

MEMORIALS
OF
EDINBURGH IN THE OLDEN TIME.

CHAPTER V.

THE HIGH STREET.



Edinburgh in the year 1598, thus describes it:—"From the King's Pallace at the east, the city still riseth higher and higher towards the west, and consists especially of one broad and very faire street,—which is the greatest part and sole ornament thereof,—the rest of the side streetes and allies, being of poore building, and inhabited with very poore people."² We may add, however, to his concluding remark, the more accurate observation of the eccentric traveller, Taylor, the water-poet, who visited the Scottish capital a few years later, and shows

VIGNETTE. Common Seal of the City of Edinburgh, from a charter dated A.D. 1565. Vide p. 73, vol. i. for the Counter Seal.

¹ Arnot, p. 268.

² Itinerary, London, 1617. Bann. Mis. vol. ii. p. 393.

his greater familiarity with its internal features, by describing “many by-lanes and closes on each side of the way, wherein are gentlemen’s houses, much fairer than the buildings in the High Street, for in the High Street the merchants and tradesmen do dwell, but the gentlemen’s mansions, and goodliest houses, are obscurely founded in the aforesaid lanes.”

The preceding chapter is chiefly devoted to some of the more ancient and peculiar features of this street. Yet strictly speaking, while every public thoroughfare is styled in older writs and charters “the King’s High Street,” the name was only exclusively applied to that portion extending from the Nether Bow to Creech’s Land, until the demolition of the middle row, when the Luckenbooths, and even a portion of the Lawnmarket, were assumed as part of it, and designated by the same name.

Here was the battle-field of Scotland for centuries, whereon private and party feuds, the jealousies of the nobles and burghers, and not a few of the contests between the Crown and the people, were settled at the point of the sword. In the year 1515, it was the scene of the bloody fray known by the name of “Cleanse the Causey,” which did not terminate until the narrow field of contest was strewn with the dead bodies of the combatants, and the Earl of Arran, and Cardinal Beaton, narrowly escaped with their lives.¹ Other, and scarcely less bloody affrays occurred, during the reign of James V., on the same spot, while in that of his hapless daughter, it was for years the chief scene of civil strife, where rival factions fought for mastery. In 1571, the King’s Parliament, summoned by the Regent Lennox, assembled at the head of the Canongate, above St John’s Cross, which bounded “the freedome of Edinburgh,” while the Queen’s Parliament sat in the Tolbooth, countenanced in their assumption of the Royal name, by the presence of the ancient Scottish Regalia, *the honours* of the kingdom; and the battle for Scotland’s crown and liberties fiercely raged in the narrow space that intervened between these rival assemblies.

But the private feuds of the Scottish nobles and chiefs, were the most frequent subjects of conflict on the High Street of the capital, and, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many a bold baron and hardy retainer perished there, adding fresh fuel to the deadly animosity of rival clans, but otherwise exciting no more notice at the time than an ordinary street squabble would now do. It was in one of these *tulzies*, alluded to in the Lay of the Last Minstrel, that Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh was slain, in the year 1551,²

When the streets of High Dunedin,
 Saw lances gleam and falchions redden,
 And heard the slogan’s deadly yell.

Neither the accession of James VI., nor the attainment of his majority, exercised much influence in checking these encounters on the streets of the capital. “Many enormities were committed,” says Calderwood, “as if there had beene no King in Israell.” The following may suffice as a sample:—“Upon the seventh of Januar 1591, the King comming down the street of Edinburgh from the Tolbuith, the Duke of Lennox, accompanied with the Lord Hume, following a little space behind, pulled out their swords, and invaded the Laird of Logie. The King fled into a crosse-head, and incontinent retired to a Skinner’s

¹ Ante, p. 37.

² “In this zeir all wes at guid rest, exceptand the Laird of Cesfuarde and Fernyhirst with their complices slew Schir Walter Scott, laird of Balclewche, in Edinburgh, quha was anc valzeand guid knycht.” Diurn. of Occ. 1551, p. 51.

booth, where it is said he shook for fære.”¹ The sole consequence of this lawless act of violence, was the exclusion of the chief actors from court for a short time; and only six days thereafter, the Earl of Bothwell deliberately took by force out of the Tolbooth, the chief witness in a case then pending before the court, at the very time that the King was sitting in the same building along with the Lords of Session.² The unfortunate witness was dragged by his captors to Crichton Castle, and there schooled into a more satisfactory opinion of the case in question, under the terror of the gallows.

The ancient Cross which stood in the High Street has been frequently alluded to, and some of the most remarkable events described, of which it was the scene. It was alike the theatre of festivals and executions; garnished at one period with rich hangings, and flowing with wine for the free use of the populace, and at another overshadowed by the Maiden, and hung only with the reversed armorial bearings of some noble victim of law or tyranny.³ In the year 1617, it was rebuilt on a new site in the High Street, apparently with the view of widening the approach preparatory to the arrival of King James, in fulfilment of his long promised visit to his native city. The King sent word at that time of “his naturall and salmon-like affection, and earnest desire” as he quaintly but very graphically expresses it, “to see his native and ancient kingdome of Scotland.” Accordingly, as Calderwood tells us in the very next sentence, “Upon the 26th of Februar, the Crosse of Edinburgh was taken down; the old long stone, about fortie fouts or therby in length, was translated, by the devise of certane mariners in Leith, from the place where it stode past memorie of man, to a place beneath in the Highe Streete, without anie harme to the stone; and the bodie of the old Crosse was demolished and another buildit, whereupon the long stone or obelisk was erected and sett upon the 25th of Marche.”⁴ The long stone must have suffered injury since, but the fine Gothic capital, of which we have already given a view, is without doubt a relic of the most ancient Cross demolished at this period. Among the older customs of which this interesting fabric was the scene, no one is more curious than the exposure of dyvours or bankrupts, a class of *criminals* at all times regarded with

¹ Vide Calderwood, vol. v. p. 116, for a more particular account of royal mishaps in the close-head on this occasion.

² “Anent walpynnis in Buithis. Item, it is statute and ordanit be the Provest, Bailies, and Counsall of this burgh, because of the greit slauchteris and utheris cummeris and tulzeis done in tyme bygane within the burgh, and apperendlie to be done gif na remeid be provydit thairto; and for eschewing thairof;—that ilk manner of persone, merchandis, craftis men, and all utheris occupyaris of buthis, or chalmeris in the hiegait, outhir heyche or layche, that thay have lang walpynnis thairin, sic as hand ex, Jedburgh staif, hawart jawalyng, and siclyk lang walpynnis, with knaipschawis and jakkis; and that thay cum thairwith to the hie-gait incontinent efter the commoun bell rynging.” Burgh Records, Mar. 4, 1552.

³ “Upone Tysday the nyntene day of Junij 1660, eftir sermond endit, the magistrates and counsell of Edinburgh, all in thair best robes, with a great number of the citizens, went to the Mercat Croce of Edinburgh, quhair a great long boord wes covered with all soirtes of sweit meittis, and thair drank the kinges helth, and his brether; the spoutes of the Croce rynnand all that tyme with abundance of clareyt wyne. Ther wer thrie hundreth dosane of glassis all brokin and cassin throw the streitis, with sweit meitis in abundance.” &c. Nicoll’s Diary, p. 293.

“Upone the 13 day of Maij 1661, Sir Archibald Johnnestoun of Warystoun, lait Clerk Register, being forfalt in this Parliament, and being fugitive fra the lawis of this Kingdome, for his treasonable actis, he was first oppinlie declairit traitour in face of Parliament, thaireftir, the Lord Lyon king at armes, with four heraldis and sex trumpetteris, went to the Mercat Croce of Edinburgh, and thair maid publict intimation of his forfaltie and treason, rave asunder his armes, and trampled thame under thair feet, and kuist a number of thame over the Croce, and affixt ane of thame upone the height of the great stane, to remayne thair to the publict view of all beholderis. Thir armes were croced bakward, his heid being put downmest and his feet upmest.” Ibid, p. 332.

⁴ Calderwood, vol. vii., p. 243.

special indignation by their more fortunate fellow citizens. The origin of this singular mode of protecting commercial credit, is thus related in the Acts of Sederunt of the Court of Session, for 1604:—"The Lordis ordaine the Provest, Bailleis, and Counsale of Edinburgh, to cause big ane pillery of hewn stane, neir to the mercat croce of Edinburgh, upon the heid thereof ane sait and place to be maid, quhairupon, in tyme cuming, sall be set all dyvoris, wha sall sit thairon ane mercat day, from 10 hours in the morning, quhill ane hour efter dinner; and the saidis dyvoris, before thair libertie and cuming furth of the tolbuith, upon thair awn chairges, to cause mak and buy ane hat or bonnet of yellow colour, to be worn be thame all the tyme of their sitting on the said pillery, and in all tyme thairefter, swa lang as they remane and abide dyvoris."¹ Sundry modifications of this singular act were afterwards adopted. In 1669 "the Lords declare that the habite is to be a coat and upper garment, which is to cover their cloaths, body and arms, whereof, the one half is to be of yellow, and the other half of a brown colour, and a cap or hood, which they are to wear on their head, party coloured, as said is,"² coloured, as is enacted at a subsequent period, "conform to a pattern delivered to the magistrates of Edinburgh to be kept in their Tolbooth."³ The effect of such a custom, if revived in our day, amid the bustle and fever of railway schemes, and "bubble speculations" of all kinds, could not fail to exercise a very pleasing influence in diversifying the monotony of our unpicturesque modern attire, and giving some variety to our assemblies and promenades! How far commercial solvency would be promoted by the frequenters of the Stock Exchange being thus compelled to wear their credit on their sleeve, we must leave these shrewd speculators to determine at their leisure. Cowper, in his "Epistle to Joseph Hill, Esq.," discusses a somewhat analogous device, adopted by an Eastern sage, for distinguishing honest men from knaves, and which consisted in the convicted defaulter wearing only half a coat thereafter; but he adds, for the comfort of all contemporaries:—

O happy Britain! we have not to fear
 Such hard and arbitrary measures here;
 Else, could a law, like that which I relate,
 Once have the sanction of our triple state,
 Some few, that I have known in days of old,
 Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold!⁴

In the steep and narrow closes that diverge on each side of the High Street, were once the dwellings of the old Scottish nobility, and still they retain interesting traces of faded grandeur, awaking many curious associations which well repay the investigator of their intricate purlieus. Dunbar's Close, of which we furnish a view, has already been mentioned, as the place pointed out by early tradition where Cromwell's "Ironsides" were lodged,

¹ Acts of Sederunt, 17th May 1606.

² *Ibid*, 26th February 1669.

³ *Ibid*, 18th July 1688.

⁴ The following Act of Sederunt, for 13th December 1785, describes the latest version of the Edinburgh Cross, if we except the radiated pavement that marks its site. "The Lords having considered the representation of the Lord Provost and Magistrates of the city of Edinburgh, setting forth, that when the Cross was taken away in the year 1756, a stone was erected on the side of a well on the High Street, adjacent to the place where the Cross stood, which by Act of Sederunt, was declared to be the Market Cross of Edinburgh from that period. That since removing the city guard, the aforesaid well was a great obstruction to the free passage upon the High Street, which therefore they intended to remove, and instead thereof to erect a stone pillar, a few feet distant from the said well, on the same side of the High Street, opposite to the head of the Old Assembly Close. Of which the Lords approve, and declare the new pillar to be the Market Cross." We suppose the more economical marking of the pavement was the only result.

and its whole appearance is both unique and singularly picturesque. Over the entrance to the Rose and Thistle Tap,—the traditional guard-room of the victors of Dunbar,—there is a beautifully carved inscription, bearing one of the oldest dates now left on any private building in Edinburgh. The stone is rebuilt into a new portion of the house, but is still nearly as sharp as when fresh from the chissel; the inscription is:—

FAITH · IN · CRIST · ONLIE · SAVIT · 1567.

On another part of the building the initials I · D · ; and K · T · , appear attached to some curiously formed marks, and are doubtless those of the original owners; but unfortunately all the early titles are lost, so that no clue now remains to the history of this singular dwelling. The lower story, which is believed to have formed the black-hole or dungeon of the English troopers, is vaulted with stone, and around the massive walls iron rings are affixed, as if for the purpose of securing the prisoners once confined in these vaults. The east wall of the main room above is curiously constructed of elliptic arches, resting on plain circular pillars, and such portions of the outer wall as are not concealed by the wooden appendages of early times, exhibit polished ashlar work, finished with neat mouldings and string courses.

Immediately to the north of this ancient mansion, there is a large land entering from the foot of Seller's close, which has two flat terraced roofs at different elevations, and forms a prominent and somewhat graceful feature of the old town as seen from Princes street. This is known by the name of "The Cromwell Bartizan,"¹ and is pointed out, on the same traditional authority, as having been occupied by the General, owing to its vicinity to his guards, and the commanding prospect which its terraced roof afforded of the English fleet at anchor in the Firth. Over a doorway which divides the upper from the lower part of this close, a carved lintel bears this variation of the common legend:—THE · LORD · BE · BLEIST · FOR · AL · HIS · GIFTIS.² The close is now nearly all in ruins, though evidently once a place of note. A building on the west side, finished in the style prevalent about the period of James VI., has the following inscription over a window on the third floor:—

☞ THE LORD IS THE PORTION OF MINE INHERITANCE AND OF
 MY CUP; THOU MAINTAINEST MY LOT. PSAL. XVI., VERSE 5.

In the house opposite,—also in ruins,—a very large and handsome Gothic fire-place remains, in the same style as those already described in the Guise Palace. In Brown's close adjoining this, Arnot informs us that there existed in his time "a private oratory," containing a "baptismal font," or sculptured stone niche; but every relic of antiquity has now disappeared; and nearly the same may be said of Byres Close, though it contained only a few years since the town mansion built by Sir John Byres of Coates, the carved lintel of which was removed, by the late Sir Patrick Walker, to Coates house, the ancient mansion

¹ Vide, vol. i. p. 96, some confusion exists in the different attempts to fix the exact house, but these discrepancies tend to confirm the general probability of the tradition; the name *Bartizan*, however, would seem to determine the building now assigned in the text.

² In that amusing collection "Satan's Invisible World Discovered," written for the purpose of confounding atheists, the following is given as an East Lothian grace, "in the time of ignorance and superstition:—"

Lord be bless'd for all his gifts,
 Defy the Devil and all his shifts.
 God send me mair siller. Amen.

of that family, near Edinburgh. It bears the inscription, "Blissit be God in al his giftis," with the initials I · B · ; and M · B · , and the date 1611.¹

At the foot of this close, however, we again meet with valuable associations connected with more than one remarkable period in Scottish history. A door-way on the east side of the close, affords access to a handsome, though now ruinous stone stair, guarded by a neatly carved ballustrade and leading to a garden terrace, on which stands a very beautiful old mansion, that yields in interest to none of the ancient private buildings of the capital. It presents a semi-hexagonal front to the north, each of the sides of which is surmounted by a richly carved dormer window, bearing inscriptions boldly cut in large Roman letters, though now partly defaced. That over the north window is:—

NIHIL · EST · EX · OMNI · PARTE · BEATUM ·

The windows along the east side appear to have been originally similarly adorned ; two of their carved tops are built into an out-house below, on one of which is the inscription, LAUS · UBIQUE · DEO · and on the other, FELICITER · INFELIX. In the title deeds of this ancient building,² it is described as "that tenement of land, of old belonging to Adam Bishop of Orkney, Commendator of Holyroodhouse, thereafter to John, Commendator of Holyroodhouse," his son, who in 1603, accompanied James to England, receiving on the journey the keys of the town of Berwick, in his Majesty's name. Only three years afterwards, "the temporalities and spiritualitie" of Holyrood, were erected into a barony in his behalf, and himself created a Peer, by the title of Lord Holyroodhouse. Here then is the mansion of the celebrated Adam Bothwell, who, on the 15th May 1567, officiated at the ominous marriage-service in the Chapel of Holyrood Palace,³ that gave Bothwell legitimate possession of the unfortunate Queen Mary, whom he had already so completely secured within his toils. That same night the distich of Ovid was affixed to the palace gate:—

Mense malas Maio nubere vulgus ait ;⁴

and from the infamy that popularly attached to this fatal union, is traced the vulgar prejudice that still regards it as unlucky to wed in the month of May. The character of the old Bishop of Orkney is not one peculiarly meriting admiration. He married the poor Queen according to the *new forms*, in despite of the protest of their framers. and he proved equally pliable where his own interests were concerned. He was one of the first to desert his royal mistress's party ; and only two months after celebrating her marriage with the Earl of Bothwell, he placed the crown on the head of her infant son. The following year he humbled himself to the Kirk, and engaged "to make a sermoun in the kirk of Halierudehous, and in the end therof to confesse the offence in marieng the Queine with the Erle of Bothwell."⁵

The interior of this ancient building has been so entirely remodelled to adapt it to the

¹ The front land to the west of Byres close, was long the residence, Post Office, and miscellaneous establishment of the noted Peter Williamson, who advertised himself as "from the other world!" and published an ingenious narrative of his Adventures in America, and Captivity among the Red Indians. Vide Kay's Portraits, vol. i. p. 137.

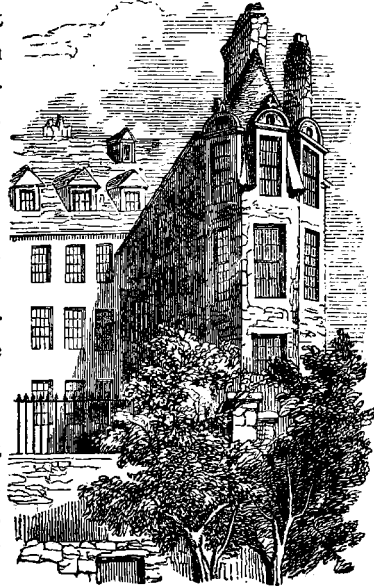
² Now the property of Messrs Clapperton and Co., by whom it is occupied as a warehouse.

³ "Within the auld chappel, not with the mess, both with preachings." Diurn. of Occurrents, p. 111. Keith and other historians, however, say, "within the great hall, where the council usually met."

⁴ Ovid's Fasti, Book v.

⁵ Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland, p. 131.

very different uses of later times, that no relic of its early grandeur, or of the manners of its original occupants remain ; but one cannot help regarding its chambers with a melancholy interest, disguised though they are by the changes of modern taste and manners. The name of the Bishop of Orkney appears at the bond granted by the nobility to the Earl of Bothwell, immediately before he put in practise his ambitious scheme against Queen Mary ; so that here, in all probability, the rude Earl, and many of the leading nobles of that eventful period, have met to discuss their daring plans, and to mature the designs that involved so many in their consequences. Here too, we may believe both Mary and James to have been entertained as guests, by father and son, while at the same board there sat another lovely woman, whose wrongs are so touchingly recorded in the beautiful old ballad of “ Lady Ann Bothwell’s Lament.” She was the daughter of the first Lord Holyroodhouse, and is said to have possessed great personal beauty. She was betrayed into a disgraceful connection with the Honourable Sir Alexander Erskine, a son of the Earl of Marr, of whom a portrait still exists by Jamieson. He is there represented in military dress, with a cuirass and scarf ; but the splendour of his warlike attire, is evidently unnecessary to set off his noble and expressive countenance. The desertion of the frail beauty by this gay deceiver, was believed by his contemporaries to have exposed him to the signal vengeance of heaven, on his being blown up, along with the Earl of Haddington, and many others of noble birth, in the Castle of Dunglass, in 1640 ; the powder magazine having been ignited by a servant boy out of revenge against his master.¹ Adam Bothwell lies buried in the ruined chapel of Holyrood, where his monument is still to be seen, attached to the second pillar from the great east window that once overlooked the high altar at which Mary gave her hand to the imbecile Darnley, and not far from the spot—if we are to believe the contemporary annalist,—where she yielded it to her infamous ravisher.



The fore part of the ancient building in the High Street, has been almost entirely modernized, and faced with a new stone front, but many citizens still living, remember when an ancient timber façade projected its lofty gables into the street, with tier above tier, each thrusting out beyond the lower story, while below were the covered piazza and darkened entrances to the gloomy “ laigh shops,”² such as may still be seen in the few examples of old timber lands that have escaped demolition. But this ancient fabric is asso-

VIGNETTE.—Adam Bothwell’s house, from the north.

¹ A rude version of this beautiful ballad was printed in 1606, and others have since been given of it by Percy, Jamieson, Kinloch, &c. ; Mr R. Chambers, however, was the first to publish the true history of the heroine, in his “ Scottish Ballads.” A slight confusion occurs in his account, where she is styled the daughter of Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney, &c. The dates seem to leave no doubt that the father was John, his son, the first who obtained the title of Lord Holyroodhouse.

² In a Sasine of part of this property, it is styled, “ that western laigh booth, or shop, lying within the fore tenement of Mr Adam Bothwell, under the laigh stair thair of . . . as also that merchant shop entering from the High Street,” &c.

ciated with another citizen of no less note in his day—"The glorious days of auld worthy faithfu' Provost Dick,"—than ever was either the Bishop of Orkney, or my Lord Holyroodhouse. Sir William Dick of Braid, an eminent merchant of Edinburgh, and provost of the city in the years 1638 and 1639, presents in his strangely chequered history, one of the most striking examples of the instability of fortune on record. He was reputed the wealthiest man of his time in Scotland, and was generally believed by his contemporaries to have discovered the philosophers stone!¹ Being a zealous Covenanter, he advanced at one time to the Scottish Convention of Estates, in the memorable year 1641, the sum of one hundred thousand merks, to save them from the necessity of disbanding their army; and in the following year, the customs were sett to him, "for 202,000 merks, and 5000 merks of girsoum."² On the triumph of Cromwell and the Independents, however, his horror of "the Sectaries" was greater even than his opposition to the Stuarts, and he advanced £20,000 for the service of King Charles. By this step he provoked the wrath of the successful party, while squandering his treasures on a failing cause. He was unsparingly subjected to the heaviest penalties, until his vast resources dwindled away in vain attempts to satisfy the rapacity of legal extortion, and he died miserably in prison, at Westminster, during the Protectorate, in want, it is said, of even the common necessaries of life.³ This romance of real life, was familiar to all during Sir Walter Scott's early years, and he has represented David Deans exultingly exclaiming:—"Then folk might see men deliver up their silver to the State's use, as if it had been as muckle slate stanes. My father saw them toom the sacks of dollars out o' Provost Dick's window, intill the carts that carried them to the army at Dunse Law; and if ye winna believe his testimony, there is the window itsell still standing in the Luckenbooths,—at the airn stanchells, five doors abune Advocate's Close".⁴ The old timber gable and the stanchelled window of this Scottish Cæsus, have vanished, like his own dollars, beyond recall, but there is no doubt that the modern and unattractive stone front, extending between Byres' and Advocate's Closes, only disguises the remarkable building to which such striking historical associations belong. The titles include, not only a disposition of the property to Sir William Dick of Braid, but the appraising and disposition of it by his creditors after his death; and its situation is casually confirmed by a contemporary notice that indicates its importance at the period. In the classification of the city into companies, by order of Charles I., the third division extends "from Gladstone's Land, down the northern side of the High Street to Sir William Dick's Land."⁵ The house was afterwards occupied by the Earl of Kintore, an early patron of Allan Ramsay, whose name was given to a small court still re-

¹ *Archæologia Scottica*, vol. i. p. 336.

² Sir Thomas Hope's Diary, Bann. Club, p. 158. *Gersome*, or *entresse siller*, now pronounced *Grassum*.

³ These changes of fortune are commemorated in a folio pamphlet, entitled "the lamentable state of the deceased Sir William Dick." It contains several copper-plates, one representing Sir William on horseback, and attended with guards, as Lord Provost of Edinburgh, superintending the unloading of one of his rich argosies at Leith. A second exhibits him as arrested, and in the hands of the bailiffs, and a third presents him dead in prison. The tract is greatly valued by collectors. Sir Walter Scott mentions in a note to the Heart of Midlothian, that the only copy he ever saw for sale was valued at £30.

⁴ Scott says *Gosford's* close, but it is obviously a mistake, as independent of the direct evidence we have of the true site of Sir William Dick's house, that close was not in the Luckenbooths, the locality he correctly mentions.

⁵ Maitland, p. 285.

maining behind the front building, although the public mode of access to it has disappeared since the remodelling of the old timber land.

Advocate's Close, which bounds the ancient tenement we have been describing, on the east, derives its name from Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees,¹ who returned from exile on the landing of the Prince of Orange, and took an active part in the Revolution. He was an object of extreme dislike to the Jacobite party, who vented their spleen against him in their bitterest lampoons, some of which are preserved in the Scottish Pasquils; and to them he was indebted for the soubriquet of *Jamie Wylie*. Sir James filled the office of Lord Advocate, from 1692 until his death in 1713, one year excepted, and had a prominent share in all the public transactions of that important period. Being so long in the enjoyment of his official title, the close in which he resided received the name of "the Advocate's Close." The house in which he lived and died is at the foot of the close, on the west side, immediately before descending a flight of steps that somewhat lessen the abruptness of the steep descent.² In 1769, Sir James Stewart, grandson of the Lord Advocate, sold the house to David Dalrymple of Westhall Esq., who, when afterwards raised to the Bench, assumed the title of Lord Westhall, and continued to reside in this old mansion till his death.³ This ancient alley retains, nearly unaltered, the same picturesque overhanging gables and timber projections which have, without doubt, characterised it for centuries, and may be taken as a very good sample of a fashionable close in the palmy days of Queen Anne. It continued till a comparatively recent period, to be a favourite locality for gentlemen of the law, and has been pointed out to us, by an old citizen, as the early residence of Andrew Crosbie, the celebrated original of "Councillor Pleydell," who forms so prominent a character among the *dramatis personæ* of *Guy Mannering*. The same house already mentioned as that of Sir James Stewart, would answer in most points to the description of the novelist, entering, as it does, from a dark and steep alley, and commanding a magnificent prospect towards the north, though now partially obstructed by the buildings of the new town. It is no mean praise to the old lawyer, that he was almost the only one who had the courage to stand his ground against Dr Johnson, during his visit to Edinburgh. Mr Crosbie afterwards removed to the splendid mansion erected by him in St Andrew Square, ornamented with engaged pillars and a highly decorated attic storey, which stands to the north of the Royal Bank;⁴ but he was involved, with many others, in the failure of the Ayr Bank, and died in such poverty, in 1785, that his widow owed her sole support to an annuity of £50 granted by the Faculty of Advocates.

The lowest house on the east side, directly opposite to that of the Lord Advocate, was the residence of an artist of some note in the seventeenth century. It has been pointed out to us by an old citizen still living,⁵ as the house of his "grandmother's grandfather," the celebrated John Scougal,⁶ painter of the portrait of George Heriot which now

¹ Now called "Moredun" in the parish of Libberton. The house was built by Sir James, soon after the Revolution.

² Sir James Stewart,—Provost of Edinburgh, in 1648-9, when Cromwell paid his first visit to Edinburgh, and again in 1658-9, at the close of the Protectorate,—purchased the ancient tenement which occupied this site, and after the Revolution, his son, the Lord Advocate, rebuilt it, and died there in 1713, when, "so great was the crowd," as Wodrow tells in his *Analecta*, "that the magistrates were at the grave in the Greyfriars' church-yard before the corpse was taken out of the house at the foot of the Advocate's Close." *Coltness Collections*, Maitland Club, p. 17.

³ The house appears from the titles to have been sold by Lord Westhall, in 1784, within a few weeks of his death.

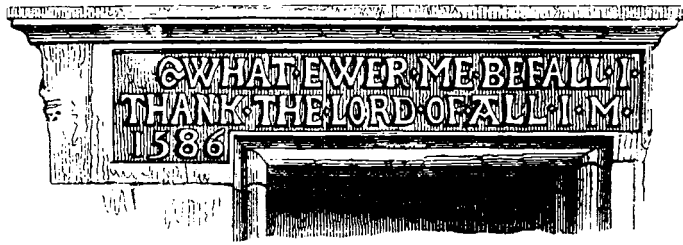
⁴ Now occupied as Douglas's Hotel.

⁵ Mr Andrew Greig, carpet manufacturer.

⁶ John Scougal, younger of that name, was a cousin of Patrick Scougal, consecrated Bishop of Aberdeen in 1664. He

hangs in the council room of the hospital ; so that here was the fashionable lounge of the dilettanti of the seventeenth century, and the resort of rank and beauty, careful to preserve unbroken the links of the old line of family portraiture ; though a modern fine lady would be seized with a nervous fit at the very prospect of descending the slippery abyss.

Following our course eastward we arrive at Roxburgh's Close, which is believed to derive its name from having been the residence of the Earls of Roxburgh. It has however, suffered a very different fate from the adjoining close. Few of its ancient features have escaped alteration, and only one door-way remains—now built up,—of the mansion reputed to have been that in which the ancestors of the noble Earls lived in state. We have engraved a fac-simile of the quaint and pious legend that adorns the old lintel. If this account be true, (for which, however, there is only the authority of tradition), the date carries us back to the year 1586, in which their ancestor, Sir Walter Ker of Cessford, died, one of the leaders in the affray already alluded to, in which Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh was slain on the High Street of Edinburgh.



Warriston's Close, is another of the ancient alleys of the old town, which still remains nearly in its pristine state, exhibiting the substantial relics of former grandeur, like the faded gentility of a reduced dowager. Handsome and lofty polished ashlar fronts are decorated with richly moulded and sculptured door-ways, surmounted by architraves adorned with inscriptions and armorial bearings,—still ornamental, though broken and defaced. Timber projections of an early date jut out here and there, and give variety to the irregular architecture, while far up, and almost beyond the point of sight that the straitened thoroughfare admits of, dormer windows of an ornate character rise into the roof, and the gables are finished with crow-steps, and, in one case at least, with armorial bearings. Over the first door-way on the west side, is the inscription and date :

. . . . QUE · ERIT · ILLE · MIHI · SEMPER · DEUS · 1583 ·

The front of this building facing the High Street, is of polished ashlar work, surmounted with handsome, though dilapidated, dormer windows, and is further adorned with a curious monogram ; but, like most other similar ingenious devices, it is undecypherable without the key. We have failed to trace the builders or occupants at this early period ; but the third floor of the old land was occupied in the following century by James Murray,

added the upper story to the old land in Advocate's Close, and fitted up one of the floors as a picture gallery ; some of his finest works were possessed by the late Andrew Bell, engraver, the originator of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, who married his granddaughter. Pinkerton remarks of him :—" For some years after the Revolution he was the only painter in Scotland, and had a very great run of business. This brought him into an hasty and incorrect manner." This is very observable in the portrait of Heriot, copied in 1698, from the original by Paul Vansomer,—now lost. The head is well painted, but the drapery and back ground are so slovenly and harshly executed, that they appear more like the work of an inexperienced pupil. Scougal died at Prestonpans, about the year 1730, aged 85, having witnessed a series of as remarkable political changes, as ever occurred during a single life time. He is named *George*, in the *Weekly Magazine*, (vol. xv, p. 66), and elsewhere, but this appears to be an error, as several of his descendants were named after him, *John*