was said, in evil years the preposterous number of 200,000. Inverness consisted of some 500 thatched houses, and the population of Dundee was considerably under 10,000. The whole revenue of Scotland was only £100,000 pounds, and foreign trade had been killed by the ill-fated Darien expedition. The Highlands were in a state of absolute savagery, the people spending the summertime in raiding, and passing the winter in the most miserable hovels where they subsisted on coarse meal mixed with blood drawn from the veins of their starving cattle. In 1705 in a fife shire town a woman was done to death for witchcraft, with the consent of the minister of the parish. There was neither trade nor industry, nor humanity nor money, neither was there any literature worth the name, secular or theological, when the eighteenth century began. When the century closed Glasgow had become a great seaport, and a dozen new and profitable industries were flourishing in the land. There were roads through the country. Canals had been made, coal pits opened, iron foundries started. Linen and cotton were being spun on a large scale and with ingenious machinery; there were carpets on the floors, good furniture in the rooms, paper on the walls, stage coaches and post chaises on the roads. Banks were directing and stimulating the finance of the country, and the eastern towns were exporting their manufactures in all directions, while Glasgow had established a large trade with both the Indies. A school of brilliant writers in Philosophy, history, Religion and the Drama had earned for Edinburgh the title of the modern Athens, and the Scots Kirk might have claimed to be the most enlightened and broadest in Christendom. Superstition and ignorance wete dying out, broad and liberal views were taking possession of the people, and the nation, emancipated from the
dead hand of the seventeenth century, and from its weary quarrel, had prepared itself for the conquest of the nineteenth.

Mathieson, in his *Awakening of Scotland*, as given us the following summary of this brilliant period:

Meanwhile the strenuous mental cultivation, of which but an inadequate idea can be obtained from these facts, had rewarded its votaries with an abundant harvest. The latter half of the 18th century, which witnessed an immense advance in the material condition of Scotland, was also, as the reader need hardly be reminded, the most brilliant epoch in the history of her literature and science. Nowhere but in France was there so rich and varied efflorescence of genius. The England of that produced no such philosophers as Hume; no such opponent of his scepticism as Campbell; no such historian - to adopt the contemporary verdict - as Hume and Robertson; no such tragic dramatist as Rose; no poet of such European reputation as Macpherson; no such novelist as Smollett; no such biographer as Boswell; no such preacher as Blair; no such economist as Adam Smith; no such geologist as Hutton; no such surgeon as Hunter; no such physician as Cullen; no such chemist as Black; no such engineer as Watt; and it was within this period that

“...When nearly every other description of educated persons were satisfied that the crime of witchcraft had no real existence, the clergy continued to urge the reality of the offence, and insisted on its punishment. In 1702, a witch was hanged at Edinburgh... On the repeal of the statutes against witchcraft, in 1735, many of the Scottish clergy strongly remonstrated. In 1745, the Synod of the Secession Church issued a declaration denouncing the measure as invoking the displeasure of Heaven.” (Rogers: *Scotland Social and Domestic*, page 29.) The result of this was far from desirable. “I think I need scarcely observe to you,” wrote Topham from Edinburgh, “that in spite of this outward show, and the force of superstition, that the Scotch, as a nation, are far from being religious: Belis is the ruling principle. Shocked with the gross absurdities with which their religion is loaded, they pay an obedience to it externally, but treat it with very little ceremony in private.” (Letters from Edinburgh, page 238.)

Mathieson: *Awakening of Scotland*, pages 180 - 205. See also Graham: *Scottish Men of Letters*, page 185. “Of old (the interest in polite letters!) had shown itself in discussions in tavern clubs, and later in the effort of people of rank and fashion to discard Scots provincialisms and acquire an English polish; in the cultivation of literary tastes, which had sprung up all around, and was now bearing excellent fruit in the works of Hume and Robertson and Ferguson.”
Robert Burns, the finest and fullest embodiment of his country's genius, lived and died. Many other names—most of them once familiar to foreign ears—are associated with the literary fame of Scotland in this short-lived culmination of her intellectual life—names, Monboddo, Hailes, Reid, Gerard, Beattie, Adam Ferguson, Wilkie, Watson, Henry, Somerville, Mackenzie, Stewart, and many others.

One feature in this rapid improvement in Scottish literary affairs is certainly its "commercial" interests. I do not wish to overemphasize this characteristic of the eighteenth-century literary product, but it is important. Perhaps the only word of warning I need interject is that the eighteenth-century men of letters did not regard, as some twentieth-century ones do, the consideration of the public's reception of their work as an irrelevant matter. Johnson's dictum that "no man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money" would not have shocked the Edinburgh literati of the eighteenth century one half as much as it would the Bloomsbury set of the twentieth. It is not a far cry from Johnson's blunt remark to William Robertson's typical observation regarding Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. "I have not read the two last chapters," Robertson wrote to Strahan, "but am sorry, from what I have heard of them, that he has taken such a tone in them as will give great offence, and hurt the sale of the book."

In my estimation, though I have nowhere found it as plainly stated, literary efforts of eighteenth-century Scotsmen were largely an export drive, one feature of which was an earnest and highly successful attempt to capture the English, (that is to say the London,) "literary

---


But if no direct statement to this effect has gone before, it is possible to indicate by indirections that it is a possible way of looking at Scottish literary endeavours of the period. The feasibility regarding artistic productions as commodities for export has been stantiated, in the instance of architecture, by Ian Finlay in his Art in Scotland:

(The Scots) remained faithful for more than a hundred years to a make-believe world based on the rules of Roman architecture, finding in it perhaps a sort of escapism to compensate them for the loss of opportunity to develop their own national traditions. Their reward was to create what might almost be termed a "corner" in neo-classicism. It became a Scottish "export" in place of commodities which would have needed capital and much skilled labour as well as time to produce.

If a style of architecture can be "exported", certainly such a "commodity" as literature may be regarded in the same light. It was obviously their interest in the London literary market which tempted Scottish authors to devote so much painstaking care to the task of mastering an English literary style. And, as I have pointed elsewhere, their efforts were highly successful, as William Creech, in his letter to Sir John Sinclair on the progress of Scotland has indicated:

In 1763 - Literary property, or authors acquiring money by their writings, was hardly known in Scotland: David Hume and Dr. Adamson had indeed, a very few years before, sold some of their works; the one, a part of the History of Britain, for 200 pounds; the other the History of Scotland, for 600 pounds; - each 2 vols. in quarto.

See Chapter 5, page 214, and notes.

Finlay: Art in Scotland, page 79.

See Chapter 4, page 168, and note.

In 1783 - The value of literary property was carried higher by the Scots than ever was known among any people. David Hume received 5,000 pounds for the remainder of his History of Britain; and Dr. Robertson, for his second work, received 4,500 pounds. In sermon-writing, the Scots have also excelled; and, although, in 1765, they were reckoned remarkably deficient in this species of composition, yet, in 1783, a minister of Edinburgh, wrote the most admired sermons that ever were published, and obtained the highest price that ever was given for any work of the kind. (N. B. The merit of these sermons obtained for Dr. Blair a pension of 200 pounds per annum.)

Previous to 1783, the Scots had made no very distinguished figure in literature as writers, particularly in the departments of history and belles lettres. Lord Kames had, in the year before, (in 1762), published his Elements of Criticism; Hume and Robertson had made their first essays in the line of History, a short time before, as mentioned above.

In 1783 - The Scots had distinguished themselves in a remarkable manner in many departments of literature; and, within the short period of twenty years Hume, Robertson, Kames, Orme, Dalrymples (Sir David and Sir John), Henry, Lytters (father and son), Watson, Reid, Beattie, Oswald, Ferguson, Smith, Monboddo (Burnet), Gregories (father and son), Black, Duncan, Hunter, Stewart (father and son), Stuart (Dr. Gilbert), Blair, Mackenzie, Campbell, Gerard, Miller, Macpherson, Brydone, Moore, Saellie, Wickle, Gillies, Adam, Sinclair, and many other eminent writers, too numerous to mention, have appeared.

The fact that their primary literary market lay outside Scotland one of two circumstances which, as I shall have occasion to describe recently, conditioned the general temper of the Edinburgh literati. Other circumstance was the intimacy in which they lived with one another, but, significantly enough, without forming a distinct literary circle. The reason for this rather unusual situation has been explained successfully by Henry Cockburn in his memoirs:-

The single upper class that existed included the nobility, the gentry, the Law, the College, the Church, and Medicine - the whole station and learning of the place, and formed an aristocracy which shone undisturbed. This "local aristocracy" is the true key

See chapter 5, page 215 f.

to the understanding of the interest and the peculiarity of that society. It was a club, which recognised members of every description who were respectable and agreeable, especially from learning and rank. Nor were even tradesmen, called merchants, absolutely rejected, provided their trade was adorned by personal or family eminence.

But perhaps the best way of illustrating the singularity of the English literary scene is by comparing it, as has often been done before, to that of London. As a prelude to this comparison, I shall once more to John Watson's admirably written Scot of the Eighteenth Century:


Watson: Scot of the 18th Century, page 55 f. David Hume's opinion of his own literary circle is well known, and may be compared with Watson's evaluation. In a letter to Gilbert Elliot Minto he wrote:— "Is it not strange that, at a time when we have lost our Princes, our Parliaments, our independence Government, even the Presence of our chief Nobility, are unhappy, in our Accent and pronunciation, speak a very corrupt Dialect of the Tongue which we should really be the People most distinguished for Literature in Europe?" (Greig: The Letters of David Hume, Vol. 1, page 255, letter 135, to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 2 July 1757.) In later years, Hume wrote to Gibbon and, in congratulating him on his History, drew an implicit comparison of the English and the Scots literary achievements. "whether I consider the dignity of your style, the depth of your matter, or the extensiveness of your learning, I shall regard the work as equally the object of esteem; and I own, not if I had not previously had the happiness of your personal acquaintance, such a performance, from an Englishman in our age, and who have given me some surprise. You may smile at this sentiment; as it seems to me that your countrymen, for almost a whole generation, have given themselves up to barbarous and absurd faction, and we totally neglected all polite letters, I no longer expected any admirable production ever to come from them." (Burton: Life of Hume, Vol. 2, page 494, Hume to Gibbon, Edinburgh, 18th March, 1776.)
It is right to add that if the middle of the century was convulsed by controversy, there was peace towards its close, and the credit is largely due to the spirit of the Moderate Party which was then controlling the Church of Scotland. Culture has not always been calm, and the elder D’Israeli has reminded us that authors are an irascible tribe; but the literary society of Edinburgh in the eighteenth century was almost idyllic in its courtesy and its friendliness. Adam Ferguson the historian had certainly a bitter quarrel with Adam Smith the economist, but Ferguson was an excitatable Celt, and had been chaplain of the 42nd in his day, and he made up his quarrel with his old friend before he died. That was the only jarring note in the music, for all the other voices were in harmony. Robertson refused to write a history of England, because it would encroach upon the field of his friend David Hume, and when his history of Scotland took London by storm, Hume bubbled over with delight, and wrote to Robertson "A plague take you! here I sat on the historical summit of Parnassus immediately under Mr. Smollett, and you have the impudence to squeeze past me and place yourself directly under his feet." Robertson was the leader of the Kirk, and Hume the most dangerous critic of the Christian position, and upon those terms they lived, in this controversial century. Robertson was the head of one party in Kirk, and Dr. John Erskine was the head of another, they were colleagues in the same parish, and they preached the one in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon, each from his own standpoint; yet they remained the best and most loyal of friends, and when the Principal died Erskine celebrated his virtues in a noble funeral sermon. When Principal Campbell, of Aberdeen, replied to Hume’s book on miracles, he sent the manuscript to Hume, that the philosopher might point out any mistake in fact or unfairness in argument, and Dr. Jardine, one of the leading ministers of Edinburgh and David Hume were on the most intimate terms. Jealousy and acrimony were unknown in that circle; if any man did well they were all glad and every one helped his neighbour to succeed.

Perhaps the best informed comparison of the two literary capitals at Britain came from the pen of an author who knew them both well, Mackenzie, the "man of Feeling." Mackenzie, in his Life of John Home wrote as follows:-

Such was the free and cordial communication of sentiments, the natural play of fancy and good humour, which prevailed among the circle of men whom I have described. It was very different from that display of learning – that prize-fighting of wit, which

distinguished a literary circle of our of our sister country, of which we have some authentic and curious records. There all ease of intercourse was changed for the pride of victory; and the victors, like some savage combatants, gave no quarter to the vanquished. This may, perhaps, be accounted for more from the situation than the dispositions of the principal members of that society. The literary circle of London was a sort of sect, a caste separate from the ordinary professions and habits of common life. They were traders in talent and learning, and brought like other traders, samples of their goods into company, with a jealousy of competition which prevented their enjoying, as much as otherwise they might, any excellence in their competitors. This view is sustained in Mackenzie's Life of William Tytler:-

It is perhaps only in smaller communities, like that of Edinburgh, that the union of business and literary studies can easily take place. In larger societies, such as that of London, where the professional objects are greater and more extensive, and the different classes of men are more decidedly separated from one another, there is a sort of division of mind, as well as of labour, that makes the lawyer or the merchant a perfect lawyer or merchant, whose mind and time are wholly engrossed by the objects of his profession, and whom it might considerably discredit among his brethren of that profession, were he to devote any portion of either to classical study, or literary composition. In Edinburgh it is otherwise; the professional duties are not in general so extensive as to engross the whole of man, and, his connections in society extending through many different classes of his fellow-citizens, he has opportunities of conversing, of reading, and of thinking on other objects than merely those immediately relating to the business which he follows. This is perhaps the most agreeable state of society of any, which, if it may sometimes prevent the highest degree of professional eminence and skill, (though even on that ground many arguments might be offered in its favour), certainly tends to enlarge the mind, and to polish the manners; to give a charm and a dignity to ordinary life, that may be thought ill exchanged for the inordinate accumulation of wealth, or the selfish enjoyment of professional importance.

Mackenzie's opinion, as expressed above, was supported by Walter Scott and by John Galt. The latter, in fact, has put similar expressions below.

---


the mouth of one of his fictional Scottish characters in his

shire Legatees. Andrew Pringle, in a letter to his friend the Rev.

Charles Snodgrass, expresses what must have been a widely held opinion,

east among Scots, of the literary circles of the English metropolis:

I am much indebted to you for the introduction to your friend

He is one us; or rather, he moves in an eccentric
sphere of his own, which crosses, I believe, almost all the
orbits of all the classed and classifiable systems of London.
I found him exactly what you described; and we were on the frank-
est footing of old friends in the course of the first quarter of
an hour. He did me the honour to fancy that I belonged, as a
matter of course, to some one of the literary fraternities of
Edinburgh, and that I would be curious to see the associations of
the learned here. what he said respecting them was highly
characteristic of the man. "They are," said he, "the dullest
things possible. On my return from abroad, I visited them all,
expecting to find something of that easy disengaged mind which
constitutes the charm of those of France and Italy. But in
London, among those who have a character to keep up, there is such
diligent circumspection, that I should as soon expect to find nature
in the ballets of the opera-house, as genius at the established
haunts of authors, artists, and men of science. Banks gives, I
suppose officially, a public breakfast weekly, and opens his house
for conversations on Sundays. I found at his breakfasts, tea
and coffee, with hot rolls, and men of celebrity afraid to speak.
When conversations, there was something even worse. A few
plausible talking fellows created a buzz in the room; and the
merits of some paltry nicknack of mechanism or science was
discussed. The party consisted undoubtedly of the most eminent
men of their respective lines in the world; but they were each
and all so apprehensive of having their ideas purloined, that
they took the most guarded care never to speak of anything that
they deemed of the slightest consequence, or to hazard an opinion
that might be called in question. The man who either wishes to
augment his knowledge, or to pass his time agreeably, will never
expose himself to a repetition of the fastidious exhibitions of
engineers and artists who have their talents at market. but such
things are among the curiosities of London; and if you have any
inclination to undergo the initiating mortification of being
reared as a young man who may be likely to interfere with their
professional interests, I can easily get you introduced.

As a conclusion to this comparative presentation of the merits of
Edinburgh club of literati, no finer summary could be offered than
written by the most recent of David Hume's biographers, Ernest
Campbell Mossner. Mossner, with the literary circles of Hume and Johnson in his mind, compares the English and Scottish society of intellectuals as follows:

"to exact counterpart of "The Club" to be sure, existed in the "Athens of the North". The Select Society of Edinburgh, instituted in 1754 by the painter Allan Ramsay on Continental rather than on English models, was for some ten years a highly successful instrument of the Scottish Enlightenment. But as it increasingly tended to become less select, it also became less stimulating and finally broke up. During the first several years of its existence, Hume acted as Treasurer, was a member of the steering committee, and twice took his turn as chairman. His influence was always felt, and the list of topics adopted for formal debate reads like the table of contents to his Essays and Treatises. But never once did he enter into the discussions from the floor, The Select Society did not suit Hume's taste because it lacked the intimacy he deemed vital.

A greater degree of fellowship was attained in other ventures such as the Grisken Club, formed to promote John Home's Douglas, and the Poker Club, formed to promote Scottish nationalism; but none of these adequately filled the bill of a genuine literary society. So far as Hume personally was concerned, no organized club ever did, as the very act of organization tended to stifle free exchange of opinion in close discussion - what he himself described as "the company of a few select companions, with whom I can, calmly and peaceably, enjoy the feast of reason, and try the justness of every reflection, whether gay or serious, that may occur to me."

In quest of the feast of reason, Hume and the Scots turned again to the Continent, finding their model this time in the French salon intime. The intimate - as distinguished from the grand - salon was the society of a few choice spirits, warm in friendship and mutual respect, animated in intellect, and appreciative of good food and good wine. No hard drinking, however, for as Hume expressly warned, a gathering kept from dullness only by that means will soon find the remedy worse than the disease. The Rev. Alexander Carlyle writes glowingly of "warm suppers and excellent claret," adding that "It was those meetings in particular that rubbed off all corners, as we call it, by collision, and made the literati of Edinburgh less captious and pedantic than they were elsewhere" - meaning, of course, London.

The spirit of tolerance illuminated the Edinburgh circle. Though many of the literati were clergymen, all were enlightened. To them, the Great Infidel presented no insurmountable problem of

ethics. While they reprobated Hume's religious opinions, they were yet able to distinguish between the opinions and the man; and if they abhorred the first, they loved the second. Dr. John Gregory, the eminent and pious physician, explained this nice distinction to Mrs. Montagu: "I detest Mr. Hume's Philosophy as destructive of every principle interesting to Mankind and I think the general Spirit that breathes in his History unfavourable both to Religion and Liberty, tho in other respects one of the most animated, entertaining and instructive Histories I have ever read. But I love Mr. Hume personally as a worthy agreeable man in private Life, and as I believe he does not know and cannot feel the mischief his writings have done, it hurts me extremely to see him harshly used." The Rev. Hugh Blair put the issue of toleration more pointedly in urging le bon David to a speedy return from London: "We would even be content to bear a little persecution for the sake of it. Usque ad aras, is the word."

The ideal of the Scottish circle, attested by the pervasive toleration accorded all persons and all ideas, was democratic. The spirit achieved was what Lord Shaftesbury a half century earlier had so aptly termed, "Liberty of the Club, and that sort of freedom which is taken amongst Gentlemen and Friends, who know one another well." The Scottish enlightenment discovered its literary instrument, not in despotism benevolent or otherwise, but in a genuine republic of letters. The social standard was fraternity, and the personal motto of Dr. Robertson was the implicit motto of all: Vita sine literis mors est.

Comparisons may sometimes be odious but, along with analogies, are requisite to all thinking concerning matters of fact. Yet it would be futile as well as odious to attempt any precise measure of the Edinburgh and the London groups. Suffice it to say, both were distinguished, although distinguished in quite different ways. The literary merit of "The Club" need not be rehearsed here as it is justly famous and customarily receives its due need of praise. It was undeniably great. But the literary merit of the Edinburgh circle is neglected today - perhaps unduly so. In the eighteenth century, however, such was not the case; in fact, more frequently the reverse was true.

The importance of literary societies and clubs in the intellectual development of Scotland in the eighteenth century should, by now, be fairly obvious. We have seen how such organizations began as groups of young men who combined to attack the problems presented by the necessity of mastering a new literary dialect and a new literary form; and how these groups later became organizations in which the members could present their
literary endeavours for the judgment of their fellow members; and, still later, how these organizations, in their turn, became the incorporated societies which could offer the distinction of membership as a recognition of literary achievement. The effect of this continuity, and of the continuous association of Scottish men of letters with their literary societies in all three stages of their development, was certain to have a recognizable effect upon their literary productions. As nearly every work of literature, (and I still use this term in the eighteenth-century sense of including nearly all writing whether philosophical, scientific, theological, or whatever), had to pass the tribunal of a literary society, singularity, or "originality", and egocentricity of all kinds were largely eliminated. Plausibility, lucidity, and commonsense form and style were the qualities which won group approval. And it is just such qualities, therefore, which we recognize as distinctive characteristics of the literary productions of the period. The end result was that few works of literature ever saw the light of day which were not, by modern standards, extremely well written. In the works of the eighteenth-century men of letters may be seen the faults and virtues which were the result of the continuous criticism and evaluation of the literary societies in which such works originated.

One result of the prevalence of literary societies in eighteenth-century life was that literary societies became, in themselves, a literary convention. Not only did it become a common practice to lend support to an opinion or an authoritative statement by pretending that it had its origin in a society, but clubs and societies of all kinds entered into the fabric of the literature produced in and about the eighteenth
century. It is revealing to read the work of a Frenchman who, as an ardent admirer of Sir Walter Scott's novels, interpreted the social life of eighteenth-century Edinburgh lawyers solely in terms of Counsellor Pleydell and his "High-Jinks". The lively scene which Scott created in his Guy Manners became, for this author at any rate, the terms of reference by means of which he described the past.

On a more serious note, the freedom and friendly exchange of information which has so often been attributed to the Edinburgh literati is revealed as a developing scientific ideal. The passage which I have quoted below is from one of Dr. William Cullen's lectures, and may be taken as an expression of an attitude toward scientific discovery which was widely accepted among Scottish scientists:

The French academicians have had this special merit of being accurate in experiments, of being always full and perspicuous in communicating them, and particularly of being free from that narrow, selfish temper of the chemists, which affects a mysterious secrecy. The French chemists have often discovered, by their own industry, and published freely to the world, what was too carefully kept secret in other countries. They have sometimes bought a secret in England, and immediately published it in France to all the world. I hope this account of the French chemists will not be thought improper here. They are, I imagine, an example fit to be held up for the imitation of young students.

But it was the literary-debating society, with its wide range of interests and its emphasis on the development of the powers of eloquence and composition in its members, which occupied a predominant place in eighteenth-century intellectual and social life. And these societies meant something more to the men who were active in them than we are

prepared to recognize. The unusual quality of the eighteenth-century Scottish enthusiasm for debate has been recognized by John Hepburn Millar in his *Literary History of Scotland*:

That grown-up men should form an association for the purpose of discussing any question in a more or less formal manner is certainly a startling notion to the present generation. Debating Societies, we are apt to think, should be left to the youthful, to those who have plenty of time to canvass topics on which all sensible men have made up their minds, and would rather not divulge their sentiments. The men of the eighteenth century apparently possessed the talisman of perpetual youth. At all events, the Select ones held their meeting every Friday in the Advocates' Library, and seem to have been as "keen" as if they had been lads in the "Speculative," which was yet a thing of the future.

But an article which appeared in the *Scots Magazine* shortly after the mid-century contains nearly all we need know regarding the value that men of the eighteenth-century placed upon these organizations:

To the author of the *Scots Magazine*,

Sir,

The season is approaching, when men, leaving the business and diversions of the country, assemble in populous cities; some for business, some for amusement, and not a few for education and instruction. In the last class may be reckoned those young men who, smitten with love of elegant literature, or destined for the pulpit or the bar, form themselves into preparatory societies, for mutual improvement in speaking and writing. The following essay, on the advantages resulting from such societies, is submitted to your inspection. The subject is new: a young essayist may therefore expect some indulgence. It is likewise of importance; and if, by your publishing the following thoughts, an able writer shall be induced to do it justice, you will oblige more than one of your readers.

I am, etc., A. I.


It is impossible, says Mr. Addison, for a man of the greatest parts, to consider any thing in its whole extent, and all its variety of lights. A member of such an institution as has been mentioned, will immediately assent to the truth of this observation. Whatever pains he may previously take, in examining the subject to be debated; upon comparing his own sentiments of it with those of others, he will find his views not a little enlarged. Many observations will then present themselves, which escaped his own penetration. His arguments he will sometimes find to be feeble, his principles erroneous, his conclusions unjust. Often he will be sensible, that he has viewed the subject in too narrow a point of light, and often that he has treated it too superficially.

In the course of so ingenious, so liberal a conversation, the mind is insensibly cured of those prejudices which are so apt to grow up in it in private. A student who confines himself to his closet, without mixing in company that is truly good, often contracts such a fondness for a particular author, as leads him to imitate, not only his beauties, but his faults. The imagination of a young reader must be gratified: if this faculty be pleased, if it be pleased especially with a florid style, he too often sacrifices his judgment. While he thinks, that nothing bad can be hid under so fair a form, he imbibes, not only the charming sentiments, but the poisonous principles of his beloved author. What blind attachment to particular authors, opinions, and systems, is seen in young men, whose curiosity is confined to their closet!

To prevent, or remove, such prepossessions, an early society of this kind will greatly contribute. Various opinions are delivered, and examined, with candour. That moderation which others observe, in hearing their sentiments refuted, disposes the ingenuous mind to a like moderation.

In a word, an institution of this kind when properly conducted, enlarges our views, improves our reasoning, and frees the mind from every narrow notion. An ingenious author observes, that nothing is preferable to a select company, where one has an opportunity of trying the justness of every reflection that may occur. I doubt, whether the admirable productions of that gentlemen, or those of his friends, would have reflected so great honour of late upon Scotland as they have done, had they not mutually enjoyed the happiness of a Select Society.

One final word is necessary. As the reader will soon discover, if he reads the essays and addresses which I have appended to this thesis, the literary clubs and societies meant a great deal more to men of the eighteenth century than has been brought out by anything that has gone
before. A rather humorous example of this may pointed out in the letter which a Mr. Samuel Hunter wrote to William Smellie. Hunter closes with a friendly direction to Smellie to give "kind remembrance to the club and family." The order of importance given to club and family is, to say the least, unusual. But it reveals, perhaps unintentionally, the importance that was placed on one's social as opposed to one's individual existence. In the essays on literary societies to which I have referred above, a consistent theme was the significance and the importance of human society. By a rather unfamiliar logic, though I suppose it is reasonable enough, these remarks always led to a consideration of societies in the sense in which we have known it here, that is, as signifying literary societies. The title of one such address, is an accurate description of the class. This title reads "Of Society in General, and Polemical Society in Particular." The message of the essay is, as the reader may discover for himself, an ardent one. The impulse which lies behind human society is the need for association with one's fellow men. And what better way is there for men to associate than in a literary society? The argument is a simple as that. What emerges from it, however, is the inescapable conclusion that to the eighteenth-century man, a literary society was more than a social opportunity, it was, inasmuch as it partook of the universal nature of society in general, a social necessity. In other words, when an eighteenth-century man met with his literary society, it

2. See Appendix N, page 661 f.
was an act of faith. What appears to us to have been merely a rather dull way to spend an evening was, to the literati who produced Scotland's Golden Age, an affirmation of their faith in the reasonable basis of human society, and of the validity of a corporate search for truth. A profound respect for the requirements of society, and a genuine belief in their institutions were two important and admirable elements which distinguished the eighteenth-century spirit. And it is this spirit, which we of this century seem temporarily to have lost, that has made the study of eighteenth-century Scottish literary clubs and societies especially important and worthwhile. The result of such studies, however, would be worthless if they engendered merely a nostalgic yearning for the irrecoverable past. They should suggest, rather, that if we are to recover the eighteenth-century's simple faith in the transcendent claims of society, we must be willing to make a sacrifice of our romantic ideals of sanctity of the individual. The suggestion may strike some as being politically, morally, and spiritually undesirable, but if there is one thing that Western Europeans and Americans, especially the Americans, have to learn, it is that we cannot have something for nothing. A stable and responsible society can only be formed of stable and responsible members who actively participate in that society. This is the great lesson that the eighteenth century can teach us.
APPENDIX 'A'

Membership of the Literary Society of Glasgow.

The twelve constituent members were,

Mr. James Moor, Professor of Greek.
Dr. Robert Hamilton, Professor of Anatomy.
Dr. (William) Leechman, Professor of Divinity.
Mr. James Clow, Professor of Logic.
Mr. Hercules Lindsay, Professor of Law.
Dr. Robert Dick, Professor of Natural Philosophy.
Rev. Mr. William Craig, Minister of Glasgow.
Mr. George Ross, Professor of Humanity.
Dr. William Cullen, Professor of Medicine.
Mr. Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy.
Mr. Richard Betham.
Dr. John Brisbane.

Though the above were the constituent members, the following were also considered as members, and joined at the ensuing meetings.

Mr. William Ruat, Professor of Church History.
Mr. Robert Bogle, merchant in Glasgow.
Mr. Alexander Graham.
Mr. William Crawford, merchant in Glasgow.
Mr. George Maxwell.
Dr. Robert Simson, Professor of Mathematics.
William Mure of Caldwell, Esq.
The Rev. and Hon. Pat. Boyle.
Walter Stuart, Esq. Advocate.
Mr. Thomas Melville.

In 1753 the Society received the following additional members:

John Graham, Esq. of Dougalston.
John Callender, Esq. of Craigforth.
David Hume, Esq.
Mr. George Moorhead, afterwards Professor of Humanity.
Mr. Robert Foulis, University Printer.
Mr. John Anderson, afterwards Professor of Natural Philosophy.
Mr. Ferguson, now I believe in Edinburgh College.
Mr. Wait.

1. Taken from Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow, pages 132 - 134.
In 1756-57, and afterwards,

Mr. Andrew Foulis, Printer.
Mr. William Campbell.
Mr. Alexander Wilson, Professor of Astronomy.
Dr. Joseph Black, Professor of Medicine.
Mr. Andrews.
Dr. Alexander Stevenson, afterwards Professor of Medicine.
Rev. Mr. Mackay.
Mr. Thomas Hamilton, Professor of Anatomy.
Mr. James Buchan, Professor of Hebrew.
Rev. Mr. James Crombie.

In 1761.

Mr. John Millar, Professor of Law.
Dr. Trail, Professor of Divinity.
Mr. Cumin, Professor of Hebrew.
Dr. Williamson, Professor of Mathematics.

In 1762-63.

Dr. Wight, Professor of Church History.
Mr. Ogilvie, now I believe a Professor in Aberdeen.
George Oswald, Esq. (of Scotstown).
Lord Cardross, now Earl of Buchan.

In 1764, and afterwards,

Dr. Walker, Minister of Moffat.
Dr. Thomas Reid, Professor of Moral Philosophy.
Mr. Robinson, now in Edinburgh College.
Dr. Irvine, Lecturer on Chemistry.

In 1773 - 1774, and afterwards,

Mr. Wm. Richardson, Professor of Humanity.
Mr. Geo. Jardine, Professor of Logic.
Mr. John Young, Professor of Greek.
Mr. Arch. Arthur, Professor of Moral Philosophy.
Rev. Mr. James Bell, College-Chaplain, afterwards Minister of Coldstream.
Dr. Taylor, now Minister of Glasgow.
Mr. John Wright, a minister in Perthshire, then a College-Chaplain.
Wm. Craig, Advocate (now Lord Craig).
Rev. Dr. Charters, Minister of Wilton.
Mr. Gilbert Hamilton, Merchant in Glasgow.
Mr. Arch. Graham, merchant in Glasgow, (afterwards Cashier of the Thistle Bank).
Dr. Bailie, Professor of Divinity.
Dr. Walter Young, Minister of Erskine.
Dr. Finlay, Professor of Divinity.
Rev. Mr. Hugh M'Diarraid.
Rev. Mr. Andrew M'Donald.
Dr. Davidson, Principal of the University.
Mr. Wm. Hamilton, Professor of Anatomy.
Dr. Taylor, then Minister, now Principal of the University.
Dr. Couper, now Professor of Astronomy.
Dr. Richard Millar, Lecturer on Materia Medica.
Dr. Cleghorn, Lecturer on Chemistry.
Dr. M'Lecod, Professor of (Church) History.
Mr. M'clyne, now Professor of Moral Philosophy.
Dr. Pat. Graham, Minister of Aberfoyle.
Mr. John Millar, Advocate.
Dr. John Lockhart, Minister in Glasgow.
Dr. Hope, Professor (of Chemistry) in Edinburgh.
Dr. James Jeffray, Professor of Anatomy.
Mr. James Millar, Professor of Mathematics.
Dr. J. Brown, now living at St. Andrews.
Dr. Thomas Brown, lecturer on Botany.
Mr. Macturk, Assistant Professor of (Church) History.
Mr. Alex. Craig.
Dr. Carmichael.
Dr. Marshal.
Mr. Pat: Wilson, afterwards Professor of Astronomy.
Mr. Dunlop, Surgeon in Glasgow.

In 1787, and afterwards,

Rev. Dr. Rankin, Minister in Glasgow.
Mr. Finlay of Bogsie.
Dr. Freer, Professor of Medicine.
Mr. Robert Davidson, Professor of Law.
Rev. Dr. Macgill, Minister in Glasgow.
Mr. Jackson, at Ayr.
Dr. Meikleham, Professor of Natural Philosophy.
The Rev. Mr. Gavin Gibb, Minister of Strathblaine, (afterwards
Minister of St. Andrews Church, and Professor of Oriental
Languages).
Mr. Lockhart Moorhead, Librarian to the University, (afterwards Professor of Natural History).
APPENDIX 'B'

Philosophical Society of Aberdeen

(Note: Details of the origin of the various works produced by the members of this Society are given by the author of an article which was published in Macmillan's Magazine, Vol. VIII, for October 1865. As this article also gives many of the subjects which were discussed in the Society, I have quoted from it at length.)

The date is June 14, 1758. Campbell is President for the day; Gregory, Skene, Reid, Gordon, Gerard, and Farquhar, are present. A strong-built, firmly-knit, dumpy figure, with a kindly but subdued eye, whom one would not readily guess to be, as he is, near fifty, somewhat diffidently takes a paper from his pocket. His subject is modestly stated—"Some observations of the Philosophy of the mind in general, and particularly on the Perceptions we have by light." This is Reid, with his theory—Philosophy according to the principles of common sense. Ten months later he volunteers a discourse entitled "Analysis of the Senses." A year after, he continues the same subject. In three months, he gives a paper "On the Sense of Touch." In his next discourse, twelve months afterwards, he resumes his observations on the "Sense of Seeing," followed, after an interval, by a continuation of the same subject. He next meets with the following minutes:

October 11, 1762. - Present, Dr. Campbell, President; Dr. Reid, Dr. Gregory, Mr. Farquhar, Dr. Skene, Dr. Gerard, and Mr. Gordon. Dr. Reid read his discourse, which the Society approved of. But Dr. Reid declined inserting it, in regard he proposed soon to send it to the press along with the other discourses he had read before the Society.

Here then, within this little circle, may be said to have been the birth-place of the "Inquiry into the Human Mind," a work which, we have Dugald Stewart's authority for saying, revolutionized the philosophy of Scotland and France. The same writer adds that "it is doubtful whether Reid's modesty would have ever permitted him to present to the world the fruits of his solitary studies, without the encouragement which he received from the general acquiescence by his associates (of this Society) in the most important conclusions to which he had been led."

Similarly we may trace Campbell's best-known work. On March 8, 1758, "Mr. Campbell" read the first discourse, given in the Society, on "The Nature of Eloquence, its various species and their respective ends," and he was unanimously requested to record it in the Society's book. Six months afterwards he discourses on the "Relation that Eloquence bears to Logic." Then follows a "continuation of the same subject." In January, 1763, he gives a discourse on "The Dependence of Eloquence upon Grammar." Between March, 1763, and February, 1768, he reads ten similar
discourses, most of them "continuations." On March 14, 1769, he discourses on "the Canons of Verbal Criticism," After three other continuations, we come to the minute of January 5, 1771, when the series is closed by a discourse on "Words connecting Sentences and Periods."

This, then, was the "Philosophy of Rhetoric," the whole of which — or with not a large exception — as Campbell himself informs us, was submitted to the friendly criticism of the Society.

The works of our philosophers, it will thus be noted, were of remarkably slow growth. The modern rate of throwing off a volume or two per month was far from their idea of authorship. Campbell, however, who had greater facility, as greater art, in composition than Reid, had published once or twice (and written many professional lectures and pulpit discourses) during the progress of his chapters on Rhetoric through the Society. On the other hand, the germs of the work had been meditated when the author was a country clergyman, twenty years before he finished his readings in the Society; and the work was not published till five years after the last of these. So Reid, who was ordained to a country charge in 1757, deeply pondered his philosophical theories during the whole fifteen years of his incumbency, if not for a longer period, afterwards wove them into his professional lectures, and finally submitted the results to the critical examination of his associates; and it was only in 1764, when he was fifty-four years of age, that he brought them before the world.

In like manner we might trace more or less fully through the Society Gerard's "Essay on Genius," Beattie's "Essay on Truth," Gregory's "Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World," and other works which illustrated the literature of the north at that period.

Among the subjects of discourses read in the Society, and not enumerated above, were the following: — "Euclid's Definitions and Axioms," (Reid); "The Universal Belief in a Diety," (Reid); "Inequality among Mankind," Rousseau criticised, (Trail); "Memory and its Influence in Forming Characters among Men," (Gordon); "The Imagination," (Farquhar); "The use of Leaves of Plants," (Ross); "On a Particular Providence," (Farquhar); "Concerning the Nature of Evidence," (Stewart); "Foundation of Taste in Music," (Gregory); "The Manner in which Association is influenced by the Causes of the Passions," (Gerard); "Origin of Language," (Professor Dunbar); "On the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Methods of Classifying Plants," (three discourses by Dr. H. Skene); "Practical Geometry," (Trail); "Principles which determine Degrees of Approbation in the Fine Arts," (Beattie); "Influence of Place and Climate upon Human Affairs," (Dunbar).

Reid visited the Society once during his vacation from Glasgow in August 1771, and no doubt took part in the conversation of the evening — "How are the Proceedings of Instinct to be distinguished from Reason or Sagacity in Animals?" He felt a warm interest in the prosperity of the body, as his correspondence proves. From this, also, we learn how great an influence the speculations of David Hume had on the minds of the members.... "Always battling with D. Hume?" he asks, years after, in a letter from Glasgow to his friend Skene.
We have a record altogether of upwards of one hundred and twenty questions "conversed upon" during the fifteen years embraced in the records of the Society. These may be ranged, according to their subjects, as follows:— Philosophy, Theology, etc., one third; Natural Science, one-fourth; Political Economy, one-fifth; Education, Literature, Philology, etc., another fifth. Some of the questions which have deeply agitated society in recent times (this author was writing in 1865) were the subjects of conversation, among our philosophers a century ago. Of such as related to deep things — "Providence, fore-knowledge, free-will, fate" — we note the following:

1. "How far human actions are free or necessary?" (Proposed by Skene).
2. "Is the human soul confined to any part of the human body; and, if so, to what part?" (Stewart).
3. "Whether mankind, with regard to morals, always was and is the same?" (Reid).
4. "What is the foundation of moral obligation?" (Farquhar).
5. "Whether human laws be binding on the consciences of men?" (Stewart).
6. "Whether every action deserving moral approbation must be done from the persuasion of its being morally good?" (Reid).
7. "Whether brutes have souls; and, if they have, wherein do they differ from human?" (Dr. Skene).

The subject of slavery came up under different aspects. In March, 1764, the Rev. Mr. Farquhar introduces the question, "What is the origin of the Blacks?" Later, Beattie modestly asks, "Whether that superiority of understanding by which Europeans and others imagine themselves to be distinguished may not easily be accounted for without supposing the rest of mankind of an inferior species?" Again, "Whether slavery be in all cases inconsistent with good government?, and "By what circumstances has slavery become supportable to so many nations of mankind?"

In general politics we have the question, "Whether, upon the whole, a high national debt be a benefit to a nation?" followed immediately by this other, "Whether paper credit be not beneficial?" Then we have a question which Aberdeen doctors could, we suppose, afford, at the time, to debate in a purely speculative way, "How does it appear to be equitable that the subjects of a State should be taxed in proportion to their respective fortunes, and not equally overhead, or by any other rule?" The question, "Whether increasing the number of Peers enlarges or diminishes the powers of the Crown?" was followed by the deeper one proposed by Gerard, "Whether any form of government can be perpetual?" (December, 1766). To a like class belonged questions as to the good and bad effects of provision for the poor by poor's-rates, infirmaries, and hospitals; the effect of machinery on labour and population; Church Establishments, etc.

As to population, Malthus was anticipated, in subject at least, for, in 1766, Professor Dunbar calls the attention of his associates to the question, "Whether good policy may not sometimes justify the laying a restraint upon population in a State?" Reid, however, had previously —
namely, in June, 1763, - put the question in an opposite form, thus, "Whether by the encouragement of proper laws the number of births in Great Britain might not be nearly doubled, or, at least, greatly increased?" To refer to later times - so, perhaps, was Mr. Darwin anticipated, by Campbell, when he propounded the curious question, "Can the generation of worms in the bodies of animals be accounted for on the common principles of generation?"

The philosophers did not, so far as we observe, debate the question, "What is poetry?" but they did "handle" two questions closely allied to it, "Whether poetry can justly be reckoned an imitative art?" and (Beattie appropriately asked) "How far versification is essential to poetry?"

Dr. Gregory propounded the question - rather bold for an M. D. - "Whether the art of medicine, as it has been usually practiced, has contributed to the advantage of mankind?" while a reverend preacher (Dr. Gerard) asks, "Whether eloquence be useful or pernicious?" Nor were our philosophers regardless of passing events, for they discussed the proceedings of Wilkes (who is described as a "favourite of the mob") and (beforeshand) the transit of Venus across the sun's disc in 1761. They were as little insensible to more practical matters, for we find that they conversed on the effects of lime, and water respectively upon the soil, and even debated on Reid's proposal, what measures should be taken to prevent an extravagant rise of servant's wages.

Subjects connected with the business of the members as instructors of youth were pretty frequently discussed. Among these were the comparative merits of public and private education; methods of teaching dead languages; whether longer time should not be given for acquiring Greek in the Scottish Universities; whether a teacher should adapt his instructions to the dull or aid the ingenious; and, finally, whether the "commonality may not have too many opportunities, the good of the State considered, for acquiring a learned education."

Among other subjects of questions were - the food of plants; evaporation; the nature of light; the apparent form and colour of the heavens and heavenly bodies; instinct and reason; wit and humour; the ludicrous; justice; benevolence; enthusiasm; luxury, etc.

The following are the more interesting questions discussed in the Society, not previously noted:--
1. "What is the cause of that pleasure we have from representations of objects which excite pity or other painful feelings?" (Campbell).
2. "What is the true cause of the ascent, suspensions, and fall of vapours in the atmosphere?" (Stewart).
3. "Is there a standard of taste in the fine arts and in polite writing? and how is that standard to be ascertained?" (Campbell).
4. "How far the motion of the earth and light accounts for the aberration of the fixed stars?" (Trail).
5. "Whether justice be a natural or artificial virtue?"
6. "Wherein does happiness consist?" (Skene).
7. "The nature of contrariety?" (Campbell).
8. "Whether the sense of hearing may not be assisted by art, in like manner as that of seeing is by optical glasses?" (Stewart).
9. "Whether, in writing, history, it be proper to mix moral and political reflections, or to draw characters?" (Farquhar).
10. "Whether it is proper to educate children without instilling principles of any kind whatsoever?" (Reid).
11. "Is there any injustice done to an impressed man when he is punished according to the articles of war?" (Ogilvy).
12. "How far the facts relating to the burning of the Roman ships, in the harbour of Syracuse, are reconcilable to the laws of reflection and refraction of light?" (Gordon).
13. "Whether music, painting, or poetry gives the greatest scope to genius?" (Entered by not discussed).

The members, we infer, voted on the questions after the conversation; but we have no means of ascertaining the decisions. The books containing abstracts of the discourses and questions were broken up and distributed, each man getting his own, before the close of the Society.
APPENDIX 'C'

List of the Members of the Select Society 1754 - 1763.
Taken from the MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.

Mr. John Jardin, Minister of the Gospel in Edinburgh
Dr. Francis Hume
Mr. Adam Smith, Professor at Glasgow
Mr. Anderson
Mr. Alexander Wedderburn
Mr. Simon Fraser, Advocate
Mr. Allan Ramsay, Painter
Mr. James Burnett, Advocate
Mr. John Campbell, Advocate
Mr. Alexander Carlile, Minister at Inveresk
Mr. William Johnston, Advocate
Mr. James Stephenson Rogers, Advocate
Mr. David Hume
Mr. John Swinton, Advocate
Dr. Alexander Stephenson
Mr. Patrick Murray, Advocate
Mr. Patrick Hume of Billie
Mr. Walter Stewart, Advocate
Mr. John Hume, Minister at Athelstanford
Mr. Robert Alexander
Mr. James Russel, Surgeon
Mr. George Cockburn, Advocate
Dr. David Clarke
Mr. George Brown, Advocate
Mr. William Robertson, Minister at Gladsmuir
Mr. John Fletcher
Mr. Alexander Agnew
Dr. John Hope
Sir David Dalrymple, Advocate
Mr. Gilbert Elliot, Advocate
Sir Harry Erskine
Mr. Hugh Blair, Minister
Mr. Andrew Stewart, Writer

June 12
Mr. Charles Fish Palmer
Mr. George Morison
Mr. George Dempster

June 19
Mr. Andrew Pringle
Mr. Alexander Monro
Mr. David Ross
Patrick Lord Elibank, Earl of Glasgow
Sir Alexander Dick
Mr. Robert Arbuthnot
Mr. Adam Fairholm
Capt. James Edainston
Mr. George Maxwell
Mr. Charles Hamilton Gordon
Mr. James Ferguson
Mr. David Kennedy
Mr. John Dalrymple
Mr. Peter Duff (struck off by order of the society.)
Mr. Robert Murray
The Rev. Mr. Wallace
Mr. John Gordon
Mr. Alex. Maxwell
Mr. James Callendar
Mr. John Couts
Mr. Wm. Tod
Mr. Wm. Wallace Jr.
Mr. Thomas Hogg
Mr. Thomas Miller
Mr. Robert Chalmers
Mr. John Grant
Capt. James Stewart
Sir John Stewart
Mr. James Guthrie
Mr. Charles Congalton
Mr. William Wilkie
Mr. John Monro
Capt. Robert Douglas
His Grace the Duke of Hamilton
Mr. Alex. Taitt
Mr. Geo. Chalmers
Colonel Oughton
Mr. John Adams
Lord Kaims
Mr. James Montgomery
Mr. David Dalrymple
Dr. Robert White
Mr. Geo. Kay, Minister of Edinburgh
Mr. George Muir
Mr. Geo. Clerk
Major Montgomery
Lord Deskford
Mr. Robert Berry
Dr. Adam Austin
Captain Morgan
Provost Drummond
The Earl of Lauderdale
Lord Auchinleck
Commissioner Udny
Mr. George Wiseheart
Lord Belhaven
Mr. Francis Garden
Mr. David Rae
Mansfield Cardonnel, Esq.
Ed. Aberdour
Mr. John Murray
Mr. William Tytler
Dr. Colin Drummond
Mr. Robert Dundas, Lord Advocate
Stamp Brookesbanks, Esq.
Mr. Wm. Nairne, Advocate
Mr. James Adams
Mr. Charles Erskine
Mr. Hugh Dalrymple
Mr. James Hay
Baron Areskine
Dr. John Stewart
Mr. John Clerk
Mr. John Macgowan
My Lord Galloway
Mr. John Graham
Mr. James Carmichael
Mr. Adam Ferguson
Mr. George Drummond
APPENDIX—'C'  

List of the Members of the Select Society, 17th October, 1759.  

Rev. John Jardine, Minister in Edinburgh  
Francis Home, M. D.  
Adam Smith, Professor of Ethics at Glasgow  
Alexander Wedderburn (afterwards Lord Chancellor.)  
Allan Ramsay (afterwards Painter to his Majesty.)  
James Burnet, Advocate (afterwards Lord Monboddo.)  
John Campbell, Advocate (afterwards Lord Stonefield.)  
Rev. Alexander Carlyle, Minister at Inveresk  
William Johnston, Advocate (afterwards Sir Wm. Pulteney.)  
James Stevenson Rogers, Advocate  
David Hume  
John Swinton, Advocate (afterwards Lord Swinton.)  
Patrick Murray, Advocate  
Patrick Hume of Billy, Advocate  
Alexander Stevenson, M. D.  
Walter Stewart, Advocate  
John Home, (Author of Douglas.)  
Robert Alexander, Merchant  
James Russell (afterwards Professor of Natural Philosophy.)  
George Cockburn, Advocate  
David Clerk, M. D.  
George Brown (Lord Coalston.)  
Rev. William Robertson, Minister in Edinburgh  
John Fletcher (Gen. Fletcher Campbell.)  
Alexander Agnew, Advocate  
John Hope, M. D.  
Sir David Dalrymple, Advocate (afterwards Lord Hailes.)  
Gilbert Elliot, one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.  
Sir Harry Erskine, Bart.  
Rev. Hugh Blair, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh.  
Andrew Stuart (afterwards M. P. for Weymouth.)  
Charles Fysch Palmer.  
George Morrison, Advocate  
Andrew Pringle (Lord Aylemoor.)  
Alexander Monro, Sen. M. D.  
David Ross, Advocate (afterwards Lord Ankerville.)  
Right Hon. Patrick Lord Elibank  
Earl of Glasgow  
Sir Alexander Dick, Bart.  

1. This list of Members was sent to Dugal Stewart by Alexander Carlyle to be used in Stewart's Life of William Robertson. It appears in that work as an Appendix, (Note 'A' to page 185), on page 318 and following.
Robert Arbuthnot (afterwards Secretary to the Board of Trustees for Manufactures Etc.)
Adam Fairholme, Merchant in Edinburgh
Major James Edmonstone
Charles Hamilton Gordon, Advocate
James Ferguson of Pitfour, Jun., Advocate
David Kennedy, Advocate (afterwards Earl of Cassillis.)
John Dalrymple, Advocate (afterwards Baron of Exchequer.)
Major Robert Murray (afterwards Sir Robert Murray.)
Rev. Robert Wallace, Minister in Edinburgh
John Gordon, Advocate
Alexander Maxwell, Merchant in Edinburgh
John Coutts, Merchant in Edinburgh
William Tod, Merchant in Edinburgh
Thomas Miller (afterwards President of the Court of Session.)
Robert Chalmers
Mr. Baron Grant
Captain James Stewart
Sir John Stewart, Advocate
James Guthrie, Merchant
Charles Congalton, Surgeon in Edinburgh
Rev. William Wilkie, Minister at Ratho
John Monro, Advocate
Captain Robert Douglas
Alexander Tait, Writer in Edinburgh
George Chalmers, Merchant in Edinburgh
Colonel Oughton (afterwards Sir Adolphus Oughton.)
John Adam, Architect
Robert White, M. D.
Henry Home, (Lord Kames.)
James Montgomery, Advocate (afterwards Chief Baron of Exchequer.)
David Dalrymple, Advocate (afterwards Lord Westall.)
Rev. George Kay, Minister in Edinburgh
George Muir, Clerk of Justiciary
George Clerk (afterwards Sir George Clerk.)
Lieut.-Col. Archibald Montgomery (afterwards Earl of Eglinton.)
Right Honourable Lord Deskfoord
Robert Berry, Advocate
Adam Austin, M. D.
Lieut.-Col. Morgan
George Drummond (Lord Provost of Edinburgh.)
The Earl of Lauderdale
Alexander Boswell (Lord Auchinleck.)
Alexander Udine, Commissioner of Excise
Rev. George Wishart, Minister in Edinburgh
Right Honourable Lord Belhaven
Francis Garden, Advocate (afterwards Lord Gardenstone.)
David Rae, Advocate (afterwards Lord Justice Clerk.)
Mansfield Cardonnel, Commissioner of Excise
Right Honourable Lord Aberdour
John Murray of Philiphaugh, Advocate
William Tytler, Writer to the Signet (Author of the *Vindication of Queen Mary.*)
Colin Drummond, M. D.
Robert Dundas (afterwards President of the Court of Sessions.)
Stamp Brookesbanks
William Nairne, Advocate (afterwards Lord Dunsmuir.)
James Adam, Architect
Captain Charles Erskine
Hugh Dalrymple, Advocate (Author of *Rondondo.*)
James Hay, Surgeon
Mr. Baron Erskine (afterwards Lord Alva.)
John Clerk (Author of *Naval Tactics.*)
John Macgowan, Jun. Writer in Edinburgh
Earl of Galloway
John Graham of Dougalston
James Carmichael, Writer to the Signet
Adam Ferguson (afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy.)
George Drummond of Blair
William Cullen, M. D.
Ilay Campbell, Advocate (afterwards President of the Court of Session.)
Alexander Murray, Advocate (afterwards Lord Henderland.)
Rev. Robert Dick
Right Honourable Lord Gray
Earl of Errol
James Dewar, Advocate
Captain David Wedderburn
Major James Dalrymple
Archibald Hamilton, M. D.
Andrew Cheap
Andrew Crosbie, Advocate
Earl of Abowye
Adam Ferguson, Advocate (afterwards Sir Adam Ferguson.)
Earl of Selkirk
John Turton
Cosmo Gordon (afterwards one of the Barons of Exchequer.)
Right Honourable Lord Gairlies
Earl of Sutherland
Captain Dougald Campbell
Honourable George Ramsay, Advocate
Earl of Rosebery
Earl of Cassills
William Graham, Advocate
John Pringle of Crichton
Right Honourable Charles Townshend
George Wallace
APPENDIX 'C'

List of the St. Giles Society, 1st. Febry., 1763.
Taken from the MS. Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.

Mr. James Burnet, Advocate  
Dr. Alexr. Carlyle  
Mr. William Johnstone, Advocate  
Mr. Patrick Murray, Advocate  
John Home, Esquire  
Mr. Robert Alexander, Merchant in Edinburgh  
Mr. James Russel, Surgeon  
Dr. William Robertson  
Dr. Hugh Blair  
Mr. Andrew Steuart  
Mr. George Dempster, Advocate  
Patrick Lord Elibank  
Mr. Robert Arbuthnot, Merchant  
Mr. James Fergusson, Advocate  
Mr. Alexr. Tail, Clerk of Session  
Mr. John Adams, Architect  
George Clerk of Drumcrieff, Esq.  
Mr. William Nairne, Advocate  
Sir Adam Fergusson, Advocate  
Mr. Islay Campbell, Advocate  
Dr. Robert Dick  
Mr. James Dewar, Advocate  
Mr. Andrew Crosby, Advocate  
Mr. Adam Fergusson, Advocate  
Mr. William Graham, Advocate  
Dr. John Jardine  
Mr. John Fordyce, Merchant  
George Brown of Eddiston  
Mr. Alexr. Wight, Advocate  
Mr. James Boswell  
Mr. Robert Malcolm  
Mr. John Campbell, Advocate  
Mr. James Stevenson Rogers, Advocate  
Mr. John Swinton, Junr., Advocate  
Mr. George Cockburn, Advocate  
Mr. Alexr. Agnew, Advocate  
Sir David Dalrymple, Advocate  
Sir John Steuart, Advocate  
Dr. Colin Drummond  
Mr. John Clerk, Merchant in Edinburgh  
Mr. John McGowan, Writer  
The Right Honble. Ed. Galloway  
Mr. James Carmichael, Writer
Mr. Alexr. Murray, Advocate
Mr. Cosmo Gordon, Advocate
Mr. George Wallace, Advocate
Mr. Wm. Alexander, Merchant
Mr. John Dalrymple, Advocate
Mr. David Ross, Advocate
Mr. John Pringle, Advocate
Col. David Wedderburn
Col. Robt. Murray Keith
Capt. Edgar
Mr. Patrick Home, Advocate
The Rev. Mr. Walker, Minister at Moffat
The Right Honble., Lt. Kelly
The Honble. Baron Grant
Dr. George Kay
Alexr. Maxwell, Esquire, Merchant
The Honble. Alexr. Gordon, Advocate
APPENDIX 'D'

Questions to be Debated in the Select Society.

Whether or not the practice of duelling be advantageous? - Debated.

Whether Divorces by mutual consent should be allowed? - Debated.

Whether the institution of Slavery be advantageous to the free? - Debated.

Whether Bounties on the exportation of corn be advantageous to Trade and Manufactures as well as to agriculture? - Debated.

Whether Corporations, and exclusive Companies for trade are advantageous to the Members of these corporations and companies?

Whether moderate taxes are a discouragement to trade, industry and manufactures?

Whether a general naturalization of foreign Protestants would be advantageous to Britain? - Debated.

Whether insuring the Enemies ships ought to be allowed in time of war? - Debated.

Whether an Union with Ireland would be advantageous to Great Britain? - Debated.

Whether the Laws against Bribery and corruption ought to be repealed? - Debated.

Whether the great Expence of lawsuits is of general advantage?

Whether Lotteries ought to be encouraged?

Whether eloquence be useful, and if useful, for what purpose? - Debated.

Whether it be more difficult for a Poet to excell in tragedy or comedy? - Debated.

Whether the practice of the imitative arts be advantageous to a Nation? - Debated.

Whether the Provisions in the late marriage Act are advantageous to the Publick? - Debated.

Whether luxury be advantageous to any state? - Debated.

Whether whiskie ought not to be laid under such restraints, as to render the use of it less frequent? - Debated.
Whether the Numbers of Banks now in Scotland be useful to the trade of the country? And whether paper credit be advantageous to a nation? - Debated.

Whether the Bounty should be continued on the Exportation of low-priced Linens made in Scotland?

Whether the common practice in Scotland of distributing money to the poor in their own houses, or the receiving the poor into work houses and hospitals be most advantageous? - Debated.

Whether in the present Circumstances of this country, it be most advantageous to increase tillage, or grass?

Whether Brutus did well in killing Caesar? - Debated.

Whether in the present Circumstances may the Progress of Intemperance, that usually becomes so remarkable (particularly among the vulgar) upon the increase of wealth, be retarded by the care of superiors?

May a Lawier of ordinary parts become eminent in his profession?

Whether it be advantageous to a Nation that the law of private property should be reduced to an Art?

Whether the Repenting Stool ought to be taken away? - Debated.

Whether Printing has been of advantage to Society? - Debated.

Whether the stage ought to be permitted in a well regulated government? - Debated.

Whether the Place given to love and gallantry in modern Tragedy be not unnatural?

Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners with regard to the condition and Treatment of Women? - Debated.

Whether the Difference of national characters be chiefly owing to the nature of different climates, or to moral and political Causes? - Debated.

Whether is an Epic Poem, or a Tragedy the most difficult and most perfect Composition?

Whether have the moderns done well in laying aside the use of a chorus in Tragedy?

Whether is the Police of France consistent with the Libertys of Great Britain? - Debated.

Whether are the Tenures of Land Estates, by Entail in perpetuity, preferrable, For the good of Familys and the Government of a country, to the more unlimited exercise of property and power of alienation? - Debated.
Whether an University in a Metropolis or in a remote Town be most proper for the plan of Education of (youth)? - Debated.

Whether a nation formed for war, or a nation formed for peace be most happy? - Debated.

Whether an Academy for painting set up in Scotland would deserve the encouragement of the publick?

Whether an Aristocracy most naturally changes into a Monarchy or a popular government?

Whether Capital punishment be the most proper method for restraining Theft? - Debated.

Can a Body Politick be virtuous as a Collective body?

Whether do we excell the ancients, or the ancients us, in knowledge & arts? - Debated.

Whether are the greatest efforts of genius made at the revival of letters after an age of Barbarism?

Whether the world has received most advantages from those who have been engaged in an active, or those who have lived a retired life? - Debated.

Whether a general Excise is not the best method of levying the publick Revenue? - Debated.

Whether any state had a Right to deny civil protection to the marriage of minors without consent of parents or guardians?

Whether the right of primogeniture ought still to take Place? - Debated.

Whether the Courts of Law ought to be allowed to judge in matters concerning the Election of Members of Parliament?

Whether Presentations by Patrons, or Election, is the best method of settling Ministers?

Whether the Liberty of the Press ought not to be restrained? - Debated.

Whether a standing Army, or a militia properly regulated, be most advantageous for Great Britain? - Debated.

Whether it is consistent with sound Politicks to allow British subjects to serve as mercenaries in foreign service? - Debated.

Whether a nation once sunk in Luxury & pleasure can be retrieved & brought back to any degree of worth & excellence? - Debated.
Whether the decay of the language of a people be not a mark of the decay of arts & Sciences among that people?

Whether a democratical form of Government be not worse than any despotism?

Whether without any knowledge of the Grammatical Art, and with the use of speaking only, but not the Science, a man may not make very great progress in Metaphysics and every branch of Philosophy?

Whether without the study of the ancients, and by the strength of our own genius, with the assistance of modern authors, we may not arrive at the greatest degree of excellence in written composition?

Whether Milton be not a better poet than Virgil?

Doth the increase of Trade & manufactures naturally tend to promote the happiness of a Nation? - Debated.

Whether the paying off the National Debt would be of advantage to Britain? - Debated.

Whether a foundling hospital erected at Edinburgh, and supported chiefly by a tax laid upon old Batchelors would tend to the prosperity of Scotland? - Debated.

Do the Laws of Scotland relating to Coalliers and Salters promote the interest of this country?

Doth the growing power of a neighbouring nation authorize the committing of hostilities?

Would the Extirpation of the African Corsairs be of advantage to Europe?

Would nunneries without the vows be of advantage to Britain? - Debated.

Whether is the succession of females of advantage to the publick? - Debated.

Whether can a marriage be happy when the wife is of an understanding superior to that of the husband? - Debated.

Do the benefits which arise to the nation from its Colonies, exceed the detriment which the nation suffers by them? - Debated.

Whether doth Poetry, painting or Music produce the strongest effects on the Imagination? - Debated.

Whether is the Government of the City by a Court of Aldermen and Common Council, where all the magistrates continue during Life, preforable to one Annual or Trinial Election of Magistrates?
Whether is the Registering of Sailors to be Employed when necessary, a greater violation of Freedom than press Warrants are? - Debated.

Whether Soldiers and Sailors ought to be Engaged for Life, or for a certain number of years? - Debated.

Whether ought games, in imitation of the Olympic games, to be insti tuted? - Debated.

Whether was the ancient method of war more destructive to humane kind, than the modern?

Whether ought virtue to be (always) Rewarded in Plays?

Whether doth ane author feel more pleasure or pain?

Whether doth a Jealous husband feel most pleasure or pain?

Whether ought merchants to be prohibited from Trading to an Extent Exceeding a certain proportion to their Stock?

Whether hath mankind decreased in stature, strength and virtue during 3000 years?

Whether is hunting an exercise proper for persons of liberal Education? - Debated.

Whether ought the Swedish Law, which orders all Debts of Land Holders to be registered and the lands to be sold when the Debts Exceed two Thirds of the Estate, be received into Britain?

Whether have reasonings on abstract subjects been of most advantage to mankind?

Whether a despotic Monarchy or a republick of nearly the same number of inhabitants can be most easily conquered?

Whether has modern honour improved the human character? - Debated.

Whether is a Nation in a State of Barbarity, or a Nation of Luxury and refined manners, the happiest? - Debated.

Whether is a miser, or a Prodigal of the greatest use to Society? - Debated.

Whether the laws with regard to game ought to be repealed?

Whether Ridicule is a proper Test of Truth?

Whether the present institution of parochial Schools in Scotland be advantageous to the publick? - Debated.
Whether the modern method of improvement by making large Farms be not runious to the country? — Debated.

Whether the study of the Sciences and the fine Arts ought to be encouraged in a well regulated Society?

Whether in a well governed State there ought to be an Art or Science of Law?

Whether the strength and duration of a state depend most on the situation & manners of the Inhabitants or upon the form of government? — Debated.

Whether the modern improvements in mechanics, and the multiplying mechanical machines doth not tend to the depeopling the World?

Whether the strict principles of Virtue and Morality can be made consistent with commerce, or can be long preserved in a Commercial State?

Whether the confessed superiority of the ancients over the moderns is not a necessary consequence of our admiration of the ancients?

Whether is a landed interest or a Commercial interest most favorable to publick liberty? — Debated.

Whether doth a landed or a Commercial interest contribute most to the tranquillity and stability of a State? — Debated.

Whether the Importation of cattle from Ireland is advantageous to Britain? — Debated.

Whether from speculative principles, or from the nature and genius of a people the preference of one political system to another ought to be determined?

Whether greater National evils will be produced by the tyranny of a Prince, or the factions of a Republick? — Debated.

Whether the fine arts are most likely to flourish under a monarchical or a Republican form of Government?

Whether Tragedy or Comedy have the Greatest & best effects upon the Morals and Manners of Mankind?

Whether permitting the rich men in any state to have more than one wife would tend to its populousness?

Whether the study of Moral or Natural Philosophy is more useful?

Whether a fine Taste is the Gift of Nature or the result of Experience, and may be acquired?
Whether Courage is natural to man?

Whether Labourers of the Ground or Manufactures make the best soldiers?

Whether the number of people in Great Britain has for these last twenty years been on the increase or decline?

Whether Paper Credit tho' it circulate only at home does not hinder the increase of money from abroad?

Whether the practice of the Ladies in painting their faces ought not to be prohibited by every wise government?

Whether Land Taxes are not more beneficial to the Public than Taxes on Commodities? - Debated.

Whether in a free country, any part of the Powers of Magistrates ought to be left undefined? - Debated.

Whether a law, prohibiting the Inhabitants of a country from leaving it, would be conducive to the populousness of that nation? - Debated.

Whether the abolishing of hereditary jurisdictions in Scotland be advantageous to the kingdom?

Whether there is any such thing as taste?

Whether a commercial and military spirit can subsist together in the same nation? - Debated.

Whether the Laws against Treason, whereby the Father forfeits not only for himself but his Children, be agreeable to equity, and useful to Society? - Debated.

Whether in the present state of Europe, a Nation might subsist without a standing Army?

Whether the manner of Trial by Juries in civil as well as criminal causes, would be of advantage to a country?

Whether would the mass of the People of Europe gain or lose more from universal monarchy sprung from the dominion of the sea, than from that arising from the conquest of the land?

Of the two great members of the Constitution of G. Britain, the aristocratical and the democratical, which would be the most threatening to subvert its frame, was most power thrown into its frame?

Should the old laws for taxing the freeholders for the support of their Representatives during their attendance of Parliament be revived?

Would it hurt the Country to have the extraordinary Lords of Session revived?

History the revival of the ancient duties of Religion be advantageous or disadvantageous to Society?

Whether the English and colonies on the Continent of America
Whether the Revival of the ancient custom of Adoption be advantageous or disadvantageous to Society?

Whether the Union of all our Colonies on the Continent of America would be of advantage to Britain and those colonies? — Debated.

Whether a nation may subsist without Public Spirit?

Whether the true interest of Britain requires that we should always remain in amity with Holland?

Whether it would be of advantage to Society that the Women held places of Trust and profit in the State? — Debated.

Whether the institution of Convents and Nunneries is prejudicial to the population of a country?

Whether active or speculative life affords the most solid happiness?

Whether honours ought to be saleable?

Whether can an ambitious man be happy?

Whether would a perfect equality in the external condition of men be desirable?

Whether Peerages ought to be territorial?

Whether Quackery is not more useful for obtaining success in some of the liberal Professions than real merit?

Whether the delays and expense attending judicial proceedings are not both necessary and useful to Society?

Whether severe or moderate punishments have the greatest effect in preventing the commission of crimes? — Debated.

Whether discretionary powers ought to be allowed to Judges? — Debated.

Whether ought the youngest or the eldest child to inherit the estate of their fathers?

Whether the popular form of government be not of all forms the worst?

Whether a large or small Capital be of most advantage to a state? — Debated.

Whether the pursuit of Industry and Trade would produce good or bad effects upon the morals of a Nation? — Debated.

Edinburgh July 20, 1762. Whether our sending troops to the assistance of Portugal be expedient. — Debated.
APPENDIX 'E'

Discourses and Questions Debated in the
Belles Lettres Society.

January 26, 1759. Debated:— Whether the expectation or actual enjoyment of any object considered under the notion of good yields the most true Delight?

February 2, 1759. Debated:— Whether the Athenian or Lacedemonian Education was most eligible? Whether mankind have been happier since the Introduction of the arts or before the Invention of them?

February 9, 1759. Debated:— Whether a great Town or a small one is the most proper place for an University?

February 16, 1759. Debated:— Whether a good condition with the Fear of becoming ill, or a bad one with the hope of becoming well, please or displease most?

February 23, 1759. Debated:— What are the causes of the Decline of Eloquence in Modern Times, and what are the proper means to restore it? Whether the Blame of the second Punic war was upon the side of the Romans or Carthagians?

March 2, 1759. Debated:— Whether the Characters of Nations depend most upon moral or physical causes?

March 9, 1759. Debated:— Whether are entails advantageous or disadvantageous to this country?

1. Debated also on August 1, 1760 and January 30, 1761.
2. Debated also on June 20, 1760 and February 8, 1761.
3. Debated also on January 21, 1763.
4. See also the Discourse for November 25, 1763.
5. Debated also on January 9, 1761.
6. Debated also on March 30, 1759 and May 22, 1761.

* Compiled from the MS. records of the society now in the National Library of Scotland.
March 16, 1759. Debated:— Whether Trade and Commerce tend to promote Luxury or not?

March 23, 1759. Debated:— Whether a person in a solitary or social life has the best opportunity of improving in virtue?

March 30, 1759. Debated:— Whether are entails advantageous or disadvantageous to this country?

April 6, 1759. Debated:— Whether a Bill allowing the Importation of Irish Cattle be of advantage or disadvantage to the Kingdom of Great Britain?

April 13, 1759. Debated:— Whether the present Constitution of Great Britain is most apt to degenerate into an absolute monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical form of Government?

April 20, 1759. Debated:— Whether the Stage in its present state is of advantage or disadvantage to society?

April 27, 1759. Debated:— Whether Learning flourishes most in an absolute or limited Monarchy?

May 4, 1759. Debated:— Whether Poetry, Painting, Music, Statuary or Eloquence tend most to improve or corrupt the morals of mankind?

May 11, 1759. Debated:— Whether the Clergy should be allowed to have any management in Civil Affairs?

May 18, 1759. Debated:— Whether a Nation can arrive at the highest Grandeur by trade and commerce or by war?

May 25, 1759. Debated:— Whether a general national Militia would be of advantage or disadvantage to the Kingdom of Great Britain?

June 1, 1759. Debated:— Whether the Union of the two crowns of Scotland and England and that of the two Kingdoms has been of advantage or Disadvantage to Scotland?

1. Debated also on July 25, 1760.

2. Debated also on March 9, 1759, and May 22, 1761.

3. Debated also February 11, 1765.

4. Debated also March 28, 1760.

5. Debated also on July 16, 1760. See also the Discourse given on February 5, 1762.
June 8, 1759. Debated:—Whether or not Brutus did right in killing Caesar?  

June 15, 1759. Debated:—Whether the Liberty of the Press is of advantage or disadvantage to a free State?  

June 22, 1759. Mr. Stewart pronounced an Oration the subject of which was Self Love and its effects. Debated:—Whether Excise Laws are prejudicial to Great Britain?  

June 29, 1759. Mr. Stevenson pronounced an oration upon the Passions and affections of the mind. Debated:—Whether Commerce and the Arts depending upon it have been of Advantage to mankind?  

July 6, 1759. Mr. Cuming delivered a discourse in which he traced the Progress of Eloquence in Greece and in Rome downwards to the days of Cicero. Debated:—Whether those who enjoy Pensions or Places during Pleasure or for a set number of years should be allowed to sit and vote in the House of Commons?  

July 13, 1759. Mr. Douglas delivered a funerall Elogium on a Gentleman lately deceased. Debated:—Whether a Monarchy or a Republic are by their Nature best Calculated for Duration?  

July 20, 1759. Mr. Douglas delivered a Discourse on the nature and Design of the Theatre. Debated:—Whether ought any person capable of exercising a lawful Employment to be hindered from following that by Corporations?  

July 27, 1759. Mr. Hamilton delivered a Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul. Debated:—Whether it is for the Advantage of Great Britain to allow her subjects to serve as Mercenaires abroad?  

1. Debated also on February 8, 1760 and March 2, 1764.  
2. Debated also on March 21, 1760.  
3. See also the debated question of November 27, 1761.  
4. See also the Discourse given on February 16, 1764.  
5. Debated also on February 22, 1760.  
6. A Discourse on this same subject was given on December 2, 1763.
August 5, 1759. Mr. Douglas (gave) a Discourse on the rise and progress of Poetry.
Debated:- Whether the Invention of Gun-powder has been of Advantage to the world?

August 10, 1759. Mr. Stevenson delivered a Discourse upon Education.
Debated:- Whether it would be right to pass a Law extending the Royalty of the City of Edinburgh over any part of the adjacent country?

August 17, 1759. James Dunbar, Esq. delivered a Discourse on the Advantages of peace.
Debated:- Whether the growing Power of a neighbouring state authorizes the committing of hostilities?

November 16, 1759. Debated:- Whether poetry painting or music affect the mind in the most lively manner or move most the passions?¹

November 23, 1759. Mr. Douglas (gave a discourse) the subject of which was Eloquence.²
Debated:- Whether Enthusiasm or Superstition are the most dangerous Extremes in Religion?

November 30, 1759. Mr. Govane delivered a Discourse upon Eloquence.²
Debated:- From what principle in human nature can the pleasure arising from inhuman spectacles be accounted for?

December 7, 1759. Mr. Spottiswoode delivered a Discourse on the Rise Progress and effects of commerce.
Debated:- Whether the Philosopher the Poet or the Orator have been the best instructors of mankind or the best members of a state?³

December 14, 1759. Debated:- Whether avarice or Ambition are the predominant passions in the human mind?

December 21, 1759. Mr. Dickson delivered a Discourse on knowledge of the world and Mr. MacKenzie delivered a Discourse on the rise and Progress of Learning in Great Britain.
Debated:- Whether the arts and sciences have been carried to the greatest Degree of Perfection by the ancients or moderns?

1. Debated also on January 25, 1760 and February 12, 1762.

2. Discourses also on November 25 and 30, 1759, January 4, 1760, December 19, 1760, and March 27, 1761.

3. Debated also on December 7, 1764 and July 4, 1760.
December 28, 1759. Debated:—Whether the Conduct of the Romans in ravishing the Sabine Women can be reconciled with the principles of Honour and Justice?

January 4, 1760. Mr. Cumin delivered a Discourse on the Eloquence of the Moderns.¹
Debated:—Whether it is most useful to study men or books?

January 11, 1760. Mr. Grant this night delivered a discourse on self conceit.
Debated:—Whether the Revival of adoptions would be of advantage to the world?

January 18, 1760. Debated:—Whether it be agreeable to the principles of Humanity and Christianity that any of the Human Species should be made slaves.²

Debated:—Whether Poetry painting music move the passions most or affect the mind in the most lively manner?³

February 1, 1760. Mr. Stewart this night delivered a Speech in the Character of Hannibal to Prusias King of Bythinia.
Debated:—Whether it is agreeable or repugnant to equity that Eloquence be practiced in Courts of Justice?⁴

February 8, 1760. Mr. Hamilton delivered a Discourse on the Eloquence of the Barr.
Debated:—Whether Brutus did right in Killing Caesar?⁵

February 15, 1760. Mr. Balfour delivered a Panegyrick on the late Major Wolfe and Mr. Dickson a Dissertation on Love.
Debated:—Whether the Arts and Polite Literature have been carried to the greatest degree of Perfection by the British or French?

1. Discourses on this subject were delivered on November 23, 1759, November 30, 1759, December 19, 1760, and March 27, 1761.

2. Debated also on February 5, 1762.

3. Debated also on November 16, 1759, and February 12, 1762.

4. Debated also on December 19, 1760, December 10, 1762, and given as a Discourse on February 8, 1760.

5. Debated also on June 8, 1759 and March 2, 1764.
February 22, 1760. Mr. Stevenson pronounced a Discourse on the Passions. 1
Debated:-- Whether a monarchy or a Republikk are by their nature best calculated for Duration? 2

February 29, 1760. Mr. Spottiswoode delivered a Discourse on Civil Liberty.
Debated:-- Whether severe or moderate punishments most effectually restrain crimes? 3

March 7, 1760. Mr. McKenzie delivered a Comparison betwixt Caesar and Cromwell.
Debated:-- Whether Virginius did right in killing his Daughter? 4

March 21, 1760. Mr. Cumin pronounced a Speech in the Character of Brutus to the Conspirators.
Debated:-- Whether the Liberty of the Press is of advantage to a free State? 5

March 28, 1760. Mr. Stewart delivered a discourse on the Origin of Civil Government and Mr. Rose a Dissertation on the Connection of Taste and Judgment.
Debated:-- Whether Poetry painting (musick statuary and Eloquence) tend to Improve or corrupt the Morals of mankind? 6

April (4), 1760. Mr. Dundas delivered a Discourse on Religious Liberty.
Debated:-- Whether Prescription is contrary to Natural Equity? 7

April 11, 1760. Mr. Hepburn delivered a Discourse on Patriotism.
Debated:-- Whether a Nation once sunk in Luxury and Effeminancy, can ever arrive att its former worth and Excellency? 8

1. Given as a Discourse also on December 18, 1761.
2. Debated also on July 13, 1759.
3. Debated also on January 23, 1761.
4. Debated also on January 16, 1761.
5. Debated also on June 15, 1759.
6. Debated also on May 4, 1759.
7. Debated also on February 19, 1762.
April 18, 1760. (The question from the last meeting continued.)

April 25, 1760. Mr. Sinclair delivered a discourse on rash vows.
Debated:—Whether critics have been of most advantage or prejudice to Learning?¹

May (9), 1760. Mr. Cockburn delivered a discourse on the propriety of mixing Love in Tragedy.
Debated:—Whether the Institution of Slavery is of advantage to the free?

May (16), 1760. Mr. Pringle delivered a discourse on Publick Spirit.²
Debated:—Whether the Custom of Travelling is in general advantageous?

May 23, 1760. Debated:—Whether Civil Military of Ecclesiastical Employments are most honourable in a free state?

May 30, 1760. Debated:—Whether Liberty may be defended by actions in themselves bad?

June 6, 1760. Debated:—Whether Prosperity or Adversity is the most trying state for virtue?³

June 13, 1760. Debated:—Whether it is more for the advantage of society that condemned criminals should be employed in publick work rather than put to death or banished?

June 20, 1760. Mr. Brainer delivered a discourse on gratitude.
Debated:—Whether mankind has been happier since the introduction of the arts or before the introduction of them?

June 27, 1760. Mr. Robert Hepburn delivered a discourse on the Preeminence of History over Imitative poetry.
Debated:—Whether it would not be better for this Nation that the Lower Class of mankind were neither allowed to read or write?⁴

July 4, 1760. Mr. Crane delivered a discourse on the advantages derived from the study of History.⁵
Debated:—Whether the Philosopher or the Poet or the orator have been most usefull to Society⁶

¹. Debated also on July 11, 1760.
². Given as a Discourse also on November 21, 1760.
³. Debated also on February 20, 1761.
⁴. Debated also on February 13, 1761.
⁵. Given as a Discourse also on May 8, 1761 and January 21, 1763.
⁶. Debated also on December 7, 1759 and December 7, 1764.
July 11, 1760. Mr. Cullen delivered a Discourse upon the influence of Manners above Laws.  
Debated:—Whether critics have been of the most service or prejudice to Learning?

July 18, 1760. Debated:—Whether a nation can arrive at the highest Grandeur by Commerce or by war?

July 25, 1760. Debated:—Whether society or solitude are the most proper schools for virtue and knowledge?

August 1, 1760. Debated:—Whether the expectation or actual Enjoyment of any object considered under the notion of Good yields the most true Delight?

August 8, 1760. Debated:—Whether the greatest National Evils are produced by the Tyranny of a Prince or by the faction of a Republic?

November 14, 1760. Debated:—Whether the influence of manners is above Laws or the influence of Laws above manners?

November 21, 1760. Mr. Douglas pronounced a Discourse... upon the Influence of Publick spirit.  
Debated:—Whether Laws have an Influence over Manners or Manners over Laws?

1. Given as a Discourse also on December 12, 1760 and January 22, 1762. Debated also on November 14 and November 21, 1760, and December 18, 1761.

2. Debated also on April 25, 1760.

3. Given as a Discourse also on February 5, 1762. Debated also on May 18, 1759.

4. Debated also on March 23, 1759.

5. Debated also on January 26, 1759 and January 30, 1761.

6. Debated also on February 17, 1764.

7. Discoursed on July 11, 1760, December 12, 1760, and January 22, 1762. Debated on November 21, 1760 and December 18, 1761.

8. Given as a Discourse also on May 16, 1760.

9. Discoursed on July 11, 1760, December 12, 1760, and January 22, 1762. Debated November 14, 1760 and December 18, 1761.
November 28, 1760. Debated:— Whether Arts and Sciences flourish more in an absolute or Free Government?

December 5, 1760. Mr. Balfour delivered a Discourse on Study. Debated:— Whether address to the imagination or understanding has the greatest influence upon mankind?

December 12, 1760. Mr. Buchan delivered a Discourse on the prevalence of Manners over Laws. Debated:— Whether the Tyranny of a prince or the factions of a Republic produce the greatest national evils?

December 19, 1760. Mr. Campbell delivered a Discourse on Eloquence. Debated:— Whether it be agreeable to the Laws of Equity that Eloquence should be practised in Courts of Justice?

January 9, 1761. Debated:— Whether the Character of Nations depends more upon Physical or Moral and Political causes?

January 16, 1761. Debated:— Whether Virginius did well in killing his daughter?

January 23, 1761. Mr. D. Grant gave a Discourse upon Impudence. Debated:— Whether severe or moderate punishments tend most to restrain Crimes?

January 30, 1761. Mr. Urquhart gave a Discourse on Friendship. Debated:— Whether anticipation or enjoyment afford most delight?

1762

1. Discoursed on July 11, 1760 and January 22, A Debated on November 14, 1760, November 21, 1760, and December 18, 1761.

2. Debated also on August 8, 1760 and February 17, 1764.

3. Given as a Discourse on November 23, 1759, November 30, 1759, January 4, 1760, and March 27, 1761.

4. Debated also on December 10, 1762 and February 1, 1760. Given as a Discourse on February 8, 1760.

5. Debated also on March 2, 1759.

6. Debated also on March 7, 1760.

7. Debated also on February 29, 1760.

8. Debated also on January 26, 1759 and August 1, 1760.
February 8, 1761. Debated:— Whether mankind have been happier since
the Introduction of arts and sciences or before the Invention
of them?¹

February 15, 1761. Debated:— Whether it would not be better for this
country that the lower class of Mankind could neither read
nor write?²

February 20, 1761. Mr. Robertson delivered a Discourse on Honour
and Mr. Fleeming one upon Ambition.
Debated:— Whether Prosperity or adversity is the most trying
state for Virtue?³

February 26, 1761. Debated:— Whether the repentance stool should
be taken away?

March 6, 1761. Debated:— Whether Polite or Mechanical Arts have
been of most advantage to Mankind?

March 20, 1761. Debated:— Whether Horatius should have suffered
Death for killing his sister?⁴

March 27, 1761. Mr. Hog delivered a discourse on Eloquence.⁵
Debated:— Whether in a free country any part of the power of
a Magistrate ought to be left undefined?

April 3, 1761. Mr. Brown delivered a discourse on the love of our
country.
Debated:— Whether a theatre should be allowed in the
Neighbourhood of an University?

April 10, 1761. Mr. Chalmers delivered a discourse, on the
necessity and utility of Gentlemen of Fortune studying Law.
Debated:— Whether, abstracting from all regard to futurity
a virtuous or vicious course of life is most eligible?⁶

1. Debated also on February 2, 1759 and June 20, 1760.
2. Debated also on June 27, 1760.
3. Debated also on June 6, 1760.
4. Debated also on February 4, 1763.
5. Given as a Discourse on November 23, 1759, November 30, 1759,
   January 4, 1760, December 19, 1760.
6. Given as a Discourse also on February 19, 1762.
April 17, 1761. Mr. Lothian delivered a discourse on the Comparative merit of Tragedy and Comedy.
  Debated:— Whether a Marriage can be happy where the Wife is of an understanding superior to the Husband?

April 24, 1761. Debated:— Is popular esteem any test of merit?

May 1, 1761. Debated:— Whether is the reading and writing of Romances to be discouraged?

May 8, 1761. Mr. Achyndachy sat as President in Course: and entertained the Society with a discourse on "the great advantages resulting to different ranks of Mankind from the Study of History?" Mr. Blair also gave a discourse on "Simplicity and refinement in Writing."
  Debated:— Whether do the Tragedies which end happily or those which end unhappily convey most pleasure and improvement to the audience?

May 15, 1761. Debated:— Whether the profession of a Lawyer has done most good or hurt to Society?

May 22, 1761. Mr. Duncan favoured the Society with a discourse showing the unhappy consequences which follow the indulging in Sensual pleasure, and particularly the hinderance it throws in the way to Intellectual Improvement.
  Debated:— Whether it is agreeable to equity that a successor should be limited in the disposition of his property by the Will of his predecessor?

May 29, 1761. Mr. Hamilton delivered his discourse "on the mistakes in judging of characters."
  Debated:— Whether in a Military Nation the practice of Duelling might not in some cases be permitted?

November 27, 1761. Debated:— Whether self Love be the sole principle of all our Actions?

December 4, 1761. Mr. Elphinston delivered a Discourse on Envy.
  Debated:— Whether the man of strong passions or of weak passions is the most happy?

1. Debated also on March 11, 1763.
2. Given as Discourses on July 4, 1760 and January 21, 1763.
3. Debated also on March 9, 1759.
4. Debated also on January 28, 1763 and February 10, 1764.
5. Given as a Discourse on June 22, 1759.
December 11, 1761. Mr. Walter Campbell gave a Discourse on Courage. 
Debated:—Whether ingratitude should be punished by the Civil 
Magistrates?

December 18, 1761. Mr. Cooper gave a discourse on the Happiness and 
Misery derived from the Passions. 
Debated:—Whether the influence of Laws is above Manners, or 
the influence of Manners above Laws?

January 8, 1762. Mr. Somerville gave a discourse on Benevolence. 
Debated:—Whether are men most excited to action by the hope 
or reward, or fear of punishment?

January 15, 1762. Mr. Lockhart gave a discourse on the necessity 
of the Improvement of Commerce, Agriculture, and the increase 
of the Inhabitants in the Kingdom of Scotland. 
Debated:—Whether Women ought to be taught the sciences?

January 22, 1762. Lord Cardross delivered his Discourse on Laws and 
Manners. 
Debated:—Whether the Character of Cato or Atticus is most 
excellent?

January 29, 1762. Mr. Stevenson delivered his discourse on the System 
of the Stoic Philosophy. 
Debated:—Whether a Foundling hospital be of Advantage to a 
Nation?

February 5, 1762. Mr. Spottiswoode Delivered his Discourse on the 
Advantages of a Commercial State over a Warlike Nation. 
Debated:—Whether it be agreeable to the principles of 
Humanity and Christianity that any of the Human-Species 
should be made Slaves?

1. Given as a Discourse also on February 22, 1760.

2. Discourses on this subject were given on July 11, 1760, December 
12, 1760, and January 22, 1762. It was debated on November 14 
and November 21, 1760.

3. Discourses on this subject were also given on July 11, 1760 and 
December 12, 1760. It was debated on November 14 and 21, 1760, 
and December 18, 1761.

4. Debated also on May 18, 1759 and July 18, 1760.

5. Debated also on January 18, 1760.
February 12, 1762. Mr. Cockburn delivered his discourse on Avarice and Prodigality demonstrating that the Tendency of the latter was of the most dangerous consequences to Society. Debated:—Whether Poetry, Painting, or Music affect the mind in the most lively manner?¹

February 19, 1762. Mr. Sinclair delivered his discourse proving that without the consideration of a future state a virtuous life is most eligible.² Debated:—Whether a nation once sunk in luxury and effeminacy can ever arrive at its former power and grandeur?³

February 26, 1762. Mr. Pringle gave a discourse proving that the interests of the people should be preferred to that of the King. Debated:—Should Polygamy be tolerated?⁴

March 12, 1762. Debated:—At what period of life are we most happy?

December 3, 1762. Debated:—Whether by the law of nature females were entitled to equal succession with males?

December 10, 1762. Debated:—Whether eloquence ought to be practised in courts of justice?⁵

December 16, 1762. Debated:—Whether divorces by mutual consent ought to be allowed?

January 14, 1765. Mr. Buchan gave a discourse on the progress of arts and sciences. Debated:—Whether ought Regulus to have broke his word to the Carthaginians?

January 21, 1765. Mr. Balfour gave a discourse on the advantages arising from the study of history. Debated:—Whether a university in a metropolis or in a remote part of the country is most properly situated for education?⁶

1. Debated also on November 16, 1759 and January 25, 1760.
2. Debated also on April 10, 1761.
3. Debated also on April 11, 1760.
4. Debated also on December 14, 1764.
5. Debated also on February 1, 1760 and December 19, 1760. Given as a discourse on February 8, 1760.
6. Given as discourses on July 4, 1760 and May 8, 1761.
7. Debated also on February 9, 1759.
January 28, 1763. Debated:— Ought duelling to be permitted?  

February 4, 1763. Debated:— Should Horatius have suffered death for killing his sister?  

February 11, 1763. Mr. Cullen delivered his Discourse on this question, "Whether in painting the Painter or Connoisseur or the Unexperienced Spectator is the most accurate judge?" Debated:— Whether the Stage is of advantage or disadvantage to Society?  

February 18, 1763. Mr. Brown gave his Discourse on this question, "Whether a publick or private Education is best?" Debated:— Whether the right of primogeniture respecting Succession both to Honour and Lands be natural and proper?  

February 25, 1763. Mr. Duncan gave his discourse on Ambition. Debated:— Whether a Law allowing the General naturalization of foreigners would be of advantage to the Kingdom?  

March 11, 1763. Debated:— Should Reading and w mistring of Romances be encouraged?  

November 25, 1763. Mr. Blair delivered his Discourse upon the causes of the decline of Eloquence in modern times. Debated:— Whether the Laws against Treason whereby the Father forfeits not only for himself but for his children be agreeable to Equity and useful for Society?  

December 2, 1763. Mr. Dick delivered his Discourse on Dramatical performances. Debated:— Whether the open Easy and Sincere or the Crafty Politick and Deceitful Character is the best fitted to succeed in the world?  

1. Debated also on May 29, 1761 and February 10, 1764.  

2. Debated also on March 20, 1761.  

3. Debated also on April 20, 1759.  

4. Debated also on May 1, 1761.  

5. Debated also on February 23, 1759.  

6. Debated also on February 3, 1764.  

7. Given as a Discourse also on July 20, 1759.
December 9, 1763. Debated:—Whether is it most for the advantage of Religion that the Clergy should have great or Small Stipends?

December 16, 1763. Debated:—Whether the Invention of money has been most Commodious or pernicious to mankind?

December 23, 1763. Debated:—Whether it be for the advantage of Scotland to have the marriage act extended to this part of the kingdom?

January 20, 1764. Mr. Warden Delivered his Discourse on The Necessity of a Religion to the Support and Welfare of Society. Debated:—Whether a Landed or Commercial Interest is most favourable to publick Liberty?

January 28, 1764. Debated:—Would it not be better that Civil Causes were tried by a Jury?

February 3, 1764. Debated:—Whether the Laws against Treason whereby the father forfeits Not only for himself but for his children be agreeable to Equity and usefull for Society.¹

February 10, 1764. Mr. Somervel delivered his Discourse this night on Pride. Debated:—Ought Duelling to be permitted.²

February 17, 1764. Mr. Cooper Delivered his Discourse this night on Commerce.³ Debated:—Whether the greatest national Evils are produced by the Tyranny of a Prince or by the factions of a Republic.⁴

February 24, 1764. Debated:—Whether is the ancient or modern Treatment of women preferable?

March 2, 1764. Debated:—Whether Brutus did right in Killing Caesar ⁵

¹ Debated also on November 25, 1763.

² Debated also on May 29, 1761 and January 28, 1763.

³ Debated also on June 29, 1759.

⁴ Debated also on August 8, 1760 and December 12, 1760.

⁵ Debated also on June 8, 1759 and February 8, 1760.
December 7, 1764. Debated:—Whether the Philosopher, the Orator, or the Poet have been most useful to Society?¹

December 14, 1764. Debated:—Whether Polygamy ought to be Tolerated?²

1. Debated also on December 7, 1759 and July 4, 1760.

2. Debated also on February 26, 1762.
A List of Members and Visitors to the Belles Lettres Society
Compiled from the Manuscript Records of the Society.

**Honorary Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Created Honorary Member on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Hugh Blair</td>
<td>May 8, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Cardross</td>
<td>Dec. 11, 1761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Andrew Crosbie, Advocate</td>
<td>Jan. 18, 1764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. William Cullen</td>
<td>Nov. 14, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dick (Alexander Dick, Prof. of Civil Law.)</td>
<td>April 3, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Ferguson, Professor of Experimental Philosophy</td>
<td>June 6, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Dr. Fordyce</td>
<td>June 6, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hope, D. M.</td>
<td>June 20, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hume, Esq.</td>
<td>June 6, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hume</td>
<td>June 6, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. John Main, Minister at Athelstaneford</td>
<td>Mar. 10, 1762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Joseph McCormick</td>
<td>May 13, 1761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Alexander Murray, Advocate</td>
<td>Feb. 15, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Dr. Robertson</td>
<td>Apr. 25, 1760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. Many of these men first appeared in the Society as visitors, see list of visitors.

Honorary Membership was also granted to many Ordinary Members who had attended the Society for two years, see list of Ordinary Members.
Mr. David Ross, younger of Inverhasty, one of the Principal Clerks of Session. Jan. 18, 1764

Mr. John Runnels of America, Phil. Doct. June 20, 1760

John Stevenson, Professor of Logic May 8, 1760

Mr. Wm. Wallace, Advocate Apr. 25, 1760

Ordinary Members.

Robert Aberdeen admitted February 10, 1764.

Achynancy admitted January 16, 1761.

Andrew Balfour, Esq. admitted February 23, 1759; made Honorary Member December 8, 1762, later resigned to become an Ordinary Member again.

(William Ballantyne) his petition for membership was accepted in 1753, but he did not take his seat in the society.

Blair admitted January 16, 1761.

John Bonar petitioned for membership four times, finally accepted March 11, 1763.

John Braimer or Brymer Esq. admitted March 2, 1759; extruded June 29, 1759, but later readmitted.

Mr. Charles Brown admitted December 12, 1760; made Honorary Member December 8, 1762, later resigned to become an Ordinary Member again.

Colin Campbell admitted April 18, 1760; extruded March 12, 1762.

Walter Campbell founding member; extruded for non-attendance March 2, 1759, but readmitted March 20, 1761; again extruded December 10, 1762.

Patrick Chalmers admitted December 19, 1760; made an Honorary Member January 12, 1763.

Clark admitted January 20, 1764.

Cochran admitted January 20, 1764.
Archibald Cockburn, Student of Law admitted March 28, 1760; extruded March 9, 1763, but readmitted November 18, 1763; made an Honorary Member but later resigned to become an Ordinary Member again.

Mr. George Cooper, Student of Law admitted December 11, 1761.

Patrick Crawfurd, Esq. admitted January 14, 1763.

Mr. Cullen first appears as a member June 20, 1760; made an Honorary Member but later resigned to become an Ordinary Member.

Mr. Patrick Cumin admitted June 22, 1759; made as Honorary Member December 9, 1761.

Mr. William Dick, Student of Law admitted February 15, 1761.

James Dickson, Esq. admitted February 23, 1759; made Honorary Member December 8, 1762.

James Sholto Douglas founding member; made an Honorary Member February 11, 1761.


Keith Dunbar admitted March 16, 1759; extruded December 14, 1759.

James Dunbar, Esq. admitted March 16, 1759.

Mr. James Dunbar, Student of Divinity admitted January 14, 1763.

George Duncan, Esq. admitted March 9, 1759.

Henry Dundas, Esq. Student of Civil Law admitted March 21, 1760; made an Honorary Member March 10, 1762, but later resigned to become an Ordinary Member again.

Elphinstone admitted January 16, 1761.

Thomas Fairholm, Esq. admitted April 3, 1760.

Alexander Ferguson admitted March 11, 1763.

James Stewart Fleming admitted May 25, 1760; made an Honorary Member December 8, 1762.

Gillespie, Esq. admitted February 2, 1759; extruded June 1, 1759.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Admission Dates and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Gordon</td>
<td>admitted November 25, 1763.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Govane</td>
<td>founding member; extruded February 1, 1760; readmitted June 6, 1760.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Graeme</td>
<td>appears as a member June 13, 1760; made an Honorary Member December 8, 1762.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Donald Grant</td>
<td>admitted November 30, 1759.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. James Grant</td>
<td>founding member; made an Honorary Member July 13, 1759.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rt. Hon. Lord Greville</td>
<td>admitted December 8, 1762.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Hepburn, Esq.</td>
<td>admitted April 18, 1760.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Archb. Hamilton, Student of Physic</td>
<td>admitted February 15, 1761.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hamilton, Esq.</td>
<td>admitted February 16, 1759; Secretary to the society from August 1759 to January 1760.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hepburn</td>
<td>admitted March 21, 1760.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Hogg</td>
<td>petition for membership accepted August 1, 1760.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Hunter, Esq.</td>
<td>admitted January 19, 1759; Secretary to the society until August 1759; extruded January 4, 1760.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Leigh</td>
<td>admitted January 14, 1763.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Lockhart, Student of Law</td>
<td>admitted December 11, 1761; extruded March 14, 1764.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. William Lothian</td>
<td>admitted January 9, 1761; made an Honorary Member January 12, 1765.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Mackenzie</td>
<td>admitted April 13, 1759; Secretary to the society from January 11, to the 2nd Friday in July, 1760; made an Honorary Member February 10, 1762.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLeod</td>
<td>admitted March 11, 1763.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archibald Ogilvie</td>
<td>admitted May 8, 1760; extruded March 22, 1761.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pringle</td>
<td>admitted January 20, 1764.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John Pringle
Student of Law

John Pringle, Student of Law

Robert Robertson, Student of Law

Thomas Robins or Robbins

Mr. James Rose

John Seton

Robert Sinclair, Student of Law

Andrew Smith

Thomas Somerville, Student of Divinity

John Spottiswoode, Esq.

Alexander Stevenson, Esq.

Thomas Stewart, Esq.

Wm. Urquhart

Mr. John Warden

James Watson, Esq.

admitted April 3, 1760; made an Honorary Member later resigned to become an Ordinary Member again; extruded March 9, 1763.

admitted April 25, 1760.

founding member; extruded April 13, 1759; readmitted June 6, 1760; left Edinburgh March 27, 1761.

admitted February 8, 1760.

petition for membership accepted March 14, 1764.

admitted April 3, 1760; resigning March 9, 1763; reinstated November 18, 1765; made an Honorary Member but resigned later to become an Ordinary Member again.

admitted May 11, 1759; expelled May 25, 1759, for "behaviour inconsistent with the Decency and Decorum, hitherto observed in this society."

admitted December 11, 1761.

admitted March 30, 1759; Secretary to the society from July 4, 1760 to April 8, 1761; again from February 10, 1762 for an indeterminate period; made an Honorary Member on February 10, 1762.

admitted March 9, 1759; made an Honorary Member on March 10, 1762.

admitted May 18, 1759; made an Honorary Member on December 9, 1761; resigned to become an Ordinary Member again.

admitted April 18, 1760; made an Honorary Member on January 12, 1765.

admitted May 15, 1761.

admitted April 18, 1760; extruded May 22, 1761.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Runnels of the Province of Holland (?)</td>
<td>Mar. 7, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Pringle, Student of Law</td>
<td>Mar. 21, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. George Buchan, Student of Law</td>
<td>Mar. 28, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert Dick, Professor of Civil Law</td>
<td>Apr. 3, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. William Wallace, Advocate, Professor of History</td>
<td>Apr. 18, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Dr. Robertson</td>
<td>Apr. 25, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Dr. Hugh Blair</td>
<td>May 8, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hume, Esq.</td>
<td>May 15, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Carlyle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Dr. Alex Carlyle, Minister at Inveresk</td>
<td>May 25, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Spence, Minister at the Wemyss</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Joseph McCormack, Minister at Thelmeny</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. McDowell, Minister at Mackertown</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Adam Ferguson, Professor of Natural Philosophy</td>
<td>May 30, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. &amp; Hon. Mr. Bruce of Balliol College Oxon.</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Turnbull, Minister at Northwick</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Mark, Minister of Haddington</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Cloag, Minister at Cockpen</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Murray, Minister at Aberyst (?)</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Murray, Minister at North Berwick</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jas. Fordyce, late at Aloa</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Carlyle</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. McCormack</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Rippard (?))</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Home, late at Elsonford</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Cullen</td>
<td>June 6, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proff. Fergusson</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Cloage (?)</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Anthony Ferguson</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jas. Boswell, Esqr.</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Fitzmaurice</td>
<td>July 11, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas Crombie, from Cambridge</td>
<td>Aug. 1, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Francis Home, from Cambridge</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Laurie, Minister at Hawick</td>
<td>Nov. 21, 1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Geo. Bethune</td>
<td>do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name and Date of Meeting

November 28, 1760
Mr. Robt McClellan

December 12, 1760
The Hon. Lord Gravel
Mr. Spearman
Mr. Couper
Mr. Swinton
Mr. Barclay

December 19, 1760
Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Carlisle

January 9, 1761
Mr. Duff, Advocate
Mr. Crosbie, Advocate
Mr. Hog, Merchant
Mr. Fordyce, Merchant

January 16, 1761
Mr. Patrick Heron

January 30, 1761
Mr. John Hepburn
Mr. John Watson
Mr. Alex. Hay

February 11, 1761
Mr. Martin
Mr. Telfer
Mr. Hume
Mr. Campbell
Mr. Rolland

February 15, 1761
Rt. Hon. Ld. Greville
Dr. Clausen
Mr. Spearman
Mr. Liscoe
Mr. Snibert
Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Smith
Mr. Martin
Mr. Swinton

Name, and Date of Meeting

February 20, 1761
Mr. Johnston
Mr. Henderson
Mr. Dewar

February 26, 1761
The Rev. Mr. Anderson
Mr. Baillie
Mr. Graham
Mr. Balfour
Mr. Stewart
Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Ross
Mr. Ayton
Mr. Lothian

March 20, 1761
Rt. Hon. Lord Greville Ker of Morrison, Esq.
Dr. Francis Hume
Mr. John Baillie, Writer
Mr. Alexr. Campbell

March 27, 1761
Keith Dunbar
Robt. Innes, Writer
Wm. Miller

April 8, 1761
Anthony Ferguson (Made Secretary to the Society and for that purpose appointed as "perpetual visitor"). Resigned February 10, 1762 because of ill health.

April 10, 1761
Sir William Forbes, Bart.
Mr. John Gordon
Mr. Peter Robertson
Mr. William Lock
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 17, 1761</td>
<td>Lord Greville, Mr. John Clerk, Mr. Alexr. Bruce, Mr. John Lothian, Mr. John Angus, Mr. William Campbell, Writer</td>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24, 1761</td>
<td>The Rev. Mr. Ker, Mr. Robt. Malcolm, Mr. Henry Smith, Mr. Archd. Hope, Mr. Garland, Mr. Urquhart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 1761</td>
<td>Alexr. Scott, P. Robertson, Mr. Murray, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Scoble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8, 1761</td>
<td>Lord Greville, Mr. Fordyce, Mr. Malcolm, Mr. Lindsay, Mr. Fraser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 1761</td>
<td>Mr. James Stewart, Mr. A. Pierie, Mr. Arch. Hope, Mr. Alex Bruce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22, 1761</td>
<td>Geo. Dempster, The Rev. Mr. Duncan, The Rev. Mr. Walker, Mr. Carlisle, Town Clerk of Dumfries, Mr. Cathcart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 29, 1761</td>
<td>Prof. Watson, Lord Greville, Mr. McVicar, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Alex Murray, Mr. Cleverhall, Mr. Bradford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27, 1761</td>
<td>Lord Greville, Jas. Dunbar, Student at Law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4, 1761</td>
<td>Lord Cardross, Anthony Hamilton, Thomas Somerville, Mr. Jas. Chalmers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 11, 1761</td>
<td>Mr. Honeyman, Mr. Stewart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 8, 1762</td>
<td>Mr. Gloag, Mr. Miller</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 1762</td>
<td>Mr. Hogg, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Seton, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Thomson, Ed. Greville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26, 1762</td>
<td>Colin Drummond, M. D., John Robertson, Andrew Stewart, Writer, William Law, Advocate, Robert Murray, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 5, 1762</td>
<td>Mr. Robert Fairhoime, Merchant, Alexr. Arbutinot, Merchant, John Angus, Merchant, Anthony Barclay, Writer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 12, 1762</td>
<td>Mr. Geo. Hume, Robt. Murray, Student at Law, John Lothian, Merchant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19, 1762</td>
<td>Lord Greville, Mr. Buchan of Lothian, Mr. Alexr. Menzies, Writer in Edinburgh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| February 26, 1762 | Lord Greville  
|              | Mr. Brodie  
|              | Mr. Reid  
|              | Mr. Balfour  
|              | Mr. Home  
|              | Mr. Seaton  |
| December 3, 1762 | Lord Greville  
|              | Mr. Fordyce  
|              | Mr. Nearn, Advocate  
|              | Mr. Carmichael Smith  
|              | Mr. Ferguson  |
| December 10, 1762 | Mr. Drummond Ross  
|              | Mr. James Cletheral  
|              | Mr. James Wardrop  
|              | Mr. Thomas Cunning  
|              | Mr. John Gloag  
|              | Mr. John Fordyce  |
| December 16, 1762 | Dr. Robert Ramsay  
|              | Lewis Gordon, Esq.  
|              | Mr. John Walker  
|              | Mr. Arthur Martin  
|              | David Ross, Esq.  
|              | William Copland, Esq.  
|              | Mr. Patrick Crawford  
|              | Mr. Alex. Cunningham  
|              | John Morgan, Esq.  
|              | John Fordyce, Esq.  
|              | Mr. Edgar  
|              | Mr. James Balfour  |
| January 14, 1763 | Mr. Wm. Carmichael  
|              | Mr. Wm. Dunbar  
|              | Wm. Hamilton Gordon, Esq.  
|              | James Geddes, Esq.  
|              | Mr. Curry, Student at Law  |
| January 21, 1763 | Mr. Robert Foswall  
|              | Mr. James Muirhead  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 28, 1763 | The Rev. Mr. Cunningham  
|              | Mr. Nairn, Advocate  
|              | Mr. Chalmers, Accomplant  
|              | Mr. Baillie, Advocate  
|              | Mr. Moffat  
|              | Mr. David Stuart  
|              | Mr. William Gordon  
|              | Mr. Geo. Clark  |
| February 4, 1763 | Mr. Alex. Night  
|              | Mr. Henry Langster  
|              | Mr. William Urquhart  
|              | Mr. John Caw  
|              | Mr. William Walker  
|              | Mr. Alex. Alison  
|              | Mr. Johnstone  
|              | Mr. Boswall  |
| February 11, 1763 | Mr. Andrew Stuart  
|              | Mr. McLeod  
|              | Mr. Ferguson  
|              | Mr. Aiton  
|              | Mr. Aberdeen  
|              | Mr. Clark  
|              | Mr. Hamilton  
|              | Mr. Chapman  
|              | Mr. Rogerson  |
| February 18, 1763 | Mr. Drummond Ross  
|              | Mr. James Cletheral  
|              | Mr. Arthur Law  
|              | Mr. Richard Johnstone  
|              | Mr. John Angus  
|              | Mr. Mich. Nasmyth  
|              | Mr. Dunbar  
|              | Mr. Andrew Hunter  
|              | Mr. David Miller  
|              | Mr. Hogg  
|              | Mr. Al. Wilson  
|              | Mr. David Grant  |
February 25, 1765
Mr. Walter McFarlane
The Rev. Mr. Farquhar
Mr. An: Ferguson
The Rev. Mr. Glen
Mr. Cletherall
Dr. Boswall
Patrick Grant of Bouchain, Esq.

March 11, 1765
Payton Skipwith, Esq.
Mr. David McQueen
Mr. Dewar
Mr. Angus
Mr. Harvey Longster
Mr. Richard Johnstone
Mr. Cuming of Logie
Capn. Brown
Mr. Thomas Miller
Mr. John Law

November 25, 1765
William Warden
Mr. McDowal

December 9, 1765
Mr. McCormick
Mr. Alison
Mr. Laidlaw
Mr. Garfrue
Mr. Cochran

December 16, 1765
Mr. Seaton
Mr. Clerk
Mr. Stuart
Mr. Williamson

December 23, 1765
Mr. Andrew Crosbie
Mr. Telfer
Mr. Gorbel
Mr. Ross
Mr. Pringle
Mr. Boswal
Mr. Cochran
Mr. Halkerston
Mr. Jardine
Mr. Dunbar

January 28, 1764
Mr. William Law
Mr. Duff

February 17, 1764
Mr. Campbel
Mr. Grame
Mr. Brodie

February 24, 1764
Mr. Leith
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Moffat
Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Reid
Mr. Seton
Mr. Campbell

March 2, 1764
James Balfour
Adam Ogilvie
APPENDIX 'G'

Contents of a Volume Described in the National Library of Scotland Catalogue of Manuscripts as "Notes and Speeches on Questions Debated in the Belles Lettres Society."

(The first section of this volume (36 pages) is devoted to the following extracts taken from various authors. These were apparently recorded for the use of the owner of the volume. This section, therefore, is in the nature of a commonplace book.)

Puffendorf, Ld. Clarke, Seneca, Dr. Clark.

1. Saying of a King of Spain.
2. do. of an Montmorency to a monk.
3. Reason why Esau is called Profane.
4. Two sayings of Seneca.
5. Derivation of the word Ara.

Dr. Clark.

1. What is meant by the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
2. The objection agt. prayer that God already knows what we want, and will do what is fit whether we ask or no answered.

Brown, Gibson, Williams.

1. The Character of the Manners of this age.
2. The evidence of Christianity, external and internal.
3. The Benefit of Christ's Death looked Backward as well as forward.

Calmet.

1. Value of talent.
2. Meaning and History of the Jewish Talmud.

Jortine.

1. Reason of the Devil's being painted Black.
2. An observation of Postellus concerning the Trinity.

1. The probable owner of this volume was William Lothian, see note #2, page 202, Chapter 4.
Shakespeare.
1. The Disadvantage of Doubting.
2. Commendation of Mercy.
3. Of Death.
4. Of Censure and Slander.
5. Of Grace.
6. Description of a messenger.
7. Of Falsehood.

Shakespeare.
1. Commendation of Mercy.
3. Advantages of Retirement.

Shakespeare.
1. Description of human life.

Shakespeare, Rambler.
1. The force of a good cause.
2. Cardinal Wolsey's lamentations.
3. The uncertainty of Man's Happiness.
4. Of the charge of Hypocrisy.

Rambler, Stanley.
1. Affectation how distinguished from Hypocrisy.
2. Of the Force of Perseverance.
3. A general antidote against Sorrow.
4. Sayings of Socrates.
5. And Aristippus.

Stanley.
1. Some Sayings and opinions of Theodorus.
2. do. of Bion.
3. do. of Plato.

Stanley.
1. Some sayings and opinions of Polemo.
2. do. of Aristotle.
3. do. of Zeno.

Stanley.
1. Some sayings and Opinions of Cleanthes.
2. Some sayings and Opinions of Chrysippus.
3. do. of Pythagoras.

Stanley, Adventurer.

1. Some sayings and opinions of Democritus.
2. do. Epicurus.
3. Why men are more jealous of their natural than their moral qualities.

Antoninus, Hutcheson, South Ul, History.

1. Sayings of Marcus Antoninus.
2. Reason of the different order of Beings.
3. Thought on innocence.
4. Sayings of the Mohammedans.

Prideaux.

1. A saying of Socrates.
2. Reason for the Jew's Hatred of the Samaritans.
4. Reason why the Jews do not reckon Daniel and David prophets.
5. Strategem of Cambyses.
6. Reason of the name Magian.
7. Reason of the name Jews.
8. Instance of Justice.

Prideaux.

1. Time when Zorastres appeared, and some of his opinions.
2. Time of the expedition of Xerxes, and the number of his Forces.
3. A great slaughter by Gelo.
4. Time of Ezra.

Prideaux.

1. How the Jews reckon the Hours.
2. Time and occasion of the Building of the Temple at Gerizzim.
3. Wherein the Samaritans and Jews differ.
5. Account of the Destruction of the Alexandrian Library.

Prideaux.

1. True account of what is called the Septuagint Translation of the Old Testament.
Prideaux.

1. Account of the Alexandrian Manuscript.
2. Of the two sorts of Proselytes among the Jews.

Prideaux.


Prideaux.

1. Opinions of the Pharisees among the Jews; and Reason of their Name.

Prideaux.

1. Opinions of the Essens and Herodians among the Jews of their names.

Prideaux.

1. Luke 2d Chapter, 1st and 2nd verses, explained, and reconciled with Josephus.

Prideaux, Balquy.

2. Arguments for the use of future Rewards and Punishments.

Balquy.

1. Many of our Deductions and Discoveries which we think are derived from Reason, are borrowed from Revelations.

Balquy.

1. Vindication of God with Relation to the first sin and its effects.
2. Reasons of the sufferings of the good and Prosperity of the Wicked.

Balquy, Brown.

2. Difference betwixt the efficacy of Taste and religious principle.

Brown, Home.

1. On what the Force of religious Sanctions depends.
2. Reason why the Heathens rejected the Jewish miracles.
3. Why a great Memory is seldom joined with a good judgment.
5. Difference betwixt agreeable and pleasant.
Home, Sherlock.

1. Manner of drawing Resemblance and Contrast.
2. Observations on the syllable "ed."
3. Distinction betwixt Melody and Harmony.
4. Explanation of Phillip.

Essay for a new Translation etc., Campbell.

1. Meaning of the Curses in some of the psalms.
2. Observation on the pagan Mythology.

Campbell.

1. Answer to the objection to Miracles that bad Beings may perform them.
2. Difference in the Evidence of Miracles arising from different circumstances.

Middleton.

1. No miraculous Powers in the Church after the Days of the Apostles.

D. Hume.

1. Mistakes in the Reasoning of those Philosophers who defend the Selfish System.

Hume, St. Evremont.

1. Reason for the pleasure we receive from Sorrow, Terror, etc.
2. Which comparisons drawn from these are most sublime.

Notes on some Questions debated in the Theological Society.

1. Whether is self love or Benevolence the Principle of human Actions: or are there two distinct Principles?
2. Whether national characters depend most on moral or Physical Causes?

1. These notes may have been made as preparation for participation in the debates, or they may have been taken at the time of the debates for the information of the owner of the volume.
3. Whether an University in a Metropolis or in a remote part of the Country is most proper for Education?

4. Does the Methodist Manner of Preaching tend to the advancement of Religion?

5. Would a Foundling Hospital be of advantage to this country?

Charge to the Right Honourable Lord Greville at his Admission into the Belles Lettres Society.1

(For a transcript of this address, see Chapter 4, page 203 ff.)

Short Notes on Some Questions debated in the Belles Lettres Society.2

1. (January 23, 1761.) Whether severe or moderate Punishments are most proper to restrain crimes?

2. (January 16, 1761.) Was it a commendable Action of Virginius to stab his Daughter?

3. (January 30, 1761.) Whether does Anticipation or Enjoyment afford us greatest Pleasure?

4. (Feb. 6, 1761.) Were men happier before the Invention of Arts and Sciences or since that time?

5. (March 20, 1761.) Should Horatius have been put to Death for killing his Sister?

1. Lord Greville was admitted an ordinary member on 8 December 1762 (See MS. Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society in the National Library of Scotland). On that night, William Lothian took the chair. In the Charge, the author speaks to Lord Greville "as the President of the Society" (see page 205, above). This is the only internal evidence that William Lothian was the owner of the volume.

2. The dates shown are for those meetings at which the debates listed were held when William Lothian was present, and presumably took part. (See the MS. Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society, which frequently mentions that Lothian "expressed his views", or "led off the debate,"
6. (April 10, 1761.) Abstracting from the Consideration of a future state, Whether is a virtuous or vicious Life to be preferred?

7. (April 24, 1761.) Is popular Esteem a Test of True Merit?

8. (Dec. 4, 1761.) Whether is the man of strong or of weak Passion the happiest?

9. (Jan. 8, 1762.) Whether are Men most excited to Action by Hope of Reward or Fear of Punishment?

10. (Jan. 22, 1762.) Whether the Character of Cato or that of Atticus is most excellent?

11. (Feb. 5, 1762.) Is it consistent with Humanity or Christianity that any of the human Species should be made slaves?

12. (Feb. 12, 1762.) Whether does Poetry, Painting or Music affect the Mind in the most lively Manner?

13. (Feb. 26, 1762.) Ought Polygamy to be tolerated?

14. (Dec. 16, 1762.) Ought Divorces by mutual consent to be allowed?

15. (Jan. 14, 1763.) Ought Regulus to have returned to the Carthaginians?

16. (Feb. 11, 1763.) Whether the stage is of Advantage or Disadvantage?

17. (May 1, 1765.) Ought the Reading and Writing of Romances to be Encouraged?

18. (Dec. 9, 1765.) Whether would it be for the Interest of Religion that the Clergy had small or great Stipends?

19. (Dec. 26, 1765.) Would it be of Advantage to this Country that the Marriage Act was extended to Scotland?

20. (Jan. 28, 1764.) Ought Civil causes to be tried by a Jury?

21. (Feb. 5, 1764.) Is the Law of Treason, by which a Man forfeits not only for himself, but likewise for his Children, agreeable to Equity and sound policy?

22. (Feb. 10, 1764.) Ought the Practice of Duelling to be encouraged?

23. (Feb. 17, 1764.) Whether the greatest national Evils arise most from the Tyranny of a Prince or the Factions of a Republic?

24. (March 2, 1764.) Whether did Brutus right in Killing Caesar?
APPENDIX 'H'

On Disputing Societies in general, the Pantheon, and Medical Society of Edinburgh, with a proposal for remedying certain inconveniences to which all disputing societies must be subject.

Though one great inducement which mankind have to associate with one another is no doubt a sensation of the many wants to which human nature is subject, yet besides there seem to be several other motives almost equally powerful. A sense of danger will prompt people to associate in order to secure themselves from it, and a consciousness of a deficiency in knowledge will sometimes, though seldom, prompt them to associate in order to obtain it. Nothing can be more necessary or laudable than those two motives for associations; but there is a third principle which very often intervenes and marrs the best planned societies for either of those purposes; I mean the principle of emulation, or a desire of excelling, and becoming more conspicuous than our neighbors. The desire seems to be as natural to us as to breathe, and is often attended with pernicious consequences. It prompts the members of an association for the public safety to exaggerate the most trifling appearances into the most grievous and alarming dangers; that each may be thought a man of penetration in discovering the dangerous situation of the state; and thus disturbs the peace of the country. And in literary societies it produces the most violent disputes, not for the sake of truth but for the honour of the disputants.

When I take a general view of this world as far as I can observe it, I see nothing but contention. Beasts fight with beasts, birds with birds, fishes with fishes, insects with insects, and men with men. Nay, so deeply rooted is this humour for contention in the whole animal creation, that it pervades even their diversions. The diversions of brutes when they meet in good humour are a mock fight, and so are the diversions of man for the most part; if not always. What else are our games at cards, dice, back gammon, chess, draughts, billiards, etc., etc. but mock fights; not to mention our horse races, and other diversions of a similar nature, where the mock fight sometimes is a real one? No wonder then, that under pretence of associating for the advancement of knowledge, people should assemble merely for the purpose of dispute. Indeed so much have people in general given into the spirit of contention, that dispute and instruction are reckoned to go hand in hand; though nothing I think can be more opposite, and that for the following reasons.

1. I do not see that our knowledge is by any means increased, on account of the multitude of our disputes. On the contrary, I think these disputes stand very much in the way of learning, and are at present almost an insuperable obstacle. If a person desires to improve himself in any science, he will naturally read the first book

1. The Weekly Mirror, No. 22, Friday, February 16, 1781, Pages 391-595.
on the subject that comes in his way. The doctrines contained in
that book he judges by his own reason, the only standard we have
whereto to distinguish truth from falsehood. In this manner he makes
some improvements, but in the next book that falls into his hands per-
haps he finds the author of the former accused of partiality to an
hypothesis, of misrepresenting facts, and stating them in an unfair
manner. How is he to proceed next? He cannot judge who is right or
wrong because his own experience doth not give him a foundation for
deciding the difference. He must therefore either make a full stop,
or have recourse to his own experience, or to other books. If he
finally stops, there is an end of his learning; at once if he has re-
course to his own experience, he could have done this before reading
either of the books, and has thrown away the time spent in persuading
them; and if he has recourse to other books, he is lost in an endless
farrago, which, like Milton's chaos, would almost confound the Devil.

In verbal controversy the case is much worse if possible. Here
we are confounded with our hurry, our passion, and our want of mem-
ory. Nothing in fact can be more absurd than to expect instruction
from the words of two literary champions heated with controversy:
scarce one in an hundred of these disputants pays the least regard
to what his neighbour says, and indeed why should he? for he comes
not there to receive or to give instruction, but to oppose his ad-
versary.

2. I am persuaded that disputation, let us manage it as we
will, can never be an eligible method of conveying instruction. We
cannot extinguish the human passions;— they will operate at all
times when an opportunity is given them; and if we desire to super-
side these operations, we ought carefully to avoid those causes
which may excite any of our passions.— The passion most gener-
ally prevalent, and which universally shews itself, is self-love;
and this passion we ought to be very cautious of opposing, if we
either mean to serve a person, or expect to be served by him. But
when we enter into a dispute with him we directly excite this most
powerful passion. When a person is searching after truth, he ought
to be directed by no other motive than the love of it, but the mo-
ment we give him any particular side of a question to defend, that
moment we give him an additional, and very powerful motive to de-
fend the side he takes, whether right or wrong, and thus our dis-
putations, instead of promoting the cause of truth, promote that of
falsehoods. We may try to correct and amend as we please, and re-
commend moderation and mildness, and so forth, but unless we could
find men without passions, the case will be still the same, and
matters will go on in the usual way.

3. I appeal to matter of fact. Disputing societies have not
been established and the members of these societies are not more
wise, more learned, or better, than other people; or than they
themselves might very easily have been though, such societies had
never existed.— Of these societies two of the most remarkable in
Scotland are the Pantheon, and Medical Society of Edinburgh. That both of them were instituted from a laudable design I doubt not in the least; but to me they seem calculated rather to do hurt than good to their members. The questions decided in the Pantheon are generally of so trifling a nature, that the deciding them, either one way or other, cannot in the least affect either the intellects or morals of the persons who hear and believe in the decisions; but the mischief here comes from another quarter. A society formed for the purpose of disputing about trifles, is plainly a society for teaching people to contend with each other about what is not worth contending for; and when a person has got into a humour of this kind, he contends, disputes, and spits fire upon all occasions, proper or improper. Such a person makes a very disagreeable companion; for his continual inclination to dispute makes him carp at every word which is said by other people, and hence he becomes generally disliked, and of course dislikes every body. I do not say that the members of the Pantheon are all people of this kind, but sure I am that they have all temptations to be so, if they enter into the spirit of their institution, and therefore I must conclude that the plan on which the Pantheon is conducted, instead of tending to increase knowledge, modesty and good-will to man-kind, tends only to increase impudence, folly, and ill-nature.

The Medical Society is in every respect much superior to the Pantheon, whether we consider the learning of its members, or the importance of the subjects debated in it. There is not a subject canvassed there which doth not essentially concern man-kind in general, as well as the reputation of individuals; nevertheless the evils of allowing or encouraging disputation appear here in very striking light.—Certain people have commenced, or have been supposed to commence leaders in medicine, a science in which no man ought to lead, or to be accounted a leader; and the followers of these leaders, supposing their honour to be engaged in defence of their cause, have carried their disputes to such an height, that they have been sometimes likely to be decided by the ratio ultima, and some of the members have been obliged to swear the peace against others.—Surely nobody will say that the cause of truth can be promoted by such violent proceedings, or that the Medical Society in such condition is calculated for making men wiser or better.

This view of our public societies is melancholy; nay it is shameful and scandalous; but it is entirely to be ascribed to the allowing of public disputation, and accounting it a proper means of instruction. Societies of this kind will be generally frequented by young people whose spirit is high, and their passions strong. They are not perhaps naturally disposed to consider a subject with that calmness and attention which is requisite before a final determination, and having once embraced, and publicly supported an opinion, their passions engage them to defend it, and to quarrel with those who take the contrary side. No doubt at every time of life people are too ready to be positive in their opinions, and pay too little regard to those of
others; but to engage in public disputes before the time at which nature hath brought our judgment and rational faculties to maturity, is certainly a most pernicious practice, and no society which by its plan encourages such a practice can possibly tend to the good of mankind, but the contrary.

To avoid all the inconveniencies which arise from disputation, I would propose to throw it entirely out of a Society instituted for the advancement of knowledge. Let the members of that society each deliver their opinion verbally, or rather in writing; let the papers given in be transcribed into books of the society, and then let the substance of them be extracted by some proper person, and circulated among the members before the next time of meeting, and thus every one would have time to form his judgement concerning the matter deliberately, and at some subsequent meeting the sense of the society could be taken, and the opinion of the majority recorded as the voice of the society concerning such and such a question. This would certainly tend to the improvement of every person, without giving offence to any, as nobody would be irritated by having his opinions violently opposed, or perhaps ridiculed, which is too often the case in the heat of dispute, under pretence of vindicating the cause of truth, but in reality for the sake of gratifying the pride and ill-nature of the disputants.

But indeed, even while I make the proposal for such a society, I can scarce help laughing at my own folly. Mankind have innumerable ways of doing good to each other, or of improving themselves, but they do not want to do good, and therefore they never embrace them. Any institution which gives one person an opportunity of shewing himself superior in any respect, though ever so trifling, to others, will be greedily embraced by many; but that which tends to keep every one on an equality, will be disagreeable to all. I must therefore sit down with the firm persuasion that my scheme will never take; for until I can divest mankind of pride and self-love, it is in vain to think that the effects of these passions will ever cease to manifest themselves.
"A Correspondent has favoured us with the following thoughts on the curious question concerning the existence of witches and apparitions, which were taken down in a short hand by a gentleman in the Pantheon, from a speech of one of the members." (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 23, March 10, 1774, pages 335-337.) The same question was debated by the Society in November, 1779.

July 28, 1774.

"On Thursday last, the important subject concerning the improvement of the woolen manufactures of Scotland was canvassed in the Pantheon. There were present a great number of gentlemen. It was almost unanimous opinion, that the improvement of that manufacture, in preference to the linen, would greatly conduce to the interests of this country." (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 25, Thurs. August 4, 1774, page 191.)

(March 23, 1775)

"Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the question, 'Whether Incorporations are of benefit to Trade and manufactures or not?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 27, Thurs. March 23, 1775, p. 394.)

June 8, 1775.

"On the question debated in the Pantheon, June 8, 'What influence has climate on the manners of a Nation?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 24, Thurs. June 29, 1775, pages 3-5.)

January 9, 1777.

"A Speech intended to have been spoken in the Pantheon, January 9, 1777, on the question, 'Ought Great Britain at present, or in consequence of future success, to treat with the Americans as colonies of the Mother country, or as conquered provinces?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 35, Thurs. January 16, 1777, pages 115-118.)

February 27, 1777.

"Speech delivered in the Pantheon, Feb. 27, 1777, on the question, 'Whether or not is the stage prejudicial to Virtue?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 36, Thurs. April 3, 1777, pages 35-37.)

1. In the column on the left, the dates in brackets are the dates of the reports of the debates. These dates I have given when dates of the debates are unknown.
March 6, 1777.  "Speech in the Pantheon upon the question, 'whether it would be more advantageous for Britain to extend her dominions abroad, or improve her manufactures and commerce at home?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 35, Thurs. March 20, 1777, pages 393-394.)

do.  "Speech of a public-spirited Gentleman in the Pantheon on the question, 'would not the improvement of manufactures, and the internal commerce of Britain, be of more advantage than extending her dominions abroad?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 35, March 27, 1777, pages 4-6.)

March 20, 1777.  "Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the question, 'Ought the civil magistrate to oppose the mode of raising men for his Majesty's navy, as at present practised?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 36, Thurs. April 10, 1777, page 71.)

April 3, 1777.  "Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the question, 'Whether are the mechanical or liberal arts most conducive to our happiness?' by a Lover of the Fine Arts." (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 36, Thurs. April 17, 1777, pages 103-104.)

do.  "Whether are the mechanical or liberal arts most beneficial to Society?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 36, Thurs. May 1, 1777, pages 170-171.)

April 10, 1777.  "Question, 'Whether is a town or country life most conducive to happiness?" by a Lover of both Town and Country." (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 36, Thurs. April 24, 1777, pages 141-143.)

do.  "Question, 'Whether is a town or country life most conducive to happiness?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 36, Thurs. May 8, 1777, pages 199-201.)

(January 7, 1778.) "Debates in the Pantheon on the continuation of the American war... Tullus Hostilius." (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 39, Wednesday, January 7, 1778, pages 51-52.)

(February 18, 1778.) "A Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the question, 'whether does Agriculture or Commerce conduce most to the benefit of a State?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 39, Wednesday February 18, 1778, pages 178-180.)


December 17, 1778. "Summary of a Debate in the Pantheon, on the question, 'Whether Love or Money should have the influence in forming the matrimonial connection?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 43, Wednesday January 6, 1779, pages 30-32.)

February 11, 1779. "Question, 'whether are men most stimulated to virtuous actions from the hope of Reward, or from the fear of Punishment?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 43, Wednesday February 24, 1779, pages 202-204.)

February 25, 1779. "Faber Aurarius's Speech on the question, 'Whether the Philosopher or Man of Business is of most essential service to his country?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 43, Wednesday March 24, 1779, pages 277, 294-298. See also, for Remarks on Faber Aurarius's Speech from Dub-hall," Ibid, Vol. 44, pages 39-40.)


do. "Further Remarks on Ostentation and Benevolence, introductory to the Sequel of the Clerk's Speech on that Subject; with a fresh Proof drawn from Philosopher's Critical Essay." (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 44, Wed. April 14, 1779, pages 89-91. These remarks were continued in the next issue, Vol. 44, Wed. April 21, 1779, pages 114-116.)
April 8, 1779. "The President's concluding Speech in the Pantheon, on the Question, 'Whether the beauties of the Person, or the qualifications of the mind, tend most to recommend a Young Lady to a Lover?" (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 44, Wed. June 2, 1779, pages 245-247.)


August 19, 1779. "Speech delivered in the Pantheon upon the question, 'Does Learning or Riches contribute most to the happiness of the possessor?'" (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Wed. September 1, 1779, pages 14-16.)

September 2, 1779. "Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the Question, 'Are the Common Council of London culpable in refusing to assist Government in the present situation of affairs?'" (Edinburgh Eight-Day Mag., or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Friday, September 17, 1779, pages 71-75.)

(September 8, 1779.) "Whether does the Company of Ladies or of Learned Men tend most to the Improvement of Youth?" by H. A. (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 45, Wed. Sept. 8, 1779, pages 251-253.)


September 16, 1779. "Summary of the Debate in the Pantheon on the Question, 'Is personal beauty of real advantage to the fair Sex?" (Edinburgh Eight-Day Mag., or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Sat. September 25, 1779, pages 100-103.)

(November 13, 1779.) "Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the Question, 'Is the existence of Witches and Apparitions probable?" (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Saturday, November 13, 1779, pages 299-301.) This subject was also debated previously on (March 10, 1774, see page 639, above.

December 9, 1779. "Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the Question, 'Whether is a state of Celibacy or of Marriage most conducive to private Happiness?' Decided by a majority of 95 in favour of Marriage." (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, Friday, December 24, 1779, pages 75-79.)

January 6, 1780. "Question debated, 'Whether Hope or Possession contributes most to Temporal Happiness?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vol. 47, Sat. January 15, 1780, pages 99-100.)

The Clerk's first Speech in the Pantheon on the Question, 'whether does Hope or Possession contribute most to Temporal Happiness?' Also a letter on the last report (see above)." (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, Saturday, April 8, 1780, pages 101-106.)

The Clerk's second Speech in the Pantheon, on the Question, 'whether does Hope or Possession contribute most to Temporal Happiness?' Decided in favour of Hope by a small majority." (Edin. Eighth-Day Magazine, or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Monday, April 17, 1780, pages 138-143.)

January 18, 1780. "Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the Question, 'has our want of success in the present War been most owing to those who planned or those who executed it?' — by Brutus." (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Tuesday, January 18, 1780, pages 164-167.)

January 27, 1780. "Question debated in the Pantheon, 'whether does Money or Merit tend most to raise a man in the World?' Decided by a majority of 52 in favour of the latter." (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Vol. 47, Tuesday, February 1, 1780, page 160.)

February 10, 1780. "Debate in the Pantheon on the important Question, 'ought Scotland to co-operate with the English Associations in procuring a repeal of the late Act in favour of Roman Catholics?'" (Weekly Magazine, or Edin. Amusement, Thurs. February 17, 1780, page 256.) This debate was continued on February 17, when it was decided in the affirmative "by a great majority."

"Speech delivered in the Pantheon on the Question, 'ought Scotland to co-operate with the English Associations in procuring a repeal of the late Act in favour of Roman Catholics?' — by Gemmarius." (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Monday, February 28, 1780, pages 329-335.)
February 10, 1780. "Ought Scotland to co-operate with the English Associations in procuring a repeal of the late act in favour of Roman Catholics?" (Edinburgh Eighth-Day Magazine, or Scots Town and Country Intelligencer, Tuesday, March 7, 1780, pages 364-367, continued on Wednesday, March 15, 1780, pages 4-7.)
Minutes of the Meetings of the Academy of Physics.

Meeting 9th September 1797.

Mr. Erskine, President.
Mr. Brougham.
Mr. Reddie.
Mr. Leyden.
Mr. Brown.

The Minutes of last Meeting were read. Thereafter, the Academy having, on Mr. Reddie's suggestion, taken into consideration the inconveniences resulting from the want of general principles, which might be taken for granted in all physical inquiries, and from the free and unconstrained introduction of metaphysical points, on which the members, either from the strength of speculative or practical habits, or the abstract nature of the subjects themselves, can never come to an agreement, judged it expedient to adopt the following principles, reserving to themselves the power of altering or modifying them as experience shall dictate.

1. Mind exists, - a something, of the essence of which we know nothing, but the existence of which we must suppose, on account of the effect which it produces; that is, the modification of which we are conscious.

2. Matter exists, - a something, of the essence of which we are entirely ignorant, but the existence of which we necessarily believe, in consequence of the effects which it produces; that is, the sensations and perceptions which we receive by means of the organs of sense.

N.B. - Under these two heads are excluded, the suppositions of mind being a bundle of ideas, and matter a collection of properties, for a bundle of effects can never constitute a cause.

3. Every change indicates a cause; but of the nature of necessary connexion we are entirely ignorant.

The Academy also exclude the following questions, to the effect of prohibiting any conversation on them, but without preventing the Members from hearing of them incidentally, in papers not professedly on that subject, or taking for granted any opinion connected with them, as the foundation of a hypothetical train of reasoning.

1. The question as to a first cause, or infinity of causes.

2. The questions concerning
   The Action and Passion of Mind.
   Liberty and Necessity.
   Merit and Demerit.
   Self-love and Benevolence.

3. All general questions as to the nature of evidence; establishing as sufficient grounds of belief, besides the evidence of sense and consciousness, that of memory; that of abstract truth, whether mathematical or metaphysical; that of experience of

1. Welsh: Life and Writings of Thomas Brown, M. D., page 498 f. (Appendix 'E'.)
conclusion, from what has been, to what will be, and that of human testimony.

4. Questions concerning abstract ideas, establishing that we have general ideas; that is, ideas of something in which a number of objects agree.

5. The question of existence of rights.

The Academy then adjourned to 16th instant.

Meeting 30th September 1797.

Mr. Erskine, President.
Mr. Brougham.
Mr. Brown.
Mr. Leyden.

Mr. Brougham was appointed to examine Holcroft's translation of Count Stolberg's Travels, and to report the important notices.

Messrs. Brown, Lang, Gillespie, and Brougham, were appointed a Committee to examine the strata of granite embedded in schistus, on the banks and in the bed of the Water of Leith.

Meeting January 20, 1798.

Mr. Brougham, President.
Mr. Gillespie.
Mr. Brown.
Mr. Reddie.
Mr. Horner.
Mr. Alex. Lang.
Mr. Logan.

Mr. Copland.
Mr. Murray.
Mr. Erskine.
Mr. Robertson.
Mr. Jas. Lang.

The Minutes of last Meeting were read.

The Academy resolved, "That corresponding Members shall henceforth be subject to contributions, and be considered in every other respect as ordinary Members, while they reside in Edinburgh."

The Academy also resolved, "That the analyses and papers of last year shall be bound in two separate volumes; and Mr. Horner, with the two secretaries, were appointed a Committee to arrange them, and cause them to be bound."

The Academy farther resolved, that, (though every paper becomes the property of the Academy, unless the author expressly reserves to himself the liberty of withdrawing it,) yet he shall have the power of making such alterations, as he shall judge proper, upon his paper, after it has been read and discussed.

Mr. Lang then took the chair; and Mr. Brougham and Mr. Horner laid before the Academy two papers, with respect to a reform of the laws.
It was resolved that there should be an election twice a-year, on the first Meeting of November, and on the first Meeting of June, of three Presidents: That the duty of the President for the evening shall be, in the words of Mr. Brougham's motion, "To keep order as he pleases, without limiting the freedom of discussion; to prevent the conversation from becoming confined, by asking all the Members their opinions, and not allowing a few to engross too great a share; to keep the speakers from wandering from the subject; to direct their attention, at intervals of silence, to what he thinks the most interesting branches of the subject; to declare, at the end of the meeting, on which side he conceives the opinions of the majority to be; and, upon his election to the office, to make himself master immediately of the laws, customs, and history of the Academy.

Resolved, that the philosophical news shall be the last part of literary business; and that the literary shall precede the private business.

Resolved, that a corresponding secretary be elected annually, whose office and business shall be, in the words of Mr. Brougham's motion, "To have the sole charge of the communication which the Academy has with correspondents, corresponding and honorary members, and persons not connected with it by any of these relations.

Regulations:
1. If any member holds a correspondence which comes within the office of the corresponding secretary, he shall give in to that secretary a copy of, or extracts from, such letters as may concern the Academy.
2. The letters and papers, which he may himself receive, he shall copy, or cause to be copied, at his own expense, into a book appropriated to that purpose, depositing the originals with the Academy. But if any of the communications thus received, shall be thought worthy of a place among the papers of the Academy, he shall cause them to be transcribed at the Academy's expense.
3. He shall have a discretionary power of answering, as he pleases, the letters received by him. But if the subject be difficult, or the measures discussed weighty, it is recommended to him to consult the Academy, if a meeting be near; otherwise, to ask the advice of the Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurer.
4. It shall be his peculiar charge and power, (subject to the aforesaid regulations), to direct the attention of correspondents to such subjects as they may investigate, and to transmit any requests to that purpose from the Academy.
5. Under similar regulations, he shall likewise have a discretionary power of commencing new connections, introducing such correspondents to the notice of the Academy, and of proposing candidates for corresponding seats.
It was further resolved, in the motion of Mr. Horner, "That the Members of the Academy shall, before Saturday the 3rd of February next, give in lists of such subjects, in the different branches of philosophical inquiry, as they think deserving the attention of the Academy, and presenting a field for investigation and research."

"That on the said Saturday the 3rd of February, a Committee shall be appointed to class the various subjects, thus collected, into two general lists, one of subjects in the Physics of Matter, the other of subjects in the Physics of Mind: arranging the subjects of each general list in that order which shall appear to the Committee most convenient for investigation; and that this Committee shall present their report at the following meeting of Saturday the 10th of February."

"That, if this arrangement be approved of by the Academy, the subjects contained in each list shall be investigated in regular succession. That the first subject at the head of each list shall be taken into immediate consideration; and being subdivided each into several heads or branches of inquiry, such as the convenience of investigation may suggest, these subdivisions shall be distributed among the members of the Academy at choice, any member being allowed to choose one, or more, or all of the subdivisions. That the two subjects, one relating to The Physics of Matter, the other to the Physics of Mind, shall thus be referred each to a Committee of Investigation; which Committee shall have a discretionary power, like the other Committees of the
Academy, of appointing its own meetings and presenting its report. That this report shall consist of the series of papers written by the members of the Committee on the several subdivisions of the subject. That there shall be no objection to the assignment of the same subdivision or subdivisions of the subject to different members. If agreeable to them; provided that those who undertake more than one, shall be obliged to present separate papers, or separate chapters of a paper, on each subdivision undertaken by them, in order that the intention of the Academy in distributing and arranging the subjects of investigation may still be answered."

On the proposal of Mr. Reddie, Mr. William Taylor was admitted a member of the Academy.

Adjourned to Saturday the 27th current.
APPENDIX 'K'

List of Members of the Poker Club, 1768. From MS. in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

John Wedderburn of Gosford, Esq.
Dr. Alexander Carlyle.
Dr. Adam Ferguson.
John Fordyce of Ayton, Esq.
Mr. John Home.
Mr. Jas. Ferguson, Jun., of Pitfour.
Lord Elibank.
Baron Grant.
Dr. Francis Home.
Dr. George Wishart.
Mr. Andrew Crosbie, Advocate.
Mr. John Clerk.
Mr. Ilay Campbell, Advocate.
Mr. William Nairne, Esq.
David Hume, Esq.
Mr. W. Alexander, Merchant.
Mr. Jas. Russel, Professor of Natural Philosophy.
Mr. James Edgar.
Mr. John Adam.
Dr. William Robertson.
Dr. Hugh Blair.
Mr. Andrew Stuart.
William Pultney, Esq.
Dr. Robert Dick.
Dr. Robert Finlay.
William Graham of Gartmore, Esq.
Sir Adam Ferguson.
Mr. Alex. Wight, Advocate.
Sir John Whitefoord.
Dr. John Drysdale.
Hon. Patrick Boyle.
Dr. William Wight.
Sir William Maxwell.
Pat. Heron of Heron, Esq.
The Earl of Dunmore.
John Stewart Shaw, Esq.
Sir Michael Stewart.
James Dundas of Dundas, Esq.
Dr. John Gregory.
Mr. Samuel Garbett.
Mr. William Hogg, Minister.
Mr. Andrew Grant, Merchant.

1. Taken from An Account of the Friday Club, Written By Lord Cockburn, Together with Notes on Certain other Social Clubs in Edinburgh, by Harry A. Cockburn. (Third Volume of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, June 1911, pages 105 f.)
Mr. Robert Stair Dalrymple.
Mr. Pat. Miller, Merchant.
Mr. Robert Malcolm.
Mr. John Macgovan.
Mr. John Dalrymple, Advocate.
Mr. Houston Stuart Nicolson.
George Dempster, Esq.
Dr. Joseph Black.
Mr. Robert Chalmers.
Col. Robert Murray.
Mr. John Ross.
Col. James Stuart.
Mr. Adam Smith.
Mr. Alex. Home.
Hon. Andrew Erskine.
Mr. Patrick Robertson.
Lord Ellicott.
Mr. James Gordon.
Archibald Menzies of Culdares, Esq.
Robert Keith, Esq.
Sir Robert Myron.
Baron Mure.
David Ross, Esq.
Archibald Cockburn of Cockpen, Esq.
David Smyth of Methven, Esq.
Earl Marischal.
Mr. Henry Bethune.
Mr. Orr of Barrowfield.
Mr. Robert Aberdeen.
Mr. W. Hamilton.
Mr. Gascoigne.
Capt. Ross Lockhart.
Col. Mure Campbell.
Col. Andrew Montgomery.
Hon. Jas. Stuart.

List of Poker Club: 26th January 1776 (in the Library of the University of Edinburgh).

Lord Ellicott.
Dr. Carlyle.
Professor Ferguson.
Mr. Fordye.
Mr. John Home.
Mr. George Dempster.
Mr. James Ferguson.
Mr. Andrew Crosbie.
Mr. William Pultney.
Mr. William Nairne.
Mr. David Hume.
Mr. James Edgar.
Mr. John Adam.
Dr. Robertson.
Mr. Andrew Stewart.
Mr. Adam Smith.
Sir John Dalrymple.
Mr. Baron Grant.
Mr. Ilay Campbell.
Mr. James Dundas.
Mr. John Clerk.
Col. Fletcher.
Sir Jas. Stewart.
Mr. Hume of Ninewells.
Mr. Andrew Grant.
Col. Campbell, Finnab.
Mansfield Cardonel.
Mr. Alex. Ferguson.
Mr. Robert Chalmers.
Mr. Robert Cullen.
Mr. George Brown of Elliston.
Professor John Robison.
Mr. William Gordon of Newhall.
Mr. George Home of Brancxon.
Dr. Blair.
Sir Adam Ferguson.
Sir John Whitefoord.
Mr. Baron Mure.
Mr. David Ross (Lord Ankerville).
Dr. Black.
Mr. Alex. Home.
Earl of Glasgow.
Mr. Baron Norton.
Mr. George Ferguson.
Sir John Halkett.
Duke of Buccleuch.
Earl of Glencairn.
Mr. Fletcher of Salton.
Lord Mount Stuart.
Mr. Baron Gordon.
Lord Ellick.
Lord Advocate H. Dundas.
Captain Elliot.
Mr. James Russel.
Mr. Robert Keith.
Mr. William Graham.
Mr. Dundas of Castlecary.
Mr. Kennedy of Dunure.
Lord Binning.
Mr. Mark Pringle.
Mr. Rutherfoord of Edgerston.
Earl of Haddington (sic).
Mr. William Morehead.
Mr. William Miller, younger of Glenlee,
Marquis of Graham.
Sir James Johnstone.
APPENDIX 'L'

Speech delivered by the Preses of a Literary Society in the North Country, upon adjourning their Meeting for some time.

Gentlemen,

As I have always considered the will of this Society my pleasure, and its injunctions my duty; so now, in consequence of a request made by certain of its members, I humbly submit to your judgements and indulgence, the following thoughts on Society, as they more immediately occurred; as also, my sentiments with regard to the conduct of this establishment of ours.

Society then I apprehend, to be the constitutional bond of mankind; that universal tie, to which, as a standard, Nature has fixed the leading propensities of every rational mind: And it is too, the only possible scheme whereby life can be supported with tolerable advantage, or whereby that native attachment, which we find founded in the original principles of human affections, can possibly meet with its corresponding object. And wisely, for the mutual benefit of the great and extensive whole, has the Almighty Creator implanted this noble social passion in every thinking soul. Man was not formed to act his part alone on the varied stage of life. The actors are numerous as the individuals, and the harmony of the exhibition depends on the intercourse and sympathy of the parties. Exigence and misery are the attractive objects which ever invite the aid and compassion of mankind; and arises that fundamental spring of feeling, which unbiased humanity cannot divest itself of. Injury and oppression call forth the positive desires of indemnification; and hence are introduced the wholesome establishments of law and Property. Nor does the happiness and prosperity of the comparatively fortunate fail to meet with the gratulations and complacence of the unprejudiced, while the lovers of improvement, and generous votaries of useful knowledge, experience the advantages of communicative Society.

From this general view, my worthy friends, - of the grand designs of Providence in furnishing the rational world with such maxims of utility, and principles of adherence, with respect to Society, I am naturally led into the consideration of what might have been expected from an association such as we have formed; though, previous to this, I hope it may but be thought a digression to analise the motives which generally influence mankind in their choice of associates.

According to my apprehensions of things, then, the motives which influence mankind to unite in bodies of this nature, are principally reducible to three; a love of fame; a view of serving some selfish end; or a desire of doing good; and tho', to determine which of these is the most noble inducement to such partial alliances, is no hard matter; yet it may, perhaps, be attended with some degree of difficulty to investigate which of them influenced us. A love of fame and singularity; or, in other words, a passion for becoming famous at the expence of more circumscribed understandings, though an inseparable
principle of vain shallow minds, is too unsocial a motive for founding the views of this establishment upon, in the abstract; and therefore let it be excluded the system of our jurisprudence - That selfish motives alone, however these may coalesce with low contracted minds, determined the respective members to promote the constitution, is an ideal unworthy of the notions, at least which I conceive, of this little commonwealth. Nor do I mean to attribute the origin and progress of our Society to disinterested benevolence only: this would be an inducement at odds with the general sense of mankind, and though goodness would extort the acknowledgement of such an heaven-born motive; yet some other peculiar feelings of human nature claim a share in the constitution, as well as administration.

The system of our passions and affections, Gentlemen, is so wisely composed of natural emotion, and derived sensation, that it is perhaps rash to ascribe to the one, of these grand springs of all our motions, an ascendancy over the other. As the offices of Society are reciprocal, so the passions which prompt to an association invariably breathe for mutual returns. And thus would I conclude, gentleman, that with such views as these our Society was formed, with such views as these it was continued, and, with views of conveniency too, it is now about to be prorogued.

Our scheme upon instituting this Society, comprehended such an intercourse of sentiment and communication of thought, as implied the most likely method of civilizing the apprehension, as well as manners; of informing the understanding, as well as enlarging the field of invention; and of exciting the social principles to abandon the silent seats of forbidding reserve, peculiar to the climate; and, calling forth the dormant seeds of genius, open and avenue for walking at large in the unconfined regions of social active life. How far these happy objects have been kept in our eye, Gentlemen, or how far we have been successful in these praiseworthy designs, can only be ascertained by after life. Subjects of use and importance, however, have been considered: Difficulties have been started with judgement, and decided with precision: Cases of controversy have been judiciously handled; and truth, extricated from the clouds of prejudice and error in which it lay involved, has been made to appear in its own amiable colours. And while thus some of the most useful topics in civil, religious, or commercial life, have engaged our attention, and exercised the powers of invention and judgment in debate, we have not been burdened with the whimsical remonstrances, or partial interference of female associates, like some of our neighbouring establishments: Nor have philosophical enquiries, and rational disputations been wanting, notwithstanding we have had the good economy to deprive ourselves the liberty of that affected boast - Sisterhood: (Note: Whether this alludes to the conduct of a society in Dundee, where Ladies are freely admitted, or to a motion lately made for that purpose in the Pantheon, but rejected by the Gods your northern friends know best. - Perhaps the question is not unworthy the
investigation of Ladies and Gentlemen, "which plan is most eligible," or, "whether the company, and presence of the ladies would promote and enliven the oratory of the Gentlemen, or not." (Note: The ensign of the society is a heart, in silver; motto, Cor Commune). Nay, Venus and her emissaries have not entered our Sanctuary, though knowledge and philosophy constantly support our course. 'Twas not ostentation or woman's applause that cemented us, but the cor commune of fellowship and prudence; That is the ensign of our privileges, and if that continue to determine our actions, I despair not of the happy issue as well as procedure of our lives. And let us reflect, my fellow members, that tho' this Society must suffer a temporary dissolution, the eternal obligations of nature, reason, and right, are the same. Duty must not be supplanted by prejudice, nor must the social and benevolent principles of our natures be sacrificed to the capricious impulses of little selfish appetites. To begin well, Gentlemen, is no doubt the ornament of youth, but to persevere in the practice of discretion is the glory of every age. And, notwithstanding the emblematical cor commune, (Note: Clapping his hand on his heart), must not be dispensed with. May it never fail to feel the impression of real good-will to all mankind; may it uniformly excite to actions worthy of members of society; and ever have the satisfaction to be conscious of innocence! A. B.

(This was printed in the Gentleman's and Lady's Weekly Magazine for Friday, April 22, 1774, page 593 f. The Society had not been positively identified, but it was probably the Perth Miscellaneous Club, see page 658, below.)
A Discourse delivered at the first opening of the
PERTH MISCELLANEOUS CLUB, who met in the Grammar-
school on Saturday, January 9, 1773.¹

Gentlemen,

Seniority, and nothing but seniority, can apologize for my appear-
ing first in this capacity, and on this occasion. In all other respects, I am deeply sensible how much it became me to be last. It is not, there-
fore, without some anxiety and diffidence, that the following hints, which time would not suffer me further to illustrate, are, in consequence of your command, suggested. I know you will neither impute my compliance with your request to an ostentatious rashness, nor censure with severity what could only be composed at random, because digested in a hurry. My chief confidence in this affair is, that a consciousness of meaning well, if it should not procure me your attention, can hardly fail of concili-
ating your good nature.

Gentlemen, when Nature brought forth her first begotten, Society, who had then as she still has, her residence in heaven, was delegated by the great Parent of all to nurse and cherish it. Confusion and uproar,
flled before her! Discord heard her voice, and disappeared! At her ap-
proach the demons of levity withdrew. The furies sought in the shades a covert from her presence. Harmony ushered her in with a smile. Fel-
licity and peace felt her influence, and revived. The virtues congrat-
ulated mankind on her appearance. The graces danced round her in grate-
ful complaisance; and earth, yet fresh with the gloss of creation, and rich with impressions of goodness, for once resembled heaven.

Independence is not communicable to creatures, for dependence is their proper and peculiar characteristic. The operations of the Deity proceed on a regular plan, and execute, by invariable and external laws, the original purposes of Providence. Hence the vast complication of causes and effects, of mutual dependencies and connections, which every where express, in characters sufficiently palpable, infinite wisdom and power. For ties, the most inseparable and permanent, pervade, unite and cement the minutest parts of his works as well as the greatest. The wildest elements are under his control. He stills the raging of the sea, he checks the fury of the waves. The wind also hears his voice, and obeys it. Order and subordination, as well as beauty and magnifi-
ence, are conspicuous throughout the vast system of nature; and shall we be the only disjointed link in this universal chain, the only grating note in such a cordial song. Shall harmony no where halt but in us, whose frames are so curiously and wonderfully made; whose souls are im-
pressed with reciprocal affections; whose breasts are replenished with sentiment; whose hearts breathe in the softest and sublimest feeling; whose voices are tuned to music; whose ears are the touchstone of melody.

Society is the inspiration of heaven, by which general classes of

mankind are united into separate bodies, and become each, in a manner peculiar to themselves, living souls. It is the voice of Nature that reaches to her utmost boundaries, to which none of her children are untractable, whose influence is universally felt and acknowledged; for it announces, in terms too peremptory to be disputed, and with a sanction which cannot be broken but at the peril of individuals, their distinguishing rights and immunities, their truest interest and improvement. It is also the key by which the primary tone of the heart is regulated, by which the cheapest feelings chime in unison, and to which the noblest passions reverberate. What is life but this great principle of union, extended and diversified according to the number and variety of its objects? By this clue we may unravel the profoundest systems of policy, investigate their premises, and ascertain their consequences; for it is by these original sympathies which subsist between man and man, in various departments, and under certain restrictions, that all the active virtues expand and flourish. To point out the advantages of society, even in its roughest and most uncultivated state, we need only figure to ourselves the situation of that community whose first principles are violated, or the fate of that unhappy man whose evil genius hath precipitated beyond the reach of her protection. Laws are the sinews, the vitals of the social body; and, if these are torn without mercy, destruction is certain and immediate. All hell, though its modest uproars were disclosed, could not strike the imagination with a more horrible spectacle than the blind and brutal violence of a lawless crowd. What words can describe his wretchedness who is the destined victim of their resentment, without being able either to repel or appease them?

Apart from society goodness has no being; for goodness is not a solitary but a social thing. Religion herself is no sooner out of company than out of countenance. "These are not my votaries," she says, "who, guided by petulance and impatience, repair to solitude, and utter there, in wild and melancholy accents, the whimsical and visionary conceits of a peevish and sickly fancy, of a harsh and barbarous superstition. Mine is the spirit of concord and love, the genius of harmony and union. I came on purpose to dispel the gloom of ill-nature and prejudice, which the author of mischief had bred among men; to banish war and wickedness, turmoils and broils from the earth; to soothe the savage breast, and soften, by the genial voice of mercy and truth, the hardest heart; to diffuse through the world whatever is requisite to humanize the passions, refine the manners, incorporate the interests, gratify the wishes, and elevate the thoughts and desires of mortals." Hence the duties she prescribes express by implication the obligations we are under; the objects she presents take hold of our hopes and our fears; the examples she exhibits work on our ambition; and the truths she suggests furnish our minds with forcible and operative principles. What constitutes the religious character, or renders it so venerable and sacred, but that divine charity which embraces all mankind with a cordial and kind regard. Hence the genuine christian, whose sentiments are as liberal as pious, is the most social, at the same time that he is the most serious, and yet the least formal alive. The claims of society appear to him equally natural and necessary: he imitates the divine goodness, and, like that providence which watches over all, is even sometimes liberal to the evil and unthankful. Happy is the bosom which heaves with such sensi-
bility! happy the country where so much excellence resides! happy the society which consists of such members! Such a society is heaven. There the inhabitants live in eternal friendship: weakness adheres no longer to humanity; discord is at an end, for the cause is removed: hope is crowned with fruition; felicity is grafted in love; murmuring is no part of the celestial concert; for all is immortal harmony and perfection. On the spirit of this let us form our fraternity: perhaps some heavenly minister more, social than the rest, may deign us a visit, correspond with our society, animate its members, and become its genius.

There is something in learning which conciliates affection and esteem; a certain secret heart-felt charm, which, like some common principle of sympathy, knits the literary body together, and of which only the breasts of the literati are susceptible. It is owing to union and concord in the acquisition that the progress of science hath met with so much success, that its influence is so extensive and salutary, and that its laurels are still fresh and flourishing. In this line genius, like a vein of ore, hath been often struck out to enrich and delight the world. Imitation, emulation, rivalry, and ambition, these fertile sources of literary merit, have full scope, full force, are kept alive and active in society. Can we give ourselves up to indolence and sloth, while all are busy and diligent around us? Will we remain rustic and unpolished, while conversant only with the liberal and polite? or ignorant and illiterate, while literature and knowledge are the professed objects of our pursuit? Darkness is not to be expected in the midst of so much light.

Our design, gentlemen, in this society is improvement. A liberal and masterly elocution is our object. The local inconveniencies which must attend us may not be few. The contempt of the selfish and ignorant is unavoidable, but insignificant. Sneering we will have in abundance, for dunces must sneer where they dare not bite. Witlings also may make themselves merry at our expense, because they want the spirit to emulate and the will to profit by our example. Good men, however, will applaud us though we should be unsuccessful. We have it in our own power to support our credit with the discerning part of the world, and the opinion of the others is too partial and capricious to merit any regard. If ambitious of true excellence, we cannot possibly become despicable: but if we prostitute our time and talents to a spirit of wrangling, give more into censure and criticism than candour and forgiveness, the genius of Eloquence, shocked with our sophistry and affectation, will leave us indignantly, and leave us too a prey to partiality and spleen, to petulance and ill-nature. As therefore we would be of use to one another, let us cultivate friendship and affability, even merriment without levity, and wit without offence, if you will, for all the graces are the companions of good-humour.
APPENDIX "N"

Of Society in general, and Polemical Society in particular. 1

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

Sir,

Whoever gives the least attention to his internal constitution, must immediately observe a violent propensity within him for society, and consequently an extreme aversion to solitude. It is a truth unquestionable, that man was formed to be a social being: this the noble powers with which he is endowed incontestibly demonstrate; yea, it is evident from the structure of his mind. The most surprising organs of speech are bestowed upon him, for the more ready communication of his thoughts to fellow-creatures of the same species; such organs, as are totally denied to the brutal creation; such organs, as of themselves remarkably distinguish him from any of the many other animal tribes.— And who can speak, who can think, without astonishment of the faculties of his soul; faculties, which enable him to investigate the works of nature, to imitate them, yea, to adorn them by art: faculties that capacitate him to judge between good and evil, to reason with the greatest force and propriety, to trace up secondary causes to their origin, and to make the just distinctions between causes and effects, by comparing them reciprocally: such faculties, in a word, as eminently qualify him for the contemplation of the great, the omnipotent, the first cause of all. Nothing is clearer than this, that these powers, and those organs were given to mankind for mutual intercourse. No man in his senses can imagine, that these social feelings and faculties were intended for individual monopoly; very far from it,

God in the nature of each being founds
Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds:
But as he form'd a whole, the whole to bless,
On mutual wants built mutual happiness.
So, from the first, eternal order ran,
And creature lik'd to creature, man to man.

Pope.

Doubtless there are some individuals of such a hermitical turn, that they would renounce all the sweets, relinquish all the advantages of society, for solitary, monastic life; who would far prefer the lonely cloister to the joyous city, and the sullen company of owls and bats, those 'birds of night, to the sprightly conversation of their brethren of mankind: But these must be accounted exceptions from the general rule; or, it may be, considered as creatures of monstrous birth. The necessities of men are very great and many; and, for their relief, they mutually depend upon each other. The lord of the lower creation is brought into the world in a more helpless condition than perhaps

any of his subjects of the irrational race. We presume, that all of these can provide for themselves, at most a few days, or a few weeks after their production, and many of them are no sooner brought into the world, than they can fly away, or run about in quest of food. — But man, the greatest in others, seems, in this respect, the least of all the animal creation. He must be clothed, he must be fed, he must be carried for a long time after his birth. When he can do these things for himself, yet his food and raiment must be laid to his hand by those who have it in their power, he being unable to acquire them for a long course of years. If the other animals are very far excelled by man, yet the all-wise Author of nature seems to have intended that they should, in some degree, be recompensed for their innumerable deficiencies, by fitting them far sooner than men for the use of those powers which they have. What a striking display of the infinite goodness, as well as wisdom of the Creator, in giving him a strong inclination to that, from which alone his wants, his grievances can be redressed!

Actuated by this universal disposition for society, men join together in political bodies, as states; commonwealths, and kingdoms; for the proper regulation of which, they enact those laws that appear most wholesome. Each government differs from another, according to the abilities of the legislator, or necessities of these to be governed. In each of these states we will most readily find the members joining together in distinct corporations of some kind or another, for the purposes of trade; in more civilized nations, the generous inhabitants forming societies for the encouragement of letters, as well as of commerce. In Britain, for instance, we have a Royal Society, very properly so called; one for the encouragement of the fisheries in Scotland; another for the propagation of Christian knowledge; a fourth for the improvement of manufactures, &c. These are certainly very advantageous, as well as ornamental to a kingdom; and what a blessing to a country in general, to be possessed of such learned and noble-spirited gentlemen as are usually the propagators of such erections!

The rearing of polemical societies is also highly necessary. Such may be accounted most excellent seminaries for capacitating youthful minds for the future service of their country—most excellent institutions for reducing to practice what they have learned theoretically—and incomparable for strengthening the memory, regulating the sentiment, bettering the judgement, and universal improvement of the mind. It must be evident to every one what is meant by these. It would therefore be unnecessary to mention the Pantheon, the Robin Hood, and debating societies in Edinburgh, as institutions of this kind: Allow me to recite a few of their advantages a little more particularly.

Gentlemen that are so closely connected together, are irresistibly led to the cultivation of acquaintance, or increase of friendship. Being assured of each other's merit, they will naturally desire, and be in some degree insensibly and agreeably forced into a pleasant intimacy. As the very name given to such erections manifestly imports
that social intercourse is particularly designed, the erecters will
take care that none be admitted as members who are not possessed of
such feelings; nay, it is altogether improbable that any would join
them who are otherwise inclined. They will not only reap the benefits
of such a generous intimacy while together in the society, but most
likely, through the whole course of their lives; they may live together
with happiness in their native country, or meet with transport in a
foreign clime: the blessings that would, that do accrue from the
mutual services of friends, in this case, are innumerable. If an
injury is offered to one, the whole consider themselves bound to take
satisfaction. If one of their number discovers a convenience
or acquires a profit, both are made common. If he sustains any loss,
or is perplexed with some inconvenience, his companions think themselves
oblige, if possible, to remedy the one, or reimburse the other.

The judgment of the speakers is confirmed by investigating the subjects
of disputation. If they have acquired knowledge, this is the school
for practice and improvement; if they have but little, they will at
least profit greatly by hearing. When gentlemen connect themselves
in such a laudable way, they are encouraged; they are obliged to look
into matters that would otherwise, with regard to them, have been
for ever hid, although probably truly important in themselves, and
necessary for the proper conduct of life. By such assistance, young
men grow old in wisdom; by such recreations, the old, the hoary head
resumes the delightful days of youth; by this innocent, this agreeable
interchange of sentiments, the son learns the experience of the father,
and the father recalls his almost exhausted spirit, intermixes gravity
with sprightliness, and renews his age as the eagle.

As it is scarcely supposeable that many of the members would speak
their mind before a numerous, a polite, a learned audience, without
previously committing their thoughts to writing, or, at least, some
careful premeditation, they have a very proper opportunity of strength¬
ening the noble powers of memory; that power, without which the
judgment would be altogether useless, as we could no sooner form ideas
than they would fly away into the regions of oblivion; without which,
we could not even collect any thoughts with the least degree of
coherence or propriety; without which, in a word, we would be entirely
unfit either for the enjoyment of our own, or the company of others.

Nor should it be forgotten, that by these the taste is greatly
corrected when false, and formed with propriety where it had no
previous existence. What an oblique, what an awkward appearance must
a fellow make, when ushered into the world without the powers of
distinction, or at least without them in any degree of refinement!
How is he capacitated to chuse his company, or how can he suit
himself to such as are laid to his hand? In what a disgusting manner
must he dress, walk, or go about business! How uncouthly must he
think, speak, look, or do any thing? He will not only be nauseous to
company, but, I had almost said, to himself - without reflecting,
that he wants the taste to discover this nauseousness. He will, at
least, be incapacitated for self-enjoyment, being unfit to distinguish
the amusements that are proper from those that are improper, and the
books that are worth the reading from such as are only useful in the
snuff-paper way. — Polemical societies are certainly then the most
proper, and the most speedy means for forming or correcting a person's
taste, when he has it not in a high degree naturally, or acquired by
early acquaintance with the world.

Neither is it an inconsiderable advantage that thence arises with
regard to the improvement of style. Let a man be well versed in
half a dozen of languages, if he is not so well acquainted with
his own, what a sorry pedantic figure must he cut! He can only
converse with the inhabitants of foreign nations, or musty volumes
of antiquity. He might do for a monk, but not for a man; he might
converse with the now silent Muses of the once-famed Helicon or
Parnassus, but not with the illustrious madamoiselles of the beau
monde: he might join with the Peripatetics, or disciples of the
stall-bred Diogenes, but not at all with the refined Philosophers of
the present age of politeness — with J—— n, but not with
C——d. And how can he be better qualified than among the
members of such an establishment?

Do we find a youth who is promising, through whom the dawnings
of genius are seen, or in whom it has already arrived at some perfection,
but murdered with a clownish bashfulness that gives pain to himself,
and all around him? send hither this youth let him first hear, and
then let him speak, till he get himself divested of that detestable
companion. By some it will be advanced, that, by depriving him of
this, you deprive him of a modest behaviour: but, for making the
proper distinction here, let us only attend to the words of a late,
a much celebrated writer, who asserts, that "there is a great
difference between modesty and an awkward bashfulness, which is as
ridiculous as true modesty is commendable, and that the last ought
to always be united to a polite and easy assurance."

These are some of the advantages that are almost confined to the
members themselves. The visitants, without question, have an
opportunity of getting acquainted with the members, or with one
another; of having their judgments confirmed by hearing the elaborate
disquisitions of others; of getting their taste formed or corrected,
their stile improved, and their acquaintance both with men and
things extended; yet these seem more to be monopolized by the
speakers, than the few following, which they enjoy in common with
the hearers.

Those who attend such societies, whether speakers or hearers, have
an exceeding good opportunity of knowing the abilities of each
other. It is most supposeable that one will exert himself to the
utmost, when he is to speak his mind before a numerous assembly
of people of taste and education. If any of them want to make up
acquaintances, they will know who are the persons of real merit, and
fit for the sweets of friendship.

In the same manner are their minds relaxed, and their cares softened.
If the student turns his steps to this house of innocence, of
improvements after the tedious labours of the closet, how agreeable
the gentle eloquence of the hall! Does the man of business for a little forsake his books, his bales, his confinement, for this in exchange, with what transport must he speak of his bargain! and with what rapture declare, that although he went with a heavy enough heart perhaps, his cares forsake him, his difficulties vanished, and his soul tasted of the delights of society indeed! Is the tender-hearted mourner decoyed thither? with what pleasure does he afterwards confess, that the happy scenes of life once more filled his eye in all their gaiety—bliss, though formerly sickened with sorrow, in place of dreary monuments and tombs! I appeal to your late, your worthy correspondent, Lector.

Let us not pass it over as a trifling advantage, that by this means the love of reading is promoted both in speakers and hearers. These being at first obliged to consider their subject with assiduity, now go upon their duty spontaneously, yea delightfully; and those, captivated with the effects of reading in others, betake themselves with application to the original cause. Thus as emulation, highly commendable, is excited, is cherished, and is often productive of the most excellent consequences. May we not venture to say, that the world has been indebted to such societies for many gentlemen of genius, who would not have otherwise been known: By going in hither, they had this emulation, this most noble ambition begun, blown up, and carried on, till they are brought from ignorance to an exalted sphere, as ornaments to the bar, the press, or the pulpit.

It would be altogether unpardonable to pass over in silence the generosity of the young ladies of the chief town in Scotland, who attend the disputes in the celebrated Pantheon. This behaviour speaks much in their favour: It certainly indicates a conviction of the manifold advantages of such societies; and this again is an evidence of the greatest good sense, and a taste truly refined. It almost seems to promise, that we shall have some admirable heroines in this distant age; heroines, who shall far excel the so much famed Lucretia, Virginia, Portia, &c. among the illustrious Romans; a Penelope, Sophonisba, or Cleopatra, among other wondering nations, both in real knowledge, and in every other dignifying accomplishment: Ladies, who shall magnanimously forget the allurements of a debauched, a debauching theatre, or the maddening pleasures of a masqued ball; the fascinating charms of beggaring quadrille, or enchanting chimeras of deceitful love—for the noble, the exalted researches of literature, and the unfading pleasures of virtue, which flatter not with false appearances, nor cruelly deceive with soul-enrapturing scenes, that have no real existence. — Continue then, my noble sisters, truly illustrious daughters of Caledonia, amiable virgins of Edinai and, by your excellent example, encourage others to tread the paths of virtue, of learning, and consequently well-founded fame! Regard not the scorn, perhaps the envy of others; you must lay your account with these, but they are only the ebullitions of ignoble souls. In a word, by your merit and conduct, put to shame the females that forget the oath of virtue; undeceive the men, who (horrid thought!) imagine, and would have others think so too, that you are only formed for toys, for play-things, and possessed of no souls at all, or only
souls in miniature; and let the female sex claim, and exalt their divine prerogative of being: "a help meet for man."

May honour attend these ingenious gentlemen, who first proposed the plan, and carried it into execution. This politeness certainly deserves the thanks of the house better than any other on whose account they are given; for such a scheme must surely be productive of many excellent consequences on both sides of the question: and that member who does not speak with propriety, with spirit, with a kind of inspiration before such enchanting judges, must undoubtedly be lost to every fine feeling, every manly sensation, and either devoid of rational powers, or possessed only of a mean soul.

But upon the whole, though sensible of overlooking many advantages, I am afraid there is too little ground to say with Cato,

I fear I've been too hasty;

but I have more occasion to fear that I have been too prolix, have wearied out your patience, and shall therefore only beg your excuse, and subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.

Glottianus.

Banks of Clyde.

(Further remarks by Philanthropes on society in general, and polemical society in particular.)

To the Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

Sir,

Nothing gives me more pleasure than the perusal of an essay on an useful and entertaining subject, well executed, particularly when published in this way; an excellent scheme for catching the attention of those who will not allow themselves to be instructed in a more serious manner. When reading your Magazine, P. 231, my attention was soon engaged by "an essay on society in general, and polemical society in particular," the production of your correspondent, and my friend, Glottianus. Everything which tends either to the advantage of mankind as already in, and friendly to the interests of society, or to raise in the minds of those who are not so friendly as could be wished, a higher degree of warmth, inviting them assiduously to prosecute the ends of social connection, and in consequence to set forth the wisdom and goodness of the first Cause of all things, ought to be held in the highest esteem by every sociable, by every rational creature. Whoever attends carefully to the nature and advantages of a well regulated society, or true friendship, which is no more than society properly improved, cannot but be convinced that it is of an heavenly extract, and cannot be reared to per-

1. The Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, Vo. 28, Thursday, June 8, 1775, pages 321 to 323.
fection in this cold, this barren soil. It is the duty of all (and, I am fully persuaded, the desire of every true lover of mankind) to use their utmost endeavours to get it established on a firm basis, that its salutary effects may be lasting: yet the full bloom is not to be expected here; it is reserved for the future state of existence. The advantages arising from society, respecting both body and mind, are great and many. The faculties themselves, which, proof to this connection, were in a manner dormant, are raised from their lethargic state of inactivity, and set on performing their originally destined functions. By society all the various powers, whether of body or mind, which individuals enjoyed only separately before, are collected together, and lodged, as it were, in a common treasury, to which everyone has access at pleasure, and may have the benefit of the whole without diminishing the original stock. On this I insist not. My design, at present, is only to make a few remarks on polemical society, as treated by Glottianus. — Without the most distant intention to depreciate the merit of his performance, I would only beg leave to offer my opinion about some things, which may either have escaped his notice, among the crowd of more necessary observations, or which he did not choose to take notice of, for reasons known to himself. As the institutions are apt, through abuses in some cases, to be really hurtful to those whom they are principally intended to benefit, I think every author, when shewing the advantageous side, should likewise touch at some of the inconveniencies which may take place, presenting them as beacons carefully to be avoided, lest, through inadvertency, youth may lose the benefit of so laudable a scheme.

Great care should be taken, that those who intend to join together in a polemical society, be, prior to that connection, in the strictest friendship among themselves. One fractious, unfriendly member may not only interrupt that advantage which they might reasonably expect in the course of their dissertations, but even occasion the entire dissolution of the society. It is true friendship for the person that causes us admire his parts without envy—that causes us endeavour to imitate his example in whatever is praise-worthy. This friendship seldom, if ever, takes place among the members of any society, when their worldly circumstances and pedigrees are in great disparity. Those of a higher sphere are apt to look down with disdain on the lower class, as scarcely worthy of their notice: They, on the other hand, are ready to be piqued at the conduct of their opulent, their high-born brethren, if they observe how they carry towards them, which cannot well be concealed; and if they should not, will fall into the opposite extreme of flattery, which is equally hurtful to the success of both.

Persons should either be so far advanced in age and learning, as to have tolerably clear ideas of those subjects they mean to treat in society, or at least confine themselves to easy subjects, if determined to engage in that exercise very young. When the question is beyond the depth of the disputants, they are neither able to determine whether the truth is properly ascertained, nor the opposite error judiciously exploded. In this case, by being accustomed to dispute
on every thing, while at the same time they understand nothing, truth becomes error, and error truth, in their notions of things, in proportion to the abilities of the disputants; which is almost sure to land them in absolute scepticism with respect to subjects even of the most serious nature.

As these societies are rather calculated for improvement in speaking than in sentiment (though the latter is by no means excluded), the mind should be well stored with useful knowledge, that it may be able to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and error, in their most simple state, without that colouring which an able speaker can give to one or the other. In order to accomplish this, the careful perusal of a few chosen books, to assist and direct the young idea how to shoot, beginning with plain easy subjects, and, as the mind opens, by an easy gradation, still to advance higher and higher, seems the best method. To read more than the mind can digest, wandering from subject to subject, without studying any one thoroughly, is far from being the means of acquiring useful knowledge. It may equip a pedant, but can never form the man of real learning.

Without a well-digested knowledge of the subject to be treated, the very design of the society is frustrated. No one can ever learn to speak well or agreeably on any point which he does not understand. Both the gestures of the body and tone of voice must correspond to the nature of the discourse; otherwise the orator will appear in a very ridiculous light to every sensible man. To regulate these, the ignorant frothy speaker has no other direction than that of CHANGE, who produces few regularities. That young gentlemen are too ready to turn their principal, if not their sole attention to those external ornaments (excellent in themselves when under proper regimen), which they imagine are best adapted to captivate the admiration of the hearers, and gain applause to themselves, is evident to every one who attends these societies; and in this their design they may very readily succeed, the minds of the vulgar being more apt to be pleased with sound than with sterling sense, though the latter only is valuable; a convincing evidence of these gentlemen's usefulness, whether in church or state, so soon as they are in office — I have often heard gentlemen talking away at no allowance, yea, to the admiration of a gaping crowd, without giving one single argument worthy of notice in the whole course of a long harangue. Too much care cannot be exercised in the admission of visitants. None ought to be admitted but those who are pretty judicious, and may be supposed, in some measure, able to judge how the question to debate is managed, that when they retire, if they are disposed to repeat what they have heard, they may characterise members according to their real merit. I have heard an empty, though a noisy speaker, raised to the skies by the encomiums of visitants, while the sensible modest man was treated with contempt.

I beg leave to differ from the gentleman anent the ladies of Edinburgh, who attend the disputes in the Pantheon. I imagine (but I may be wrong, and so far beg to be excused) that the minds of ladies, as well as their bodies, though sprightly enough, are too
weak for having much advantage from polemical exercises; nay, they are apt to lose sight of the truth altogether, when twisted about through all the windings of a well supported debate, which, I make no doubt, those in the Pantheon are. Clottianus may; but I would not be very fond of a lady, much given to disputation, as a help-mate for me.

I intend other remarks, but, lest your own or readers patience should be wearied too much with what I have said, shall only beg leave to subscribe myself,

SIR, Yours, &c.

Philanthropos.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed Books


Arthur, Rev. Archibald. Discourses on Theological and Literary Subjects, with an account of some particulars of his life and character, By William Richardson, (Professor of Humanity University of Glasgow). Glasgow: 1808.


1. See also the supplementary list of Printed Books, page 686.


Black, George F. *A List of Works Relating to Scotland*. Published by the New York Public Library, 1916.


--- The *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 3 volumes. Edinburgh: Alex Smellie, 1817.


--- *The Rise and Progress of the City of Glasgow comprising an
Account of its Public Buildings, Charitable Institutions, and  
other Establishments, Till the Year 1820. Glasgow: John  
Smith, 1829.

The Cochrane Correspondence Regarding the Affairs of Glasgow, 1745 -  

Cockburn or Rutherford, Mrs. Alison. Letters and Memoir of her Own  
Life; Also 'Felix' a biographical sketch and various songs,  

Cockburn, Harry A. An Account of the Friday Club, Written by Lord  
Cockburn, Together with Notes on Certain Other Social Clubs  
in Edinburgh, Extracted from the Third Volume of the Book of  
the Old Edinburgh Club, June 1911.

Cockburn, Henry. Journal of Henry Cockburn, being a Continuation of  
the Memorials of His Time. 1851 - 1854, 2 volumes. Edin¬  
burgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874.

--- Life of Lord Jeffrey, with a Selection from his Correspondence,  

--- Memorials of His Time, New ed. with introduction by his Grand¬  

A Collection of Loyal Songs. For the use of the Revolution Club.  
Edinburgh: Donaldson and Reid, 1761.

Constant, Benjamin. Le Cahier Rouge de Benjamin Constant. Publié  
par L. Constant de Rebecque: Paris: (no date).

Couper, W. J. The Edinburgh Periodical Press, 2 volumes. Stirling:  
Eneas Mackay, 1908.

Coutts, James. A History of the University of Glasgow - From its  

Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1951.

Craig, Sir Henry. A Century of Scottish History, 2 volumes. Edin¬  

Creech, William. Letters Addressed to Sir John Sinclair, Part. Re¬  
specting the Mode of Living, Arts, Commerce, Literature,  
Manners, etc. of Edinburgh in 1763 and since that period.  
(Included as an Appendix to Sinclair's Statistical Account,  

Currie, J. The Works of Robert Burns; with an Account of his life;  
and a Criticism on writings, Etc., in 4 volumes, 5th
Dalrymple, David. *A Catalogue of the Lords of Session, From the Institution of the College of Justice in the Year 1532, with Historical Notes.* (1749).


--- *The Entail.* do.

--- *The Provost and Other Tales.* do.

--- *Sir Andrew Wylie.* do.


Glasgow Past and Present: Illustrated in Dean of Guild Court Reports and in the Reminiscences and Communications of Senex, Aliquis, J. B., Etc., 3 volumes. Glasgow: David Robertson and Co., 1884. (2nd edition?)


Grant, Sir Alexander. The Story of the University of Edinburgh During its First Three Hundred Years. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884.


--- Scotland Described or a Topographical Description of All the Counties of Scotland with the Northern and Western Isles Belonging to It. Edinburgh: 1797.


Hume, A. The Learned Societies and Printing Clubs of the United Kingdom being An Account of their respective origin, history, objects, and constitutions. London: G. Willis, 1853.


Kerr, Robert. Memories of the Life, Writings, Correspondence of William Smellie, Late Printer in Edinburgh, etc., 2 volumes. Edinburgh: 1811.

Kincaid, Alexander. The History of Edinburgh from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time; by way of Guide to the City and Suburbs, etc. Edinburgh: for the author, 1788.


MacGeorge, Andrew. Old Glasgow: The Place and the People. From the Roman Occupation to the Eighteenth Century. Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1880.


Mackenzie, Peter. Reminiscences of Glasgow and the West of Scotland, 2 volumes, in 4 parts. Glasgow: John Tweed, 1865 (?).


Macpherson, Hector. The Intellectual Development of Scotland. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911 (?).


--- Church and Reform in Scotland, A History from 1797 to 1843. Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1916.
--- Scotland and the Union, A History of Scotland from 1895 to 1747. Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1905.


Medical Essays and Observations Revised and Published by a Society in Edinburgh, 5 volumes, volume 5 in two parts. Edinburgh: Printed by T. and W. Ruddiman, 1733-1744.

The Memorial Catalogue of the Old Glasgow Exhibition 1894. Published by the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts, 1894.


--- Scottish Prose of the 17th and 18th Centuries. Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1912.


Murray, David. *Memories of the Old College of Glasgow; Some Chapters in the History of the University.* Glasgow: 1927.


Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow During the Greater Part of the Last Century. Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1851.


Rogers, Rev. Charles. *Scotland Social and Domestic; Memorials of Life and Manners in North Britain.* London: Printed for the Grampian Club, 1869.


--- *Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers; To Which is Added Porsoniana.* London: Edward Moxon, 1856.


— Waverly, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since. do.

— The Antiquary. do.

— Rob Roy. do.

— Redgauntlet. do.

— Old Mortality. do.

— Saint Ronan's Well. do.

— The Heart of Midlothian. do.


'Senex' (Robert Reid). Old Glasgow and Its Environs, Historical and Topographical. Glasgow: David Robertson, 1864.


Stewart, Dugald. Biographical Memoirs of Adam Smith, of William Robertson, and of Thomas Reid Read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, now collected into one volume, with some additional notes. Edinburgh: George Ramsay, 1811.


Strang, John. Progress of Glasgow, a sketch of the commercial and industrial increase of the city during the last century as shown in the records of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, and other authentic documents. Glasgow: Printed for private circulation, 1883.


Terry, Charles Sanford. A Catalogue of the Publications of Scottish Historical and Kindred Clubs and Societies, And of the Volumes Relative to Scottish History Issued by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1780 - 1908, with a Subject-Index. Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1909.


Thomson, John. An Account of the Life, Lectures, and Writings, of William Cullen, M. D., Professor of the Practice of Physic
in the University of Edinburgh, 2 volumes. Edinburgh: Wm. Blackwood, 1832.


Topham, Edward. Letters from Edinburgh; Written in the Years 1774 and 1775, etc. London: Printed for J. Dodsley, 1776.


Turner, Dawson. The Literary Correspondence of John Pinkerton, Esq., now first printed from the originals in the possession of the author, 2 volumes. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1850.

Tytler, Alexander Fraser. Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames, etc., containing sketches of literature and general improvement in Scotland during the greater part of the eighteenth century, 2 volumes. Edinburgh: Creech, 1807.


Supplementary List of Printed Books.

Argyll, the Duke of Scotland as it was and as it is, 2 volumes. Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1887.


The Athenian Gazette; or casuistical Mercury, resolving all the most nice and curious questions proposed by the ingenious, etc. London: 1691. And The Athenian oracle, being an entire collection of all the valuable questions and answers in the old AthenianMurcures, and a supplement to the Athenian oracle ... To which is prefix'd The History of the Athenian Society, and an Essay upon Learning. By a member of the Athenian Society. London: 1706, 1710, 1728.


Collection of Styles, or a Complete System of Conveyancing, adapted to the present practice of Scotland, 3 volumes. Edinburgh: 1790-1794.


Cunningham, Allan. The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, annotated and continued to the Present time by Mrs. Charles Heaton, 5 volumes. London: George Bell and Sons, 1879.

Drake, Nathan. Essays, Biographical Critical, and Historical, Illustra-

1. See also the List of Printed Books, beginning on page 670.
ive of the Rambler, Adventurer, and Idler, and of the various Periodical Papers which, In Imitation of the Writings of Steele and Addison, Have Been Published Between the Close of the eighth volume of the Spectator and the commencement of the year 1809, 2 volumes. London: Printed by J. Seeley, 1809.


Foulis, Robert. A Catalogue of Pictures, Composed and Painted chiefly by the Most Admired Masters of the Roman, Florentine, Parman, Bohemian, Venetian, Flemish, and French Schools. In which many of the most capital are illustrated by Descriptions, and critical Remarks, 3 volumes. London: Sold at the place of Exhibition and by T. Cadell, 1776.


Medical and Philosophical Commentaries, by a Society in Edinburgh. London: For J. Murray, beginning 1775.


Pamphlets and Manuscripts.

(Note: The entries in this section of the bibliography are arranged either alphabetically, or under the name of the Club or Society to which they apply. Locations are given in parentheses for all pamphlets as well as the manuscripts. For a description of the Laing MSS, listed below, see Historical Manuscripts Commission Report on the Laing Manuscripts preserved in the University of Edinburgh, 2 volumes. Printed under the Authority of his Majesty's Stationary Office, 1914 and 1925.)


(Ar buckle, James). "A Short Account of the Late Treatment of the Students of the University of G——w, (i.e. Glasgow)." Dublin: Printed in the Year, 1722. (A Pamphlet in the University of Glasgow Library.)


Cape Club. "The Capeiad," in three Cantos. Together with the songs of Cape. Being a complete history in verse of the Knights Companion of that Illustrious order C. F. D., (i.e. Concordia Fratrum decus), 1764-69. (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, Laing II, 464.)

— "Cape Song," by Robert Fergusson. (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, Laing II, 354.)

Congress Hall Club. "Minutes of the Congress Hall Club," 4 volumes. (A manuscript in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)

Easy Club. "G. Buch(anan) Secretary of the Easy Club, to the Editor of the Spectator." (A manuscript in the Library of the University
of Edinburgh, Laing II, 212, 1. Note: No. 212 contains several other papers relating to the Easy Club, also several poems and autographs, by Allan Ramsay, author of "The Gentle Shepherd," etc.)

— "Geo. Buchanan, Secretary of the Easy Club, to Mr. Edgar at Leyden." (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, Laing II, 212, 2.)


Literary Society of the University of Glasgow. "Minutes of the Literary Society of the University of Glasgow." (A typescript - from the original records - in the Murray Collection in the Library of the University of Glasgow.)


Mirror Club. "Curious paper, apparently a contribution for The Mirror,"
written by William Craig, Lord Craig, one of its promoters. (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, Laing II, 265.)


"Funeral Concert performed by the Gentlemen of the Musical Society of Edinburgh, 22 November 1771, on the Death of Sir Robert Murray, Bart., one of the Directors and William Douglas, Treasurer to the Society." (A pamphlet in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)

"A List of the Members of the Musical Society at Edinburgh, 1793." (A pamphlet in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)

Medical Society of Edinburgh, (afterwards the Royal Medical Society).

"History of the Medical Society of Edinburgh," by Dr. Wm. Stroud, President. This History appears as a preface to "A List of Members, Laws, and Library Catalogue of the Medical Society of Edinburgh." Edinburgh: Printed for the Society by Wm. Aitken, 1820. (The "History" alone, in the form of a pamphlet, may be seen in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)


Pantheon Society. "Essay on the Question - 'Whether have the exertions of Allan Ramsay or Robert Fergusson done most honour to Scottish Poetry!,'" by Robert Cumming. Edinburgh; 1791. (A pamphlet in the Edinburgh Public Library.)

"The Laurel Disputed; or, The Merits of Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson contrasted; In two Poetical Essays, Delivered in the Pantheon at Edinburgh, on Thursday, April 14th, 1791 On the Questions, 'Whether have the Exertions of Allan Ramsay of Robert


"List of Members of the Philatelic Society." (A manuscript, bound with the pamphlet listed directly above, in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)


Poker Club. "Minutes of the Poker Club, 1774 - 1784." A gift to the University by Adam Ferguson, 1854. (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.)

Pryde, George S. "Historical Association Pamphlet, No. 98. 'Social Life in Scotland Since 1707,' by George S. Pryde." Published for the Historical Association by G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1934. (A pamphlet in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.)


Select Society. "Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh." (A manuscript in the National Library of Scotland.)

"Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture." (A pamphlet in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)

Society for Investigating Natural History. "(Transactions of the) Society for Investigating Natural History, 1782, Vol. 1." (A manuscript in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)


"A Summary Account of the Rise and Progress of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge." Showing: the importance of the Institution; the Benefits arising from it; the chief Objects of the Attention of the Directors; and the Aid
necessary to enable them to carry on their beneficient Designs. Edinburgh: Printed for the Society, 1783. (A pamphlet in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.)

— "A Brief History of the Society in Scotland, for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands; and of the Correspondent Board in London; From the Establishment of the Society in the year 1701, Down to the Present Time." By Henry Hunter, Secretary to the Correspondent Board. London: 1795. (A pamphlet in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.)


— "A Short Account of the Society in Scotland, for Propagating Christian Knowledge." To which is affixed a List of the Ministers who have preached before the Corresponding Board, and of the Subscribers, etc. London: Printed by T. Gillet, 1809. (A pamphlet in the University of Edinburgh Library.)


Society for the Reformation of Manners. "Minutes of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, 1700 - 1707." A Register of the resolutions and proceedings of a society for reformation of manners at Edinburgh commencing on 10th September 1700, and continuing till the end of 1707. The meetings were held on Tuesdays, Daniel Defoe was admitted a member on 25 March 1707. (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, Laing III, 339.)

— "A Letter from **** a Magistrate in the Countrey, to **** his Freind," Giving a new Historical Account of Designs, through the Christian World, for Reforming Manners therein, (by Sir Francis Grant, Lord Cullen.) Edinburgh: Printed by George Mossman, 1701. (A pamphlet in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)

— "A Discourse of Suppressing Vice, And Reforming the Vicious." Delivered in Several Sermons in the Moneths of June and July, 1701. By a Minister of the Church of Scotland, (William Wishart). Edinburgh: Printed by the Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1705. (A pamphlet in the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Public Library.)

— "Paper written for the Speculative Society," By Patrick Fraser Tytler, historian, 1771-1839. (A manuscript in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.)

"A Visit to Mr. Smellie's Printing-Office, Foot of the Anchor Close." Taken from a Periodical Publication, March, 1845. (A pamphlet in the University of Edinburgh Library.)

ARTICLES AND PERIODICALS.


Caledonian Mercury, tri-weekly. Edinburgh: 1720 - 1867. Read: 1723 - 1724 (single issues), 1727 (Jan. 9 to March 15), March 1756 to March 1737, 1740 to 1748 (single issues), 1743 to 1757 (single issues), 1747, 1748, 1763, 1775 to 1777 (single issues).


Edinburgh Courant. Read: 1709 - 1712 (single issues).


Edinburgh Flying Post. Read: 1709, 1710, 1711 (one copy each).

Edinburgh Gazattee. Read: 1699 - 1712 (single issues).


Edinburgh Museum; or North British Magazine, monthly. Edinburgh: January 1763 to December 1764.


Glasgow Courant, tri-weekly. Glasgow: 1715 - 1716. Read: November 1715 to January 1716.


Hogg's Instructor. Edinburgh: 1851 - ?


Mirror, weekly; semi-weekly. Edinburgh: January 1779 - May 1780.


Scots Spy, or Critical Observer, weekly. Edinburgh: March 1776 to November 1776. Read: March, August, September 13, 20, 27, October 4, 11, 18, November 15, 1776.


