

bells to the drum," by this characteristic explanation: "from half an hour before twelve at noon, when the music bells begin to play, frequently called the gill-bells, from people's taking a wheting dram at that time, to ten o'clock at night, when the drum goes round to warn sober folks to call for a bill." Such were the habits of "sober folks," during the eighteenth century, when every citizen had his chosen *horuff* for daily resort, and when lawyers and clients, merchants, traders, and men of all degrees, transacted business and spent many of their leisure hours at the club or in the tavern. The more usual places of resort, however, even among the most reputable citizens, were to be found down the wynds and closes of the High Street. John Dowie's famous tavern has vanished, along with the old wynd; but one or two of the haunts of bygone generations still exist, and keep alive some of their favourite customs, known only to a few survivors of last century, or to the favoured proteges whom they have initiated into the mysteries practised by their forefathers! Currie's tavern in Craig's Close, once the scene of meeting of various clubs, and a favourite resort of the merchants in the neighbourhood of the Cross, still retains a reputation among certain antiquarian bibbers for an old-fashioned luxury known by the name of *pap-in*: a strange compound of small beer and whisky, *curried*, as the phrase is, with a little oatmeal!

On the south side of the Parliament Close, near to John's Coffee-house, was the banking-house established by Sir William Forbes, the well-known author of the *Life of Dr. Beattie*, as well as of other works; and one of the most benevolent and public-spirited citizens of whom Edinburgh ever had to boast. Though descended from the ancient Lords Pitsligo, attainted for their fidelity to the Stuarts, he commenced life as an apprentice with the noted bankers, Messrs. Coutts, and on their final establishment in London he founded the banking company long known by his name. So successful was he in life that he accomplished his long-cherished purpose of recovering the attainted estates of the Barony of Pitsligo, which are now possessed by his descendants. Adjoining the banking-house of this eminent citizen, John Kay, the ingenious delineator of "Edinburgh Characters," kept the small print shop where he vended his portraits and caricatures during nearly the whole of his career as an artist. His windows were filled with his newest etchings, and formed a centre of attraction to the numerous loungers of the Close, some of the most noted among whom, both lawyers and clients, were the frequent subjects of his pencil. An ancient thoroughfare led from the centre of this range of buildings to the Cowgate by a broad flight of steps, latterly called the Back Stairs, of which we furnish a view, showing an earlier stage of the great south window of the Parliament Hall, with the remains of still older windows, surmounted with sculptured pediments in the same style as the whole exterior of the original building. It is occasionally called by writers of last century the New Stairs, but a