

TRADITIONS OF PERTH.

THE City of Perth, to which the following observations refer, is so well known in the history of Scotland, for the many remarkable events which have taken place in it and the surrounding country, prior to the period here alluded to, that little need be said as an apology for bringing these sketches before the public. They refer to a period, during which there were, for many years, neither a local paper nor magazine to chronicle the passing events. They consist chiefly of the personal observations of the writer, and the accounts related to him by his father, who settled in Perth shortly after the memorable year 1745; and as the writer has spent his whole life time in it, and taken an active part in many of the events of the times, he trusts there are many little incidents, however trifling in themselves, that may prove interesting to the descendants of those who figured in the days to which these recollections refer. As the incidents related were written merely for his own amusement, at leisure hours, he trusts that the homely style in which the statements are given will not be despised.

EXTENT AND APPEARANCE OF THE CITY.

There is a tradition that, at a very early period, Perth, then called Bertha, stood at the junction of the Almond with the Tay; and some large beams have been found in the bed of the river near that spot. Be this as it may, we have records and charters, as far back as the eleventh century, to shew that, at that period, Perth, where it now stands, was a considerable town; but as I only mean to describe Perth as it was in the last century, I beg leave to refer to *Gall's Gabbions* for some very interesting particulars, referring to Perth in those early days.

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About the year 1770, the City of Perth consisted of the High-street, from the river up to the port where St Paul's church now stands; South-street, extending the same length in a parallel line: (this street was then and is still frequently termed the Shoegate;) the Watergate still remains nearly as it was; as also the Skinnergate, the Horse-cross, the Castle-gable, and Curfew-row. At the termination of the Castle-gable stood the North-port, situated at the south side of the gate now leading into Mr Condie's house, then Blackfriars' house, and the property of Mr Robertson of Tullybelton. On the opposite side, a little old house, the porter's lodge, was long occupied as the house for collecting the customs of that port, then the principal entrance from the Highlands. The Kirk-gate, which still retains much of its former appearance, was then one of the principal streets; the shops being occupied by many of the leading merchants in the grocery and the cloth lines. The houses extended on the north side of the church to the same extent as at present, to St. John's-street, where they terminated in gardens. On the east, stood a range of houses, between the two narrow vennels leading from the Watergate; from this there was a narrow venna, called the Salt-vennel, leading to the South-street, in a straight line with the east end of the church. The buildings in this venna were very old wooden buildings, inhabited by the very lowest class of society, and here the beggars and vagrants generally lodged. The School-vennel and the Flesh-vennel were just in their present state. On the west of the church, the ground where the flesh market now stands, was the bowling-green. In the year 1761, the present flesh and meal markets, and the academy above, were built. The Meal-vennel has still much of its former appearance. Mill-street was a dirty lane with only three houses in its whole extent, and one below the Glovers'-yard on the north side, occupied by the hangman; it was bounded on the south by garden walls, and on the north by the ancient city wall, which extended from where the new spinning-mill is built to the top of Methven-street; thence it turned south to the High-street, where the Port stood with gates and bars; it then continued down Methven-street to the South-street, where the Shoegate-port stood with its gates; thence it turned down Canal-street to the Speygate, which leads from the Watergate to the Greyfriars, where there was another port. The course of the mill lade marks the position of the wall. At that time the lade was uncovered all the way down Methven-street and Canal-street, to the Tay.

GOWRIE HOUSE.

At the foot of the South-street stood the ancient palace of Gowrie House, which extended from the Water-vennel to the line of Canal-street, bounded on the west by the line of the Speygate, and by the river on the

cast. The building formed three entire sides of a square, and half the fourth side, leaving the other half of the front open towards the South street, where the entrance into this ancient building was by an arched gateway. The gable end of the south side stood a little to the north of the gate of the new jail. This wing consisted of a range of lofty stone buildings, the lower part being bomb proof; the second storey was divided into two long and lofty halls; the upper one was divided in the same manner, but the apartments were not so high. On the east of these halls, in the angle of the buildings, was the grand stair-case which led to the south and east wings, with the little turrets at the top. The half of the eastern range was similar to the south, and divided in the same manner. The other half was a building of one storey, which appeared to have been occupied as shades or stables. The northern range consisted of buildings not so lofty as the southern, having only one flat above the bomb-proofs; and another above that, half garrets. On the west end of this range was the great kitchen, with a fire-place extending across the whole breadth of the house. The western range, north of the main gate, (forming part of the Watergate,) was similar to the south wing, consisting of halls in each flat, thus enclosing a spacious square. On the south of the building, to the line of Canal-street, was a garden, the city wall forming the western and southern enclosure. On the east of the building, a terrace ran along the river the whole length of the property. At the end of the terrace stood an oval tower, the interior of which was ornamented with drawings of the arms of noble families in Scotland. The tower was built in the angle of the eastern and southern walls, and was called the Spy tower, it is presumed, from its commanding situation, having a clear view to the west, south, and east. On the outside of this tower was a dock or basin, formed on the side of the bed of the lade, that still runs into the Tay below Canal-street, between the Old Shore and the Gowrie wall. Here the ship owners were wont to lay up their vessels for safety during the winter; the idea of exposing their property to the storms at this inclement season, never having entered the heads of the cautious merchants of those days. This tower, as well as the whole of Gowrie House, were reckoned amongst the greatest ornaments of Perth. The property fell into the possession of the City. When the Duke of Cumberland was here in the year 1745, with the King's army, the Magistrates presented him with the gift of Gowrie House, with all its gardens; which his Highness, immediately on his return to London, sold to the Board of Ordnance, who immediately converted it into an artillery barracks, making Perth head quarters.

The house in Spey-gate, fronting the jail, now occupied as a public-house by Mr M'Laren, stood opposite the window from which King

James the V. called for assistance in the alleged Cowrie Conspiracy, and was then the house of one of his nobles.

The palace of the Bishop of Dunkeld stood on the ground now occupied by the new buildings on the east side of St John Street. The public hall of this ancient building was long occupied as the linen stamp office. Another nobleman's house stood in what is now termed the Kirk Close, some parts of which still remain. The Parliament House was in the close which still bears its name, and was for many years used as an Episcopal chapel. About the year 1818, this building was pulled down, and a very elegant hall erected on its site, by the Royal Arch Mason Lodge, which is now much used for public sales. This hall was built with money, the bequest of Mr Murray, the founder of the Royal Lunatic Asylum.

Curfew-row, rendered famous by Sir Walter Scott's "*Fair Maid of Perth*," is still in existence; but scarcely a vestige of the old houses remain, except one at the corner of Blackfriars'-wynd, where the curfew bell hung; which used to ring every night at nine o'clock, to warn the Beges to put out their fires. Behind this house stood the Monastery of Blackfriars, where King James was murdered. On the same ground there is at present a house which was built for Lord John Murray, one of the Atholl family, and which was long considered the only genteel house in town. The Curfew-row was, from an early period, until a few years ago, occupied on both sides with malt barns, belonging to the brewers. The remains of these buildings are now occupied as a tannage.

The Watergate, at that time the only thoroughfare from the south, contained the only fashionable self-contained houses in the town. The writer can remember when five Provosts were all living in this street.

The Skinnergate was another principal street, and the only thoroughfare to the north by the Castle-gable and the North-port. The present line of Mill-street, Methven-street, and Canal-street, were then dirty, unpaved roads, without any buildings, save a number of malt barns and sheds, some of which are yet standing. Even limited as the extent of the town then was, many parts of the streets were unbuilt. The west side of the Meal-vennel, and the sides of the Shoegate above the Meal-vennel, were but partially built, and below the vennel there were many buildings lying in ruins, termed old walls. The only houses without the city walls, on the west, were the Glassite chapel; and the Mill-wynd, which was built for a linen factory,

There was formerly a bridge across the Tay at the foot of the High-street, which was swept away by a "mighty inundation," as we learn from a grave-stone erected to the memory of Mr Mills, the builder. For a long period the only passage across the river was by ferry boats, similar to those now employed in bringing sand up the river. The boat house on the opposite side stood where the church of Kinnoull is now built; and the pier where they landed on that side was at the point that projected on Mr Patton's property, and was then called Gibraltar point. This pier projected a good way into the river, forming a deep bay below, which Mr Patton has filled up, and thus extended his grounds a considerable space into the bed of the river. On the Perth side the boat landed at the North-shore, through the arch below the west end of the Council-room.

There is an anecdote told of a regiment of Sutherland fencibles, during the war in the year 1756, who were on their march to the south. When they came to the Tay, they refused, to a man, to enter a boat, dreading that, if once on board, they would be shipped off to Germany. They therefore resolved to cross the river at a ford a little higher up, by wading; and the whole regiment, joining hand in hand, made their way through.

EXTENSION OF THE CITY.

About the year 1758, the east side of the New-row was partially built, by a company engaged in the linen manufacture, long known by the name of the New-row company. About this time, the proprietors of lands in the vicinity of Perth began to feu their property for building, and a desire for more commodious houses becoming general, the suburbs were rapidly extended. The Clayholes were taken in small lots, chiefly by weavers, who erected very humble dwellings, many of them of clay. Thimble-row was built shortly after. A row of houses of the same description was built up the south side of the Laigh Causeway, and turned round on the west side of the then Auchterarder road,—called Earl's-dykes. This row is now almost in ruins; and the old tenements on the west side of the Laigh Causeway have, within these few years, been replaced by good substantial houses.

The Glover Incorporation, who are the proprietors of the lands of the Leonards, feued out a great part of them. Leonard-street was speedily built; and Pomarinn and the Cross-street filled up rapidly at the same time.

On the north side of the town, the building of the present bridge, which was finished about the year, 1771, made way for vast improvements in that quarter. George-street was immediately formed, and an opening made to the High-street. About the year 1783, Charlotte-street was built, and immediately after that the lands of Blackfriars were laid out

in streets. The first building was the house next Provost Marshall's, in Rose Terrace. At that period there was not a house to the west or north of the old tannage. Paul-street soon followed, and the street between it and the Mill-wynd.

The row of houses at the foot of Canal-street on the south side, were built about the year 1772, and the large building on the east end was added in 1780. Up the south side of Canal-street, there was a low, marshy piece of ground, extending from Prince's-street west to Shuttlefield-close, called the How Rig, which filled with water during the winter, and afforded excellent sport to the youngsters on the ice. The Star inn, Gaelic chapel, gas works, &c., are all built upon it.

The ground between this and the South Inch was all laid out in small gardens. To the westward, the Hospital Gardens; and on the north side of the city, the whole of the Blackfriars, and the lands of Drumhar, where the Barracks stand, were laid out in a similar manner—so that almost every family in Perth had a garden. The lands of Blackfriars were laid out in beautiful small plots, well stored with fruit trees and bushes, and intersected by green walks; forming an agreeable promenade in the summer season. These extended as far into the Inch as the railing.

CROMWELL FORT.

On the north end of the South Inch stood Cromwell Fort. This was a regular square fortification with four bastions. The north side extended along the Greyfriars to the Edinburgh road, and a considerable way to the westward where Marshall Place now stands. The east side extended from Graham's coal yard by the alley of trees, to a line with the chesnut tree that stands by itself, on the east side of the Inch. The whole was composed of the earth and sand dug out of the trenches, which were about 100 feet wide at the top, and had been originally very steep. About the year 1780, before the City began to fill them up, they were about ten feet deep, and used to contain a considerable number of pike. During the winter, they afforded excellent ice for skating. Sometimes boys were drowned here; and frequently they were the watery graves of new-born infants. Within the mound on the east side, a range of stables for dragoon horses was built, that would contain 200 horses, with a riding-house on the west end: these were pulled down when the present barracks were built; the rest of the space within the trenches was occupied as wood-yards. This fortification, of which not a vestige remains, measured about 266 yards on each side, the mounds were demolished gradually, by taking away the sand for paving the streets; and the trenches were filled up by rubbish carted from the town. The remains of the mounds were wheeled into the trenches to complete the filling up.

During the digging, a seam of wheat was discovered about nine inches thick, which had been burned and reduced to chareoal; but every pickle was perfectly entire, and quite dry. A serjeant of the Guards, who was in Perth at the time, filled a tin cannister with it, and sent it up to London.

The streets were then paved with round bullets of stone, taken from the river, and formed a very rough road for carriages. About the year 1780, the system of paving with cut stones was introduced, first in the Watergate.

The water that supplied the City was conveyed from the mill lade from a cistern above the mills, by wooden pipes. On relaying the streets, lead pipes were adopted in place of the wooden ones; but still the water, although plentiful, was not good; and at various periods attempts were made to introduce spring water. Frequent surveys were made of the springs throughout the neighbourhood; but the matter never went further, until the year 1829, when an act of Parliament was obtained for supplying the City with water, under a set of Commissioners, with power to assess the inhabitants in proportion to their rents. That act has since been carried into effect, and the inhabitants now enjoy the luxury of the purest water. This has obtained by digging a filtering well at the upper end of Moncrieff Island, from whence the water is conveyed below the bed of the river to the water-house, on the east point of the line of Marshall Place. This building is erected on an elegant plan, and is an ornament to the City. The whole of these operations were conducted under the direction of Dr Anderson of the Academy, with the most complete success. Trials have been made to ascertain how high the water would rise from the pipes on the streets, which is found to ascend to the roofs of the highest houses at the Cross.

It was during the time that Thomas Hay Marshall was a member of the Town Council, that the greater part of the improvements that have since taken place were projected. The North Inch was then only half its present size: it was bounded on the north by a wall, called the White Dyke, which was said to have been built by the fines levied from the brewers, and bakers for fighting with the weavers; and was erected to prevent the encroachments of the Muirton farmers, who were in the habit of taking a few furrows, from time to time, from the common good. The dyke ran across from the river to Balhouse orchard, at the place where a few old trees are still standing, the remains of an alley that ran along the side of the dyke. About the year 1785, an excambion was made with the Earl of Kinnoull, by which the Muirton haugh was added to the Inch, for which the Town gave the greater part of the farm of Laigh Tullylumb, when the white dyke was pulled down, and a race-course

formed round the Inch. Provost Marshall became proprietor of the Blackfriars, and exerted his interest with the county gentlemen to get the line of road from Dunkeld and Crieff to come through these lands. About the year 1760, the road to Dunkeld went from the High Street Port, in almost the same line as at present. Shortly after that period, when the bridge was built, it was altered and taken up through the North Inch, and a row of trees planted on each side; one of these still remains to mark the line. About the year 1788, it was again brought in a straight line from the Bridge of Almond to the boundaries of the Blackfriars, where it was twisted into angles to suit Marshall's plan of the streets.

The road to Crieff, which went from the High Street Port by Dovecotland and the Stone Cross, was altered to the present line which now joins the Dunkeld road. The Stone Cross is yet standing to the west of Goody Burn. This was a large upright stone, raised on a pedestal, with steps round it, originally having had the figure of a man on it. The arms had long been broken off, the upright part alone remaining. An anecdote is told of an English traveller who, on visiting the Cross, mounted to the top and placed a crown piece there; many years afterwards, the same gentleman was again in the country and paid the Cross a visit, and, to his astonishment, found the crown piece exactly as he left it.

The ground on which Dovecotland is now built, was formerly the site of a large establishment of friars. In digging these grounds, many old coins have been found. About the year 1778, a plan for building this place on an elegant scale was made out, but the want of water, and other local circumstances caused the scheme to be abandoned; it was, therefore, feued out to any individuals to build to suit themselves. The daughters of the first settler having established a notorious house, the rough wits of the day bestowed a name upon the place which greatly injured the sale of the rest of the property.

At the same time, an excambion was made between the Town and the Blackfriars, by which the lade was straightened, a piece of ground was given to the lands of Blackfriars, at the top of the Inch, and a piece of ground at the foot of the Inch taken from these lands; by these arrangements, the Town became bound that no building should, at any future period, be erected on the Inch to intercept the view from Blackfriars House and garden. About the year 1802, an excambion was made with the proprietors of the gardens on the north of the South Inch, and, on the west, with the Glover Incorporation, by which the marches were lined off straight, and the ground of Marshall Place feued out. This line was at first sold in seven lots for villas, but never was built. The feus were given up, and the present plan adopted. In former times, the road from Edinburgh came in by the Cloven Craigs, in a line with

Craigie and by the Leonards, where the road from Craigie, by Leonard-street, still passes. The Edinburgh road was altered about the year 1760, and brought in the present line through the South Inch, through Cromwell's mound, and the gardens where Prince's-street was formed.

Under Provost Marshall's superintendence, the Borough Muir was feued out, some of it in small lots of two and three acres, at a feuduty of two bolls of wheat a-year. The whole of this extensive wood has been cleared, and the ground greatly improved, and is now studded with gentlemen's houses, and tradesmen's neat cottages. On some of these lands, which, forty years ago, was reckoned not worth a shilling an acre, wheat of the finest quality is now raised; frequently they have produced the heaviest wheat and barley in the county.

The houses in Perth were generally built on the plan of having arched door-ways and windows; but on the front wall there was erected a projection of wooden work, about six feet wide. On the ground floor these were open, and were termed Channels;—here the goods were displayed. Several of these houses are still to be seen, with the wooden fronts; but the channels are filled up and converted into shops. The Skinnergate, narrow as it is, was all the way finished in this manner; and so close did it bring the fronts of the houses to each other, that the inmates could hand their snuff mulls to those on the opposite side; which rendered the lower apartments sufficiently obscure. Many of the old houses were a foot or two below the level of the street, which added to their dismal appearance. Although the buildings were almost all confined within the boundary of the city wall, the streets and lanes were by no means built up. On the front of South-street, a considerable part was lined by garden walls, and the west side of the Meal-vennel was in the same state. Few of the shop windows had any glass in them—they had only a wooden grating.

Shortly after the Rebellion, a company started in the north of England under the firm of the York building company, who began their operations on a very extensive scale, and extended them to Perth. They bought the property east and west of the Skinnergate, and rebuilt the houses as they now stand; but their affairs fell into confusion, and the property was sold for their creditors. It would appear that their rights had not been sufficiently valid; for, about the year 1785, one Gregory, a tailor, having got possession of some old charters, he summoned the proprietors before the Court of Session, to surrender up the property. The whole of them, to save litigation, compromised the matter with him; by which he obtained a considerable sum of money. The flats of the old houses were

extremely low, seldom above six feet between the floor and the roof, and the windows were very small. The roofs were covered with heavy thick slabs of stone, the weight of which often bilged the roofs, and presented a clumsy appearance. Several of these roofs are yet to be seen in the town.

The houses were uniformly divided, into separate flats, half-flats, or single rooms. The only self-contained houses were on the east side of the Watergate, between the street and the river. The 1st of these was possessed by John Richardson, Esq.—the 2d by Dr Wood—3d, Lady Stewart of Urrard—4th, Provost Caw—5th, Provost Alison—6th, the Sheriff-clerk's office, by Murray of Dollarie. On the north, Lord John Murray's, and Tullibelton's, now Mr Condie's. The rest of the good houses were let in flats to separate families, and generally consisted of a kitchen, a public room, (which served for parlour, dining room, and hall), with one or two bedrooms, and a closet. In most of the houses the entrance to the rooms was through the kitchen into the parlour, and from thence into the bed-room. Outside stairs to the first flat were very common, and had an awkward appearance on the street. A great part of the buildings in the closes were occupied by brewers, who kept public houses, and retailed their own ale. About the year 1780, there were upwards of sixty houses of this description. The principal inns then were the King's Arms, foot of High-street, now occupied by Mrs Slater; the second in the Thistle Close, first entry above the Skinnergate; the third, the Salutation, so called from John Burt, the landlord, having shook hands with Prince Charles. The King's Arms was considered the first; it enjoyed the patronage of the Duke of Atholl, and many of the first families in the county.

THE JAIL.

This old building was formerly a part of some religious house. At what period it had been converted into a prison, I am not enabled to state; but it was sufficiently gloomy for this purpose. On the ground floor there was one cell, 12 feet square, arched above. The window was raised about eight feet from the floor, and so thoroughly set with a triple grating that very little light entered the place. The door was composed of thick double oak planks; there was also an outside iron door. This was what was termed the condemned cell, or laigh iron house. Here the criminal was fastened to a chain in the floor; his bed a little straw on the damp stones, and a single blanket for a covering. Some years before it was given up, a cage was erected in this place, similar to those I shall describe above stairs, where there was only another cell for criminals

and a small dark room for debtors. To these were added two garret rooms for debtors. The upper cells were about 16 feet by 12. In the lower one there were three cages; each about six feet long, and four wide, built up to the roof, and of double plank. The door into them was about four feet high, and eighteen inches wide, with a hole for handing in their bread, about 12 inches by nine, with iron gratings on it. Within were chains for locking the prisoners to the floor, a bundle of straw, and a blanket. Beside them was placed a wooden stoup, which was supplied with fresh water just twice a week, and their bucket with filth was only removed once a week. In the upper cell, which was usually allotted for women, there was only one cage, situated in the centre of the room. In these wretched places, with a scanty allowance of bread and water, were the poor wretches confined for months, some of them for years, without seeing the light of day, or enjoying a breath of fresh air. The common allowance was five halfpenny loaves a day, with water; until an old man, who was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, complained to the Court that he could not live on the allowance; when seven, instead of five, were ordered for the whole. Often were they in such a crowded state, that the smell, to a stranger, on entering, was intolerable. The debtors, likewise, had very wretched accommodation; sometimes three or four were huddled into one of these garrets, where there was just room for the bed, and a narrow passage between the door and the fire place.

After an arduous struggle of nearly thirty years, the Duke of Atholl prevailed on the county gentlemen to erect the present jail and public buildings, which stand on the ground formerly occupied by Gowrie House; but even this structure, in point of accommodation, has been found quite inadequate for the purpose; and, at the present time, steps are being taken to get it enlarged, so as to admit of a classification of the prisoners. A chaplain has been appointed for the jail, who, every Sunday, holds worship with the prisoners, and gives instructions during the week, particularly to the young, in reading and religious knowledge; but the want of room, to admit of a proper separation of the criminals, prevents this salutary measure having proper effect.

The old Jail, which had lain useless since the erection of the new one, has been lately fitted up as a sort of penitentiary, under the management of the Police Establishment. The old debtors' room has been divided into cells, which are kept in good order, and properly ventilated; and the criminals' cells, with the three *cages*, have been cleaned out for the accommodation of the refractory. It, therefore, appears, that, under our modern police management, an individual, for the most trifling offence, is

liable to be thrust into a den, which, half a century ago, was considered too horrible for even the most atrocious criminal.

In former times, when a person had the misfortune to be confined for debt, he had to remain until the first Town Court day before he could even make application to obtain an aliment; and had then to incur the expense of obtaining an order, and of serving an intimation on the creditor, that, at the expiry of ten days, he must allow him 6d. or 9d. a day. Here he had to lie for twelve or fourteen days before he could obtain any subsistence, and for this he had to pay 10s. 6d.; but his misery did not end with this, for the jailer charged jail fees,—for every night he was in custody, 3d., if a burgess; if not a burgess, 6d. For this sum, which frequently became heavy, the jailer indeed could not detain the prisoner; but if he had brought any bedding, this was arrested until the amount was paid. These jail fees have since been done away with, and the prisoner allowed to depart the moment his creditors permit.

BURGH COURT.

Many curious anecdotes might be told of this Court. A late worthy Trades' Bailie sat on the bench one day, on a case where he was himself the pursuer, and decided the case in his own favour, and decerned the defendant to pay all costs.

Bailie Allison was sitting judge, when a boy was brought before him for a practice, at the time very common, of getting up to the steeple from the roof of the church, by a window in the staircase leading to the steeple, the object being to swing by the bell-ropes. Sometimes they set the bells a-ringing, and alarmed the neighbours. This boy, the son of a poor widow, was caught in the act, and committed to prison until Court-day. When brought forward, the case was clear, and the Bailie sentenced him to two months' confinement. He was then ordered away to jail; but hesitating to leave the Court, "Take him away," was called out by the Bailie, rather in a pet at the culprit not obeying the order. In reply to which, the boy asserted that there were others present, equally implicated, and who ought, likewise, to be confined. "Tell me who they were," said the Bailie, "and they shall get the same fate." "I diinna like to tell," said the boy. "You must tell, or I'll double your time." "Sandy Allison was there." "Sandy Allison! what Sandy Allison?" "Your ain Sandy." The Bailie was dumfounded. At last he said, "You may go home for this time; but if I catch you again, you may depend on being punished!"

Robie Aiken, the hangman at that time, lived in a bakehouse (having an oven in the end of it), near the north shore. Here the wretched

creature kept a most infamous house, where many a row was kicked up by folks of all degrees, until one night, in a riot, poor Robie was kicked out of the world altogether. Amongst the magistrates at that time, there was a Bailie Duncan, *alias* Jamaica Pate, who was said to be very fond of the lasses, and had been in the habit of visiting Robie's; whether, as sitting magistrate, for the laudable purpose of keeping order, or otherwise, is not known. There was another worthy of the day, Perry Mitchell, well known in Perth for many dirty tricks. Perry was a daily visitor at Robie's. One night whilst he was there, a dreadful row commenced, in which broken heads abounded; some of the parties concerned were apprehended, amongst them Perry. When brought into Court, Jamaica Pate was on the bench. Perry had made his escape at the time of the row, but was apprehended shortly after, on the information of some of the others. He was asked from the Bench if he had been in Robie's on such a night? "Me there!—I was not: the last time I was in the house, ye was there yoursel' a' the time; an' ye ken if there was ony disturbance! Ye mind when somebody cam' to the door, that ye creepit into the oven; and when ye heard wha it was, ye came out again; and then we a' drank thegither. And whan Meg Bain thought you was dead drunk, I catch'd her hand in your pouch gaun to rob ye." The poor Bailie, unable to stop the body's loquacity, was glad to get him out of the Court on any terms. This Perry was long a nuisance about the town. He was frequently apprehended for petty offences. On one of these occasions, he was committed to prison; and when one of the Town Officers informed old Provost Marshall of it, he exclaimed "Filthy body, we are continually plagued with him; he deserves a good whipping." On this the officer went straight to the jailer, and told him that Provost Marshall had ordered Perry to be whipped. The hangman was brought, Perry stripped and bound, and led down stairs. By this time the thing had taken wind, and a crowd had assembled. Provost Marshall, whose shop was below the Skinnergate, seeing the multitude, asked the meaning. Some one replied, that Perry Mitchell was going to be whipped through the town. The astonished Provost instantly made his way through the multitude, and arrived just in time to rescue Perry from the hands of the hangman. This narrow escape, however, does not appear to have operated as a sufficient warning to induce him to mend his manners; for he was subsequently whipped by his friend Robie, and banished the county.

THE MAGISTRATES UNDER THE OLD SYSTEM.

It was formerly the case, that the office of City Treasurer was no sinecure. He kept the public purse, and had the duty of settling the whole

public accounts. One year, a certain baker, who could scarcely write his name, was elected to the office. At this time the bakers were in the practice of running accounts with their customers by the month. Instead of a check book, each family had a thin stick hung by a string. When the baker's man went round with the bread, he carried a bundle of these sticks with him, and the individual receiving a loaf cut a notch in his particular stick. So thoroughly conversant was the Treasurer with this system of *Practical Arithmetic*, that he was thus enabled to keep a record of the whole income and disbursements of the City funds. To the astonishment of his brethren in the Council, on delivering up his charge, instead of laying before them the usual documents that his accounts might be audited, he brought in a whole basket full of nick sticks; and, much to his honour, the accounts were all found to be correct;—at least, no one presumed to challenge their accuracy.

Sometime afterwards, one of the Treasurers fell behind in his intromissions, upon which the charge of the funds was transferred to the City Clerks, and the duty of the Treasurer became nominal. For upwards of 30 years back a Chamberlain has been appointed, who now takes the charge of all the money matters,—the Clerk managing the rest of the business. On the death of old Walter Miller, who, for a long period, had held this office, a keen canvass ensued for the situation. One, Andrew Davidson, offered £1200 for it; but the Magistrates of the day had friends to serve, and Messrs Peddie and Stewart were appointed. After the decease of Mr Stewart, Mr Peddie transacted the business till his death; when Messrs Miller and Mackenzie obtained the office for life; both of whom are esteemed able and upright men.

Notwithstanding the ample revenue of the city, the Magistrates of those days contrived to get the city involved pretty deeply in debt: to accomplish this they had every opportunity, as they never rendered any account of their charge to the public. Dinners and suppers were given on the most trifling occasions, and a reckless waste of the funds prevailed. If a tradesman was employed about any little job, it was made the subject of one or more special visits by one or other of the Magistrates, accompanied by a few of his acquaintances: the issue was an adjournment to a public house; and if any of the party offered to pay their proportion of the reckoning, the offended Bailie would exclaim, with an air of offended dignity, "What, Sir, would you presume to pay in the presence of a Magistrate! Put it to the town's account!" On every occasion of vindicating the law—in every case of pillory, whipping, or hanging—a magisterial dinner was held to be indispensable.

The delegation to the Royal Burgh Convention was an expensive job. One hundred pounds was the allowance for maintaining the proper dignity of the city representative at this assembly. About the year 1780, one of our worthy Provosts who was sent to the Convention, having fallen in with some light company, had the misfortune to have his pocket picked of his allowance and commission. As he could not appear at the Convention without the proper credentials, an express had to be sent over for another copy, which raised many unpleasant surmises at the Provost's expence.

About the year 1804, a spirit of economy began to obtain in the Council. The above allowance was not taken by the Provost, but merely a sum sufficient to cover his unavoidable outlay. The state of the funds was laid open to the inspection of the public; and all feasting at the expence of the city funds given up; with the exception of the election dinner, which was considered but a very moderate recompense for the time and trouble bestowed upon the public business.

At a later period, Provost Morrison made a motion at the meeting of the Convention, to the effect, "That it should be dissolved for ever, as useless, expensive, and cumbersome;" but he was not seconded.

THE OLD CROSS.

This structure stood on the High street, between the Kirkgate and the Skinnergate. It was about 12 feet high, with a balcony on the top, to which there was access by a flight of steps within the building. Proclamations were wont to be read from the balcony; and here, on the King's birth-day, the usual loyal toasts were drunk by the Magistrates. As each separate health was drank, the bottles and glasses were thrown among the crowd, and new ones procured for the succeeding toast. So much for the civic economy of the day.

About the year 1764, when carts and other carriages came to be introduced, this edifice, being found considerably to impede the carriage-way, was taken down. The city gates were removed about the same period.

MAGISTERIAL DIGNITY.

During the last generation, the magistrates were sufficiently impressed with a sense of their own importance, and were also resolved to exact a proper acknowledgment of it from the inhabitants. So atrocious an offence against all decorum was it held for a person to pass a bailie on the street without giving him a hat, that any one omitting the ceremony was generally ordered "up stairs"—that is, thrown into jail. About the year 1764, one of the bailies was such a rigid upholder of the civic dignity in this respect,

that, "Put him up stairs, as Bailie Robert says," became a common bye-word.

BURGH ELECTION.—BEAUTIFUL ORDER.

This abominable system, calculated for the complete subversion of the liberties of the citizens, existed in all its splendour in the eighteenth century. There was a particular junto that kept the civic honours among themselves. The Provost was nominally elected every year; but to hold office only one year, or, in the technical phrase, to be made an yearling, was held to be a disgrace. He was, therefore, re-elected for the second year, when the former Provost was again appointed for other two years. The Dean of Guild was elected in much the same manner, from a leet sent down to the Council. The Trades' Bailie was also chosen by the Council, from a leet sent by the Trade whose turn it was to have the Bailie. The Treasurer was chosen alternately from the Guild and Trades' side of the Council. The Magistrates were elected on the first Monday of October, and the Deacons of the Trades were elected on the Wednesday following. The Trades which sent Deacons to the Council were the Hammermen, Glovers, Shoemakers, Fleshers, Wrights, and Tailors. The Weavers, though a corporate body, had no seat at the Council board—they having at some period either neglected, or been defrauded of that privilege. The Brewers and Dyers were incorporated with the Guildry.

In a few years the bustle incident to the ancient burgh elections will be forgotten, and after generations will learn with astonishment, that six weeks' painful canvass of the freemen was submitted to, and large sums sacrificed, in the remote prospect of obtaining the honour of Deaconship of one of these petty corporations. Houses of rendezvous were opened by the contending parties, and suppers given, and morning drams in abundance. Even to obtain the humble situation of Box-master, much *booing* often took place, and many curious manœuvres were resorted to, to remove obstinate members out of the way, in order that their vote might not be recorded. Many a hard struggle was maintained for the office of Trades' Bailie. To such an excess were these carried, that individuals in affluent circumstances, often brought themselves to poverty; besides acquiring dissipated habits, and destroying their own health and family comfort.

The election of Deacons and Box-masters took place at nine o'clock on Wednesday morning; but as early as five the different parties were at Athole brose, to restore the tone of their stomachs, after the fatigues of the table with the would-be Deacon on the previous evening. After the

election, the day was generally spent in tipping; and in the evening each Corporation dined together in their different halls; the expense of the entertainment being always defrayed from those funds which were understood to be set apart for the relief of the poor and infirm of their respective bodies.

On the following Thursday, the election of a Convener took place, after fortifying themselves with a public breakfast, invitations to which were given to the clergy, the magistrates, and those connected with the Convener's Court. The Convener's dinner concluded the festivities of the Michaelmas Elections. At this dinner, all those who at any time had held office as Deacon, Trades' Bailie, or Trades' Councillor, were entitled to attend during life, by payment of a guinea, on their entrance, to the funds of the Convener Court. This sumptuous entertainment was of course always well attended; and many of the *ci-divant* deacon bodies, that seldom allowed themselves the indulgence of a full meal, here threw away their cares and swelled the saturnalia. Friday was redolent with aching heads and qualming stomachs. Saturday was a day of repentance; and the Sabbath arrived as a blessed day to put an end to the debauch. But severe was the ordeal which many of the penitents had yet to undergo, before dissenting sessions, for drinking to excess, and swearing the Burgess' oath.

The dignity of the magistrates was supported by a small corps or body guard of town officers, five in number, being one for the Provost and each of the magistrates. At that time, only decayed burghers were appointed to the office, which then was no sinecure. Their regular salary was little more than three shillings a week; but they had a number of perquisites, arising principally from the business of the Town Court, which augmented their income. This court was held on Tuesday and Saturday. Since the appointment of the Justice of Peace Small Debt Court, and the establishment of the Police Court, the business of the Town Court has become almost nominal. It is now held on Tuesday, and the only business of importance brought before it, is serving heirs to property. Formerly, the powers of this court were both extensive and despotic. The sitting magistrate, without the sanction of a jury, had no hesitation in sentencing an offender to a public whipping. An instance of this occurred in the year 1776. A boy, belonging to some respectable family in the Watergate, was detected in some petty offence, and sentenced by the Bailie to be whipped through the streets by the hangman. The mother, when the boy was dragged past the door in this degraded state, fell on her knees, and imprecated a curse on the Bailie and his family—that none of his children might live to the age of her son: or if they did, that they might be brought to suffer the same disgraceful punishment. Whether

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the idea of fatalism caused mental depression, and induced consequent disease—or that the mother had invoked the more inscrutable workings of Providence,—it was remarked, that every one of the Bailie's numerous family died when they came to be about the age of her son.

MILLS.

Perth has long been famed for its mills. To the west of the town, on the King's lade, there are two flour mills, two meal mills, and a malt mill. The multure of these was formerly very heavy. The Perth bakers were bound to them, and had to pay the twentieth boll. When the flour mill of Balhousie was in separate hands from the town's mills, the bakers, to escape the heavy multure, adopted the plan of selling their wheat to the Balhousie mill, and buying back the flour. Of late these mills have all been in the hands of one company. There was formerly a waulk mill on the lade, above the flour mills, which was occupied by the dyers; it was subsequently used in wool-spinning. At present the fall is employed in driving machinery in the Perth Foundery. At the foot of Mill-street there was a barley mill, a malt mill, an oil mill, and a waulk mill. Some years ago these different structures were converted into a wool-spinning mill and an oil mill, which have recently given place to a flax-spinning mill in conjunction with the oil mill, under the management of Mr Fleming, Bridgend. Farther down the lade, on the site of Mr Urquhart's shop in George-street, there was formerly an oil mill, which was long occupied by John Richardson, who carried on an extensive trade in that line.

On the Balhousie branch of the lade, at the foot of Charlotte-street, there was a snuff mill; and at the south west corner of the South Inch there was another mill, which was latterly employed in spinning cotton. The remains of this latter building are now entirely swept away. From various circumstances, it was surmised that this mill was wilfully set fire to by the proprietor. It was supposed to have been a very losing concern in his hand.

MILL LADE.

The lade by which these various mills are driven, is taken from the River Almond, about four miles west from Perth. It is said to have been dug through the different proprietors' grounds in one night by the military, and has been hence styled the King's lade. The admission of the water from the Almond is regulated by a sluice, and an extensive embankment of masonry called Low's work, and the whole is subject to the inspection of the Magistrates. The income of the city from the different mills upon the lade has frequently been as high as £1000 a-year, and

forms a considerable portion of the city revenue. The oil mill, on the lowest fall on the lade, was removed to make room for George-street. The snuff mill, which had long been discontinued for that purpose, gave place to the very handsome building which forms the corner of Charlotte-street. In addition to the mills already mentioned, many extensive works are established on the different falls of the lade, before it reaches Perth. These we will notice when we come to speak of the manufactures.

THE BOOT OF BALHOUSIE.

This is a branch from the King's lade, which drives a flour and meal mill at Balhousie, and flows by the west side of the North Inch into the Tay. The history of this stream is rather curious. It is said that Oliphant, the Laird of Balhousie, preferred the apparently very modest request to the King to be permitted to take a bootful of water from the lade: which was at once granted. But the wylie laird interpreted the privilege in the way that suited himself, and immediately drew off as much water from the bottom of the lade as would flow through a pipe about eleven inches wide, the assumed width of the laird's boot top! Such is the rapidity with which the water rushes through the pipe, that two or three of the laird's boots would have let off the entire water of the main stream. People troubled with sprains and rheumatisms are said to experience relief by bathing under the rush of water from the boot. In the recollection of the writer, the lades abounded with fine trout; they were particularly plentiful in the different mill troughs; while at present there is not one to be seen. The deleterious substances flowing from the different printfields and bleaching establishments, is generally understood to be the cause of this striking change. On one occasion, the writer, on passing along the lade, observed several fine trouts rise to the surface, turn over, and expire. On reaching the Tulloch, he found that some of the vats had just been emptied, which at once accounted for the phenomena he witnessed. And yet this very water, which carried death in its course, was what the inhabitants of the town employed for family use.

The different branches of the lade go completely round the boundaries of the old town. The main stream flows down Mill-street, and joins the Tay at Deadland gardens. A branch turns off at Methven-street, and goes round by Canal-street, joining the river at the Coal Shore. From this a branch runs off above the Gas works, and flows round the west and south side of the South Inch, uniting with Craigie burn, and joining the Tay below the Depot.

It would appear that the ancient Monastery of Blackfrars, drew the supply of water from the lade which was required in the establishment,

as stone pipes have been discovered in digging the foundations of some of the houses which have been erected on the grounds. Owing probably to the absence of limestone in the district drained by the Almond, and the numerous bleachfields on that river, and on the lade, the water is extremely soft, and is allowed to be unrivalled for the purposes of washing and bleaching.