

GLASGOW OF OLD.

By GEORGE EYRE-TODD.

IT was already an interesting place, this little community clustering at the head of the brae where Glasgow Royal Infirmary now stands, when Ninian, the Romanised Briton, paid his visit to it in the year 397, and consecrated a Christian burying-ground for the use of the inhabitants. Before the Romans came it had been a stronghold of the Britons of Strathclyde, for its original name appears to have been Cathures, the *cathair*, *caer*, or fort. Across the open muir, some three or four miles to the north, the legionaries had built their great wall of defence against the Highland Picts. Under the stockade of the fort on the south ran their road, the present Drygate and Rottenrow. Below that road the hill sloped steeply, on the line of the present High Street, Saltmarket, and Briggate, to the fords of Clyde, which the stronghold was probably originally built to defend. And close at hand, on the east, beyond the narrow glen of the Molendinar, or Mill burn, rose the lofty Fir Park hill, on whose top in the grey dawn the priests of Baal and Ashtaroth could be seen performing the rites of their ancient faith.

When the Roman legions left the country, a few years after Ninian's time, the place may have had to defend itself again against the Picts, and its gar-



Glasgow Tolbooth Belfry Tower

Built in 1626 along with a new tolbooth (council chamber, court rooms, and prison) to replace an earlier tolbooth on the same site, this is the only civic example of the crowned tower in Scotland. It was closely associated with the civic life of Glasgow for 200 years, and was immortalised by Scott in the famous opening scene of "Rob Roy." The adjoining building replaced the Tolbooth itself in 1814

rison may have seen the mighty King Arthur himself—the historic Arthur of Nennius—descend to Drygate on the way from his fortress capital of Alclud, now Dunbarton, to that last great battle in which he fell, at Camelon, near Falkirk, in the year 537.

Six years later another personage who was to become historic arrived at the spot. Mungo was the son of Eugenius or Owen, Arthur's nephew and successor, and of Theneu, sister of that Medraut, Tennyson's Modred, who had finally defeated and slain the King. He arrived driving an ox-cart bearing the body of a holy man, Fergus, whom he laid to rest in Ninian's burying-ground; and in the glen beside it he built the Christian cell which was to give the place its new name, Eglais-acha (*ecclesiæ ager*), the Glesca or Glasgow of to-day. Most interesting, perhaps, of the events of his life at that place was the visit paid to him by Columba, the Irish missionary, who had settled at Iona twenty years after Mungo's coming to Strathclyde. One may picture the two, the sweet-voiced Gael and the princely Briton, pacing in precious converse by the Molendinar's bank, and, as a memento of friendship, when the moment of parting came, exchanging their pastoral staves.

With the death of Mungo a curtain descended on the story of Glasgow for some five hundred years. It rose again when that greatest of the Scottish Kings, David, youngest son of the mighty Canmore, overthrower of Macbeth, came hither as Prince of Strathclyde.

Canmore and his sons, to secure their new dynasty

on the throne, introduced the feudal system to Scotland. In pursuance of this policy David planted the whole of Clydesdale with settlers, holding their lands by service to the Crown. Tancred and Simon, Dalfin, Robesberd, and a score of others have left their names in the upper valley, while Walter Fitz-Alan, as High Steward at Renfrew, and Arkil of Northumbria, as Earl of Lennox at Dunbarton, made history by closing the water gateway of the region against the invading Norsemen. In similar fashion and for similar reasons Canmore and his sons replaced the patriarchal Culdee priesthood by a feudal hierarchy, and a new chapter in the history of Glasgow opened when David, riding into the place, appointed his tutor Eochy the first Roman bishop of the see, and endowed the new church with the great royal manor of Partick.

The new policy had its drawbacks, for the Archbishop of York claimed the Bishop of Glasgow as his suffragan, and though a later bishop, the capable Jocelyn, secured a charter of independence from the Pope, there is reason to believe that the claims of spiritual suzerainty made by York had not a little to do with the claims of temporal suzerainty made by Edward I. and his successors, which brought about the Wars of Succession and Independence, and devastated Scotland for fifty years.

With a strong castle on the site of the early British fort, with country mansions at the Bishop Loch, at Partick, at Carstairs, and elsewhere, and with broad lands on the Border and in Galloway, the bishops of Glasgow were great barons. Many of them were great men, and held high public office as

chancellors of the kingdom and the like. Some made a notable mark in history; and one was a hero. When Robert the Bruce had definitely defied Edward of England by slaying the Red Comyn at Dumfries, it was Bishop Robert Wishart who rode to meet him, absolved him for the deed at the altar of Glasgow, made his own episcopal garments into coronation robes, and himself set the Crown on the new King's head at Scone. Taken clad in mail in the castle of Cupar, he languished for eight years in an English prison, and when, after the battle of Bannockburn Bruce ransomed him along with the Queen and Princess Marjory, the old man was blind.

One bishop of Glasgow was a prince of the Roman Church, and his name, Walterus Cardinalis, was for centuries emblazoned in letters of gold on the Cathedral roof. The last of the long line of Catholic prelates, Archbishop Beaton, was for forty years after the Reformation the wise and able ambassador of Mary, Queen of Scots, and James VI. at the Court of France.

The scenes which Glasgow witnessed during the feudal centuries—from the days of David I. to those of Mary Stewart—were of deep interest and much significance. One may picture the completion of the Cathedral in 1258 by the great lady, widow of Comyn Lord of Kilbride, whose fine head in stone, along with the heads of her lord, of Bondington the bishop, and of King Alexander II. himself, in the lower church, are perhaps the earliest Scottish portraits in existence. One may picture the patriot Wallace storming the Bell o' the Brae, the steep upper part of High Street, in 1296, to avenge the seizure of

the Bishop's Castle by the English after the collapse of the Scottish army at Irvine. One may reconstruct the visit of Edward I. of England five years later, when he lived for a fortnight in the Blackfriars Monastery in High Street, where the railway station stands now, and repeatedly made offerings in person at the high altar of the Cathedral. There must have been a building boom and the sound of much chiseling in the little city when Bishop Cameron added the strong tower and wall to his castle, and caused each of his thirty-two canons to build a substantial mansion in its neighbourhood. James II., he of the fiery face, perhaps to atone for his slaughter of Earl Douglas in Stirling Castle, had himself made a canon of Glasgow. It was as part of that King's policy of bringing the Church to his side in his fateful struggle with the Douglasses that he procured for Bishop Turnbull the bull of Pope Nicholas V. for the founding of a University in Glasgow, and one may picture him shortly afterwards mustering his forces in the city, and marching thence up Clydeside to capture and destroy Douglas Castle, the headquarters of those rebel lords in Douglasdale.

In similar fashion, to avert Heaven's vengeance for the part he had taken in the overthrow of his father at Sauchieburn, James IV. had himself made Canon of Barlanark and Laird of Provan. He had the see of Glasgow made an Archbishopric, and was often in the city performing his office and giving drink-silver to the masons whom Archbishop Blackadder employed to build the rood screen and the south transept of the Cathedral. And on that fair September day in 1513, when the Scottish army fired its



The Oldest House in Glasgow

Provand's Lordship, in Cathedral Square, built in 1471, recently restored. It was possibly in this house that James IV. lodged on his frequent visits to Glasgow as a Canon of the Cathedral, and that Mary Queen of Scots stayed when she came to see her husband Darnley as he lay sick of smallpox in the house of his father, the Earl of Lennox, a hundred yards further up the street

huts and marched amid the smoke down the long hill face to meet the English at Flodden, not least valiant of those who went to fight and fall with him were the stout burgesses of Glasgow under their Provost, the Earl of Lennox.

For all the actual record that remains, James V., the gay Gudeman o' Ballengeich, may never have set foot in Glasgow. He was only thirty when he turned his face to the wall to die heartbroken at Falkland. But in the "Tales of the Borders" the inn in the old Water Row at Govan ferry is made the scene of one of his many exploits as a wanderer in disguise.

Most dramatic of all, perhaps, in the annals of the city are the appearances of that King's daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots. Glasgow owed to her enlightened action the new endowment of its University and provision of funds for public purposes. These benefits have been long forgotten, as has been the prompt and gallant raid by which, in the early days of her marriage with Darnley, the Stewart Queen drove her precious half-brother, the Earl of Moray, and his fellow-conspirators headlong out of the city and into exile. The history of that time was written by the Queen's most bitter enemies, Knox and Buchanan. By them and their successors more attention has been devoted to the last two visits of Mary.

One of them was her visit to her dissolute and faithless blackguard of a husband, Henry Darnley, as he lay sick of a loathsome smallpox in the house of his father, the Earl of Lennox, in Castle Street here. The occasion was turned to account by her accusers for the dating of one of the Casket Letters

used as evidence against her, from her lodging in the city—probably the old mansion of her friends, the Baillies of Provan, which still stands at the corner of Macleod Street and Cathedral Square.

Last of all her visits was when, eleven days after her escape from Loch Leven, she was on the way to Dunbarton Castle, when Moray intercepted her at Langside, two miles south of the city, and in a short half-hour, helped by the treachery or weakness of Argyll, her brother-in-law, and commander of her army, broke up her forces and sent her fleeing to the Solway shore, on the way to her long imprisonment in England.

The Reformation ruined Glasgow for the time. The Bishop's Castle and the great houses of the clergy at the head of High Street fell to wreck, and the tradesmen who had lived by supplying the needs of these dignitaries found their occupation gone. At the same time, the common grazings round the city were sold by the magistrates and enclosed, and the burgesses thus found their means of livelihood curtailed in other ways. It is true that the old rentallers or tenants of the Archbishops had their possession made absolute by means of feu charters, but it took a generation for Glasgow to find new means of livelihood by recourse to industry and trade.

Already the seeds of industry and commerce had been sown in the little bishop's city, and in the course of a generation these began to bring a new prosperity to the lower end of the town, about the Cross and the riverside.

The "wauking" or shrinking of cloth in the water of the Molendinar gave its first name of

Waukergate to the street now known as Saltmarket. As early as 1420 William Elphinstone had set up the business of curing Clyde salmon and herring and sending them to France to be exchanged for brandy and salt. In 1524 Archibald Lyon, a son of Lord Glamis, had settled in the city and undertaken great adventures in trading to Holland, Poland, and France. And in 1578, according to Lesley, the historian of the time, the burgesses were trading with the east country in fat cattle, herring, salmon, ox hides, wool, butter, and cheese, and to Argyll and the Isles in wine, brandy, and brogat, a kind of honey ale, the town possessing a "very commodious seaport, wherein little ships, ten miles from the sea, rest beside the bridge."

By 1605 the Craftsmen and the Merchants were strong enough and quarrelsome enough to need a Letter of Guildry regulating their powers and shares in governing the city, and the Merchants House and the Trades House came into existence. In Cromwell's time the Merchants of Glasgow owned as many as twelve vessels, three being of no less than 150 tons. So substantial was the city's mercantile success that in 1668 the harbour of Irvine, on the Ayrshire coast, the original seaport used by Glasgow vessels, having silted up, the community acquired 16 acres of land in Newark Bay, on the upper Firth of Clyde, and proceeded to build the new harbour of Port-Glasgow.

In the days of Charles II. the Glasgow Merchants even fitted out privateer vessels to make war upon the Dutch, and captured more than one prize. To the days of the Merrie Monarch also belonged the

Glasgow Whale-fishing Company, with a capital of £13,500, five ships on the seas, a blubber-boiling factory in Greenock, and a soapwork at the head of Candleriggs, in Glasgow. A little later came Walter Gibson, Provost of Glasgow in 1688, "the father of trade of all the west coasts," who did a mighty business in curing red herring and exporting them to France, importing iron direct to Glasgow for the first time, and also, alas! in shipping Covenanters as slaves to the American plantations.

Greatest of all was the enterprise of the Darien Expedition, in which £400,000—half the wealth of Scotland—was sunk, and in which the Merchants of Glasgow took a large share. Part of the expedition sailed from the Clyde, and none of the capital and few of the Colonists were ever seen again. Thus for a second time, at the end of the seventeenth century, ruin and gloom descended upon the strenuous little Clydeside city. Amid the pleasant gardens and sweet-smelling orchards, so admirably described by Daniel Defoe, there was many a sore heart then for the sons and the fortunes that had been lost by the cold-blooded policy of William II. and III.

It was the Union with England in 1707 that was to open the trade of the western world and bring its modern prosperity to Glasgow.