

CLUB NOTES.

BY T. D. F.

From time out of mind, Clubs have existed. There can be no doubt in any rational mind, that David, Jonathan, and the wise men of the elder Scriptures, had their clubs. Plato had his club, Aspasia her's; Diogenes and Orson are almost the only names standing boldly out on the historic page, who could not be supposed to have their clubs, their meetings together for sadness or merriment, intellectual jousts or gay revellings. It is a time honored custom, but perhaps in many cases, better in the breach than the observance, too apt to degenerate into scenes of mere physical enjoyment. Yet there is something ever interesting in these clubs; they call out a play of fancy, and have given rise to more brilliant *jeu d'esprits*, more stupid jokes, heavy orations, and sparkling addresses, than all the political meetings in the world. In what strong relief do the Pickwick Club, and the Club which Goldsmith has made immortal, stand out in every one's imagination! And, to come nearer home, who of the privileged members of the Canadian "Shakspeare Club," does not recall the pleasant evenings passed in its storied hall? The calm, grave face of the immortal bard, looking upon them from his lofty pedestal, the illuminated pages of his *chef d'œuvres* spread open to attract and enchain the careless passer by; while they inspire the eloquent professor, who reads, with such exquisite truth and grace, the living words. Who has not listened with a thrill of delight, to the play of voice, which now rung lightly out the merry words of the sparkling Rosalind, and the lovely Jessica, and now uttered with deep pathos, the prayer of the innocent victims of Richard the Third's jealous anger, or the deep complainings of the heart-stricken Catherine! And with equal interest too, perchance, they have listened to the graceful play of satire between the gallant editor, and his argumentative legal friend; or the Secretary's glowing reports, or addresses from some highly cultured mind, on Channing or Wilberforce, or discussions on civilization and its consequences! What if there be an occasional failure? a subject badly argued, or a false measure in a poem? What matters this? It cannot mar the general interest felt in the "Club."

Indeed, every individual can recall some Club, in which he or she has felt a deep interest. It may

have been one calling forth the whole depth of the masculine mind, or perhaps only a tea-table coterie. Such an one had existence not a thousand miles from Montreal, and its triennial anniversary, celebrated by a festive reunion, opened by the following address, which was most enthusiastically received by its hearers. The muse of the writer has, in the poetical portion of it, taken something of a license, more substantial than a mere play of fancy, but perhaps the readers of the *Garland* may not find it unamusing.

CLUBS IN GENERAL—OUR CLUB IN PARTICULAR.

If, my dear Club, you had only given me a subject for this exercise of mind that you have imposed upon me, you would have relieved me of a great weight, for I find myself very much in the situation of the school girl who has a composition to write—the subject being left to her own choice; had it but been given her, no matter if only the trite ones of faith, hope and charity, it would have been a relief—for then, turning over a few dictionaries, or reading some ancient essays—she could have collected ideas to aid in completing her task; but now half her time is wasted in selecting the theme. She writes a sentence on some grave subject—finds it too dull—she explores the realm of fancy, but nothing presents itself that quite satisfies her. Just so it is with me. I received your *commands* to write something for this, our anniversary celebration. You kindly left it to me, whether it would be a homely address, or a fanciful poem—a sketch or a sermon;—thus many parti-colored shreds and patches of subjects, have presented themselves, with kaleidoscope variety and irregularity, for my choice, but none that seemed suited to the occasion.

Shall I attempt a chronicle of the club? Alas! that would be more dry than, if not so voluminous as, Rollin's ponderous folios, for who could catch the subtle essence which has given the spirit and vitality to our meetings? A simple detail of our gatherings—the pleasant greetings, the creative hands, busy with their transforming power, turning the raw material into the various articles of taste and use—the sonorous voice of the reader, the many calls to "Order, order!"