The New City.

THE ground on which the New Town, as it is locally designated, is built, was partly a furzy tract, sloping from the summit now occupied by St. Andrew Square, George Street, and Charlotte Square, to the banks of the Water of Leith on the north. With the exception of a solitary rude farm-steading, no houses were nearer than the hamlet of Multrie's Hill, which stood on the site of the Register House. The old village of the barony of Broughton was then literally a rural place, and farther north was the hamlet of the Canonmills, the ancient property of the Canons of Holyrood. Latterly a colony of French weavers, whom religious persecution had driven from Picardy, located themselves between Multrie's Hill and Broughton, and originated the name of the fine continuation of York Place into Leith Walk called Picardy Place. The site of Princes Street along the then North Loch was known as the "Lang Row," or "Lang Gate."

A proposal to extend the city on the north side of the North Loch had been suggested in the reign of Charles II., and one of those who interested themselves in the project was no less a personage than the Duke of York, afterwards James II., then residing in Holyrood-house. It is stated, in a letter dated 1693, that a design was formed to erect a bridge over the North Loch, build streets on the other side, and inclose the ground with a wall. The removal of the Government and the abolition of the Scottish Parliament after the Union completely frustrated any desire then to attempt the design. John eleventh Earl of Mar, during his exile after the suppression of the Rebellion of 1715, is said to have employed his leisure time in plans for the extension of Edinburgh.

The fall of the east wall of a house six storeys high on the south side of the Cross, on the 6th of September, 1751, by which one person was killed and a number of the inmates narrowly escaped, caused an alarm for the safety of several tenements which were in a very decayed condition. On the 21st of October, 1763, the foundation-stone of the North Bridge was laid by George Drummond, Esq., Lord Provost of the city, which was the first decided movement to extend the city after the draining of the North Loch. The architect was a brother of Milne, who designed and built Blackfriars' Bridge at London, and he bound himself to uphold the fabric for ten years. The citizens, however, were by no means zealous in the work. Provost Drummond, who was one of the greatest benefactors to Edinburgh, became unpopular with many on account of his "new-fangled" notions about bridge-building and town-extension. Many persons, whose prejudices were inveterate, ridiculed the idea of a new city, and the North Bridge was a structure of popular dislike, though to please them it was pretended that it was merely to be a more convenient access to Leith than by Leith Wynd and the Canongate. The fall of the south end of the bridge in August 1769, when nearly completed, and by which five persons were killed, confirmed the opposition of many of the citizens. This accident was caused by the insecurity of the foundations, and an immense pressure of earth on the top of the vaults and arches to raise the structure to a proper level; but the denizens of the old alleys maintained that it was the fulfilment of a prophecy of the renowned Thomas the Rhymer, one of whose visions of the future was this same North Bridge of Edinburgh, and who predicted that it would fall three times. This absurdity was religiously believed, and probably assisted indirectly in the formation of the Earthen Mound. The bridge was speedily repaired, and was opened to the public in 1772, at the expense, before its completion a few years afterwards, of 18,000*l.*

The plan for the New Town, from St. Andrew Square to Charlotte Square, including Princes Street on the south and Queen Street on the north, was designed by Mr. James Craig, the nephew of Thomson, the Poet of the "Seasons;" and the edifice belonging to the Royal College of Physicians, taken down in 1844, and superseded by the present Commercial Bank, opposite St. Andrew's Church, was by him. The whole of Mr. Craig's plan was completed in 1815. Another extension northward of the ornamental gardens in front of Queen Street, and resembling the first, was commenced in 1801, and nearly completed in 1826. On the west side of the Water of Leith, at Stockbridge, is a more recent addition, consisting of crescents, terraces, and streets, on the lands of St. Bernard's, the property of the late eminent portrait-painter, Sir Henry Raeburn. Near this, on the east bank of the Water of Leith, in the deep romantic ravine traversed by that stream, is the ornamental building in the form of a Grecian temple, inclosing St. Bernard's Mineral Well, erected by Francis Garden, Esq., a Judge in the Court of Session by the title of Lord Gardenstone, who died in July 1793. This beautiful structure is a monument of one of the last acts of his lordship's public beneficence.

A most magnificent extension of the new city on the north-west was commenced in 1823, when the grounds of Drumsheugh, between Charlotte Square and the Water of Leith, the property of the Earl of Moray, were feued. In the immediate vicinity is the stupendous bridge over the ravine of the Water of Leith, called the Dean Bridge, from its connexion with the lands of Dean, consisting of four arches, completed in 1832, on the north-west end of which is Trinity Episcopal Chapel, a handsome Gothic edifice, with a tower over the west entrance. The view from the Dean Bridge is magnificent, and has been compared to an Italian scene. It includes the romantic ravine below, the town of Leith, the Frith of Forth with its rocky islets, and the hills and coast of Fife in the back-ground.

While the New City was in progress of erection, the inhabitants of the Old Town adhered with pertinacity to their ancient abodes in the High Street, the Canongate, and their diverging alleys. Those were chiefly shopkeepers, and ancient spinsters or widows of rank and family, who abominated all innovations, and who held the New Town, its projectors, and inhabitants, in utter contempt. Most of them lived and died in those antique tenements, which were subsequently either destroyed by casualties, removed on account of decay, or have been for years occupied by poor families. It required a succeeding generation to be reconciled to the New Town. The success of the extension was also doubted by some who had no such prejudices, of which the following is a remarkable instance. When it was determined, in 1771, to erect a commodious and elegant Episcopal chapel, it was proposed to obtain a site near the north end of the North Bridge, and, according to one statement, on the ground occupied by the Theatre Royal. After much grave deliberation this design was abandoned, and the reason assigned was, that the "New Town would never come to anything!" The promoters accordingly preferred a site which was purchased from the Royal College of Physicians on the north-east side of the Cowgate, an area low-lying and inconvenient, and on it they erected the large Episcopal chapel, which was opened in October 1774, and continued as such till 1818, when the congregation removed to the elegant Gothic edifice of St. Paul's Chapel in York Place, and sold their place of worship to a congregation of Presbyterian Dissenters. When the Assembly Room in George Street was erected, many persons ridiculed the absurdity, as they thought, of placing such a structure in the fields.

The New Town has of course few or no historical associations. The house forming the north-east corner of South St. David Street and St. Andrew Square was erected by David Hume, to which he removed from James's Court, and in it he died. The name of the street is also derived from him, and was written one morning on the wall of the house by the daughter of Robert Orde, Esq., Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, in ironical allusion to the historian's religious opinions. In the corresponding tenement on the opposite corner of the square was born Lord Brougham, and in it he resided during the course of his education. Sir Walter Scott's residence was a house on the east side of North Castle Street, and that of Francis Jeffrey, Esq., in 1834 a judge in the Court of Session by the title of Lord Jeffrey, in Moray Place. At page 142 a further description of the New Town will be found.

The New Town has, nevertheless, one tale of horror which rivals the story of Muschet and his cairn in the Duke's Walk at Holyrood. A narrow alley leading to a tenement on the west end of the General Register House is known as Gabriel's Road. This Gabriel, according to the narrative of the redoubtable Dr. Peter Morris, was a Presbyterian licentiate or preacher, who was employed by a gentleman of the city as tutor to two boys, the one ten and the other eight years of age. Gabriel cherished amorous propensities towards a female domestic of the family, and this was discovered by one of his pupils. The boy informed

NATIONAL MONUMENT, CALTON HILL.

From an Original Drawing by J. D. Harding.

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his brother, and both mentioned it to their mother in the evening. Whether the lady reproved the girl or the preacher himself for this levity is not stated; but when he found that he was discovered, and that the informants were his pupils, he resolved to sacrifice them to his vengeance. One Sunday he led them out to walk in the fields on which the east part of the New Town is built, and, passing deliberately to a secluded spot, he stabbed the elder brother to the heart with a large clasp-knife, which he had secretly provided. The younger boy gazed for a moment, and then fled, screaming in terror, pursued by the murderer with the bloody knife in his hand, and he also fell a victim. This atrocity was distinctly seen by multitudes in the Old City, who heard the cries of the boys, but were unable to rescue them, by the deep valley and North Loch intervening. A rush was made to the scene of blood, and they found the murderer sitting on the spot in a stupor, from which he was only roused by the hands of those who seized him. It happened that the Magistrates had assembled, to walk officially to St. Giles's Church in the afternoon, when the crowd approached with their captive. Gabriel was brought into their presence, and having been taken "red-hand," or in the very act of guilt, he was, according to the old Scottish law, hanged within an hour after the deed was done, and the bloody knife was suspended from his neck.[1] Such is the story of Gabriel, to whom no date is assigned. It is evidently another version of the murder perpetrated by Robert Irving, a Presbyterian preacher, on Sunday the 28th of April, 1717, for which he was executed at the Gallow-Lee, between Edinburgh and Leith, on the 1st of May. This criminal was preceptor to John and Alexander Gordon, sons of James Gordon, Esq. of Ellon, and he was induced to murder them for disclosing to their parents some conduct with a female domestic which they had accidentally witnessed. When asked what prompted him to commit the crime, he at length confessed that predestinarian principles had swayed him, and that he had imbibed them from a book written by Flavel,[2] which he obtained from the College Library. At his apprehension he attempted to cut his throat with a penknife. His hands were struck off at the place of execution, and he was afterwards hanged, the wound in his throat breaking out, and bleeding copiously, after he was suspended. This is the true story of Gabriel's Road, though the locality is not mentioned in the printed account of the last confession of the murderer.[3]

The Calton Hill, which terminates the view looking east from Princes Street, though now within the city, and surrounded by streets, was purchased by the Town-Council of Edinburgh from one of the Lords Balmerino, and in 1725 a charter was obtained from George I., erecting the district, which had previously been designated Wester Restalrig, into a burgh of barony, under a bailie, for whom a court-room, to which was attached a prison, both of which have disappeared, was provided. Although the greater part of the street has been removed by the erection of the Regent Bridge, and more recently by the North British Railway Company, leaving only a few tenements nestling under the precipices, the burghal institution existed in 1847, and the Calton had its high constables and its Incorporated Trades, who possessed considerable property, and to whom belonged the cemetery or grave-yard on the very summit of the precipices, in which the sombre-looking round tower, containing the ashes of Hume the Historian, is conspicuous on the very margin of the rock. In this cemetery are also interred Professor Playfair and several other eminent individuals. There is also a burying-ground on the south-east slope of the Hill, which was obtained as a compensation for that part of the old cemetery now forming Waterloo Place. In this quarter the Calton Hill is perforated by the tunnel of the North British Railway.

In the deep hollow on the north side of the Hill, called Greenside, now covered with obscure streets and lanes, James IV. granted to the citizens, in 1496, sufficient ground to hold tilts and tournaments near the north-eastern side of the then Craigend gate. According to tradition, Queen Mary first saw the Earl of Bothwell at a tournament in Greenside, and he is said to have attracted her admiring notice by riding recklessly down the steep side of the Hill in this quarter, which was undoubtedly a most daring feat of horsemanship; but Sir Walter Scott alleges that Queen Mary's mother, the widowed consort of James V., was the spectator of this exploit, and that the hero of it was Bothwell's father, Patrick, third Earl, who with the Earl of Lennox, openly aspired to her hand. The tournament ground was, in 1520, by consent of

[1] Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk, Edin. 1819, vol. ii. pp. 198–200.

[2] John Flavel, an eminent English nonconformist, who died in 1691. His particular work which induced Irving to commit this double murder is not stated.

[3] This account is a broad-sheet in a curious and valuable folio volume of miscellaneous collections in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, marked C.C.C: 3: 2. The broad-sheet is numbered 137.

James V. and the Archbishop of St. Andrews, assigned to some Carmelite Friars for the erection of a convent, which was founded by the Town-Council in 1526, and dedicated to the Holy Cross. This edifice, whatever were its extent and pretensions, was in 1591, at the instance of John Robertson, merchant in Edinburgh, constituted an hospital for leprous persons of both sexes. The Town-Council placed it under the direction of the Trinity College Hospital, and authorised some severe rules to be observed by the inmates, one of which was, that on no pretence whatever were they ever to go out of the building, under the penalty of death; and to show that this was a serious threat, a gibbet was actually erected at the end of the Hospital.

On the Calton Hill are monuments erected to the memory of Lord Nelson and Professor Playfair, and cenotaphs to Dugald Stewart and Robert Burns; the admired columns of the National Monument, commenced in 1822, but never completed, and now going to decay; the Royal Observatory; the High School begun in 1825, and opened in 1829; and the three extensive buildings, one of which was formerly the Bridewell, all now designated the Prison of Edinburgh, inclosed by castellated walls, varied by towers of different heights and proportions, overlooking the Old City.

The most impressive view that a stranger can obtain of the City, is that from Calton Hill. Looking westward are the magnificent hotels, shops, banks, &c., all built of stone, which form the north side of Princes Street. On the south side are the gardens (with Sir W. Scott's monument) already alluded to; and in the hollow are the Edinburgh and Glasgow, and other railways, but almost hidden from view. On the south-west, in the distance, is the venerable castle, from whence descends, in an easterly direction, through the Old Town, the High Street, leading to Holyrood Palace. At the back of this rises Arthur's Seat, round which are the Royal Park, Salisbury Crags, &c., which, in winter, often present the singular spectacle of being covered with snow from the top to within about 200 feet from their base. If the eye be directed in a north-westerly direction, some of the chief buildings in the New Town will be noticed, such as the Registry Office, some of the new churches, the squares, &c. Prominent among the new buildings is the recently erected Post-Office, near the North Bridge. Beside are theatres, the great Music Hall, &c. Northwards, the Forth may be traced from its mouth at Kirkcaldy to Alloa, forming a bright water-line, across which it is proposed to erect one of the largest bridges in the world, to accommodate the constantly increasing railway traffic. The view by daylight is imposing; but when the houses are lit up, gas being in universal use, the whole City presents an appearance of being specially illuminated, the tall houses in the Old Town presenting a prominent feature. The beauty of the scene is still further enhanced if it be observed during the rising of the moon, as then the hills from Arthur's Seat to the Pentlands form a massive background, which throws the City into greater prominence.

Although Edinburgh is more celebrated as a seat of learning and fashion, it has several important manufactures, as of leather, indiarubber, iron, glass, breweries, &c. It has long been celebrated for its publishing and printing establishments. Stereotyping was first carried on in this City. Its population was estimated, in 1875, as amounting to about 220,000. The annual value of real property is about £1,500,000. As already stated, it is the seat of the Scottish Law business. The Court of Justiciary consists of one Outer Court, having five judges, and two Inner Courts of Session, each having four judges, who are practically the final Court of Appeal in Scotland, further proceedings having to be carried on before the English Supreme Court of Judicature. The government of the City rests in a Lord Provost, six baillies, and other officials, making in all forty-one. Its revenue is about £170,000 annually. The Library, for the use of Advocates and Writers to the Signet (the latter equivalent to the English solicitors and attorneys), contains about 200,000 volumes. The number of registered electors is about 25,000. Edinburgh returns two members for the Parliamentary borough, and, in connection with St. Andrews, an additional one for the two Universities.

Permanent residents in Edinburgh have an advantage which would be greatly prized by the denizens of London. It is that of ready access to the sea-side. In a few minutes, Portobello, Leith, Newhaven, and Trinity, all situated on the banks of the Frith of Forth, are reached. Equally may be mentioned as an advantage, the abundant supply of fish daily brought to these places. Take Edinburgh in all its positions, it may be considered as one of the most desirable places for residence in Great Britain. Its climate is comparatively mild. The average temperature of the year is 47.2° Fah.; of summer, 57.6°; and of winter, 37.9°.

EDINBURGH FROM THE CALTON HILL.

From an Original Drawing by D. Roberts, R.A.

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