

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF YE GENTLEMEN
OF DOWNSIDE IN YE MIDDLE OF YE
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

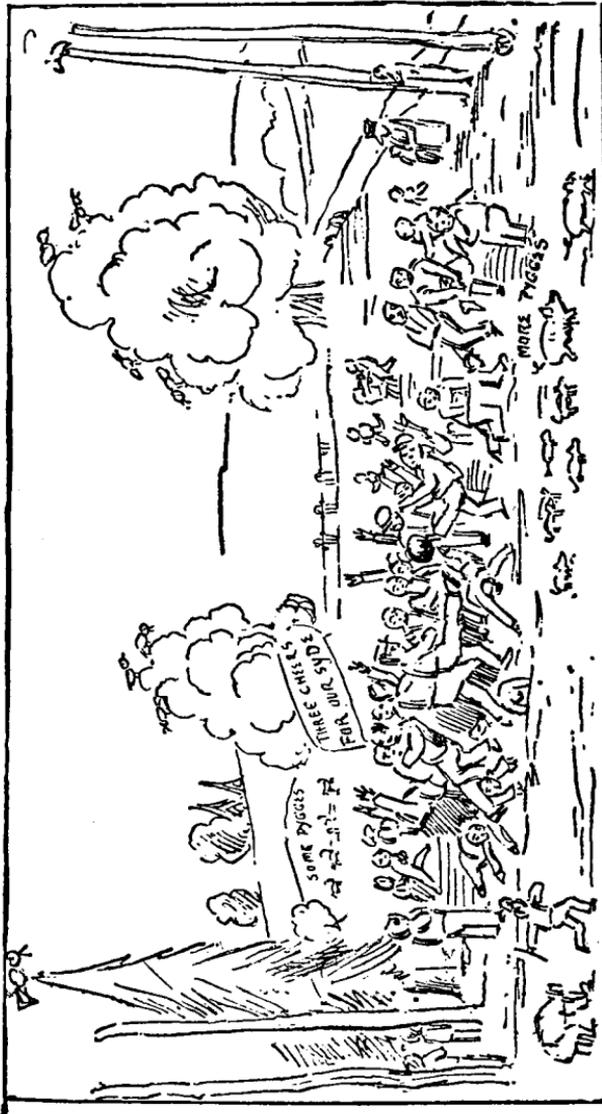
WE again have the pleasure of presenting our readers with a *fac-simile* taken from the diary of Mr. Pips in the old debating book of 1852. It was our intention to have selected two others of more characteristic quality, from among those which still remain, but from unavoidable causes we have been obliged to substitute the present one. However, this will not perhaps be of much consequence, as it our intention to reproduce, by degrees, the whole series.

The sketch "showynge ye game of footballe" is perhaps somewhat rude and archaic in character, but what life and vigour in the details! How expressive the earnest faces of the players, how realistic the attitudes and how true to nature the whole scene! On either side are upreared the tall posts of the goals, on the top of one of which rests, stolidly gazing on the scene, a solemn rook or wily crow. Beneath, the "scrimmage" is at its height: arms uplifted, legs entangled, rude shocks given and received, and one unfortunate wight appears to have received a contusion on his shin-bone. Near the goal-post stands a reverend father, but though he has at least one prominent feature, we are unable at this distance of time to recognise what is doubtless a portrait. Over the wall of the lane appear the heads of some *virs* or natives. In the background the artist has introduced "some pygges" and as if to call attention to such a common feature, in the foreground are "more pygges."

The text which accompanies the illustration takes the form of a letter to Mr. Pips from his youthful son. We do not reproduce it in its entirety: extracts will suffice. The boy begins in the reverent fashion of more reverent days than these:—"My dear father, I hope you are quite well." He has not much to say about the game of football, which he apparently is not much in love with; but he recalls to our memory an old custom which we remember to have heard of in our time, but which we strongly suspect to have been legendary, at least in regard to the details afterwards embroidered upon it. He says:—"Last Thursday, being ye first Thursday of ye

month we commenced ye game of football, which I did not much enjoy. But in ye evening it being grown somewhat dark, some

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF YE GENTLEMEN OF DOWNSIDE IN YE MIDDLE OF YE
NINETEENTH CENTURIE No 6



SHOWING YE GAME OF FOOTBALL.

laddes did come to tell me I was to go with others some to procure oil for ye lampes of ye goal posts. At this I did marvel wondrous

greatly, for no lampes did I see, nor could I picture to myself ye reason for such doings. But one kicke given to me from behinde did explain ye reason and clear up my hesitation, and I did sally forth in quest of ye oil. We did go to ye house of Mr. Coxe, ye shoemaker, but from him we could find neither oil nor newes whither to repaire for it. At length when we returned home with bad success we found all ye laddes gone within, and for having gone away without ye leave of ye prefect we were sentenced to muche learning of lines, to ye amusement of those who had made us fooles. Never mind, I shall remember ye oil next year and ye argument from behinde to show ye necessity of fetching it."

We remember well the legend of this wild-goose chase but as we always heard it told, the errand to Mr. Coxe was for *strap-oil* and *pigeon's milk* and the argument alluded to by Pip's junior came from Mr. Coxe himself and his own strap. We refrain from a play upon the words of the striking expression used by Master Pips. This contemporary account of an ancient custom is, we cannot doubt, of the highest historical interest.

Another custom the boy also alludes to now perhaps fallen into disuse. It is that of "partridge shooting." How many will recognise the expression and remember the meaning of what was once a long established usage? We confess at first the mention of it rather confused us, but a vivid recollection soon returned of the dreary sport in which we ourselves had more than once had to take a solitary part. Mr. Pips, as an anxious parent is naturally somewhat nervous at the mention of this sport, "for fear lest my sonne might lose his braines whereof he has not much to spare" but he is consoled at finding that "'tis more likely to give brains than to take them away."

THE NEW CHURCH.

It is with great pleasure that we present our readers with a ground plan of the eastern portion of St. Gregory's magnificent new church. There may be some to whom a plan of any sort is a mystery. To such the accompanying plate will be of no interest: but we trust that to the majority it will convey much meaning and some little pleasure. If, as the *Athenæum* lately remarked, "it is difficult to overrate the value of ground plans to antiquaries" so is