

The Rockwood Review.

began at five o'clock precisely—a strong proof of the truly good habits of the primitive Kingstonians. Can it be possible that such a thrilling episode in the early history of the Town received no single line of description in the Home News of the "Gazette?"

It was not to a travelling Barnum, however, that the Kingstonian was wholly indebted for his fun. Messrs. Bradbury and Rogers, predecessors of Artemus Ward, arrived in the following week—long before the news of Waterloo—and informed the ladies and gentlemen, of course, that they had opened an elegant Museum at Mr. Oliver Thibido's Hotel, which fascinating exhibition was to have its doors thrown open at 8 o'clock a. m. till 9 p. m., but would positively be removed on the following Monday. Tickets were 2s. 6d., children half-price. Amongst other wonders, they had a superior organ, playing a variety of music, accompanied by sixteen small figures, performing upon a chime of bells; and a number of superior wax figures "better wrought, and more elegantly clad than any that has ever been exhibited in the country."

The officers of the Military and Navy, however, were the great promoters of hilarity, and in Field and Theatre catered to the pleasures of Society. In 1815, they established the first October Race Meeting, and liberal were the prizes, and fairly numerous the entries for the various events. The Wellington Stakes of 70 guineas each, 1½ mile heats; the Claret Stakes; the Waterloo Stakes; the Garrison Stakes, and several Matches, furnished an excellent programme.

The Theatrical Season opened in January, 1816, and the first performance was the Tragedy of "Douglas," followed by the roaring farce of "The Weather Cock."

Tickets for Boxes were 6s. 3d., and Pit 5s., and could be obtained at the Brigade Major's office only, while no money was taken at the

door. As a proof of the steady habits of the worthy citizens, it may be added that the doors were opened at six, and that the curtain rose at half past six. On 7th February were given the admired Comedy, "Speed the Plough," and a Farce entitled "The Tooth Ache." The popularity of these entertainments, and the small size of the Theatre, may be gathered from the fact that an announcement had to be made, again and again, that persons holding tickets for the previous performance and who could not get in, were entitled to gain admission at the coming entertainment.

The Repertoire of these willing Thespians was extensive. It included The Review, or Wags of Windsor; the Jew; the Weathercock; the Heir at Law; the Boarding House; Cure of the Heart Ache; Love a la Mode; Education; the Farce of Animal Magnetism; the West Indian; the Road to Ruin; the Upholsterer; Turn Out; Love laughs at Locksmiths; the Wheel of Fortune, and some repetitions. The season closed on the 24th of June, and reopened on the following October. On the 29th February, 1816, there was a special Performance "for the benefit of the Widows and Orphans of the Brave Men who fell at the Glorious Battle of Waterloo," when was given the much admired Comedy of "John Bull, or an Englishman's Friend," to which was added the Musical Farce of "The Poor Soldier."

Admittance to the Boxes was two dollars and a half and to the Pit one dollar. Tickets were obtained at John McAuley's and the Post Office. Prices afterwards fell to one dollar for Boxes and a half-dollar for Pit, with John McAuley as agent. In summer the Curtain rose at seven o'clock.

From the list of plays, and the frequency of their performance, it may readily be seen that Kingston was better off, from a theatrical standpoint, eighty years ago than