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HOWEVER unpatriotic a Scotchman may appear in the eyes of local advocates of "Scotland for the Scotch," there is one point in which he will share the sentiment of the patriots. He will admire Edinburgh, and be difficult to convince that any town in the kingdom has a more beautiful situation, or remains more rich in memories of the eventful past. When one speaks of Edinburgh, one means, of course, chiefly the Old Town. The new town has little to boast of except comfort, and the unalterable charm of her situation, with its view of the hills, of the sea, and of the serrated front of the ancient city. Mr. Ruskin has said so much against the architecture of the new town that it seems superfluous to add a malison to his maledictions. The new houses are very solid, and built of good gray stone, which has a tendency to grow dark, and to wear the solemn gloom admired in the respectable quarters of Bath. To me Bath always appears to have been built out of grave-stones, funereal slabs of a moderate antiquity. New Edinburgh is not so bad as Bath, of course, and stone walls can never seem so squalid and skimped as the London houses of dirty, yellowish brick. But, on the whole, the new town reflects in her architecture a life of prosperity, without much stir or excitement; and the spires and towers of the various churches and public buildings can be credited at most only with good intentions. The sentimental traveler soon leaves New Edinburgh, with her steep ways, her grim monumental Moray Place, her streets where the grass grows long and green in the early autumn, for the picturesque and historical wynds and closes of the ancient town. Probably the majority of the dwellers in the new town pay very few visits to the decaying houses of their ancestors. They are proud of the old town, of Auld Reekie, but they do not often cross the ravine and climb the Mound and moralize over the scenes of old forays and fights, of murders and martyrdoms. To tell the truth, there are features in the old town that rather repel the curious. You may be inured to all the odors of Cologne, you may have traveled (in the interests of *bric-à-brac*) into the Jews' quarters in Italian towns, but nowhere will you have faced such dirt as in the closes and wynds of Edinburgh. Some of these lanes leading into the High street or the Cowgate

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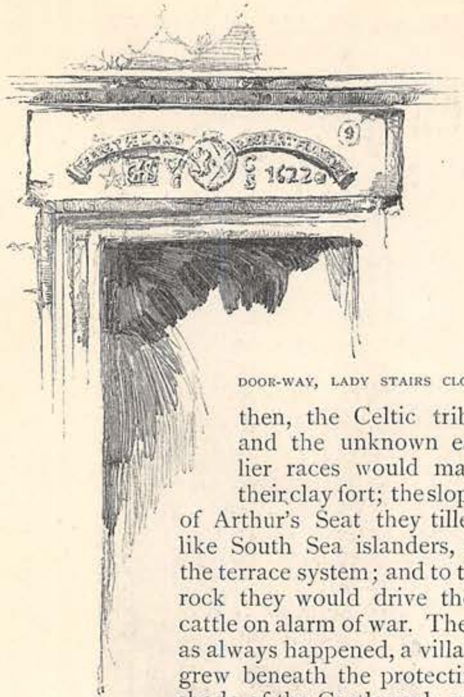
—lanes walled with high-roofed mansions of Scotch nobles and judges in past centuries—are homes of the most abominable filth. The gutter down the middle of the steep, narrow causeway is an open sewer; the grimy women come out and hospitably offer to let you view the rooms for which they pay rent, and only very keen curiosity will tempt you to accept the offer. The condition of the children playing in these fetid places cannot decently be described. Overhead, out of most windows, stretch poles on which a few rags of clothes are drying and dripping. The poles are the substitutes for the bleaching greens of civilization, and they are everywhere to be seen poked out of windows, even in the wider streets of old Edinburgh. Everything breathes of cholera, of plague, and of that ancient "pest" so often mentioned in civic annals; yet it sometimes happens that, from the black mouths of these closes, you can see the green sides of the hills quite near at hand. Within a mile or less are the smooth slopes and fresh sward of Arthur's Seat or Salisbury Crag; or perhaps, beyond the farther mouth of the wynd, there is a glimpse of the blue waters of the Frith of Forth. Thus, it is not strange that the dwellers in the new town visit the old as rarely as possible, except for purposes of charity, or on a raid after blue china and old chairs. Between people living in Ainslie Place and people living in the Playhouse Close, the narrow ravine beneath the Castle, is "a great gulf fixed." On the south side of the little glen where the railway runs, the folk dwell in sanitary conditions not very much altered from those of the fourteenth century. There is gas, of course, instead of the oil lamps which of old were sometimes burned between five and nine in the winter evenings. The roofs are not thatched; great stacks of heather and peat or turf are not piled up on either hand of the door, as in the past. An unfortunate small boy, three hundred years ago, lighted one of these piles of heather "in a waggishness," as Bacon says, and was himself burned at the stake for the crime, by way of encouraging other boys not

A RAINY NIGHT, LOOKING TOWARD OLD TOWN OR NORTH BRIDGE.

CANDLE-MAKERS' ROW.

to indulge in such high spirits. From these dangers the old town is now free; but in many of the wynds the dirt still reminds one of what Smollett's congenial muse described in "Humphrey Clinker." The crowding of human beings in these "lands" — houses fourteen stories high, crowded with scores of families — is probably about as bad as ever it was. The old conditions of life made these tall houses necessary, and the poor people who now inhabit them remain where they do partly out of carelessness, partly for want of cheap accommodations elsewhere. London has probably no such black rookeries as swarm in Edinburgh.

The original causes which made the streets so narrow and so high are plainly written on the configuration of the soil. Without going deep into the history of Edinburgh, without grubbing among Roman remains and relics of the bronze and stone ages (for, if once we fall into that pit, we may never scramble out again), it is plain that the steep isolated rock of the Castle first tempted people to dwell here. It is like the crag of the Acropolis at Athens, or Ithome, or Hissarlik. A sketch of mediæval Athens, recently republished, shows that the town stretched in a rough oblong east of the Acropolis rock, exactly as old walled Edinburgh clung to the rock of the Castle. That rock was a commanding spot, easily rendered all but impregnable, and so far from the sea that precautions could be taken in time against invaders by water. The conditions are exactly those which, according to Thucydides, were preferred by founders of cities in the ancient days when Greeks were half barbarians. Here,



DOOR-WAY, LADY STAIRS CLOSE.

then, the Celtic tribes and the unknown earlier races would make their clay fort; the slopes of Arthur's Seat they tilled, like South Sea islanders, on the terrace system; and to the rock they would drive their cattle on alarm of war. Then, as always happened, a village grew beneath the protecting shade of the Castle rock, and that village developed into Edinburgh. But, from its neighborhood to the English border (whence the road along the sea is not difficult), Edinburgh was always exposed to the southern fire and sword. Again and again her gates were forced, her houses were burned, her people fled to the Castle and to the shelter of the surrounding forests. Naturally, then, the city huddled herself together as close as might be under the shadow of the Castle. Every house beyond the city walls was certain to be robbed and burned whenever a hostile force came against the town. Edinburgh had been walled in 1450, and so narrow was the circumvallation that the Cowgate was beyond the circle of towers. The wealthy dwellers in the Cowgate "were out in the open country." Any visitor to Edinburgh has only to stand where the Cowgate begins and look back to the Castle to understand how narrow were the limits of the mediæval town, and what urgent need there was to pile the houses "close and high." After the fatal battle of Flodden (1513),—a battle still remembered by the border people as a day of sorrow,—new walls were built round Edinburgh, and "the Flodden wall" included the Cowgate. "The whole length of the old wall was about one mile, that of the new was one mile three furlongs," says Mr. Grant, in his "Old and New Edinburgh." So prudent were the citizens that, for two hundred and fifty years, scarcely a house arose beyond the Flodden wall. And it is within this miserably contracted territory, in the dark and burrowing lanes, that the poor of Edinburgh still herd, still regard the curious visitor with curiosity scarcely less than his own. So much it is necessary to say about the old town, lest the stranger who examines it should complain that he has been taken without warning into a pestilent, malodorous home of dirt and disease. He is now fairly warned, and he must console himself with the thought that the dirt is historical, the disease romantic,—a slight survival from the unrivaled filth and pestilence of mediæval Scotland.

"In Athens," says Cicero, "every stone you tread on has its history." As much may be said for old Edinburgh, where the very nuisances are historical, and the wind brings you a realistic whiff of the middle ages. The old ruined castles all around have each its legend, clinging to the place like the ivy, haunting it like the ghost of the murdered man or child so often found built up within the thick masonry of the walls. What a dreadful mystery of old times these walled-up skeletons might unfold if they could speak! In what midnight murder or brawl over cards and wine, or in what bitter family feud about charters and settlements, did *he* perish whose bones were found walled up among the ruins of Craigmillar? What was the secret of that infant's birth, who, dead, had no other grave than the "stone shroud" of the castle wall within Queen Mary's chamber? There comes no answer out of darkness and the dust, nor can we well believe that some of these dead people, thus consigned *in pacem*, were sacrificed (according to the practice of the Black Art) to secure the safety of the buildings. The times were too late for such deeds in Scotland, and the dead men surely perished in some other cause. But if their secret is well kept, some, at least, of the other secrets of the town have come into the light of day, and are recorded in the annals of history and the black calendar of crime. The Scotch of the middle ages (which in Scotland lasted till 1745) were a wild, passionate, revengeful race. They yielded not in fury, and cruelty, and pride to the violent nobles of the Italian towns of Perugia and Verona. In such streets as the West Bow and the Cowgate and Canongate, it is easily seen that most of the ancient houses are as strong as fortresses. Observe the clean-cut line of the thick walls, the narrow entrances, the lintels each carved with a text, more for magic than in piety, the small windows heavily barred. The arms cut above the lintel may be the bearings of noble houses, Douglases, Carrs, Scotts, or the trade blazon of the weavers or the saddlers.

But everywhere the houses are strong enough to stand an irregular siege, and in no town in the British isles could street fighting be so dangerous and so protracted. Such houses were first the homes of a *noblesse* who shrank from no treachery and no violence. The cellars served well enough to lodge a captured judge in before he was carried on a rider's saddle to the dungeon of some keep in lonely Liddesdale. The sudden steps on the uneven floor, in dark corners, answered admirably for the purpose of stabbing a guest as he stumbled. The barred windows might long keep a deserted wife a prisoner, till it became convenient to remove her to some even more inaccessible retreat in an island of the western seas. In these recesses noble ladies have practiced sorcery, melting the waxen effigies and burning the hair of their enemies. Through these strait house-doors burghers have fled in terror, and wounded men have been dragged in hastily, when the slogan of the Border war was heard in the midnight streets, when torches flared above the thrusts of spears and swords and the noise of smitten shields. In shy corners of these closes, on a later day, gentlemen have found what Sir William Hope in his "Scots Fencing Master" calls "an occasion," that is, a chance for a sudden informal duel. Then, as the city expanded beyond the Flodden wall, and the gentry built houses in the new streets, or migrated to London, the old town fortresses fell into the hands of the most desperate of the poor. The properties and actors were changed, but the old drama went on, and the Irish murderers, Burke and Hare, counted their victims by the score, till one of them *(more Hibernico)* turned informer and had his comrade hanged. Even out of the net-work of narrow lanes, in the wider places of the city, the game of revenge, of bloodshed, of burning, went on in the open day. The gallows of the Grass Market saw brave men "testify" to the most various causes, to faith and loyalty, to reason and freedom. The stake had its share of gentle and simple, when old women of the people and beautiful daughters of noble houses were burned indifferently for the crying sin of witchcraft. Every room of each old prison —the Castle *oubliettes* and the Tolbooth—has its romance, its tale of some scarcely credible escape by royal prince or daring smuggler. The Scotch people, that is now so "dour," so prosperous and law-abiding, has the fiercest strain in its blood. Our fathers sowed their wild oats in rapine and slaughter and fire, while the children have subsided into a peaceful but not unadventurous race. Or perhaps, after all, it was chiefly the ravenous, arrogant nobles, so proud, so brave, and so poor, that outdid in old Edinburgh the feats of the Baglioni. In the endless feuds and wars and party strifes, the Maiden (our Scotch guillotine) and the sword, poison, and the halter cut off the fiercer stocks of the Scotch *noblesse*, and in the struggle for existence victory remained with the quieter folk, whose necks were not eternally in peril. To understand what manner of men the "forbears" of the Scotch were, it is not enough to speak

LADY STAIRS CLOSE.

A MEMORY OF HIGH STREET.

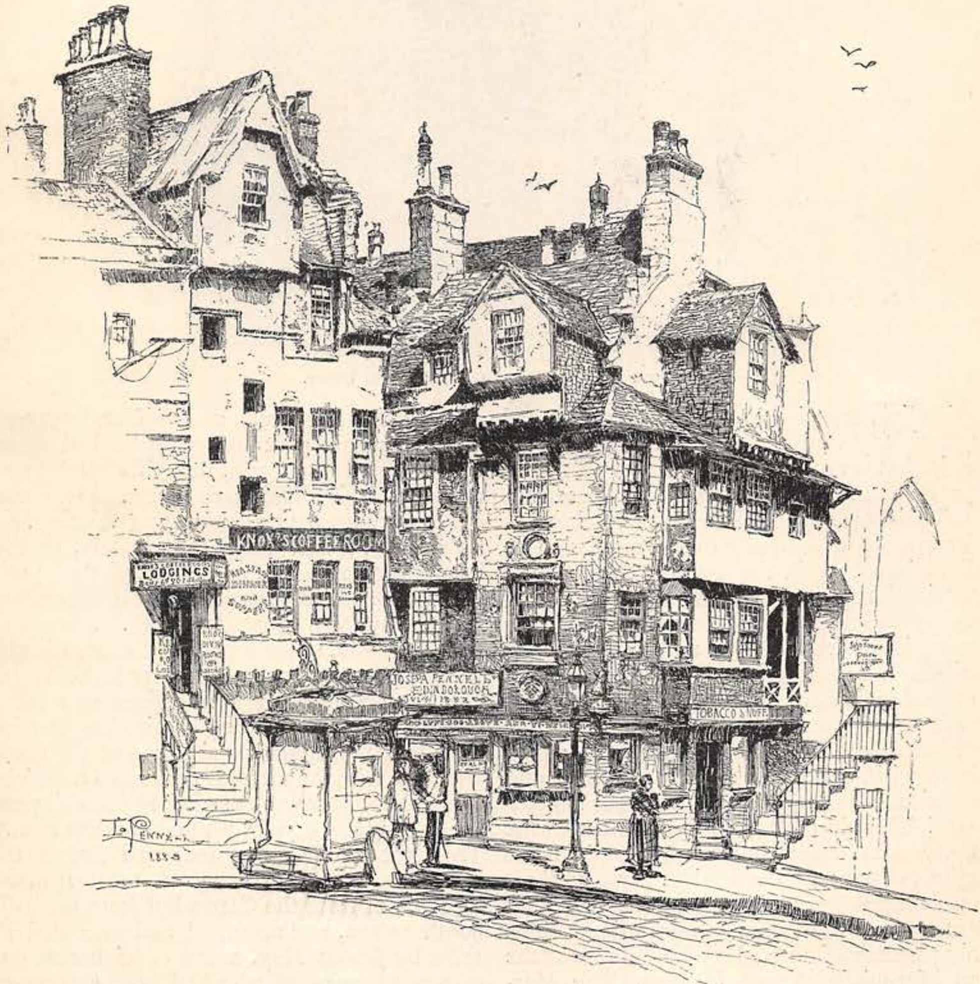
in general terms. We must go a little into detail, and attempt to people, for an hour, those high craglike houses, those narrow streets, the Castle, the palace, with the men who wrangled and reveled in them, and who held all things cheaper than rapine and revenge.

Probably the best way to see ancient Edinburgh aright is to enter it from the west. Before penetrating the inner town, the Castle invites the curious, and the romance of the Castle alone would demand much more space than we can give to the whole history of Auld Reekie. The Castle of to-day chiefly consists of barracks, of no great antiquity, perched on that high crag which frowns over Prince street gardens. Often the little boys of Edinburgh risk their necks on these crags, imitating Randolph, Bruce's famous general, who won the Castle of the Maidens, *Arx Puellarum*, from the English. The keep seems a place of impregnable strength, if we think of the conditions of war before the invention of heavy siege pieces and modern artillery. From the dungeon prisons hewn in the rock, too, one might guess that even so ingenious a captive as Baron Trenck could never have escaped. Yet the whole history of Edinburgh Castle is a long tale of escapes and captures. Placed on such a height, its front secured by the perpendicular black rocks, and (in old times) by the North Loch which lay where the railway now runs, the Castle commands a wide prospect of land and sea. No enemy can approach, no prisoner escape, without being observed in the onset or the flight. So, probably, the defenders of the Castle deemed, and, lulled into drowsy security, suffered the enemy to seize, or the captive to escape from, the keep. Randolph won the Castle by a *coup de main* in 1311. The English then held it; but one Frank, a man-at-arms of Randolph's, knew a secret path whereby he had often scaled it when engaged in a love adventure. And so, with Aphrodite for guide, thirty Scots clambered one dark night of March into the Castle of the Maidens. It is plain enough that they never could have scaled the sheer rock without some artificial aid, and Mr. Grant reports that, about sixty years ago, there were traces of steps cut in the stone just where the cliff is steepest and where the sentinels would be least on their guard. By these steps, perhaps, the Jacobites meant to climb, four hundred years later, when, in the characteristic Jacobite style, they stopped too long "powdering their hair," as the slang term was for drinking,—*Pulveris exigui jactus*. By that little toss of powder the plot was ruined, and the house of Hanover kept possession of the Castle. In 1337 the English again held the Castle, and were again driven out by a *ruse* of the most obvious character, a trick as transparent as that of the Trojan horse. In the Castle the fatal dish of the black bull's head was cooked for Earl Douglas in 1440. It would

be interesting to know whence the Scotch derived this *plat*, so conspicuous in their culinary history, and as purely national a delicacy as "sheep's head" or haggis. I do not know that the black bull's head was ever introduced at English, Irish, or Continental tables, and no mention of the dainty occurs, as far as I am aware, in the records of any savage or classical people. When one powerful party leader had so far overcome the suspicions of a rival as to induce that rival to accept an invitation to dinner, then the host went smiling home, consulted his cook, and hinted that a black bull's head might as well be added to the *menu*. When this ominous dish was brought to the table, the wretched guest knew that his last hour had arrived. And this was what befell young Douglas. The people expressed their horror of the deed in a ballad, of which, apparently, but one verse survives, though more may perhaps be known to the learning of Professor Child:

> "Edinburgh Castle, towne and tower,
> God grant thou sink for sinne,
> And that even for the black dinner
> Earle Douglas got therein."

If "sinne" could sink town and tower, Edinburgh would centuries since have been with "Memphis and Babylon and either Thebes." In those old times, when a Scotch prince hated a man, he very commonly acted on the maxim, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself," and dirked his foe with his own hand. This was the custom of the Duke of Albany, brother of James III., who slew John of Scougal, and in other ways so conducted himself that, in 1482, he was consigned to prison in the Castle. Thence Albany deemed that he was not likely to come



JOHN KNOX'S HOUSE.

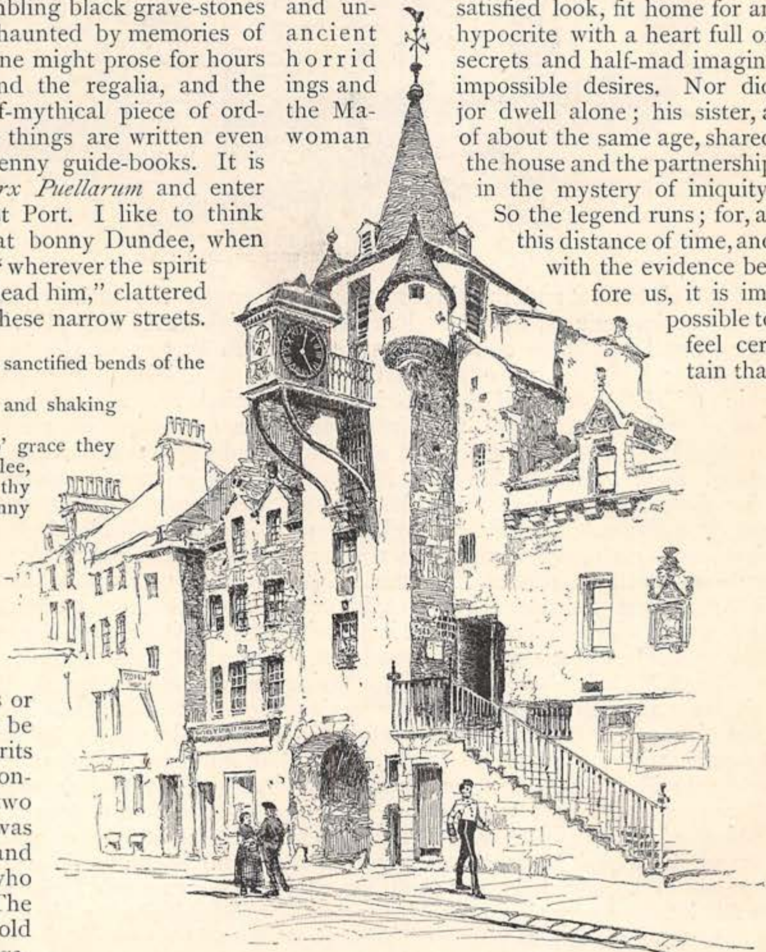
HOUSE OF BOSWELL AND HUME, JAMES COURT.

forth alive, especially as his brother Mar had mysteriously vanished—so mysteriously, indeed, that even now the manner of Mar's fate is unknown. Albany's friends sent a small ship to wait in the harbor of Leith, and a hamper of wine easily found admission to Albany's rooms in the castle. The hamper contained ropes as well as wine, and when Albany had made his keepers drunk with the liquor, had dirked them, and thrown their mail-clad bodies to grill on the fire, he escaped to the ship at Leith by aid of the rope. But the favorite way of escaping had a bland and child-like simplicity. The captive's wife paid him a visit, the pair exchanged clothes, and the prisoner walked out in the lady's petticoats! This old trick was played in the Castle as often as the "confidence trick" in the capitals of modern civilization. Apparently it never missed fire, and we may conclude that in every case the turnkeys were bribed. The only prisoner of note who ever failed was the first Marquis of Argyll, in 1601. The Marchioness came to see him in a sedan chair; he assumed her dress and coif, and stepped into the sedan. But presently he lost heart and stepped out again, though what he was afraid of it is difficult to guess. He could only die once, his execution was certain, and he might as well be shot privately, in the attempt to run away, as be decapitated publicly in the town where the great Montrose, his enemy, was done to death. When the Marquis's son, in his turn, was confined in the Castle, his ready brain conceived the novel idea of escaping, not in the dress of a lady, but in that of the lackey of his daughter-in-law. He let the lady's train drop in the mud, whereon, with the wit and coolness of a daughter of the Lindsays, she switched the dripping silk in his face, crying, "Thou careless loon." Then the soldiers laughed, and Argyll, for that time, got clean away. A most spirited escape, not from the Castle, but from the Tolbooth prison, was arranged and executed in 1783 by James Hay, a lad of eighteen, but of precocious parts, who had been sentenced to death for robbery. Old Hay, the father,

got the turnkey to drink with him, made him "no *that* fu'," but still "wi' a gey drap in his ee," and then induced the confiding jailer to go out and order some more whisky. The moment the turnkey had gone, old Hay cried (in a capital imitation of the jailer's voice), "Turn your hand," whereon the porter opened the prison door. Young Hay was off like a shot through the open prison gate, made for the Greyfriars Kirk-yard, scaled the wall, and hid himself in the vault of "bloody Mackenzie," the persecutor of the Covenanters. The vault, of course, was haunted by the ensanguined specter of Sir George Mackenzie; so no one looked *there* for young Hay, whose school-fellows of Heriot's Hospital, like bricks of boys, supplied him with food for six weeks. Then young Hay escaped, scot-free, to Holland. I don't know why it is, but I am glad he got off. All this happened precisely one hundred years ago, and it is something to think of in Greyfriars Churchyard, among the crumbling black grave-stones and ivy green, still haunted by memories of the Covenanters. One might prose for hours over the Castle, and the regalia, and the Mons Meg, that half-mythical piece of ordnance; but all these things are written even in unassuming sixpenny guide-books. It is time to leave the *Arx Puellarum* and enter the city by the West Port. I like to think that "Claverse," that bonny Dundee, when he went northward, "wherever the spirit of Montrose might lead him," clattered with his men down these narrow streets.

"As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Each carlin was flyting and shaking her pow;
But the young plants o' grace they looked couthie and slee,
Said "Good luck to thy bonnets, thou bonny Dundee."

The gate on the West Port was a favorite place for exhibiting the heads of traitors or martyrs, or, when traitors or martyrs happened to be scarce, of any culprits that chanced to be convenient. Here also, two hundred years ago, was spiked the red right hand of Chieslie of Dalry, who slew Lockhart. The houses, have the old "crow-step" on the gable, a series of narrow stairs whereby the little sweeps in times past were wont to scale the chimneys. Fortunately the den of iniquity, down Tanner's close, where Hare and Burke carried on a wholesale business in murder, has long perished. Perished, too, but only within the last five years, has the house of Major Weir, the most horribly haunted place in Edinburgh, worse than even Mary King's ruined close, where the blue specters of those who died in the great plague used to walk. If Hawthorne had been an Edinburgh man, he would have made the dwelling of Major Weir immortal in romance. The legend has that blending of Puritanism, of superstition, of horror, which Hawthorne enjoyed; and over all these is a veil of mystery, which seems to lift for a moment only to leave one more puzzled and confused. The house of Major Weir was not precisely in the West Bow; but the tall, gaunt building stood back within a black narrow court of its own, a court with a dark, hungry, and unsatisfied look, fit home for an ancient hypocrite with a heart full of horrid secrets and half-mad imaginings and impossible desires. Nor did the Major dwell alone; his sister, a woman of about the same age, shared the house and the partnership in the mystery of iniquity. So the legend runs; for, at this distance of time, and with the evidence before us, it is impossible to feel certain that



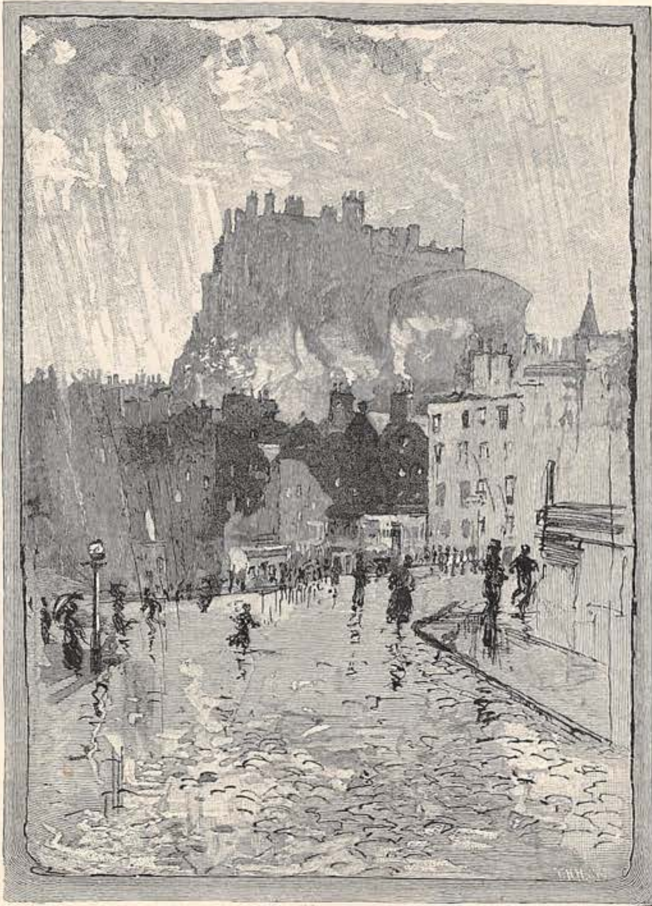
THE TOLBOOTH, HIGH STREET.

ALLAN RAMSAY'S SHOP IN HIGH STREET.

Major Weir was not an honorable man enough whose brain, perhaps, was turned in his extreme age by sickness and religious mania. The major had been an officer in the army which (in 1641) protected the Scotch settlers then recently planted in the North of Ireland. In 1650 he was one of the guard which attended the execution of the great Montrose. Like many soldiers of that age, Major Weir was, in religion, extremely evangelical, and his sermons and prayers met with much acceptation in "the sanctified bends of the Bow." It was observed that he could only be eloquent when he leaned on his favorite stick, "all of one piece of thorn-wood with a bent head." Probably much of Major Weir's evil fame rises from nothing more serious than his fondness for this black stick, which it was his trick of manner to fondle. But, if we were still as superstitious as our ancestors of two centuries ago, what young man of fashion who takes his "crook" everywhere into society would be safe from suspicion of sorcery? When the major was about seventy, he fell into a heavy sickness, which, according to some authorities, "affected his mind so much that he made open and voluntary confession of all his wickedness." Probably enough the malady "affected his mind," which would then play, in a fearsome fashion, with horrors of sin and the dread beliefs of Calvinism. The Lord Provost of the period, like a sensible man, at first treated the confession as mere raving. But, plied probably by the superstitious, and by the Royalist enemies whom the major is sure to have made, the Provost finally arrested Weir, his sister, and his black stick. In prison the poor wretch stuck to his "confession," but refused to pray. "As I am to go to the devil, I do not wish to anger him!" he screamed. On April 9, 1670, he was sentenced to be strangled and burned, while his sister was merely to be hanged. When his dead body fell into the fire, his stick twisted and writhed in unholy fashion, and "was as long in burning as the major." As to the confessions of the major's sister, we have them on the excellent authority of "Satan's Invisible World Discovered,"—evidence which would not now drown a kitten, much less hang a woman. Major Weir's house was long uninhabited after his execution. When some one did occupy it, in the beginning of this century, he was startled by the apparition of a shadowy being like a calf. This is the third

case of a ghostly calf which I have met with in a life-long study of ghost stories. One of the other calves haunted the place where an idiot boy had been slain. The third appeared in France, to two lads, and is mentioned in M. d'Assier's recent volume on "Posthumous Man" (*L'homme d'outre-tombe*).

One follows the winding of the West Port to the Grass Market, a wide, airy place (for the old town), from the crown of whose causeway many an old Covenanting hero, trailing his tortured limbs to the gallows, took his farewell of the sky, and the green hills, and the sea. From the gallows platform the eye can glance to the north and the west,— to the "hills of the robbers" beyond the Forth, and to where the setting sun slants on moors and morasses, faint and far away, the hiding-places of the "persecuted remnant." In Scotland, the popular tradition is all on the side of the Covenanters. We read Sir Walter's works, and give our hearts to the gallant Grahames, to Montrose and Dundee; but the people still remember "Claverse" and "bloody Dalziel" with a curse. The peasant populations of the Lowland counties have not the deathless Celtic memory of grievances; but the persecutors of the Covenanters they have never forgotten nor forgiven, and they still speak of the bones of murdered saints, found in the beds and "brae-hags" of burns, where Claverhouse came on them at their prayers, and where his musketeers shot them even on their knees. With such stories my own childhood was fed, and even Sir Walter's magic has never quite cast the glamour over the more splendid and romantic party that stood for the Church and the King. But Scots of all historical parties may find in the Grass Market a sacred place; for here were done to death brave men and fair women of every creed and character. Among others, on February 17th, 1688, fell precious Mr. Renwick, the preacher. Quite lately I came across Mr. Renwick's last dying speech and confession, a sordid little fly-leaf, in a cheap book-stall. This ex-



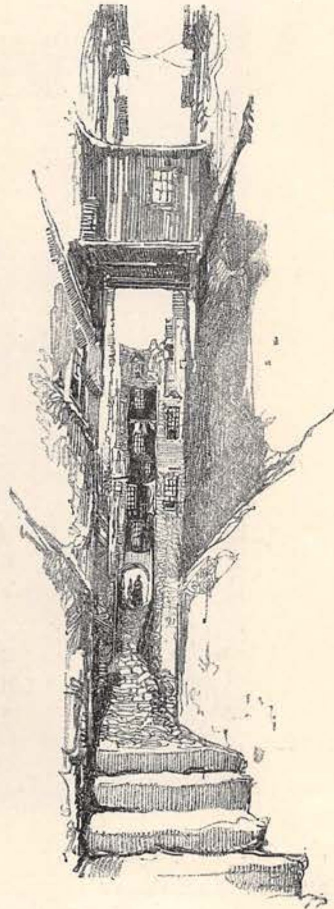
IMPRESSIONS OF GRASS MARKET.

THE COWGATE, FROM GEORGE THE FOURTH'S BRIDGE.

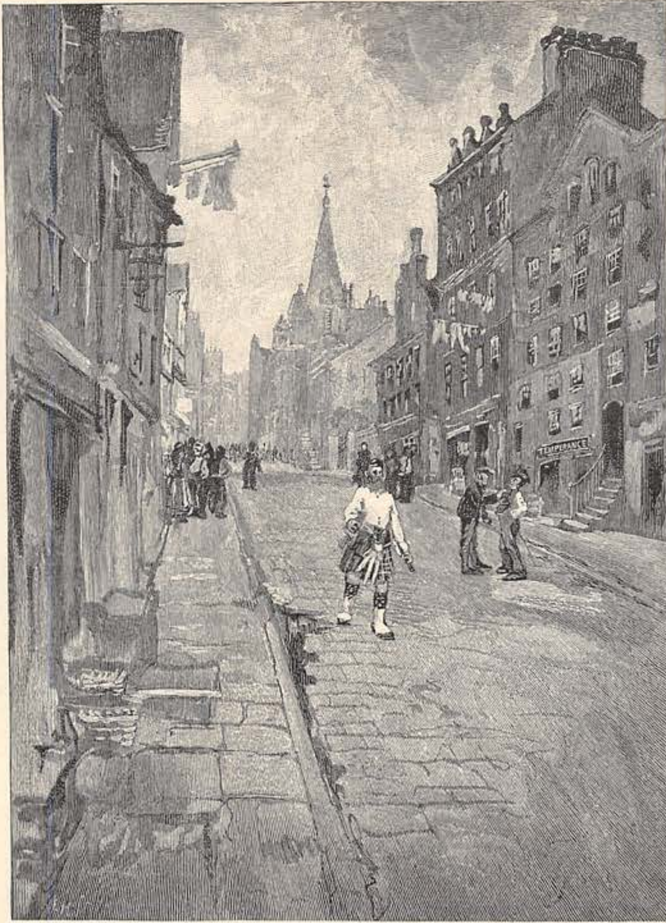
cellent martyr frankly admitted that he had always preached the righteousness of resisting his lawful king in arms. This was all very well; but the odd thing was to find Renwick full of indignant surprise at his own execution. It never seemed to occur to him that the corollary of his doctrine was the king's right to put him to death if he could catch him. This is a logical deficiency which one has observed in certain homicidal patriots of a much later epoch than 1688. The ancient stone-socket of the gallows-tree has long been removed from the Grass Market. In its place you may observe stones laid down in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross in the pavement; just as opposite the windows of Baliol, in the Broad street, Oxford, a small cross in the roadway marks the spot where Ridley and Latimer were burned at the stake. The shop of the dyer on whose pole Porteous was hanged (as we have all read in the "Heart of Midlothian") has also disappeared. "Though much is taken, much remains," however; for example, the neighboring church and church-yard that of old belonged to the Greyfriars. Here is the flat tombstone on which the Solemn League and Covenant was signed by men desperately anxious to bring back the mastodon, Theocracy; here are the graves of martyrs and of persecutors; and here is the vault of which we have already spoken, haunted by the red specter of Bloody Mackenzie. And here "Greyfriars Bobby" lay, a faithful terrier, watching for many years on the grave of his dead master. People fed poor Bobby; otherwise he would have starved; and I presume he occasionally relaxed himself by chevying one of the too numerous cats

which haunt the rusty-green grass and bushes of the old church-yard.

Leaving the Greyfriars, one naturally turns down the Cowgate, the fashionable quarter before Flodden fight—"being deemed open and airy." The Cowgate dives down a deep and narrow ravine, a kind of cañon, and high above it, as if in mid-air, passes the arch of George the Fourth's bridge. The Cowgate is like a Highland torrent of turbid population, flowing through its narrow and precipitous glen, and receiving at every turn the tributary streams of a score of dirty wynds, pouring in from either hand. The Cowgate, it is said, was originally the "Sou'-gate," or Southern Gate, and had nothing to do with kine. But this, to my mind, is contradicted by the fact that a writer of 1500–1530 calls the street *Via Vaccarum*, "the Street of the Cows," where, as he adds, you find *omnia magnifica*—everything handsome—about it. Now, it is not likely that the name of a new suburb would so rapidly be changed from South Gate to *Via Vaccarum*, or "Kowgaitt" (1518). But a short distance on the right hand of the Cowgate—attained by walking down Robertson's Wynd—was the Kirk of Fields, "St. Mary's of the Fields." The buildings of the University of Edinburgh now occupy most of the site of the house. It was an ill-famed, half-abandoned place, almost in the country, when Darnley was strangled there and when the mansion of the Kirk o' Fields was blown up. The very next wynd to Robertson's, namely, Niddry's, led you straight to the old High School, where George Sinclair shot the city officer dead at the great barring out, and where Scott had his schooling, and fought his "battle of the cross causeway,"—stones being the weapons, in very much later times. But the old High School has long ceased to exist. It was entered by a portal in a tower, very like the ancient entrance to the new buildings of the University in St. Andrews. The new High School is a handsome Greek edifice, near the south side of Calton Hill, and has no traditions of the famous elder world. The difficulty in writing about Edinburgh is that "one cannot see the town for the houses." So many legends cling to these black and narrow lanes and these "dour" old piles of masonry, that one is tempted to go on telling story after story, and neglecting the general effect. But this one more anecdote I cannot resist the temptation to steal from Mr. Grant's great treasure-house of traditions. Sir Walter Scott had a grand-aunt, who was all that a Scotch grand-aunt should be—a lady of an ancient house, with a memory well stored with legends. When she was a little girl, this Aunt Margaret was residing at Swinton House, in Berwickshire, and happened to wander, in the listless fashion of childhood unemployed, into the dining-room There sat a lady "beautiful as an enchanted queen," and engaged in taking the refreshment of tea. Now, children have not a gift of beholding the thing that either is not, or is hidden by a veil from older eyes, that one might set this apparition down as a ghost or a day-dream. But the beautiful lady broke silence, and begged little Margaret to speak first to her mother, *by herself*, of what "she had witnessed." When the family came home from church, Margaret was advised to say nothing about the beautiful lady. Yet she was not a ghost after all, but a woman of flesh and (in the strictest sense) of blood. These things happened shortly after "the Fifteen," when many English officials were in Edinburgh. Among them was a Captain Cayley, who had grievously insulted a beautiful and very young lady, Mrs. Macfarlane. In penitence, or impudence, he then ventured



A WYND.



THE CANONGATE.

to call at Mrs. Macfarlane's house, near the Cowgate. What passed between them is not certainly known, but Cayley was shot dead, and Mrs. Macfarlane walked out and was no more beheld at that season. She it was whom little Margaret Swinton saw in Swinton House in Berwickshire, where the homicidal fair was concealed in the secret chamber with the sliding panel, which old Scotch families often found so convenient. So one goes down the Cowgate, past the site of College Wynd, where Scott was born, and where Oliver Goldsmith, though but a medical student, and a poor one to boot, swaggered in "a superfine small hatt," brave with eight shillings' worth of silver lace, and a "sky-blue satin, rich black Genoa velvet, fine sky-blue shalloon, and *the best* superfine high claret-colored cloth." What a genius for dress had Oliver, who, even in years mature, wore a coat of Tyrian bloom! The odd thing is that Oliver actually *paid*, at least in part, for the splendors that dazzled the College Wynd, and charmed all eyes in the Cowgate.

From the Cowgate one reaches the High street, the central way and great battle-field of the old turbulent Scotch. As late as the end of the sixteenth century, Scotland had her regular blood-feuds, like Corsica. If one gentleman slew another, no one was so mean as to seek a legal remedy (which, indeed, no one was likely to obtain), but kinsfolk waited till they had a chance to pink some member of the hostile family. Far away in Yarrow, near the Dowie Dens, where the knight was slain in the old ballad, there is an upland farm called Catslack. The green hills gather close together; their slopes are dank and thick with rushes round the narrow Catslack burn, which leaps down, with little links and little pools, to the Yarrow. There my first trout was caught, and there, in an even more remote antiquity (1596), did Sir James Douglas of Parkhead, a natural son of the Regent Mor-

ton, meet his deadly foe, Captain James Stewart. Chance or design brought them together on the borders of the way which threads the vale of Yarrow and leads from Moffat to Selkirk. There Sir James Douglas, having overpowered Stewart in fight, left his body to be devoured by dogs and birds, and rode away,

OLD HOUSES IN CANONGATE.

by Tinnies, and Hangingshaw, and Philiphaugh, through the oak wood, and below Black Andro, carrying the slain man's head on a spear. "Yarrow visited," indeed, with a vengeance! Now the house of Ochiltree, of which Stewart was a member, could not leave this shame unavenged. Accordingly, a trifle of twelve years afterward, Sir James, now Lord Torthorwald, was walking in the High street, and, as Homer says, "Death was not in his thoughts." There, however, he met William Stewart, a nephew of Captain Stewart, who drew his sword, and, without giving Torthorwald any "show," ran him through before he could defend himself. This was at the "Cross," hard by the great and splendid Church of St. Giles, in whose beautiful lantern cannon have been mounted to command the city, and in whose aisles Douglas and Albany built a chapel to expiate the murder of Rothesay, whom they starved to death. The cross where Stewart took his revenge on Torthorwald is now marked only by a kind of wheel of inlaid stones in the causeway. The bailies of 1756 swept it away, as bailies, town councilors, railway share-holders, and their like are always eager to destroy whatever is ancient or beautiful, from Derwentwater to the Edinburgh Cross. Many were the revenges of the old Scotch *noblesse;* and the William Stewart who slew Torthorwald was himself son of the William Stewart slain, years before, by Bothwell, another Douglas, in the Blackfriars Wynd.

Next to the High street and Cowgate, the Canongate is the most famous of the ways through old Edinburgh. The Canons in Holyrood built and ruled over it,—a place without the walls, defended by the sanctity of the abbey and of the holy fathers. Yet the devil was once raised in the "back-green" of a house in the Canongate by Sir Lewis Bellenden, a lord of session, that is, a judge. Sir Lewis was so terrified "that he took sickness and thereof died," something like Semele, who perished after she beheld her heavenly lover in all his glory. We may trust that the learned judge raised the devil for no malignant purpose, but merely in the course of "psychical research." The visitor will notice the wide, wooden fronts of some of the old houses in the Canongate. According to tradition, these were fashioned out of the trees on the Borough Moor, a forest in the possession of the city. Beggars and robbers found this forest so convenient a shelter that the town council decided to fell it, and all the citizens received permission to carry off as much timber as they pleased, with which they faced their houses. But time wholly fails one to tell a tithe of the stories of the Canongate. The most horrible has for hero the gigantic idiot, son of an old

duke of Queensberry. One day the idiot was left unguarded, the house was empty of retainers, and the giant strayed into the kitchen. There he met one little boy turning the meat on the spit. When the family and servants came back, they found —— but no, that is quite enough! The reader

SMOLLETT'S HOUSE.

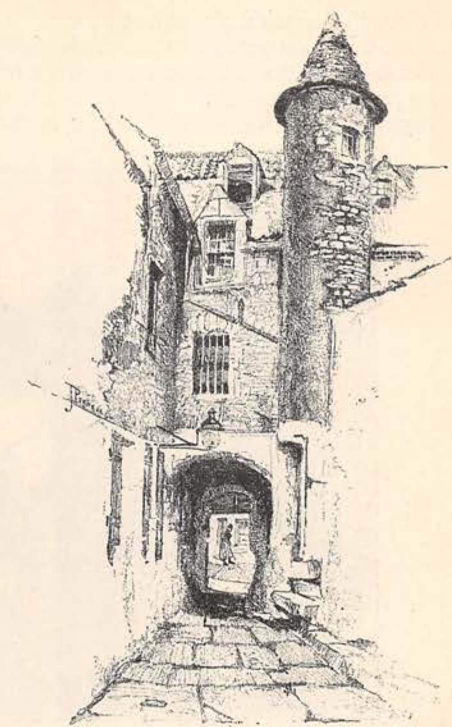
may imagine what they found, or may consult original authorities. Nearly opposite the house of the dread ducal Cyclops and devourer of men is the "Golfers' Land," built by one Paterson, who was quite like an Olympian victor, for he and his ancestors had ten times won the champion medal at golf—an excellent and delightful game. Golf may be played wherever there is a wide enough space of broken grass-land; but he who would see the game in its glory and in its ancient seat (the most picturesque town north of the Forth) must go to St. Andrews. On the right hand of the Canongate is "the old Playhouse Close," one of the most characteristic of the antique wynds, and the home of the sorely persecuted stage in Presbyterian Scotland. And so, passing the White Horse Tavern, where Boswell entertained Johnson, and which, with its gables and dormer windows, is one of the best-preserved relics of the past, we go, by the quaint "Queen Mary's Bath," into the open free air, with the green slopes of Arthur's Seat on one hand, and Holyrood on the other. It is pleasant to feel the salt breeze from the sea, and to leave behind the fume and reek, the memory and savor of crime and sin, the dust that may still have grains in it of burnt men's ashes, the gutters where blood has flowed so free, the historical ghosts and horrors of the old town and of old times.

Not here, nor to-day, is there room to speak of Holyrood; nor, indeed, does its tale require to be told. "A beggarly palace, in truth," Hogg found it, when he visited it with Shelley. A beggarly palace, perhaps, but one, in which it is difficult to be quite unmoved and untouched; for in the beggarly bed slept the fairest woman in the world, and in that hole of a boudoir Rizzio died, and up the winding-stair came Darnley, with Faldonside and the others that "made sikker." The view of the hill from the windows must be what Mary saw every morning, though probably the bare sides of Arthur's Seat were then wooded.

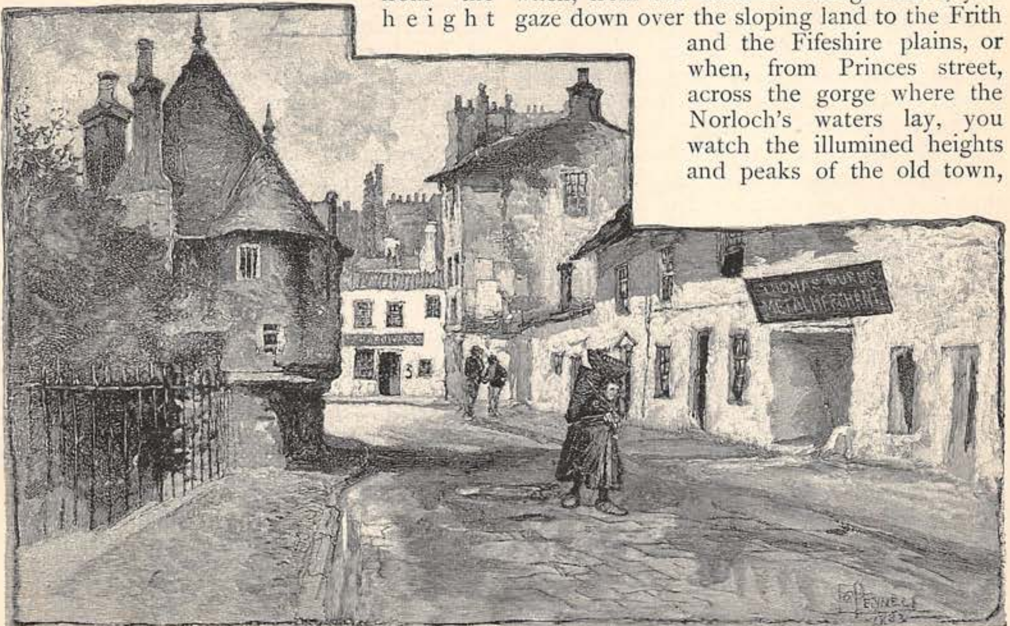
Of New Edinburgh I have not proposed to say much. A casual Scot whom Hogg (Shelley's Hogg, not the Shepherd) found in the streets assured him that "if all the buildings at Oxford and Cambridge were molded into one edifice, the effect would not be the same as that of Edinburgh University. It would be far inferior." The effect would not, indeed, be precisely the same. But if you took a few things out of Queen's, and blackened that college, the effect would not be wholly unlike that of Edinburgh University. The Register Office, according to Hogg's cicerone, was "the finest building in the habitable earth." We Scots have a "canty conceit o' oursel's," and New Edinburgh is the Sparta which we have adorned. The monuments on the Calton Hill cannot be observed without admiration. Here is a Greek ruin, a pepper-box, "very late and dreadfully debased," with other weird edifices, testifying, wildly and incoherently at once, to our feeling for art, and to our recognition of Dugald Stewart and Robert Burns.

The Register Office may or may not be the finest building in the habitable earth, but the distant views of Edinburgh, the general impressions from a dozen different points, are wonderful and memorable,—as pleasant and dear to look back upon or forward to as the glowing spectacle of Florence from any of her storied and sacred heights. Only, while in Florence all is color and brilliancy, with an evident and beautiful arrangement and order, Edinburgh depends for her charm on the smoke, the sea-haze, the mystery, broken by the faint and clear forms of the Castle Hill and its towery crown, by the ridge of the old city, the tall spires, and the lantern

of St. Giles, etched on the gray background. Behind all, on three sides, are the everlasting hills, and to the north the gray or glittering Frith, decked with flying sails, and studded with tiny islands. Two views of Edinburgh remain impressed most deeply on my memory. One was seen on a late afternoon of January from the Calton hill. At our feet the straight line of the lamps of Princes street twinkled away into the shadow. Beneath us was swathed in long folds a soft brown mist, from which the crests of houses, the spires of churches, the Castle rock, rose solemnly, their bases in shadow and darkness, their crowns clear against the upper sky. Farther away emerged from a fainter mist the deep folds and rolling ridges of the hills,—farther away, but yet, owing to some effect of light, the hills seemed quite near at hand, brooding about the town. The other is a summer view of Edinburgh, about five o'clock on a bright August afternoon, the town beheld from Fetter College, between the new city and the sea. Now the ocean of mist, from which the spires emerged, and above which stood the long castled line of houses, was blue or silvery gray; the city and its towers were white and distinct against a sky of deep, tender blue. Behind was Arthur's Seat, with its leonine air of watching over a trust. These are two beautiful views of Edinburgh, but she is beautiful from all points and in every light, beautiful especially, perhaps, from the height whence Marmion saw her before Flodden. The outlines of all the hills have a peculiar, almost a Greek grandeur and simplicity. Everywhere they are within sight, except when, from the crest of George street, you gaze down over the sloping land to the Frith and the Fifeshire plains, or when, from Princes street, across the gorge where the Norloch's waters lay, you watch the illumined heights and peaks of the old town,



THE PLAYHOUSE CLOSE. FIRST THEATER IN SCOTLAND.



QUEEN MARY'S BATH.

clear through the rainy air, reflected, with all their lamps, in the pools of water. This view Mr. Pennell has chosen, and none is more familiar and characteristic.

About the people of Edinburgh, so far, nothing has been said. People are not like places, deaf and insensible, and it is a thankless job to criticise our contemporaries. Edinburgh cannot be said to be all that she was when it was a far cry to London, when Edinburgh was a capital indeed, with a literature and a brilliant society, and a school of art of her own. Now, London is within a brief nine hours' journey, and has drawn away the "county people"—the old families—from their old haunted *châteaux* to Belgravia and Mayfair. The artists, or many of them, have gone on where purchasers have gone before; and many of the members of the Academy in London are Scotch. Yet some remain in their own beautiful town and spurn the attractions of money and of a noisier fame. The same causes operate to withdraw men of letters from the capital of the Blackwoods and Constables, from the home of "Maga" and the "Edinburgh Review." The lights of London have a magnetic attraction, and people who resist them are usually either too indolent or too wise to be very ambitious. But "Maga" remains true to the city of Lockhart and Wilson, and has still her court of wits and scholars. The University, the Bar, the Army (as represented by the regiments at the Castle and Tuck's Lodge), these, with such of the surrounding lairds as prefer the comparative quiet of Edinburgh, make up the society of the place,—a society which has a winter season and is Covenanting and Presbyterian enough to dance in Lent. Probably there is no more hospitable and amusing town in the kingdom. I remember a day of this last spring, a Sunday, which was horrible with

WHITE HORSE INN, WHERE JOHNSON STOPPED.

howling east winds and tormented with dust. We struggled for a mile beyond the town, and found ourselves in a deep dell, a windless air; the trees were breaking into leaf, the primroses starred the banks, a clear trout-stream flowed singing through the midst of this sheltered paradise. This is the charm of Edinburgh. The unspoiled country lies within sight of her gates; the fields, and the hills, and the towns, and the sea, and the links of Musselburgh, whereon to play golf and forget this troublesome world, are all hard at hand. I do not imagine that the people of the old town think much of these advantages. The place is notorious for intoxicated Caledonians and temperance hotels.

Though Edinburgh has its drawbacks (something about them, more about its incommunicable charm, may be read in Mr. R. L. Stevenson's book on his native city)—though Edinburgh has its drawbacks, the position of a professor in the University, with half the year pure, untrammeled holiday, seems to be the true paradise of men of letters. So think all scribbling or bookish Scots, and I mean to send in my testimonials as soon as any pious founder endows a chair for the study of French fiction. Till then, only one's heart, or a great share of it,—*dimidium animæ meæ*,—and one's memories, happy or sad, are in Edinburgh.

Andrew Lang.