

## Edinburgh: the Old City.

**I**N the situation and appearance of the "Old Town" of Edinburgh are displayed various peculiar features, and the architecture of many of the existing tenements denotes the former intercourse of the citizens with the Continent. The information, however, which we have as to the ancient state of the city is limited, and its history, previous to the foundation of the Abbey of Holyrood by David I., like its origin, is altogether unknown. For a considerable period after that event, the town was merely a small village built on the ridge sloping eastward from the Castle. The huge, massive, and lofty abodes of the inhabitants extended in that direction only as far as the Nether-Bow gate, at the termination of the High Street, which was the boundary of the burgh; and part of the old city wall still forms the west side of the steep alley or street known as Leith Wynd. Between the Nether-Bow and the Abbey of Holyrood were few or no houses previous to the foundation of that monastery, and this is confirmed by the charter of David I., which permitted the canons regular of Holyrood to erect a burgh of regality on the ground between their abbey and the town. This was the commencement of the Canongate, of which the abbot and canons were the superiors. The city was also for centuries surrounded by lakes and swamps, which procured for it the appellation of "l'Isleburgh" by the French in the sixteenth century. On its north side, and towards the west, lying immediately beneath the precipices of the Castle Rock, was the North Loch, the bed of which at the present day forms the Princes' Street Gardens, and, like many other once solitary and romantic spots, is now traversed by a railway.<sup>1</sup> On the south was the Borough Loch, which covered the present Hope Park Meadows, and was long the resort of snipes and other wild-fowl.

The first extension of the city was the Cowgate, which was long a suburb, the houses on each side being placed amid gardens now covered by decayed tenements, and abounding with numerous alleys. The first fortified wall of Edinburgh, erected about 1450, included only the Lawnmarket and High Street on the south; but in little more than half a century the Cowgate had been built, and as it was considered of sufficient importance to require defence after the fatal battle of Flodden in 1513, this suburb and the Grassmarket were included within the second wall, of which some portions in the streets further south and west still exist. Froissart states that in 1384-5, when a French force arrived to assist Robert III. against the English, the city contained four thousand houses; but this is a gross exaggeration, and is of no more authority than the number of fine castles he pretends to have seen in the vicinity. After the atrocious assassination of James I. at Perth, in February 1436-7, Edinburgh became the Scottish metropolis, and succeeding sovereigns, especially James III., conferred many privileges on the citizens. In the reign of James IV. the town was increased by the erection of wooden houses, the materials of which were obtained from the forest called the Borough Muir, on the south

<sup>1</sup> Previous to the fortifying of the city in the middle of the fifteenth century the bed of the North Loch was a dry ravine. The gardens of David I. under the Castle rock, such as they were, occupied part of the ground; and Bower mentions a grand tournament held on it in 1296, under the auspices of the queen of Robert III., at which Prince David, her eldest son, presided. After the lake was formed as a defence of the city on the north, it extended east of St. Cuthbert's parish church, from the base of the Castle rock, near the ruinous Well-House Tower, erroneously designated *Wallace's Tower*, to the

line of the North Bridge, at which was a sluice for discharging the water. A ford in the lake is mentioned at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Town-Council kept swans and ducks in the North Loch, and several tenements on its south bank had servitudes of boats, which latterly were most convenient for introducing smuggled goods into the city. The lake was partly drained in 1763, previous to the erection of the North Bridge and the construction of the Earthen Mound, but the ground lay waste and marshy till 1816 and 1825, when it was enclosed, and partly laid out in pleasure-grounds.



NEW ASSEMBLY HALL.  
EDINBURGH.

*From an Original Drawing by W. L. Letch*

JOHN G. MURDOCH LONDON

of the then Borough Loch. In 1478, when the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., encamped the English army at Restalrig, Edinburgh is described as populous and wealthy. Taylor, the Water-Poet, notices the High Street, in 1615, as the "fairest and goodliest street that ever his eyes beheld." Dr. Johnson merely observes of the Scottish metropolis, when on his journey to the Hebrides, in 1773, that it is "a city too well known to admit description." Boswell, however, records his admission, that "the breadth of the street, and the loftiness of the buildings, made a noble appearance." This was only a few years before the following description of the then town was published by a most competent authority, who says—"Placed upon the ridge of a hill, it admits of but one good street running from east to west, and even this is tolerably accessible only from one quarter. The lanes leading to the north and south, by reason of their steepness, narrowness, and darkness, can only be considered as so many unavoidable nuisances. Many families, sometimes no less than ten or a dozen, are obliged to live overhead of each other in the same building, where to all other inconveniences is added that of a common stair, which is in effect no other than an upright street."<sup>1</sup>

When the citizens were crowded together in the towering tenements, entered by those "upright streets," the common stairs, and in the steep and narrow lanes of the High Street, the Canongate, and the Cowgate, the town was entered by six gates, locally designated "Ports." The Nether-Bow Port on the east is already noticed as leading directly into the Canongate; south from this, at the junction of St. Mary's Wynd and the Pleasance, was a gate at the east end of the Cowgate; and on the north, at the termination of Leith Wynd, near Trinity College Church, was St. Andrew's Port. A more modern gate was the North Port, at the east end of the North Loch, leading to the fields on which the new city is erected, and to a straggling hamlet called Multrie's Hill. On the south-west were the Potterow and Bristo Ports, and immediately under the south base of the Castle rock, at the west end of the Grassmarket, was the West Port. An internal gate was in the West Bow. All those ancient erections have long disappeared. The hamlet of Multrie's Hill was removed for the erection of the General Register House at the east end of Princes' Street, and no vestiges remain of St. Ninian's Chapel in the vicinity, and of a building called Dingwall's Castle, which probably derived its name from John Dingwall, one of the first judges of the Court of Session, and Provost of Trinity College Church at the Reformation. The ancient road on the north side of the North Loch, which had no hedges or fences of any kind, known as the Long Gate or Row, is the present line of Princes' Street. It is traditionally said that the magistrates on one occasion, before 1750, offered to an inhabitant of the Canonmills a perpetual feu of all the ground between Multrie's Hill and the Gallowlee, half-a-mile distant on the left of the road to Leith, for a merely nominal feu-duty, but, as the land produced only heath and furze, the conditions were declined. It is curious to contrast this with the present value of the district in question. The former village of Picardy, occupied by the descendants of French refugees as weavers, gave its name to Picardy Place. The Gallowlee, the scene of many an execution, as its ominous name intimates, once contained fine gardens and nursery-grounds.

### THE CASTLE-HILL.

THE most ancient part of Edinburgh is the narrow street adjoining the esplanade of the Fortress, extending to the Lawnmarket and head of the West Bow, and designated the Castle-hill. This was for many years a fashionable residence of some of the nobility and gentry, and the denizens were a kind of exclusive community, separated in some degree from their neighbours in the Lawnmarket by the Weigh-House, a particularly clumsy edifice of two storeys and a flat roof, erected in the middle of the street in 1660, on the site of the Weigh-House destroyed by Cromwell in January 1651, and allowed to deform the locality till its removal before the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, Bart., a judge in the Scottish Supreme Court from 1726 to 1766, Lord Justice-Clerk from 1763 to the latter year, and grandfather of the first Earl of Minto. His Lordship was known to be the writer of "Proposals for carrying into effect certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh," in which he indulges in several severe reflections, not now applicable, on the internal condition of the city. It is not known in what part of the city Sir Gilbert

originally resided; but in 1753 the first storey or flat of the west tenement, entered by a common stair from Carrubber's Close in the High Street, was advertised to be sold or let as the house of the "Dowager Lady Minto;" and some years afterwards the mansion still called Minto House, on the south of the Cowgate, near Argyll Square, was built as a town residence for the family.

visit of George IV. in 1822. The Castle-hill includes sundry antique tenements on both sides of the street, and the entrance to several alleys or closes which were demolished by the construction of the spacious road from the south-west suburbs to the Lawnmarket, winding round the Castle rock, called the "New West Approach," opened in 1836, and by the erection of the beautiful Gothic edifice, surmounted above its eastern entrance by a magnificent and lofty spire, for the annual meetings of the General Assembly, and as one of the city parish churches.<sup>1</sup> The designations of those closes or alleys were, like many of those in other parts of the town, occasionally changed by the caprice of the proprietors, or on account of some resident inhabitant of rank and importance.<sup>2</sup> Only one, apparently, had an outlet to the lower region of the Grassmarket on the south.<sup>3</sup> The first alley below the esplanade on the south side deserves to be particularly noticed. In it is an old mansion strongly built, the walls of great thickness, said to have been at one time a residence of the ducal family of Gordon, though this rather contradicts their reputed town domicile in the Canongate. The outer doorway is surmounted by a kind of fleur-de-lis coronet. In this house, or certainly in one in this alley, was born the gallant Sir David Baird, Bart., the hero of Seringapatam, who died in 1829. The other closes, which led to old mansions and tenements, behind which were sloping gardens, have disappeared, and a very few of the street entrances are the only remains of this completely changed locality.<sup>4</sup>

On the north side of the street, near the Esplanade, is the Reservoir, a plain stone edifice erected for supplying the Old Town with water. Before this, the carrying of water afforded employment to persons of both sexes, called *water-caddies*, whose daily avocation was to ascend the long stairs of the tenements of the Old Town with small barrels full of water on their backs, which they emptied into the tubs and pails of those who paid them a small sum for each barrel. Those water-caddies were duly licensed by the magistrates, and had the right of first obtaining water at the wells whenever they appeared; while the citizens could only procure a supply by turns, and the maxim that they who came first were first served was duly observed, except in the case of the caddies. The wells of Edinburgh were often the scenes of abusive language and skirmishing on the part of female viragos, who contended for the priority of their "turn" with their neighbours.<sup>5</sup>

Behind the Reservoir,<sup>6</sup> on the steep declivity of the Castle-hill bank, overlooking Princes' Street Gardens, is Ramsay Lodge, a plain villa, chiefly interesting as having been built by Allan Ramsay, the author of

<sup>1</sup> The General Assembly's Hall, in which the congregation of the Tolbooth parish is accommodated, was named Victoria Hall, in compliment to her Majesty Queen Victoria, during whose first visit to Scotland in 1842 the edifice was in progress of erection. Although the whole structure was built, with the exception of the higher part of the spire, the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone was performed on that occasion. The edifice was completed in 1844, and the General Assembly was first held in it in May that year. Under the church, on the ground-floor, are commodious apartments for meetings of committees, the preservation of records, and the library belonging to the General Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> One alley derived its name from a different cause. This was the Stripping Close, at which culprits sentenced to be whipped through the town were divested of their upper garments by the executioner, and the punishment was commenced on their backs by that functionary.

<sup>3</sup> This was Currie's Close, dignified as *Vicus Curreri* in the "Bird's-Eye" view of Edinburgh taken by Gordon of Rothiemay in 1647, and republished in Kirkwood's "Plans and Illustrations of the City of Edinburgh" in 1817.

<sup>4</sup> Blair's Close is the name of the alley in which Sir David Baird was born. Below it were Brown's Close, Boswell's Court, and Rockville Court, the latter deriving its name from the Hon. Alexander Gordon of Rockville, a younger son of William second Earl of Aberdeen, who was elevated to the Bench in 1784, and discharged his duties as a judge till his death in his house in this alley in 1792. Coalstoun's Close, on this side of the street farther down, and now removed, was so named because in it resided George Brown, Esq. of Coalstoun, in Haddingtonshire, who took his seat on the Bench by the title of Lord Coalstoun in December 1756. His Lordship had previously occupied a house in the Luckenbooths opposite St. Giles' church. His lady, who survived him sixteen years, died in Coal-

stoun's Close in 1792. Lord Coalstoun was the grandfather of the lady who married George ninth Earl of Dalhousie. Kennedy's Close, which was the next eastward, is said to have been so called from a branch of the Kennedys, Earls of Cassillis, who had a house in this alley.

<sup>5</sup> In 1621, the Scottish Parliament, in compliance with a petition of the citizens, passed an act to bring water into the city; nevertheless the lieges remained in their former condition, procuring water from spring-wells and other sources, till 1672, when the magistrates employed Peter Brauss, a German engineer, to introduce water in a lead pipe from Comiston, near the base of the Pentland Hills, about four miles south-west of the city, to this Reservoir. The contract with Brauss amounted to 2950*l.*, and, to stimulate him to activity, the authorities promised him a gratuity of 50*l.*, which sum was paid to him in 1681, when the water is supposed to have been first introduced. Public wells, which still remain, were erected in the streets. In 1722, additional pipes were laid; and in 1787 a cast-iron pipe of five inches was added. In 1790, other springs were procured at Swanston, and three miles further south near the Pentlands, and a pipe laid at the expense of 20,000*l.* These were the preliminaries of the more extensive introduction of water into the city by a public joint-stock company.

<sup>6</sup> In the "Bird's-Eye" view of Edinburgh, by Gordon of Rothiemay, a "kirk on the Castle-hill" is noticed as one of the "chief places of the town." A view of the south side of the edifice is given, which was a kind of Gothic fabric near the site of the Reservoir. Maitland conjectures that it was the "church of St. Andrew near the Castle," to the altar of the Holy Trinity in which Alexander Currie, vicar of Livingstone, granted an annuity of twenty merks Scots on the 20th of December, 1488. Maitland also names an informant (Professor Sir Robert Stewart) who had often seen the ruins of this church. —History of Edinburgh, folio, p. 206.



WEST BOW  
EDINBURGH

*From an Original Drawing by G. Cattermole*

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the "Gentle Shepherd." He spent the last twelve years of his life in this house, and died in it in 1757, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous old mansions and tenements stood between Ramsay Garden and the alley known by its modern name, from a subsequent proprietor, of Blyth's Close, in which were the reputed Palace and Oratory of Mary of Guise, the Queen of James V. Most of those tenements are now demolished, and the others, inhabited by very poor families, are in rapid decay.<sup>2</sup> The Palace and Oratory of Mary of Guise, and Blyth's Close itself, were taken down in 1845, and the only remaining memorial of the latter in 1847 was the front land of three storeys, on which were the inscription "LAUS DEO," the date 1591 in large iron letters, and the marks of the initials of James VI. The Palace of Queen Mary's mother was of no architectural pretensions, yet it was antique and solid, though latterly its squalid inmates rendered the exterior and the interior peculiarly forbidding to a visitor. It was a tenement of three storeys on the west side of the alley, entered by a turnpike stair, above the door of which were carved in stone the Queen's initials, her cipher, and the words "LAUS ET HONOR DEO." The roofs of the apartments displayed various coronets, fleurs-de-lis, and ornaments in carved wood, many of which are carefully preserved.<sup>3</sup> On the opposite side of the alley was the supposed Oratory, in a large recess in which was found a curious iron box, now preserved in the museum at Abbotsford.

### THE WEST BOW.

THIS singular street, one of the most ancient in Edinburgh, of which only two small portions now remain, one forming the south-west corner of the Lawnmarket, and a few tenements below, and the other at the Grassmarket, was entered from the Castle-hill by an angular sloping of the street, in which before 1822 stood the Weigh-House. The West Bow was for centuries one of the most remarkable and grotesque localities of the Old Town, the houses of the most fantastic architecture, and abounding in antiquities, which have all disappeared. The street was a steep descent from the Lawnmarket, which was designated the *Bow-Head* at its commencement, and the *Bow-Foot* at its amalgamation with the latter. It had two *bends* or crooks, called *turns*, at one of which, next the Lawnmarket, was the gate connected with the first wall of Edinburgh, built in 1450, extending directly eastward between the Lawnmarket and the High Street, and the then suburb of the Cowgate. The hooks for supporting the hinges of this gate were long visible in the front of an adjacent house. This gate had been retained after the building of the wall in 1513 included a wider circuit within the city; and it was the scene of ceremonials at the state entrances of the sovereigns. The West Bow had witnessed the public entries of James VI. and his consort Anne of Denmark, Charles I., Oliver Cromwell, Charles II., and James II. when Duke of York, into the city; and its denizens, for upwards of a century after the removal of the place of execution on the Castle-hill, and other localities, were familiarised with the melancholy processions of criminals led to expiate their

<sup>1</sup> Although the site is most romantic, and the house is surrounded by trees, the fantastic style in which it is built caused numerous jokes at Ramsay's taste, which considerably annoyed him. It is said that he one day complained to his friend Patrick fifth Lord Elibank, to whom he was showing the interior, that the wags of Edinburgh compared the house to a goose-pie, and his Lordship is reported to have jocularly replied—"Indeed, Allan, when I see you in it I think the wags are not far wrong." The following notice of relics discovered at the formation of Allan Ramsay's garden is interesting—"About the middle of June some workmen, employed in levelling the upper part of Mr. Ramsay's garden in the Castle-hill, fell upon a subterranean chamber, about fourteen feet square, in which were found an image of white stone, with a crown upon its head, supposed to be the Virgin Mary, two brass candlesticks, about a dozen of ancient Scottish and French coins, and some other trinkets scattered among the rubbish. By several remains of burnt matter, and two cannon-balls, it is guessed that the building above ground was destroyed by the Castle in some former confusion, it having been the most westerly house in the city."—The Scots Magazine for June 1754, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the former occupants of these tenements may be here noticed. In Pipe's Close, a repulsive narrow alley, the first east of the Reservoir, formerly dwelt the Hon. Barbara and the Hon. Elizabeth Gray, daughters of John tenth Lord Gray, so styled because he married Marjory Baroness Gray in her own right, only child of Patrick ninth Lord. At the head of the next alley, called Skinner's Close, the family of the Earls of Leven is said to have resided in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the entrance to the common stair having the date 1621. Below this was Sempill's Close, so designated because it contained the town residence of the Lords Sempill, a strong-built tenement in excellent repair in 1847. John twelfth Lord Sempill occupied this house in 1753, when it was advertised for sale. Over one door is the inscription—SEDES MANET OPTIMA CÆLO; and over another—PRAISED BE THE LORD MY GOD, MY STRENGTH, AND MY REDEEMER, with the date 1638.

<sup>3</sup> An interesting paper on the interior of the Palace of Mary of Guise was read to the Society of Scottish Antiquaries at a meeting of the Society in the early part of the year 1847.

offences in the Grassmarket. In this street the unhappy Captain Porteous made his hopeless struggles and vain entreaties for mercy to his relentless destroyers; and here also was the shop from which the rioters procured the rope to hang him, leaving, as an evidence of the deliberation and justice of their proceedings, a guinea as the price on the counter. The narrative of that daring riot is subsequently given in full, in the account of the "Old Tolbooth."

Though for years, before its demolition to be supplanted by Victoria Street and Victoria Terrace, the West Bow had sadly degenerated in its inhabitants, and abounded with public-houses of the lowest description, brokers' shops and stalls, its former denizens were long a peculiar community of artisans, and dealers in a multiplicity of articles. They were also zealous Covenanters, whom the adherents of the House of Stuart ridiculed as "Bow-Head Saints," and the "godly plants of the West Bow."<sup>1</sup> The dagger-makers were at one period the principal residents of the street,<sup>2</sup> and when that trade became extinct they were succeeded by whitesmiths, coppersmiths, and pewterers, who for many years kept undisturbed possession. The noise occasioned by so many hammermen at their vocation was most annoying to a stranger. Another peculiarity of the West Bow was that it contained several booksellers,<sup>3</sup> and from this street emanated numerous tracts, sermons, and other productions of favourite Presbyterian ministers, whose polemical literature is now forgotten.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, such a singular locality could not be without its supernatural visitants and haunted houses. The worthies of the West Bow were terrified by a coach which thundered over the descent from the Lawnmarket at midnight, driven by a mysterious coachman, and drawn by six horses, whose eyes, mouths, and nostrils, sent forth flames of fire and brimstone. As to haunted houses, the street possessed one which had no rival in any other city or town in the kingdom. This was the domicile of the notorious Major Weir, at which the aforesaid coach was believed to stop for a short time in its career down the Bow, and in which the spirits of darkness were alleged to hold communings with its former occupants. This house was for many years the terror of the neighbourhood, and the object of most special horror to the boys of Edinburgh, who regarded it with superstitious dread. "No family," says Sir Walter Scott, "would inhabit the haunted walls as a residence, and bold was the urchin from the High School who dared approach the gloomy ruin, at the risk of seeing the Major's enchanted staff parading through the old apartments, or hearing the hum of the necromantic wheel which procured for his sister such a character as a spinner."<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Weir, commonly called Major Weir, was the son of Thomas Weir of Kirkcounie, and was born near Lanark about 1600, as it is stated that in 1670, when he was executed, he was seventy years of age.<sup>6</sup> His father or grandfather is mentioned as treacherously obstructing the marriage of the eldest son

<sup>1</sup> The "sanctified bends" of the Bow are noticed by Sir Walter Scott in a ballad in which Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, is represented as retiring from the Convention of Estates at the Revolution by that street, to raise the standard of James II. in the Highlands, though he left the city by Leith Wynd. This fine ballad is inserted from one of the publications known as "Annuals" in the Quarterly Review for 1828, pp. 96, 97. The following are the stanzas describing the Viscount's *poetical*, though not his *real* departure from Edinburgh:—

"As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,  
Each carline was flyting and shaking her pow;  
But some young plants—they looked couthie and slye,  
Thinking—luck to thy bonnet, thou bonnie Dundee!  
With sour-featured saints the Grassmarket was pang'd  
As if half of the West had set tryst to be hang'd;  
There was spite in each face, there was fear in each e'e,  
As they watch'd for the bonnet of bonnie Dundee."

<sup>2</sup> In June 1605, a dagger-maker in the West Bow, named William Thomson, was killed by John Waterstone, one of his neighbours, who was next day beheaded on the Castle-hill for the crime.

<sup>3</sup> The bibliopoles of the West Bow were latterly represented by Mr. James Main and Mr. Thomas Nelson. The old-established book-shop of the former was some yards down the street on the east side, and the windows displayed a series of productions now forgotten, such as the exploits of Dick Turpin the highwayman, accounts of extraordinary shipwrecks, and other ephemeral narratives, with coloured engravings, and generally sold at sixpence each. Mr. Nelson, the last of the West Bow booksellers, and an extensive publisher in what is technically

called the *number trade*, long possessed the shop under the antique corner wooden tenement at the head of the Bow, east side, next to the Lawnmarket, from which he removed to large and commodious premises near Blyth's Close, in the Castle-hill street.

<sup>4</sup> A crazed enthusiast named William Mitchell, by trade a white-iron smith, who occasionally exhibited as a preacher, and was well known in Edinburgh during Queen Anne's reign by the sobriquet of the *Tinklerian Doctor*, resided in a cellar at the head of the West Bow, from which he issued raving theological broadsheets on a variety of subjects.

<sup>5</sup> Major Weir's house, or *land*, entered immediately below the former book-shop of Mr. Main, close to a front tenement bearing the date 1604 over the doorway of the stair, and the words *SOLO DEO HONOR ET GLORIA*—a pious inscription, which was nevertheless unable to prevent the nocturnal visits of the ghosts and demons. A narrow passage leads into a small open court in front of the house, which is two storeys high, with a small attic, the walls of the ground storey more ancient than those of the upper. It is singular that Sir Walter Scott, in his "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," published in the Family Library in 1830, completely mistakes the Major's house in the frontispiece to that volume; and an engraving of a tenement on the north-west side of the first *bend* or turn of the West Bow, which was at one time the Assembly Room, is given as the real tenement, which was further up the street, on the opposite side, and not visible from the pavement until entered by the narrow alley and open court.

<sup>6</sup> Law's Memorials, edited by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq. Edin. 4to. 1818, p. 22.



FOOT OF THE WEST BOW.

*From an Original Drawing by G. Cartermole.*

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of Lockhart of Lee, his brother-in-law, to a daughter of Gilbert ninth Lord Somerville.<sup>1</sup> Weir was a lieutenant in the Puritanical army in Ireland, and in 1649 and 1650, he commanded the city-guard of Edinburgh, from which situation he derived the title of Major. He is quaintly described as "a tall black man, and ordinarily looking down to the ground—a grim countenance, and a big nose." The Major had acquired a remarkable fluency in prayer, and soon became noted among the Covenanters in Edinburgh for his supposed piety and fervid extemporary utterance at their private meetings, in which he "prayed to admiration." Many also resorted to his house to exercise their devotions, though it was afterwards remembered that he never could discourse on religious subjects, or engage in prayer, without a black staff in his hand, which he always carried with him. Such was the subsequent credulity respecting the Major's powers of necromancy and the black art, while he was deceiving his zealous admirers for years by his shameful hypocrisy, that it was believed his very staff possessed magical properties—that it could go to a shop and procure any articles he required—that it could open the door to any one who called upon him—and that it was often seen in motion before him in the capacity of a link-boy.

The Major never married, and his domestic affairs were superintended by a spinster sister, who resided with him in this house, attended by a female servant. At length, whether harrowed by remorse, or in a state of insanity, the Major confessed to a long course of criminal intercourse with his own sister, and with two females, one of whom was his servant, and the other is described as his step-daughter. His neighbours were astounded at his disclosures, more especially when he concluded with the declaration, "Before God, I have not told the hundredth part of what I can say more, and am guilty of." His impeachment of himself was considered so incredible, that Sir Andrew Ramsay of Abbotshall in Fife, the Lord Provost, refused for some time to commit him to prison; and it is the recorded opinion of a writer who lived a century after him, that "the Major was delirious."<sup>2</sup> The self-accusing Major and his sister were eventually committed to the Tolbooth, and even his mysterious staff, by the special advice of the latter, was secured. He was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be strangled and burned, a punishment which was inflicted a few days afterwards at Greenside, near the base of the Calton Hill, where it appears that he was literally burned alive. His staff was also thrown into the flames,<sup>3</sup> and it is recorded that it "gave rare turnings, and was long a burning, as also himself." While he was in the Tolbooth he confessed his profligacy, but refused to engage in any acts of devotion; and he died in a state of the most hardened indifference. The Major's sister was also tried, condemned, and executed for her criminal practices, to which was added the very unnecessary accusation of witchcraft, the proof chiefly her own confession as to sundry alleged traffickings with a tall woman who came to her from the "Queen of Fairie," while she was a schoolmistress at Dalkeith.<sup>4</sup> She told a minister who attended her, that she had resolved to die "with all the shame she could;" and accordingly, when she appeared on the scaffold, after addressing the spectators concerning her sins, her brother, his magic staff, and the Solemn League and Covenant,<sup>5</sup> she attempted to exhibit herself in a state of nudity, striking the executioner for preventing her. This abandoned creature died as impenitent as the Major, and both left behind them a notoriety in the annals of crime and superstitious credulity, which will never be obliterated from the traditionary history of the city.

Nearly opposite the entrance to the Major's house, on the west side, was a tenement, a part of which had once been the Assembly Room. On the doorway of the stair were the words *IN DOMINO CONFIDO*, the arms of the Lords Somerville, with the date 1602, and some initials. Further down the Bow was another lofty tenement entered by an outside stair, which is alleged to have been the first Assembly Room. This was the house erroneously engraved in Sir Walter Scott's *Letters on Demonology* as that of Major Weir. The angle contained a spiral stair, from which projected a massive turret of three or four storeys, and was a most prominent object in the West Bow.

<sup>1</sup> *Memorie of the Somervills*, written by James eleventh Lord Somerville, and edited by Sir Walter Scott, vol. ii. pp. 72-78.

<sup>2</sup> Arnot, in his *Criminal Trials*, 4to. p. 360.

<sup>3</sup> No Antiquarian Society then existed in Edinburgh to rescue Major Weir's mysterious staff, and preserve it as a curiosity.

<sup>4</sup> "She also confessed in prison that she and her brother had made a compact with the devil, and that on the 7th of September, 1648, they were both transported from Edinburgh to Musselburgh, and back again, in a coach and six horses, which seemed all of fire, and that the devil then told the Major of the defeat of our army in England, which he

confidently reported in most of its circumstances several days before the news arrived here. But as for herself, she said she had never received any other benefit by her commerce with the devil than a constant supply of an extraordinary quantity of yarn, which she was sure, she said, to find ready for her upon the spindle, whatever business she had been about."—*Ravillac Redivivus*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> She is reported to have exclaimed at the gibbet:—"I see a great crowd of people come hither to-day to behold a poor old miserable creature's death, but I trow there be few among you who are weeping and mourning for the broken Covenant."

The head of the West Bow was, in 1596, the scene of one of those numerous conflicts which for centuries were of frequent occurrence in the streets of Edinburgh. A deadly feud had existed for some months between the Somervilles of Cowthally and Cambusnethan in Lanarkshire, two branches of the noble family of Somerville. Among the allies of the Somervilles of Cambusnethan was James Johnstone of Westerhall, whose mother was a daughter of the former family, and who considered it his duty to support their claims and pretensions on all occasions. This gentleman was a thoroughbred Borderer, an excellent swordsman, and capable of contriving and executing the boldest enterprises. Hugh Somerville of Wrights, commonly from his stature and personal appearance known by the sobriquet of "Broad Hugh," was standing one day at the head of the West Bow, and Johnstone of Westerhall was walking up the same from the Grassmarket. A person who knew their family quarrels remarked to the Laird of Westerhall, "There is Broad Hugh Somerville of the Writes." They had often fought before upon equal terms, but on this occasion Westerhall took an undue advantage of his opponent. Supposing that Somerville was purposely waiting to attack him at the head of the West Bow, or that he intended to insult him, he drew his sword, and exclaiming, "Turn, villain!" he ran furiously towards his opponent, and dangerously wounded Broad Hugh on the head. Thus unexpectedly struck, he unsheathed his weapon as soon as he recognised his former antagonist, who had not attempted to repeat his stroke, and as he was the taller man, and of great bodily strength, he pressed Westerhall, who traversed the breadth of the street. Broad Hugh nevertheless kept close to him, having the advantage of the steep ascent. The greatest consternation prevailed, the people ran into the shops, and no one attempted to separate the combatants, as every thrust of their swords threatened instant death to any one who went near them. Broad Hugh bore down Westerhall, who was now almost exhausted by fatigue, to the foot of the Bow at the Grassmarket. Westerhall stepped within the door of a shop, and stood on the defensive; and here the last stroke of Broad Hugh almost broke his sword in pieces, having hit the lintel of the door, the cut on which long remained. The city by this time was in an uproar, and the magistrates, when informed that two gentlemen were engaged in a deadly encounter in the West Bow, sent their halbert-men to seize them. They were both secured, and conveyed to their own residences. The wound on Broad Hugh's head was at first considered dangerous, but he was at length completely cured. After the death of Lord Somerville, he and Westerhall were reconciled, and their mutual differences were forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

### THE LAWNMARKET.

THE Lawnmarket extends from the head of the West Bow and Castle-Hill to St. Giles's Church, opposite to which the street is known as the Luckenbooths,<sup>2</sup> and both are continuations of the High Street. Like other localities of the old town, the Lawnmarket had its due proportion of closes, the greater part of which on the south side are demolished. On the north side, opposite the head of the West Bow, is a large tenement, six storeys high, of hewn stone, built about 1690, and entering into an area court called Milne's Court,<sup>3</sup> from which is a thoroughfare to the Mound and the New Town. This "land" was long occupied by families of rank and opulence. East of Milne's Court are three alleys under modern houses leading into James's Court, the north tenement of which, nine storeys high, overlooking the Earthen Mound and Princes' Street, and

<sup>1</sup> *Memorie of the Somervills*, edited by Sir Walter Scott, vol. ii. pp. 7-11.

<sup>2</sup> "Ruddiman thinks that 'the *Luckenbooths* in Edinburgh have their name because they stand in the middle of the High Street, and almost join the two sides of it.' But the obvious reason of the designation is, that these booths were distinguished from others, as being so formed that they might be *locked* during night, or at the pleasure of their possessor."—(*Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary*, vol. ii. *sub voce* LUCKEN.) On the other hand, Maitland, who described the fabrics as "rotten, noisome, and offensive" in 1753, thus explains the derivation.—"The Scottish commerce formerly extended no further than to France and the Low Countries. From the latter we got woollen cloth, by the Flemings called *laken*, the sellers whereof occupying the *Booth Row*, that name was forced to give way to *Lucken-Booths*."

<sup>3</sup> Milne's Court in the Lawnmarket, and Milne's Square, opposite the Tron Church, are said, though the authority is not stated, to be designated from an individual named Milne, who was the descendant of an architect of considerable repute in his time. An isolated monument to Alexander Milne, who died in 1643, and of whom it is said in the inscription—"Quod vel in ære Myron fudit, vel pinxit Appelles, artifice hoc potuit hic lapicida manu," is in the enclosed pleasure-ground behind Holyrood Palace. In the Greyfriars' churchyard is a monument erected by his two nephews to the memory of John Milne, of which is a long inscription setting forth his many virtues, and stating that he was "the King's sixth master-mason of the race of Milne, exquisitely skilled in architecture," with the date of his decease, which was December 1667, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.



THE STRAND FROM THE HEAD OF WEST BOW, LONDON

*From an Original Drawing by W. P. Taylor*

JOHN G. MURDOCH. LONDON

built in 1727, was for upwards of half a century the residence of the upper classes, and of many eminent persons, who combined to prevent the intrusion of those of inferior station. But James's Court is chiefly interesting as the residence of James Boswell, Esq., where he entertained the Corsican general Paoli, the godfather of Napoleon, in September 1771, and thither he conducted Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was his guest from the 14th to the 18th of August, 1773, on which latter day they commenced their celebrated tour to the Hebrides. This house, which is a "half flat," is on the third storey of the west stair in the Court, and is entered by the left of the two doors. It had been previously occupied by Hume the historian, during whose absence in France it was tenanted by Dr. Hugh Blair.<sup>1</sup>

The next alley to James's Court is Lady Stair's Close, having a thoroughfare from the street to the Earthen Mound, and deriving its name from Eleanor, youngest daughter of James second Earl of Loudon, and dowager of the celebrated soldier and statesman, John second Earl of Stair, who died in 1747. The house in which the Countess of Stair died at an advanced age, in 1759, is on the west side of the alley, and is entered by a doorway which is surmounted by a sculptured stone, exhibiting in the centre a small coat-of-arms, the inscription, FEAR THE LORD AND DEPART FROM EVIL, the date 1622, and the initials of probably the original proprietor and his wife. Lady Stair married, while very young, James first Viscount Primrose, who treated her in the most inhuman manner, and some remarkable events in her early life are introduced into the tale by Sir Walter Scott, entitled, "Aunt Margaret's Mirror." He died in 1706, leaving three sons and one daughter by her Ladyship. She subsequently married the Earl of Stair, by a singular stratagem on the part of his Lordship, after long refusing to listen to his addresses, and whom she induced to refrain from inebriation, the common indulgence of the age, by a very affecting incident. Her Ladyship always spoke the broad Scottish dialect, and was peculiar in her conversation.

Some of the tenements in front of the Lawnmarket, on this and the opposite side of the street, are of wood, procured from the clearing of the timber on the Borough Muir. The erection of Bank Street and of the Bank of Scotland caused the first destruction of two alleys called Lower Baxter's Court and Morocco Close. Sellar's Close, the third east from Bank Street, led into the house in which Cromwell held his levees, and transacted his military business, in 1650 and 1651. This was a very extensive "land," which is entirely removed, having been allowed prematurely to fall into ruin.

The south side of the Lawnmarket, which consists of lofty tenements, contained several alleys full of curious old houses connected with historical and traditionary associations. The whole of those alleys were demolished by the erection of Victoria Street and of George IV. Bridge. In Riddell's Close, however, a part of which still exists, is the house of the unfortunate Bailie Macmorane, who was shot by one of the High School boys named Sinclair, on the 15th of September, 1595, in a riot which those juveniles excited because the Town-Council refused to sanction a request designated the "Privilege."

The second alley east of Riddell's Close was formerly called Lord Cullen's Close, after Sir Francis Grant, Bart., a Judge in the Court of Session by the title of Lord Cullen, from 1709 till his death in 1726. It was afterwards known as Brodie's Close, deriving its name from William Brodie, wright, a noted criminal, though at one time a member of the Town-Council, who was executed in 1788 at the west end of the Old Tolbooth, with an associate named George Smith, for breaking into the Excise Office, then in Chessels' Court in the Canongate. Smith met his fate with penitence, but Brodie displayed a remarkable levity on the scaffold, which he had done during the whole interval from his condemnation to his execution. It is stated that while in prison he was visited by a Frenchman styled Dr. Peter Degravens, who undertook to restore him to life after he had been suspended the usual time, and that the hangman had been paid a sum of money for a short fall, though he inadvertently made it too long. After Brodie was cut down, two of his workmen placed the body in a cart, and drove furiously round the Castle rock, imagining that the motion might cause resuscitation, and it was afterwards conveyed to his workshop in this alley, where Degravens attempted bleeding and other modes to restore animation, but with no better success.

Immediately below Brodie's Close, and fronting the street, was the tenement in which Hume the historian was born in 1711. It was destroyed by a calamitous fire in 1725, and its successor shared a similar fate in 1771. Between this and St. Giles's Church every memorial of the olden time has disappeared. The present Melbourne Place occupies the site of the Old Bank Close, formerly Hope's Close, so called because it was the

<sup>1</sup> Life and Correspondence of David Hume, by John Hill Burton, Esq. Advocate, 8vo. 1846, vol. ii. pp. 136-139.

residence of Sir Thomas Hope of Craighall, Lord Advocate in the reign of Charles I., and a prominent leader of the Covenanters. This alley contained several ancient tenements of historical interest. The house of Sir George Lockhart, Lord President of the Court of Session, was in it, and he was assassinated while in the act of entering the alley on Sunday the 31st of March, 1689, when returning from St. Giles's Church, by John Chiesley of Dalry, merely for pronouncing a decision in favour of his wife and children.<sup>1</sup> In this alley was also a tenement<sup>2</sup> in which the Earl of Morton was imprisoned, from the 27th of May to the 2d of June, 1581, previous to his execution; and when the French ambassador La Motte arrived in Edinburgh, on the 7th of January, 1581-2, he was lodged in it as one of the best houses in the town. James VI. occupied the tenement a short time in the spring of 1594, and he walked from it to St. Giles's Church to hear a sermon, after which he addressed the congregation, and denounced the turbulent Earl of Bothwell. In 1637 it became the property and residence of Sir Thomas Hope of Craighall, and in it were held many deliberations of the Covenanters. The alley derived its latter designation of the Old Bank Close from a substantially built tenement in an open court at the south end, on which was the date 1588, and occupied by the Bank of Scotland previous to the erection of the edifice in Bank Street.

But in a locality where every ancient domicile has been removed, it is unnecessary to indulge in minute description. The second alley below the Old Bank Close was Libberton Wynd, the site of which is now occupied partly by the street in front of Melbourne Place, and partly by the County Hall, completed in 1818. In Libberton Wynd was John Dowie's tavern, celebrated by Burns, and the room in which he composed his lyrics of "Willie" and "Allan" was after his death an object of curiosity to visitors. Dowie's ale was irresistible to the Judges of the Supreme Court and many distinguished persons, some of whom instituted a club in the tavern, which they designated, as a pun on the name of the landlord, the "College of Doway." This beverage, which was the production of Younger, an eminent brewer, and the tavern itself, are the themes of a very humorous poetical effusion by Mr. Hunter of Blackness, entitled, "Johnnie Dowie's Ale." The house itself consisted almost exclusively of small dark rooms or dens, and was sadly deficient in comfortable accommodation, yet in this apparently repulsive hostelry many of the most respectable citizens, and several remarkable individuals, continued to meet every evening during a great part of the eighteenth century. Dowie amassed about 6000*l.*, and lived till 1817, continuing to the last an entire conformity to the fashions of his youth, by wearing a cocked hat and clothes of the old costume, though he latterly dispensed with knee and shoe buckles. He was twice married, and had several children by his first wife, one of whom obtained the rank of captain in the Army. His successor carried on the business, under the designation of "Burns' Tavern," till the demolition of the Wynd in 1834. The small room known as the "Coffin," to which Burns resorted during his sojourn of six months in Edinburgh, was internally refitted by green cloth and a new table.<sup>3</sup>

In 1640 the Lawnmarket was the scene of a serious and resolute personal rencontre between Major Somerville, a relation of "Broad" Hugh Somerville of the Wrights, and a Captain Crawford, who had served under General Ruthven in Germany. After the surrender of Edinburgh Castle to General Leslie, Major Somerville was entrusted with the command. Captain Crawford, who imagined that he had the right of admission to the Fortress when he pleased, appeared one day at the gate, but the sentinels would not allow him to enter without the Major's permission. This irritated the Captain, who uttered some contemptuous

<sup>1</sup> Chiesley loaded his pistol in the morning, and is said to have resolved to shoot the President in the church. He followed his Lordship close after the dismissal of the congregation, and shot him in the back in presence of numerous spectators, exclaiming—"I have taught the President how to do justice." Lockhart fell, and almost immediately expired when carried into his house, the ball coming out at the right breast. Chiesley made no attempt to escape, and having been taken in the act, was put to the torture by order of the Estates of Parliament, confessed the crime, and was condemned to be hanged at the Gallow-lee, between Edinburgh and Leith, on the Wednesday following, his right hand to be cut off while he was alive, and fixed on the West Port, and his body to be hung in chains, with the pistol tied round his neck. A daughter of this man became the wife of James Erskine of Grange, a brother of John Earl of Mar, the leader of the Enterprise in 1715, and a Judge in the Court of Session from 1709 till his resignation in 1734, by the title of Lord Grange. The romantic

story of the abduction of Lady Grange, as she was called, to St. Kilda, by the authority of her husband, is well known.

<sup>2</sup> This tenement displayed over the architrave the date 1560, the year in which it was completed, and the initials R. G., which meant Robert Gourlay. It occupied the site of a building said to have been a prison. Maitland mentions the "old Tolbooth in the Bank Close in the Lawnmarket, which was rebuilt in 1562," as it stood in 1753, on the "western side of the Close," with the windows strongly stanchelled; and he notices the fabric as the predecessor of the "Tolbooth situated at the western end of the Luckenbooth Row, the common prison for debtors and criminals."—History of Edinburgh, folio, pp. 21, 22, 181.

<sup>3</sup> Biographical Sketches and Illustrative Anecdotes of John Kay's Original Edinburgh Portraits and Caricature Etchings, 4to. 1838, vol. i. pp. 1, 5; Traditions of Edinburgh, by Robert Chambers, vol. ii. pp. 238, 288, vol. iii. p. 106; Lockhart's Life of Burns, published in "Constable's Miscellany."



LIEBERTON'S WYND.  
EDINBURGH

*From an Original Drawing by G. Callermole*

JOHN G. MURDOCH, LONDON

expressions, which the Major accidentally overheard, and caused a meeting in the Greyfriars' Churchyard to fight a duel. The Captain, however, thought proper to apologise in such abject phraseology as to excite the contempt of the Major, who told him, "You have neither the discretion of a gentleman, nor the courage of a soldier; get you gone for a dastardly fool, fit only for Bedlam." The parties left the churchyard, and the Major, when he returned to the Castle, freely expressed his opinion respecting his opponent's valour. This was soon intimated to Captain Crawford, who resolved to challenge and fight Major Somerville on the public street, when it would be most crowded with passengers. No other mode in his opinion could save his honour. The Major, a few days after General Ruthven had left the Castle, was requested to attend the Committee of Estates and General Leslie on important business. As he was passing the Weigh-House from the Fortress, on his way to the Parliament House, between ten and eleven in the forenoon, Captain Crawford, who had previously deposited his cloak in a shop on the south side of the Lawnmarket, came up to Somerville armed with a long broadsword and a large Highland dirk, and said, "If you be a pretty man, draw your sword," brandishing his own and the dirk. The Major was at first astonished at the rashness of the man assaulting him while on public duty. He had only a walking-cane in his hand, and the sword which General Ruthven had presented to him attached to a shoulder-belt behind. He was forced to parry some thrusts with his cane, till he drew his sword, and the conflict commenced in earnest about the middle of the Lawnmarket. The Major drove the Captain, in a kind of retreating fight, to some goldsmiths' shops constructed of wood, and, afraid that the Major would transfix him to the timber, the latter resolved by one blow to disarm his antagonist. As if aiming at the Major's right side, and parrying his thrust with his dirk, he turned round, and attempted by a back-stroke with his sword to hamstring him in one or both legs. The Major only escaped this by a nimble leap, interposing the cane in his left hand, which was cut through by the blow. The Captain, however, had exhausted himself by the effort, and, before he could recover a defensive posture, Major Somerville beat the dirk out of his left hand with the remaining piece of the cane, and closing with him, struck him to the ground, mere compassion preventing him from inflicting vengeance. Some of the Major's soldiers happened to pass, and the prostrated Captain was with difficulty saved from their fury. He was taken to the Tolbooth, put in irons, and kept in prison upwards of twelve months, and he was only released by the intercession of Major Somerville's wife, to whom he wrote an account of his deplorable condition, requesting her influence in his favour, on condition that he "enacted himself to perpetual banishment."<sup>1</sup>

The former denizens of the Lawnmarket were noted for many peculiarities. Like other citizens, and in accordance with the baneful practice of the age, they were much addicted to forenoon tipping, and had several Clubs for dram-drinking, such as the "Lawnmarket Club," called ironically the "Whey Club," the "Haveral Club," the "Spendthrift Club," and a "Whist Club," the initiated members of which professed to spend the sum of only fourpence-halfpenny each night.

The communication called the Earthen Mound, between Princes' Street and the old city, was originated by some of the shopkeepers of the Lawnmarket, and it is to be regretted that this mass of rubbish was allowed to be deposited in the valley of the North Loch. In 1783, when the Mound was projected, Princes' Street in the New Town was built as far as Hanover Street. Previous to this, a number of gentlemen had formed an association in favour of Burgh reform, and their proceedings to accomplish their object were peculiarly offensive to the Magistrates and Council. As they resided chiefly in the Lawnmarket and West Bow, they felt the want of a direct access to Princes' Street, and at first intended to apply to the Town-Council in favour of their proposal; but aware that they were obnoxious to the Corporation, they commenced a subscription to lay down a pathway on the site of the Mound. This was projected in a tavern in the Lawnmarket, at the west entrance to James's Court, kept by Robert Dunn, much frequented by the shopkeepers of the period, and ironically designated "Dunn's Hotel," by way of burlesque on an elegant hotel of that name opened in Princes' Street. In a short time a foundation of furze was laid with mock masonic solemnity, and they returned to the "Hotel" to choose office-bearers, and appoint a committee to superintend the work. John Grieve, Esq., Lord Provost, whose house was the tenement forming the south-east corner of Hanover Street and Princes' Street, induced the Town Council to sanction the accumulation of rubbish. The Mound thus commenced, was long known among the lower classes as

<sup>1</sup> *Memorie of the Somervills*, vol. ii. pp. 270, 274.

the "Mud Brig," and also as "Geordie Boyd's Brig," the latter after an eccentric clothier, whose shop was in the Lawnmarket, and who was one of the most active in promoting the formation of the Mound.<sup>1</sup>

### THE TOLBOOTH.

THIS prison, graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," stood at the north-west corner of St. Giles's church in the Lawnmarket, and was one of the vilest edifices which even imagination can conceive. It was five storeys high, and occupied an area of not much more than sixty feet in length, by about thirty-three feet in breadth, exclusive of a more recent addition of two storeys at the west end towards the Lawnmarket. The roof of this was flat, and was used as a platform for the execution of criminals, from 1785 to 1817, when the whole edifice was demolished. It was surrounded by a black painted wooden rail, and was entered from the prison by a door in the gable, near which was an aperture for the projection of the gibbet. The entire edifice contracted the breadth of the street to very limited dimensions, and a house attached to it on the east in the Luckenbooths was separated from St. Giles's church by a narrow alley noted for personal rencontres. The east part of the Tolbooth was a tower or fortalice, of polished stone, and the west portion, a subsequent erection, was plain rubble work. On the south side the building contained two projecting spiral staircases to the several storeys. The ground-floor on the south side was popularly known as the "Thief's Hole," and that on the north side, which had long been shops, was constituted the City Guard-House in 1787. The sole entrance to the prison was in the angle close to St. Giles's church, by a doorway of carved stone-work, in front of which was always stationed a private of the Town-Guard in his red costume, and armed with a Lochaber axe. The turnkey's residence was close to the "Thief's Hole," and a door adjoining led into a lock-up dungeon. On the first floor from the entrance to the prison was an apartment with a stanchelled window on the south, and a rude pulpit intimated that this room or hall was also the scene of the ministrations of the chaplain to the prisoners. On the north side of this hall, towards the street, was a curiously constructed double window, which tradition alleged was the entrance of James VI., by an arch thrown over the street to an opposite house, when the Parliaments were held in the Tolbooth. A part of the edifice under this arch was the "Purses," so designated on account of the licensed beggars known as "blue gowns" receiving at it the royal bounty. The storey above the hall contained the "condemned room," with an iron bar across the floor, to which criminals doomed to execution were chained.<sup>2</sup> The ground-floor on the north side at the "Purses" continued the station of the City Guard from 1787 to the disbanding of that body in 1817.

It is stated that the Tolbooth was rebuilt in 1561, but portions of it were more ancient. In the former Tolbooth, which occupied the site of the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," the Court of Session first assembled in presence of James V. on the 27th of May, 1532, and that part of the edifice in which the Judges sat was called the "Council House." In 1561, however, the then Tolbooth was considered the most public building in the Town, and on it were at that date spiked the heads of Alexander third Lord Home and his brother, by command of John Duke of Albany, the Regent, who ordered them to be executed for supporting the party of the Queen Dowager of James IV. and the English interest. The dilapidated state of the Tolbooth was such in 1561-2, that Queen Mary sent a mandate to the Town-Council to employ workmen to remove it "with all possible diligence," and to provide accommodation elsewhere for the Courts of Law. The civic exchequer happened to be at the time in a most deplorable condition, and the sum of six hundred merks, allotted to the "Master of Works" to pay his men, was with such difficulty procured, that the Judges threatened to remove the Supreme Court to St. Andrews.

The rebuilding of another fabric is thus noticed by a contemporary—"This year, 1562, upon the 19th day of March, the tradesmen of Edinburgh founded the new Tolbooth, at the west end of St. Giles's

<sup>1</sup> Biographical Sketches to Kay's Portraits, vol. ii. pp. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup> In this room was also a square iron box called the "Cage," into which dangerous and violent culprits under sentence of death were immured. At the demolition of the Tolbooth this "Cage" was pur-

chased by some persons in Portobello, three miles east of Edinburgh, and the door and padlock of the prison were sent to Abbotsford, where the doorway was re-erected by him whose genius had rendered the "Heart of Mid-Lothian" celebrated throughout the world.



church."<sup>1</sup> This was subsequently known as the "Nether" or "Laigh Tolbooth," and also as the "High Council-House," and stood at the south-west corner of St. Giles's church, in the vicinity of the site now occupied by the east end of the Library of the Writers to the Signet, and was opposite and parallel to the Old Tolbooth. During the progress of this erection the Judges sat in the Holy Blood Aisle of St. Giles's church.<sup>2</sup> Queen Mary rode in state from Holyrood to meet the Parliament in this Tolbooth in 1563, and the subsequent Parliaments and Conventions of the Estates held at Edinburgh often convened in it before the erection of the present Parliament House.

The Old Tolbooth was allowed to remain in its dilapidated state for a number of years, and a tenement in the Old Bank Close was used as the common prison. The building was eventually repaired, and continued to be the public jail till 1817. For upwards of two centuries previous many remarkable political offenders, and noted criminals, had been confined within its walls previous to their execution. It had also its due proportion of heads of persons who suffered death for high treason and other offences spiked on its battlements. On it was placed the head of the Regent Morton, who was executed at the Cross on the 2d of June, 1581, for his connexion with the murder of Lord Darnley, and it so remained till it was removed by order of James VI. in 1582.<sup>3</sup> This barbarous practice was inflicted on the Earl of Gowrie and his brother, who were killed at Perth in the celebrated Gowrie Conspiracy in 1600; the Marquis of Montrose, who was executed as a traitor by order of the Covenanting Committee of Estates on the 20th of May, 1650; and on his rival and enemy the Marquis of Argyll, who was beheaded on the 24th of May, 1651. Montrose, Argyll, and the son and successor of the latter as ninth Earl, whose fate, on the 30th of June, 1685, was similar to that of his father, were confined in the old Tolbooth immediately before their execution, as was also the uncle of Bishop Burnet, Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston, one of Cromwell's peers by the title of Lord Warriston.

During the domination of the Covenanting Committee of Estates the Tolbooth was filled with Royalist prisoners, who were designated "Malignants," and after Cromwell obtained possession of the city, his opponents, both Royalists and Covenanters, were committed to durance within the same edifice. The restoration of Charles II. introduced another class of prisoners, many of them preachers and their followers who only left the Tolbooth for the scaffold in the Grassmarket. In subsequent times the inmates were chiefly criminals and debtors; and such was the discipline of the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," that some of the latter, who were on friendly terms with the jailer, enjoyed the "freedom of the prison," which meant that they were not confined to one apartment, but were allowed to perambulate over the storeys of the west portion of the building.

One of the most important events connected with the Old Tolbooth was the celebrated Porteous Mob, the prominent incident in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian." That extraordinary outbreak, which astonished the whole kingdom, was remarkable for the dexterity of its plan, and the mystery which still envelopes the identity of the ringleaders. It occurred as follows:—

On the 9th of February, 1736, Andrew Wilson, George Robertson, and William Hall, robbed the collector of excise from Kirkaldy of a considerable sum of money in a public-house in the town of Pittenweem. They were speedily apprehended in the adjoining town of East Anstruther, tried before the High Court of Justiciary, and condemned to be executed in the Grassmarket on the 14th of April. Hall was reprieved; but Wilson and Robertson being left to suffer the extreme penalty of the law, a plan was concerted by the culprits to escape

<sup>1</sup> *Historie of the Reigne of Marie Queen of Scots*, by Lord Herries, printed for the ABBOTSFORD CLUB, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*, folio, pp. 21, 22. The funds for this new Tolbooth were procured with the greatest difficulty. On the 5th of March the stones of a chapel, supposed to be that of the Holy Rood in the lower part of St. Giles's churchyard near the Cowgate, were ordered to be appropriated to the work; on the 18th of June, another edict was issued to raise money for its completion; and on the 21st they were obliged to obtain the loan of 1000*l.* merks on the Town Mills. In January, 1563-4, the edifice was still incomplete, and in reality the difficulty of procuring money seems to have been a source of continual torment to the Town-Council, whose finances were exhausted. Maitland observes lugubriously—"This grievance, which probably is nowhere to be paralleled, was a very great hardship on

the injured Edinburghers, to be compelled by their sovereign to erect an expensive building for the use of a national Court, the charge whereof ought to have been defrayed by the public, and not by one town."

<sup>3</sup> The King's letter, which is preserved in the archives of the City of Edinburgh, is as follows:—"REX—Provest and Baillies of our burgh of Edinburgh, We greit you weil. It is Our will, and We command you, that incontinent after the sicht hereof ye tak down the heid of James, sum tyme Erle of Mortoun, of (from) the pairt quhair it now is placit upoun your auld Tolbuith, swa that the same heid may be bureit; for the quhilk this our letter sall be to you sufficient warrand. Subseryvit with our hand at Halyrudhous, the aucht day of December, and of our reigne the sextene year, 1582."—Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, vol. i. Part II. p. 116

from the Tolbooth, by sawing or filing one of the iron bars of the windows, which had every prospect of success. The noise caused by the operations was stifled by a regular "psalm-singing" practised by the prisoners, and on the bar being severed, the attempt was first made by Wilson, who is described as a "round squat man;" but he stuck so fast between the bars on either side of that which had been removed, that before he could be disentangled the turnkeys were on the alert. It is said that Robertson earnestly wished to be the first to hazard the experiment, and that he was prevented by Wilson, who thought that, if he got out, his companion would have the better chance. This circumstance seems to have operated powerfully on the mind of Wilson, who occupied the few remaining days of his life in devising a mode to save his fellow-culprit. The plan he adopted was as bold as it was unlikely to succeed. It was the custom to convey criminals to the adjoining division of St. Giles's, called the Tolbooth Church, under a party of the town-guard, on the Sunday before their execution, to hear a discourse suitable to their unhappy condition. On this occasion, four soldiers of the guard escorted Wilson and Robertson to the "condemned pew." While the congregation were assembling, Wilson suddenly seized two of the soldiers, secured a third by holding his coat in his teeth, and called to Robertson to run for his life. Robertson soon tripped the fourth, leaped out of the pew, and rushed through the church, the people (not unnaturally) affording him every facility to escape.

Wilson, without hearing the sermon, was immediately taken back to the Tolbooth, put in irons, and on the following Wednesday was conducted to the scaffold in the Grassmarket, surrounded by a strong detachment of the guard, commanded by the ill-fated Captain John Porteous. As Wilson's conduct had excited the greatest sympathy in his favour, and as the crime for which he was to suffer was considered very trivial by the populace, the magistrates dreaded a rescue, and among other precautions ordered a military detachment to occupy the Lawnmarket during the execution. Nothing, however, occurred till the body was to be cut down, when a number of persons assailed the hangman with stones, some of which struck the soldiers of the city guard. Captain Porteous immediately discharged his own loaded piece among the crowd, and then ordered his men to fire, without any authority from the magistrates, who were in an adjoining house. Six persons were killed, and a number dangerously wounded.

The popular rage against Porteous, who had always been disliked, was so furious, that he would have been sacrificed by the mob, if he had not been committed to the Tolbooth until his conduct should be investigated. He was tried for murder, found guilty by the High Court of Justiciary on the 20th of July, and sentenced to be executed on the 8th of September. It may be doubted whether Porteous was justly condemned for murder, as no evidence was adduced to prove that he intended any fatal violence; and a respite of the execution for six weeks was therefore obtained. His enemies, however, who saw that their vengeance would not be gratified, and that his friends were sufficiently powerful to procure a commutation of the sentence, formed a most extraordinary combination for the purpose of inflicting on him the utmost penalty of the law, in defiance of the authorities.

On the night of the 7th of September, the day previous to that fixed for the execution of Porteous according to the sentence, a little before ten o'clock all the gates of the city were seized by a mob armed with sticks and bludgeons; many of the prominent leaders were observed to be persons of superior rank. The rioters entered the city by the West Port, and compelled the drummer stationed at that gate to proceed before them beating his drum along the Grassmarket and the Cowgate to the Nether-Bow Port, which they secured and locked, exclaiming continually—"Come here, ye who dare avenge innocent blood!" They then assailed the city guard-house in the High Street, violently disarmed the men, and turned them out of their quarters. Having adopted every possible measure to prevent the magistrates from obtaining the aid of the soldiers quartered in the Castle, they surrounded the Tolbooth, to the interior of which they obtained access by burning the door, dragged Porteous from the grated chimney of his cell, in which he had concealed himself, and carried him to the Grassmarket, where they hanged him on a dyer's pole, as near as possible to the regular place of execution. The body was found hanging at daybreak, and all the rioters had disappeared, no one knowing who they were, or whither they had gone.<sup>1</sup> It is said that many of them were disguised in female and other attire. The whole affair was transacted with the

<sup>1</sup> It is necessary here to correct the statement which Sir Walter Scott was entitled to assume, to give effect to his story, but unpardonable in local writers to narrate as a fact. This is, that the public assembled to witness the execution of Porteous on the 8th September

—that the scaffold was erected in the Grassmarket—and that it was then the respite was first announced. All this is pure fiction, for the respite was known five days previous, and sufficient time was thus obtained to organize the confederacy.

utmost coolness. The mob, in their progress with Porteous to the Grassmarket, broke open a shop in the West Bow, and took from thence a rope, for which a guinea was found on the counter in the morning; the chief performer in this exploit was a man named Bruce, an inhabitant of East Anstruther, who fled for a time, but subsequently returned to that town, and followed the avocation of a barber.<sup>1</sup> On the way from the Tolbooth to the Grassmarket, Porteous gave to one of the citizens, who vainly interceded in his behalf, a sum of money to be delivered to his brother. One man was tried and acquitted, but none of the ringleaders were ever discovered.

### ST. GILES'S CHURCH.

THIS edifice, the exterior of which was completely rebuilt in 1830 and 1831, is in the style termed the "decorated Gothic," and is one of the most conspicuous objects in the Old Town. St. Giles was the tutelary patron of the city, and the town-council could at one time boast of possessing a reputed arm of the holy man, presented by Preston of Craigmillar, whose descendants, in gratitude for the relic, obtained from the civic functionaries the privilege of carrying it, enshrined in a silver case, on public occasions.<sup>2</sup> The attachment of the citizens to St. Giles, however, completely evaporated at the Reformation. On one occasion, during the regency of Mary of Guise, they forcibly seized an image of their patron which was to be exhibited in an ecclesiastical procession, and threw it into the North Loch, and a small image which was borrowed from the neighbouring Grey Friars, was termed in derision "young St. Giles." Soon after Queen Mary's arrival from France, so zealous were the lieges against St. Giles, that they actually cut an imaginary likeness of him out of the city standard, and substituted the national emblem of the thistle in place of the "idol," as they designated the representation.

St. Giles's Church, in its present condition, is very different from what it originally was, and the only part of the fabric which the citizens of former generations would recognise is the beautiful central tower, surmounted by open arches, from the groin of which rises a small steeple. The south and north sides of the church were long encumbered by small shops or booths, built close to the walls between the buttresses. Those on the south side in the Parliament Square were of stone, above which were dwelling-houses of two storeys, with flat roofs, the shops chiefly those of jewellers. The booths on the north side were of wood, and were called the Krames, separated from the Luckenbooths continuation of the Lawnmarket and High Street by a row of lofty stone tenements, which extended from the east gable of the Old Tolbooth to a huge "land" of eight or nine storeys, apparently forming the termination of the High Street on the west. The booths of the Krames were originally tenanted by mercers, hosiers, glovers, and other traders in miscellaneous wares, but before the removal they had degenerated into mere toy-shops.<sup>3</sup> On the north-east corner wall of the church, above the shops, was a niche in which had been a statue of the Virgin Mary, and some steps leading from the Cross were in consequence known as "Our Lady's Steps." Such is a brief description of this part of the City in the olden time, every vestige of which is swept away, and St. Giles's steeple is the solitary external memorial of past centuries.

That division of St. Giles's Church still called parochially the Old Church—the south transept of the present edifice—was the most ancient portion of the entire fabric before the whole was externally rebuilt; but though the date of the foundation is unknown, no part of the former structure was of greater antiquity than the middle of the fifteenth century. The statement ascribed to Simon of Durham, that it existed in the ninth century, and was one of the churches belonging to the bishopric of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, is unworthy of the least credit; yet a religious edifice occupied its site probably in the thirteenth century, and the ground sloping down towards the Cowgate, on which the Parliament House and Courts of Justice are erected, was long before the Reformation the common place of interment of the

<sup>1</sup> This man was well known to the venerable informant of the present writer, the mother of the late Captain James Black, R.N., a lady almost a century old in 1839.

<sup>2</sup> This reputed arm of St. Giles, with its enshrined cases, weighed five pounds three and a half ounces. In the church were also pre-

served "St. Giles's coat, with a little pendicle of red velvet which hung at his feet," with other curious relics.—Maitland's History of Edinburgh, folio, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Walter Scott gives an accurate description of the Krames in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian."

citizens. On the 15th of December, 1359, a charter was granted by David II. of the lands of Upper Merchiston, near the city, to the chaplain officiating at St. Catherine's altar in the church. In 1365, the same monarch ratified a donation by a burgher of Edinburgh to the altar of the Virgin Mary, which intimates that several altars and chaplaincies had been founded. The Scottish Barons met in the church in 1384, and declared war against England. The result was the invasion of Scotland under the Duke of Gloucester, who burnt the city, including St. Giles's Church and Holyrood, leaving all in ruins except the Castle, after a conflagration of five days.

The church was soon rebuilt with the city, and this was the commencement of the subsequent edifice, or of that division long designated the Old Church. Various sums were paid by Robert III., and his successor James I. between 1390 and 1413 to restore the edifice.<sup>1</sup> Even in 1387, the erection of five chapels was designed on the south side,<sup>2</sup> and subsequently five were constructed on the north side. The next addition was the present High Church, which may be said to form the chancel of the modern edifice, and appears to have been commenced in the reign of James I.<sup>3</sup> The High Church Aisle, formerly the Holy Blood Aisle, in which the General Assembly long annually met, and was entered from the Parliament Close, is said to have been built by the Prestons of Craigmillar, whose armorial bearings frequently occurred in it, those of the City twice, and one coat-of-arms which was not ascertained. The High Church division seems to have been terminated at the west end by the tower and steeple till the seventeenth century, when the increasing population rendered more parochial accommodation necessary, and the additions placed the tower in its present central position. About the end of the reign of Charles I., the west portion, long known as the Tolbooth Church,<sup>4</sup> from its proximity to the prison, was constituted a parish church. In 1656, this church was divided into two by a partition wall,<sup>5</sup> and that portion of the extended edifice forming the north-west division, next the Old Tolbooth, was known by the several designations of "Haddo's Hole Kirk," the "New North Kirk," and the "Little Kirk."<sup>6</sup>

In this condition the whole stood till 1829, a huge, sombre, and irregular pile of Gothic architecture of its kind, without any pretensions to elegance of design or decorations of masonry. On the contrary, the four churches under the roof of St. Giles were one mass of deformity, more especially after all the surrounding lofty tenements which concealed the entire edifice from public view had been removed. It is unnecessary to describe the exterior of a group which no longer exists in its former state, and contained nothing attractive in the interior to compensate for the miserable taste of those who had suggested the additions. It is, therefore, the historical associations connected with St. Giles's of Edinburgh which are alone interesting.

<sup>1</sup> The sums are mentioned in the Chamberlain's Accounts.

<sup>2</sup> *Registrum Magnum Sigilli*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> This is proved by an examination of the armorial bearings on the pillars, for the interior of this part of the edifice was strictly preserved. The first pillar from the altar window on the north side, in the division called the High Church, is known as the *King's Pillar*, and contains four coats-of-arms—those of Scotland, or of James II., twice repeated, those of France, and those of James II. and his consort Margaret of Gueldres. This intimates that the pillar was erected between 1437, the year of the accession of James II., and 1460, when he was killed at the siege of Roxburgh Castle. The demi-pillar on the same side contains the arms of Thomas Cranston, "scutifer," or shield-bearer, to the King, and this ancestor of the Lords Cranston was a man of considerable note in the reign of James II. On the pillar opposite the *King's Pillar*, are four armorial bearings—those of Preston of Craigmillar, of Nicolson, of Kennedy, and of the City of Edinburgh. Archbishop Kennedy of St. Andrews, when Bishop of Dunkeld, was Lord Chancellor in the reign of James II., and his elder brother, Gilbert Kennedy of Dunure, an ancestor of the Earls of Cassillis, was created Lord Kennedy by that monarch. On the south side were also displayed the arms of Isobel Countess of Lennox, the wife of Murdoch Duke of Albany; and this lady, who was a great benefactress of the Church of Rome in Scotland, died in 1451. The other armorial bearings in this part of the edifice belonged to the city of Edinburgh, with only one exception on the roof in the north-west corner.

<sup>4</sup> "Quhilk was so callit because it was lastlie the pairt and place quhair the Criminal Court did sit, and quhair the gallows and Mayden

did lie of old."—Nicoll's Diary, printed for the BANNATYNE CLUB, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> Nicoll's Diary, pp. 174, 178.

<sup>6</sup> With the additions already mentioned, the external length of the building, previous to 1830, was understood to be 206 feet, the breadth at the east end 76 feet, at the west end 110 feet, at the transept or centre, 129 feet; the height of the tower 155½ feet, or, according to Arnot, 161 feet. It was divided into four parish churches, of which the *High Church* was the east portion, the *Old Church* was the south transept, the *Tolbooth Church* and *New North Church* were the west additions; the aisle appropriated for the annual meetings of the General Assembly adjoined the *Old Church* on the south; and the north transept, opposite the Luckenbooths, was occupied for a few years previous to the alterations as a police-office and court-house, which originated the satirical remark, that a part of St. Giles's church was converted into a *den of thieves*. Maitland's statement of the height of the tower of the Church is 155½ feet, "as measured," he says, "by James Fife, player on the music-bells therein."—*History of Edinburgh*, folio, p. 273. The local diarist Birrel relates a curious and very dangerous exploit connected with St. Giles's tower. On the 10th of July, 1598, a man exhibited or "played souple tricks, the lyke never seen in this countrie," upon "anc tow" fastened from the top of the steeple to a stair below the Cross called "Josias' Close-head."—*Diary*, p. 47. In 1648, the four open stone arches on the top of the tower, which are imagined to resemble an imperial crown, were ordered to be rebuilt.

The church belonged to the Abbots of Dunfermline till the reign of James III., who, in 1466 or 1483,<sup>1</sup> constituted it collegiate, having a Provost, a curate, sixteen prebendaries, a minister of the choir, four choristers, a sacristan, and a beadle; and the patronage is said to have been vested in the Archbishop of St. Andrews and the town-council of Edinburgh. In this state it remained till the Reformation, when John Knox became the first Protestant minister. The opulent citizens had founded altars in the church of their tutelary saint, and a great part of the property in the neighbourhood was by degrees appropriated to that purpose.<sup>2</sup> Thirty-four altars are enumerated,<sup>3</sup> of which those of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Cross, the Holy Blood and St. Anthony, Our Lady of Piety, and the Holy Cross of the Body and Blood of Christ, are specially noticed. One was dedicated to St. Eloi, or St. Aloysius, who was selected by the incorporated trades of the city as their peculiar and favourite guardian. Above this altar was displayed the "Banner of the Holy Ghost," better known by its less dignified title of the "Blue Blanket," still preserved, and traditionally said to have been the standard of a band of Scottish mechanics who engaged in the Crusade wars in the Holy Land.<sup>4</sup> The "jewels, plate, vestments, and other treasure and trinkets," which belonged to the Provost and prebendaries, were numerous and valuable. At the Reformation all those treasures were sold, and the remaining sum, after being employed to repair the edifice and arrange the interior according to the notions of the Protestant preachers, was applied to the purposes of the City.<sup>5</sup> The Provost, before the appropriation of the temporalities by the town-council, received the rents and the profits, was entitled to a residence and glebe in the vicinity, and had the right to select the curate, who was to officiate for him, preside in the choir when the two senior prebendaries were absent, and to whom was paid annually twenty-five merks, exclusive of a domicile near the church.

The most celebrated Provost of St. Giles's Church was Gavin Douglas, the translator of Virgil's *Æneid* into Scottish verse, and the author of several works, one of which, entitled the "Palace of Honour," dedicated to James IV., bears a remarkable resemblance to Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the coincidence being too evident to be accidental. He was the third and youngest son of Archibald fifth Earl of Angus, surnamed "Bell-the-Cat," was subsequently consecrated Bishop of Dunkeld, died of the plague in London in 1521 or 1522, while under the ban of the Duke of Albany as a traitor, and was interred in the Savoy Church. Gavin Douglas was appointed Provost of St. Giles's Church in 1509, when he resigned his rectory of Hawick. His conduct in 1520, during the contest between his nephew Angus and the head of the Hamilton family, then styled Earl of Arran, is subsequently noticed in the street riot of "Cleanse the Causeway." The humble bishopric of Dunkeld was the only preferment which this first translator of a Roman classic, and one of the earliest of Scottish poets, obtained during his troubled life. Deprived of the abbey of Aberbrothwick, excluded from the primacy of St. Andrews, and after encountering much personal opposition in connexion with the see of Dunkeld, Gavin Douglas became embarrassed with debt, and finally, as we have seen, died an exile; but he left behind him a reputation which will always distinguish him as a prelate of much learning and of munificence beyond his limited resources, and his misfortunes seem to have originated from the circumstance that he was a member of the once powerful house of Douglas.

After the Reformation, the then existing fabric of St. Giles was completely altered in the interior, and the Old Church division became the parish church of the City when John Knox was appointed the first minister.

<sup>1</sup> Father Hay in his MS. gives the date 1483.

<sup>2</sup> St. Giles's Grange, once a farm, afterwards the estate of Grange House (Dick Lauder, Bart.), about a mile and a half south of the church in a direct line, near the site of the nunnery of St. Catherine of Sienna, or the "Sciennes," on the south of Newington, belonged to the Provost and prebendaries. Some idea may be formed of the opulence of the ecclesiastics before the Reformation from the enumeration of Maitland, who states the rental derived from various lands, ground-annuals, and feu-duties, as amounting even in 1661, nearly a century after much of the property had been plundered, to the sum of 25287. Scots.

<sup>3</sup> Among the endowed altars were those of St. Catherine, St. Nicholas, St. Francis, St. Martin and St. Thomas, St. Blasius, St. Dionysius, St. James the Apostle, St. Ninian, St. Laurence, St. Saviour, and the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. Maitland observes of the altars in St. Giles's church, which he enumerates, that many of them "had a plurality of foundations and chaplains belonging to

them, whereat were performed the numerous anniversary obits, &c., for the repose of the souls of the founders, their relations, and friends."—History of Edinburgh, folio, p. 272.

<sup>4</sup> The "Blue Blanket," which is a curious memorial of former times, and is almost in tatters, is always deposited with the Convener of the Trades, the only member of the incorporations who has, since the Burgh Reform Act, an official seat in the town-council. This banner is displayed on important occasions. It waved above the temporary barrier-gate erected near Picardy Place to receive George IV. in 1822, and it was produced to welcome her Majesty Queen Victoria in 1842.

<sup>5</sup> Maitland's History of Edinburgh, folio, pp. 272, 273. The church was also amply provided with gold and silver crosses, candlesticks, chalices, and various vessels, a golden bell and unicorn, a small golden heart with two pearls, a diamond ring with several small stones, a silver ship for incense, silver paten and spoon, a communion cloth of gold brocade, and costly robes for the Provost and Prebendaries.

The Earl of Moray was married in it to Lady Anne Keith in February 1561, and the ceremonial seems to have been performed by Knox, who addressed the future Regent on the occasion, although he expressed his dissatisfaction at the extraordinary feasting which followed. Lord Darnley occasionally attended the prelections of Knox in this church, but his compliance obtained for him little favour from that austere orator. On the 22d of February, 1567-8, Sir William Stewart was inaugurated Lord Lyon-King-at-Arms in the edifice, after a sermon, in presence of the Regent Moray and many of the nobility; but this unfortunate gentleman<sup>1</sup> held his office only a few months, as the celebrated Sir David Lindsay of the Mount was installed his successor on Sunday the 22d of August, 1568, in presence of the Regent Moray. On Tuesday the 11th of February, 1569-70, the body of the Regent, who had been assassinated by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh at Linlithgow on the 23d January, was conveyed from Holyrood, and interred in the church; Knox preached the funeral sermon, many of the nobility being present, and the audience, consisting of three thousand persons, were deeply affected.<sup>2</sup> A monument, a kind of altar-tomb which still exists, was erected to his memory, with a Latin inscription from the pen of George Buchanan.<sup>3</sup> The fabric sustained no injury during the siege of the Castle in 1573, though Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, the governor, fortified the tower with artillery, and placed in it a party from his garrison. The edifice was often the scene of offensive personalities uttered by the officiating preachers to James VI., at which he sometimes displayed great irritation,<sup>4</sup> and on other occasions was obliged to pass over the affront in silence. In this church he repeatedly denounced the turbulent Earl of Bothwell to the assembled congregation, in 1591 and 1592; and here he was told from the pulpit by Mr. Robert Bruce, on the 13th of March, 1594, that "God would raise up more Bothwells than one, who would be greater enemies to him than Bothwell, if he fought not God's quarrel and battles on the Papists before he fought or revenged his own particular quarrel." On the 3d of April, 1603, two days before his departure to England as the successor of Queen Elizabeth, the King went to the High Church division of the edifice, which was crowded on the occasion, and heard a sermon preached by Mr. John Hall, containing many free allusions, which the Monarch, however, is said to have taken "in good part." After the sermon he rose and addressed the congregation, who were greatly affected. He promised to visit his native kingdom every third year, and entreated his subjects not to be depressed because he left them, for his power to serve them was increased, and his inclination to do so would never be diminished. James concluded his speech, which was in the Scottish vernacular, in these words—"I have nae mair to say, but pray for me." The audience expressed their feelings by loud sobs and tears. James was again in the High Church at his entrance to the city on the 16th of May, 1617, when he heard a sermon by Archbishop Spottiswoode of St. Andrews. Among the dignitaries of the Church of England then present were the learned Dr. Lancelot Andrewes, who was at the time Bishop of Ely, and the future Archbishop Laud.

Charles I. was often under the roof of St. Giles's during his visits to Edinburgh. After his coronation at Holyrood in 1633, he founded the bishopric of Edinburgh, which had for centuries been a part of the

<sup>1</sup> See a notice of Sir William Stewart's fate in the History of Edinburgh Castle in the present Work, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Calderwood's *Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*, printed for the WODROW SOCIETY, vol. ii. pp. 526, 527.

<sup>3</sup> The inscription on the Regent's tomb is as follows—"PIETAS SINE VINDICE LUGET. JUS EXARMATUM EST, 23 JANUARY 1569. JACOBO STEWARTO, MORAVLE COMITI, SCOTIE PROREGE, VIRO ETATIS SUE LONGE OPTIMO, AB INIMICIS OMNIS MEMORIE DETERRIMIS EX INSIDIIS EXTINCTO, CEU PATRI COMMUNI PATRIA MERENS POSUIT." It is recorded of the Regent, that "his head (was) placed south, contrair the ordour usit; the sepulchre laid with hewn wark maist curiously, and on the head ane plate of brass."

<sup>4</sup> In the beginning of 1586-7, one of those numerous exhibitions occurred in which the preachers delighted to indulge. The fate of Queen Mary was soon to close on the block in Fotheringay Castle, and the "kirk-session" of Edinburgh refused to enjoin their preachers to pray for her, though anxiously requested by the King to mention her distress in their supplications, after sentence of death had been pronounced against her. A chronicler of the time has preserved an account of the King's visit to St. Giles's church on the 3d of February, the day he had appointed for solemn prayer in behalf of his unfor-

tunate mother. On this occasion the King expected that Adamson, titular archbishop of St. Andrews, was to preach; but when he entered the church he was astonished to see "perched up in the pulpit a young fellow, one John Cowper," whose brother, William Cowper, was afterwards Bishop of Galloway. The King exclaimed before the congregation—"Master John, that place was designed for another; yet since you are there do your duty, and pray obey the charge to pray for my mother." Cowper replied that he would speak solely as the "Spirit of God should direct him," and immediately commenced an extemporaneous prayer, in which he mentioned Queen Mary under the name of Jezebel and other severe epithets. The King ordered him to desist, at which the preacher exclaimed—"This day shall bear witness against you in the Lord. Woe be to thee, O Edinburgh! for the last of thy plagues shall be the worst!" He then came down from the pulpit, and left the church followed by all the women. In the midst of a considerable noise which this extraordinary conduct excited, Adamson entered the pulpit, and delivered an eloquent and appropriate discourse, which was heard with satisfaction by the King and the well-disposed part of the congregation. Mr. Cowper was compelled to cool his zeal in Blackness Castle, to which he was committed a prisoner on a charge of sedition, for this contempt of the royal authority.

extensive diocese of St. Andrews, superintended by an archdeacon and several deans appointed by the Archbishop. The newly constituted diocese included the counties of Berwick, Haddington, Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Stirling, and the small county of Clackmannan. A part of the patrimony of the ancient Priory of St. Andrews was purchased by the King and the Duke of Lennox, to insure a suitable revenue to the bishop. The foundation charter of the see is dated Whitehall, 29th December, 1633. St. Giles's church was declared to be the cathedral, and the chapter was arranged to consist of a dean, who was to be the incumbent of the High Church, and twelve prebendaries, whose maintenance was to be derived from the tiends, feus, and superiorities of the lands enumerated in the charter.<sup>1</sup> The Bishops of Edinburgh were to have precedence over all the Scottish bishops, after the Archbishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow, and were to be vicars-general of the diocese of St. Andrews during the vacancy of the primacy. The first Bishop was Dr. William Forbes, who had been educated at Cambridge, and who had been successively minister of the parishes of Alford and Monymusk in Aberdeenshire, also of Aberdeen, and Principal of Marischal College, and who was at that time one of the ministers of Edinburgh. The patent of his nomination was dated the 26th of January, 1634, and he was consecrated in the following month, but died suddenly in April that year. He was succeeded by Bishop David Lindsay, who was translated from Brechin in September 1634.<sup>2</sup>

The next important event in the history of St. Giles's, which may be said to have been the commencement of the Scottish rebellion against Charles I., was the riot at the introduction of the Scottish Liturgy, on Sunday the 23d of July, the seventh Sunday after Trinity, long remembered as "Stoney Sunday," and the "Casting of Stools." It occurred in the Old Church division, the High Church being then under repair. As to the Liturgy of the Church of England, it was well known in Scotland at the time, as it had been daily used for the previous twenty years in several of the parish churches throughout the kingdom, without any symptoms of disapprobation. In the present case, however, a formidable opposition was organised by various persons, who became conspicuous leaders in the approaching Covenanting war. In concerting their operations they instructed some women of the lower orders to "give the first affront to the Service-Book," meaning the Liturgy, and to commence an uproar in the church when divine service commenced, assuring them that the turmoil would be carried on by more important agents.

It had been enjoined that this Liturgy, which, though in all essential and general points the same as that of the Church of England, few persons in Scotland had seen except those bishops who prepared it, should be first used on Easter Sunday; but by the same fatality which attended many of the proceedings of that unhappy time, the day latterly announced was the 1st of July. Sunday the 23d of that month was appointed for its introduction into St. Giles's cathedral. On that day appeared in the Old Church division of the edifice Archbishop Spottiswoode, the Lord Chancellor, Archbishop Patrick Lindsay of Glasgow, several of the Bishops and members of the Privy-Council, some of the Judges of the Court of Session, and the Lord Provost and magistrates, in their robes of office. It was then the custom of the poorer classes to carry small three-footed stools, on which they sat during the sermon. At the time of divine service, which it appears was nine in the morning, Mr. James Hannay, Dean of Edinburgh, entered a reading-desk habited in his surplice, and commenced the morning service from the Liturgy, when the most extraordinary uproar was commenced by the women, and by men in disguise. The riot is differently related by contemporary writers. Clamours, cries, and execrations, assailed the Dean, accompanied by such clapping of hands and other noises, that scarcely a word could be distinctly heard. One woman threw her portable stool at his head, and he only evaded the blow by turning aside before the missile reached him.<sup>3</sup> This outrage was succeeded by a discharge of clasped Bibles, sticks, and missiles; others attempted

<sup>1</sup> Among the prebendaries were the incumbents of Holyroodhouse, Liberton, Tranent, Haddington, Dunbar, Dalkeith, Linlithgow, Falkirk, and Stirling.—Charter of Erection of the See of Edinburgh, in Bishop Keith's Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops, 1755, pp. 28–37.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Lindsay continued Bishop of Edinburgh, and connected with St. Giles's cathedral, till 1638, when he was deposed and excommunicated by the Covenanting General Assembly at Glasgow. He died during the commotions of the Civil War, and the diocese was vacant till 1662, when George Wishart, who had been chaplain to the Marquis of Montrose, was consecrated to the see at St. Andrews. His

successors were Alexander Young from 1671 to 1679, John Paterson from 1679 to 1687, and Alexander Rose, who was deprived at the Revolution. The subsequent Bishops of Edinburgh had no connexion with the cathedral of their predecessors.

<sup>3</sup> It is almost unnecessary to remind the reader that the heroine of this exploit, for which she has obtained a niche in history, is traditionally said to have been Jenny Geddes, after whom the poet Burns named a favourite mare. Jenny was by profession a *kail-wife*, or retailer of vegetables—a class of persons who long kept stalls for that purpose at the Tron Church, and who at the arrival of Charles II. in

to pull the Dean out of the reading-desk, and he was glad to escape from their fury, leaving a part of his surplice in their hands. All this time an excited mob on the street violently attacked the doors of the church, and pelted the windows. Various paltry jokes, unworthy of notice, are recorded by the Covenanting describers of this tumult.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lindsay, the diocesan, who was to preach the sermon, went into the pulpit, and addressed the disturbers of the service. He reminded them of the sacredness of the place, and of their duty to God and the King, entreating them to desist from their profanation; but his courage, dignity, and eloquence, which even Wodrow admits, were of no avail. He was assailed by the most ferocious epithets, and it is said that a stool was also aimed at him, which might have killed him if it had not been averted by a friendly hand. Archbishop Spottiswoode, who occupied a seat in the gallery, also interfered, but he only turned the storm of fierce imprecation against himself. The Primate saw that it was vain to attempt to allay the uproar, and in the exercise of his authority as Lord Chancellor, he ordered the magistrates to clear the church. This was done, the doors made fast, and the service was continued in defiance of noise and violence, until some of the rioters, left within the church, raised their old cry—"A Pope! a Pope! pull him down!" This induced the magistrates again to act officially, and to expel them from the cathedral. The service was then concluded, and the sermon delivered in quietness. The Liturgy was opposed, though not with such indecency, in the Greyfriars' and Trinity College churches.

When the Bishops and the nobility retired from St. Giles's after the morning service, they found the High Street crowded by a mob, who insulted them, and threatened a personal attack. One clergyman was severely beaten, and Bishop Lindsay, who was very corpulent, was probably rescued from death solely by the domestics of the Earl of Wemyss, who conveyed him into their master's residence. Before the afternoon service a number of the bishops convened in the house of Archbishop Spottiswoode, and conferred with the magistrates, who adopted proper methods for preserving order. Numbers resorted to St. Giles's at two o'clock, the usual hour for the sermon, but no preacher appeared. About three o'clock, some of the bishops and clergy went privately to the church accompanied by a strong guard, and those only were admitted who were known to be peaceable citizens. At the dismissal of the congregation, about five o'clock, the High Street was again swarming with male and female rioters, ready to renew their outrages. Bishop Lindsay, who was in the coach of the Earl of Roxburgh, Lord Privy Seal, again escaped with great difficulty on his way to Holyrood. An attempt to stop the coach, and drag out the bishop, who was erroneously supposed to be the most active promoter of the Liturgy, was successfully repelled by the Earl's servants with drawn swords, who cleared their way at full speed down the High Street, followed by the rioters, who, as the erection of the Tron Church was then in progress, readily obtained an ample supply of missiles. A nobleman, supposed to be the facetious Earl of Rothes, who saw the populace running after the coach, exclaimed, "I will write to the King, and tell him that the Court here is changed; for my Lord Traquair used ever to get the best *following*,<sup>2</sup> but now the Earl of Roxburgh and the Bishop of Edinburgh have the best *backing*."

The Solemn League and Covenant was subscribed in St. Giles's church, though the great scene of that transaction was the Greyfriars' church and cemetery. On the 1st of December, 1638, Dean Hannay and his colleagues in St. Giles's were deposed by the Covenanting General Assembly at Glasgow, and on the 13th a similar deliverance was pronounced against Bishop Lindsay, who never again entered his cathedral.

the North of Scotland, in June, 1650, were so surcharged with loyalty, that they burnt their stalls, ereels, and even their very stools, for joy.—Nicoll's Diary, printed for the BANNATYNE CLUB, p. 17. That Jenny was considered a noted virago in her day, is evident from her conduct at the celebration of Charles II.'s coronation in 1661, as recorded in the "Mercurius Caldonius," a newspaper attempted by Thomas Sydserf, whose father was then Bishop of Orkney. She is designated the "immortal Janet Geddes," the "Princess of the Trone Adventurers;" and "she was not only content to assemble all her ereels, basquets, creepies (small stools), frames, and other ingredients that composed the shope of her sallets, radishes, turnips, carrots, spinage, cabbage, with all her other sort of pot merchandise that belongs to the garden, but even her leather chair of state, where she used to dispense justice to the rest of her lang-kale vassals, were all very ordourly

burned, she herself countenancing the action with a high-flown vermilion majesty." The stool preserved in the Museum of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries at Edinburgh, as that thrown by Jenny Geddes at the head of the Dean of Edinburgh, must be spurious.

<sup>1</sup> One of these jokes is, that when Jenny Geddes heard the bishop call to the dean to read the collect for the day, she exclaimed, when she threw her small stool—"Deil colic the wame o' ye!" It is also said that she vociferated—"Will ye say mass at my lug (ear)?" If the morning service proceeded to the collect for the day, it must have been nearly half over, as it is precisely the same as that of the Church of England.

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently a witty allusion to the Earl of Traquair as Lord High Treasurer of Scotland.



From 1638 to 1650 the edifice was in the possession of the Covenanters, and during Cromwell's domination those Presbyterian ministers were allowed to officiate who were submissive to a sway which it was vain to resist.

The first indication of a new state of affairs after the Restoration of Charles II., was the magnificent funeral in St. Giles's of the mutilated remains of the Marquis of Montrose, attended by a gorgeous procession, on the 11th of May, 1661.<sup>1</sup> The High Church division became again the cathedral of the Bishops of Edinburgh, and continued as such, though used as one of the parish churches, till the Revolution. Since that event nothing of comparative importance has occurred in connexion with the fabric except its renovation. The General Assembly held its annual meetings in the south aisle, anciently the "Holy Blood Aisle," till 1833, during a period of one hundred and forty years. The west portion of the edifice, occupying the site of the Tolbooth and Haddo's Hole, or New North churches, is now designated West St. Giles's, and is one of the three parish churches into which the edifice is subdivided. Though under the same roof, these churches are as distinct as if they were situated in different parts of the city.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His mutilated remains were, by order of the Parliament sitting in January that year, removed from the ignoble grave in the Borough Muir, his limbs were sent from Glasgow, Stirling, Perth, and Aberdeen, his head was taken down from the Tolbooth, and the whole were placed in a splendid coffin. On Monday the 7th of January, at nine in the morning, the magistrates ordered four companies of their trained bands to march with colours displayed to the Borough Muir, where sundry noblemen and gentlemen, relatives and admirers of the great Marquis, were assembled; the dismembered body was taken out of the grave, wrapt in costly cloth, placed in a coffin under a canopy of rich velvet, and conveyed amid martial music, and the discharging of the artillery of the Castle, to the Chapel-Royal of Holyrood, in an aisle of which the coffin was deposited until the order for the funeral was issued by the King and the Estates of Parliament. The procession returned from the Borough Muir by the West Port, Grassmarket, West Bow, and Lawnmarket. When opposite the Tolbooth the procession halted, the coffin was opened, and the head of the Marquis, which had been taken down from the spike it had occupied upwards of ten years, was deposited therein under the sound of trumpets from a platform erected by the magistrates. On the 11th of May the solemnity of the funeral was observed, and he was interred behind the tomb of his grandfather, John third Earl of Montrose. The street from the Chapel-Royal of Holyrood to St. Giles's was lined by the citizens in armour, forming twenty-three companies with banners. The King's life-guards of horse, in number one hundred and sixty, first appeared in military order, and next came twenty-six boys in deep mourning habits, carrying the armorial bearings of the Marquis and of the branches of his family. They were succeeded by the Lord Provost, magistrates, and town-council, all in mourning, who were followed by members of the Parliament. A trumpeter, dressed in the livery of the Marquis, next appeared, with a horse led behind him; after him a gentleman on horseback in armour, followed by eighteen gentlemen, some of whom carried long banners of honour, and others the spurs, gloves, breastplate, and back armour of the Marquis on the points of long staves. A horse next appeared, which was covered by the rich embroidered mantle on which the Marquis and his ancestors sat at the riding of the Parliaments, and led by a lackey decorated with his family arms on the breast and the back. Then came the principal nobility, the heralds and pursuivants in their tabards, several of them carrying honours; then another led horse, covered with black cloth; after which appeared the Lord Lyon King-at-Arms in his magnificent robes of office, followed by a great number of the relatives and friends of the Marquis. Six trumpeters preceded the coffin, which was carried under a rich pall supported by noblemen and gentlemen, and by a number of ladies, the wives and daughters of peers. Next was the Earl of Middleton, Lord High Commissioner to the Parliament. This funeral procession was closed by that of another victim of the Covenanters, Colonel Hay of Delgaty, who was beheaded for his connexion with the Marquis, and had been buried in the Borough Muir. He was interred on the right side of the Marquis.—Nicoll's Diary, printed for the BANNATYNE CLUB, pp. 316, 317, 331, 332.

<sup>2</sup> It is already stated that the more modern additions to the fabric were those of Haddo's Hole, or the New North and the Tolbooth churches. Maitland asserts—"The room over the northern door of Haddo's Hole church was at first denominated the *Priest's Prison*, but from the long confinement of one Haddow therein, it is said to have received the appellation of Haddow's Hole." Arnot repeats this statement—"It takes the name of Haddow's Hole from its having been made a prison in which a gentleman of the name of Haddow was long confined." Both of those writers were evidently ignorant of the origin of the appellation, which was not derived from "one Haddow," or "a gentleman of the name of Haddow;" but from Sir John Gordon of Haddo, an ancestor of the Earls of Aberdeen, whose family seat is Haddo House in that county, and whose second titles are Viscount Formartine and Lord Haddo. The fate of Sir John Gordon, who fell a victim to his loyalty in 1644, when he was executed by the Covenanters, is subsequently noticed. He was imprisoned in that part of St. Giles's which, till 1830, bore his territorial name, with its subsequent appellations of the "New North Kirk" and the "Little Kirk." It was not converted into a place of worship till 1699, when the increase of the inhabitants rendered such accommodation necessary. The Magistrates intended to fit up a meeting-house in the Lawnmarket for that purpose, but the edifice selected having been declared unsuitable, Haddo's Hole was seated and prepared for the new congregation at the expense of about 2000 merks Scots. The interior was one of the most dismal-looking places of worship in the city. The adjoining Tolbooth Kirk was altogether different in its historical associations. The New Tolbooth, at its south-west corner, was soon found to be inadequate for the accommodation of the Court of Session, and during the greater part of the reign of James VI., and the whole of the reign of Charles I., the judges sat in the Tolbooth Kirk. Hugh, eighth Lord Somerville, had a lawsuit in the Court of Session with his relative, Somerville of Cambusnethan, which had been protracted from 1570 to 1577 by the influence of the latter, who employed "all his allies, which were not few," says the noble historian of the Somervilles, "and his lady all her friends, which were many, being of the surname of Murray, and Philiphaugh's eldest daughter, who owned his son-in-law much in this action." In 1577 Lord Somerville, who had often importuned the judges for a decision, was advised to try the avarice of the Regent Morton, which he did by leaving a purse of gold, as if by accident, on the table at an interview with the Regent in his residence at Holyrood Palace, and hurrying down-stairs, disregarding Morton's exclamation—"My Lord, you have forgot your purse." A person was sent after Lord Somerville, requesting him to return and breakfast with the Regent, which was a sure sign that the device had been successful. Lord Somerville accepted the invitation, and it is stated that "about ten o'clock the Regent went to the house, which was the same which is now the Tolbooth church, in a coach. There were none with him but the Lord Boyd and the Lord Somerville." When the coach was passing Niddry's Wynd, the Laird of Cambusnethan was standing at the head of that alley, and when informed who the persons were in the coach with the Regent, he struck his breast, and said, "This day my cause

In the west gallery of the High Church is a chair of state under a canopy supported by four pillars, and surmounted by a crown. This chair is occupied by the Lord High Commissioner on the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly, and the two following Sundays. George IV. heard a sermon in this seat on the forenoon of Sunday the 25th of August, 1822. The front seats of the north gallery are for those of the town-council who choose to attend officially, and those opposite are occupied by the judges of the court of Session.<sup>1</sup>

### THE PARLIAMENT CLOSE AND PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

MANY curious stories could be told of the former Parliament Close, and of that celebrated arena of Scottish jurisprudence the Parliament House of Edinburgh, partly built on the site of the ancient burying-ground of St. Giles's, which sloped down from the church to the Cowgate. The Parliament Close was entered on the east and west of St. Giles's; and the east side or corner, contained a stately "land" or tenement of six storeys, resting on piazzas, in one of which was John's Coffeehouse, a noted convivial resort of lawyers in the eighteenth century, destroyed by fire in the summer of 1824. The opponents of the Union in 1707 constantly met in John's Coffeehouse to discuss the proceedings of the Parliament. The Parliament Close, before the conflagration in November 1824, consisted of tenements adjoining the "piazza land" of seven storeys high, and the back part, overlooking the Cowgate, displayed no less than thirteen storeys, which made it the highest house in the city.<sup>2</sup> Those stately tenements of ashler work occupied the site of even loftier buildings which were burnt in 1700. The Parliament House and the then Goldsmith's Hall, the latter on the site of the entrance to the Library of the Writers to the Signet, on the north gable of the former, constituted the west side of the square, St. Giles's church the north, and the south side, east of the Parliament House, was a tenement called the Treasury, in the lower and western part of which the Court of Session was held, and the upper parts, before the Union, were appropriated to the Privy Council, the Exchequer, and the Treasury. After the Union those apartments became the Court of the Exchequer. The central apartment of this edifice

is lost." This was actually the case, and Lord Somerville obtained a decision in his favour. The "house" to which the Regent Morton went was the Court of Session, then held in the Tolbooth Kirk. James VI. was sitting in it on the 17th of December, and a convention of the preachers was held at the same time in the "New Kirk," when the tumult broke out on the rumour that the latter intended to murder him, which caused the doors to be secured, some exclaiming—"God and the King!" and others—"God and the Kirk!" The citizens were soon in commotion, and the King retired for safety to the upper room of the New Tolbooth, which was latterly the Justiciary court-room, and he was there protected from the excited enthusiasts in this religious riot till the Earl of Mar brought soldiers to his rescue by Forrester's Wynd. In 1598 this division of St. Giles's was fitted up for divine service in the same form as it had been five years previously, and sermons were preached in it on the 4th of November, but it was again altered in 1601. It appears that the Tolbooth church continued to be used as the Court of Session till 1640, when the present Parliament Hall was finished.

<sup>1</sup> Formerly the peculiarities of the congregations which assembled under the roof of St. Giles's were very marked, and indicated their theological tendencies. "The High Kirk," says Mr. Chambers, "had a sort of dignified aristocratic character, approaching somewhat to Prelacy, and was frequented by sound church-and-state men, who did not care so much for the sermon, as for the gratification of sitting in the same place with his Majesty's Lords of Council and Session and the magistrates of Edinburgh, and who desired to be thought men of sufficient liberality and taste to appreciate the prelections of Blair. The Old Kirk, in the centre of the whole, was frequented by people who wished to have a tough 'sufficient' sermon of good divinity, about three quarters of an hour long, and who did not care for the darkness and 'goustiness' of that dungeon-like place of worship. The Tolbooth Kirk was the peculiar resort of a set of rigid Calvinists from the Lawnmarket and the head of the Bow, termed the 'Towbuith

Whigs,' who loved nothing but extempore apostolical sermons, and would have considered it sufficient to bring the house down about their ears if the precentor had ceased, for one verse, the old hill-side fashion of reciting the lines of the psalm before singing them." To these observations on eccentricities long exploded may be added the congregation of the New North or Haddo's Hole Kirk, who were considered intensely evangelical, and to whom a read sermon was an utter abomination, though they were occasionally visited with such a penance by strangers. When Dr. Johnson was in Edinburgh in 1773, he was taken to inspect St. Giles's church. "We next went," says Boswell, "to the great church of St. Giles, which has lost its original magnificence in the inside by being divided into four places of Presbyterian worship. 'Come,' said Dr. Johnson, jocularly, to Principal Robertson, 'let me see what was *once* a church.' We entered that division which was formerly called the New Church, and of late the High Church, so well known by the eloquence of Dr. Hugh Blair. It is now very elegantly fitted up, but it was then shamefully dirty."—Boswell's Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, edited by John Wilson Croker, 8vo. Lond. 1831, vol. ii. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Those "Babel Lands," as they were called, were always shown to strangers among the curiosities of the city. Dr. Johnson, after inspecting the High Church in St. Giles's and the Royal Infirmary, was taken to see those towering tenements. "We then conducted him," says Boswell, "down the Post-House Stairs, Parliament Close, and made him look up from the Cowgate to the highest building in Edinburgh (from which he had just descended,) being thirteen floors or storeys above the ground upon the back elevation; the front wall being built upon the edge of the hill, and the back wall rising from the bottom of the hill several storeys before it comes to a level with the front wall."—Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson, vol. ii. pp. 276, 277. The "Post-House Stairs" were latterly known as the "Back Stairs," and led to the Cowgate.

was occupied as the Chancery Office and the Commissary Court, and in two rooms under the Court of Session the national records were deposited.

In the lower part of St. Giles's churchyard, in what was latterly the Back Stairs alley, was the Chapel of the Holy Rood, in which Walter Chapman, the first printer in Edinburgh, founded in 1528 a chaplaincy, and endowed it with his tenement in the Cowgate.<sup>1</sup> At the west end of the churchyard, nearly on the site of the Parliament House, stood the manses of the ministers of the city, previous to the order of James VI. enjoining them to reside in different parts of the town, to prevent their caballing against him. No houses were in this part of the square previous to 1662.

In the centre of the square is the fine equestrian statue of Charles II. on a stone pedestal in front of which is a long Latin poetical inscription expressed in the most flattering language.<sup>2</sup> According to a tradition, it was intended for Oliver Cromwell, but Maitland alleges that it was erected by the citizens at their own expense of 1000*l.* sterling in 1684, the year before the King's death.<sup>3</sup> John Knox is said to have been interred a few feet in front of the site of the statue of Charles II., at least tradition assigns that spot as the locality of his grave, when the Parliament Square was part of St. Giles's cemetery. He was buried on Wednesday the 26th November, 1572, in presence of all the nobility then in the city, and an immense concourse of persons; the Regent Morton well exclaiming, as the body of Knox was laid in the grave—"There lies he who never feared the face of man."

The north side of the Parliament Square long presented the deformity of a number of flat-roofed houses of two and one of three storeys, built close to the walls of St. Giles's church. It is stated that those booths and shops were first erected in 1628, and the civic authorities, to show that they had not lost all reverence for the sacredness of the Church, enacted that only booksellers, watchmakers, jewellers, and goldsmiths, whose avocations were considered respectable, should be the occupants. The shop of George Heriot existed in the vicinity till 1809, when the erection of the Signet Library, already mentioned, caused the demolition of some curious old alleys west of St. Giles's. Heriot's shop was the centre of three small ones immediately on the west of the church, between the Old Tolbooth and the Laigh Council-House, which, as formerly observed, stood near the north-west angle of the square. The back windows looked into an alley, now removed, which was known as Beith's or Bess Wynd, and Heriot's name was discovered upon the architrave of the door carved in stone. This interesting relic, his forge and bellows, and a hollow stone fitted with a stone cover or lid, conjectured to have been used by the wealthy goldsmith for receiving and extinguishing the embers of the furnace, are now preserved in his Hospital.<sup>4</sup> James VI. is said to have visited Heriot in his shop, and tradition alleges that he was always regaled with a bottle of wine. Heriot's residence in the city was in the Fishmarket Close, and his first shop or booth was at "Our Lady's Steps," on the north-east side of St. Giles's. Both in that humble structure, and in the one at the west end of the church, Heriot carried on an extensive trade as goldsmith and money-lender. It has been computed that during the ten years previous to the accession of James VI. to the English crown, Heriot's transactions with Anne of Denmark, who was passionately fond of jewellery, amounted to no less than 50,000*l.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maitland (*History of Edinburgh*, folio, p. 185), who had evidently made no inquiries on the subject, vaguely states, "In the neighbourhood of this chapel was a farm-house called St. Giles's Grange." He had previously observed (p. 176), after mentioning the Convent of St. Catherine of Sienna on the west side of Newington—"A little distance toward the south-west is the seat of Grange," and "as all religious foundations had their respective granges, barns, or outhouses, for the convenience of agriculture, I take this to have been that belonging to the nunnery of the *Siens*." This *Siens*, *Sciennes*, or *Sheens*, is, as already observed, the local corruption of *Sienna*. It is not true that the Grange, to which Maitland refers, now the Grange House, and the lands connected with it, ever belonged to the nuns of the Edinburgh convent of St. Catherine. It was the Grange of the collegiate church of St. Giles in the city, and is called in old records "Geilis Grange." In 1512, Sir John Crawford, one of the prebendaries, granted a donation of twenty-two acres, of which he was the proprietor, in the Borough Muir of Edinburgh, for the sustentation of a chapel, every vestige of which has disappeared, erected by him in honour of St. John the Baptist. Maitland, moreover, is most erroneous in stating that the "farm-house called St. Giles's Grange" was "in the

neighbourhood," as if it was in the immediate vicinity of the Chapel of the Holy Rood near the Cowgate. The Grange is nearly two miles in a direct line south from St. Giles's church.

<sup>2</sup> The statue of Charles II. was for upwards of a century and a half the only public one in Edinburgh. Before it was repaired, and placed on its present pedestal, it had become so dilapidated that it was necessary to take it down, and the effigy of the "merry monarch" and the horse were consigned for several years to the outer court of the jail on the Calton Hill, which caused several jokes and witticisms at the expense of the Town-Council, by whose order it was restored.

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless it is stated that this statue "supplied the place of one of Oliver Cromwell, which had been in forwardness, but was immediately thrown aside on the downfall of his family."—*The Scots Magazine* for 1810, p. 404.

<sup>4</sup> *Traditions of Edinburgh*, by Robert Chambers, vol. ii. pp. 209, 210.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoir of George Heriot*, with the *History of the Hospital* founded by him in Edinburgh, by William Steven, D.D., 12mo. Edin. 1845, pp. 5, 7.

The printing-office of the learned Ruddimans was in the Parliament Close, where they published, as the title-pages intimate, many of the classical, educational, and historical works which emanated from their press, and were edited by them. Of Mr. Thomas Ruddiman it is recorded—“It was in 1739 that he purchased of David Rutherford, the advocate, for 300*l.* sterling, the house wherein from that time he lived in the Parliament Square amidst the booksellers, and in the neighbourhood of the Advocates’ Library.<sup>1</sup> He had now better opportunities for gratifying his passion for chess. He used often to step into the shop of Alexander Symmers, the bookseller, in that Square, to play at this fascinating game. They did not play for money, but, being both pertinacious players, they generally parted in a wrangle.”<sup>2</sup> Ruddiman died in his house in the Parliament Close, on the 19th of January, 1757, in the eighty-third year of his age, and was interred in the Greyfriars’ burying-ground, but no stone marks the spot where this distinguished scholar was laid.<sup>3</sup>

The shop-keepers and denizens of the Parliament Close were long a sociable and friendly community, and formed themselves into a club, known as the “Parliament Close Council,” consisting of from fifty to a hundred members, all of whom met once or twice during each year at dinner. They were also noted for many curious habits, which strangely contrast with the present forms of society and mode of conducting business. They frequently shut their shops at three o’clock, with a written announcement that they were at Bruntsfield Links playing at golf, and would return at six. Yet many of them acquired fortunes, and as some of them were or had been civic dignitaries, they were on intimate terms with the judges of the Court of Session and the learned gentlemen of the Parliament House. The very boys seemed to be inspired with new vigour in the Parliament Close, which they considered a peculiarly grand locality. The Parliament Square, as it is designated, now consists of buildings for the courts of law, erected in exact uniformity, and the front resting on piazzas; but its inhabitants have disappeared, and a cocked-hat citizen of the eighteenth century would no longer recognise this once busy and animated scene.

The noble hall called the Parliament House, which excites the admiration of every visitor, was erected at the expense of the citizens, who were afraid that the courts of law and the Parliament might be removed from Edinburgh for want of proper accommodation. It was begun in 1632, and finished in 1640, at the expense of 209,340 merks Scots, or 11,000*l.* sterling, of which the sum of 56,000*l.* Scots was obtained by subscription. The length is one hundred and twenty-three feet, and the breadth forty-two feet, the roof arched with oak panellings gilt at the projections. The interior of the Parliament House, or “Outer House,” as it is also called in the phraseology of the courts, is grand and impressive, and it is doubly interesting from its historical and legal associations. The interior is also rendered imposing by the statues of distinguished individuals which it contains. These are the first Lord Melville, Lord Presidents Forbes and Blair, and Robert Dundas of Arniston, Lord Advocate, Dean of Faculty, representative in Parliament for the county of Edinburgh, and Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer from 1808 till his death in 1819. The statue of Lord Melville, of whom it is said that he “walked the boards of the Parliament House during no less than twenty years before he began to reside constantly in London as Treasurer of the Navy,”<sup>4</sup> occupies a pedestal surrounded by an iron railing in the north end of the hall, and represents his lordship in his robes as a peer. It is the work of Chantrey, and was erected at the expense of the Faculty of Advocates. The statue of Lord President Forbes by Roubilliac, and that of Blair by Chantrey, rest on the east wall; the former was erected by the Faculty of Advocates, and the latter by the College of Justice. The statue of Lord Chief Baron Dundas occupies a recess on the west wall of the Parliament House. It is in a sitting posture, and was first placed in the adjoining County Hall in 1824, from which it was removed in 1845.

Previous to 1810, when the present buildings connected with the Parliament House were commenced, the Square must have had a most imposing appearance. The edifice was entered by a stately arched door in the north-west corner, near the Tolbooth division of St. Giles’s, close to the Goldsmith’s Hall, and over this door were the royal arms of Scotland finely carved in stone, supported on each side by allegorical figures of Truth and Mercy.<sup>5</sup> Projecting towers rose from several parts of the buildings, which

<sup>1</sup> Then solely under the Parliament House.

<sup>2</sup> Life of Thomas Ruddiman, A.M., by George Chalmers, 8vo. London, 1794, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Life of T. Ruddiman, p. 269. The Scots Mag. for 1757, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Peter’s Letters to his Kinsfolk, vol. ii. p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> James Robertson of Kinraigie in Perthshire, long a well-known character in Edinburgh by the sobriquet of the *Daft Highland Laird*, and who was chiefly to be seen either near his residence in the Castle.

were four storeys high, flat-roofed, and ornamented by an elegant open stone balustrade. The interior of the Parliament House contrasts strangely with the present exterior, which is justly pronounced to be "a very ill-conceived and tasteless front-work of modern device, including a sufficient allowance of staring square windows, and some pillars and pilasters," of very indifferent Ionic architecture.

It has been already stated that the Parliament House was completed in 1640, though the date carved in stone on the north gable in the lobby of the Library of the Writers to the Signet is 1636. If it is to be assumed that the hall was finished for the purpose to which it was appropriated in that year, the first Parliament held in it was that of the triumphant Covenanters, which met on the last day of August 1639, the day after their General Assembly was dissolved. The Earl of Traquair appeared as the Lord High Commissioner, and the names of all the nobility and members for the counties and burghs are on record.<sup>1</sup> On the 6th of September the Solemn League and Covenant was subscribed by Traquair in this hall in presence of the Parliament, his Lordship intimating and ordering to be entered on the minutes that he did so simply in his official capacity as Lord Treasurer, and not as Lord High Commissioner,<sup>2</sup> but this declaration was afterwards ordered to be expunged as illegal.<sup>3</sup>

The second Parliament held in this hall met in 1640, and on the 11th of June, as the King had appointed no commissioner, Robert Lord Balfour of Burleigh was elected President. The Parliament again met in the Parliament House of Edinburgh on the 19th of November, 1640, and elected Lord Balfour of Burleigh to be the President, who, though much engaged in the public transactions of the time, was selected rather for his ready compliance with all the projects of the Covenanting Estates than for his superior abilities.<sup>4</sup> This Parliament was adjourned till the 14th of January, 1641, and subsequently to the 13th of April, the 25th of May, and the 15th of July. The Estates next convened in the Parliament House on the 15th of July, when Lord Balfour was re-elected President. Neither the King nor his commissioner appeared; but the Earl of Dunfermline and Lord Loudon produced a letter from his Majesty, in which all the demands of the Covenanters were conceded, and much important business was transacted in connexion with these affairs. Charles I. arrived in Edinburgh on the 14th of August, and found the prerogatives of the Crown usurped by the Estates. On the 17th of August, after a sermon in the Chapel-Royal, the King proceeded in state to the Parliament House, the Marquis of Hamilton bearing the crown, the Earl of Argyll the sceptre, and the Earl of Sutherland the sword. Charles Lewis, Prince Elector Palatine, the King's nephew, was accommodated with a seat on "ane embroidered stool" behind the throne by permission of the Estates, for which the King returned thanks. It appears that the object of the Prince Elector in accompanying the King to Scotland was to obtain a subsidy of men and money. It is impossible to narrate all the acts, debates, and incidents, which occurred within the Parliament House of Edinburgh at this meeting of the Estates, at which Charles I. was present almost every day after his arrival, till its adjournment on Wednesday the 17th of November, and in which he sacrificed all his regal authority. He was compelled to bestow honours and rank on those whose fidelity was suspected, or whose enmity was avowed. The Marquis of Hamilton was the only exception. He was created a Duke, yet before the patent had passed the seals, he had retired from Edinburgh, alleging a plot to assassinate him as the reason. In this parliament, and within the Parliament House, were proscribed, or consigned to destruction as "Malignants," the Earl of Montrose, Lord Napier, Sir George Stirling of Keir, Sir Lewis Stewart of Blackhall, Sir Robert Spottiswoode, then Lord President of the Court of Session, Sir John Hay, and other loyal noblemen and gentlemen, whose only offences were fidelity to their sovereign, and opposition to the Solemn League and Covenant. The feelings with which Charles I. heard his supporters condemned as "incendiaries" may be easily understood.

hill, or in the Lawnmarket, Bow-Head, or Grassmarket, one day met the celebrated lawyer, the Hon. Henry Erskine, as he was about to enter the Parliament House, of which the laird was a great frequenter. Mr. Erskine inquired after his health, and his reply was, "Oh, very weel; but I'll tell ye what, Harry: tak' in Justice wi' ye," pointing to the statue of Justice over the old porch, "for she has stood lang i' the outside, and it wad be a treat for her to see the inside, like other strangers."—Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes to Kay's Original Portraits, 4to. Edin. 1838, vol. i. pp. 5, 6.

<sup>1</sup> Acta Parl. Scot. folio, vol. v. pp. 248, 249.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. v. p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> Acta Parl. Scot. folio, vol. v. p. 260.

<sup>4</sup> This Lord Balfour was merely titular. He was Robert Arnot, son of Sir Robert Arnot of Fernie, chamberlain of Fife, and he married Margaret, sole heiress of Sir Michael Balfour of Burleigh, first Lord, Baroness Balfour of Burleigh in terms of the patent at the death of her father. This Robert Arnot assumed the name of Balfour, and adopted the title of Lord Balfour in virtue of a letter from Charles I. He was the father of John third Lord, and great-grandfather of Robert fifth Lord, who killed the schoolmaster of Inverkeithing for marrying during his absence on the Continent a young woman of whom he was enamoured.