

Reminiscences of Edinburgh.

THE CANONGATE.

There is an indescribable feeling of delight experienced when we visit the scene of any event that has been distinguished in history for deeds of heroism or of constancy in love. Who can read of Marathon, Thermopylae or Bannockburn, without having emotions stirred within him at the time, which he recalls with pleasure, and speaks of afterwards with increased satisfaction?

There is no street in Edinburgh so distinguished in history for romance as the Canongate. It is a narrow street, displayed in deeds of daring or of love by the brave men and beautiful women, as the Canongate. Other streets have arisen of finish and commodious dimensions, but with all their beauty and amenity, they never can occupy the place of the winding, old fashioned street running from Holyrood Place to St. Mary's Wynd.

Who that has ever visited the apartments of the beautiful Mary Stuart, and looked upon her couch where she sought to forget her sorrows, and, perhaps, in her dreams recalled scenes of delight, passed away like visions of the night never to be restored, who that has looked upon the small and table, when she sat almost solitary, with none able to cheer her, who that has looked out of the window she was wont to gaze from, reflecting upon her blighted hopes, her present sorrows, and watching with dread the shadows of approaching evil that awaited her; who that has done so unmoved must have had a heart harder than stone!

The King during his stay attended divine worship in the High Church, which was considered a good omen, as recognizing our Presbyterian form of church government. The King proceeded up and down the Canongate on the occasion in a close carriage, in a very unostentatious manner. The foundation-stone of the National Monument was laid during His Majesty's stay, but he did not honor the ceremony with his presence.

Yet once again the Canongate is taken possession of by the upper ten thousand for the first time. She comes in such a gracious and kindly manner as to win the hearts of her people. She appears in the very grandeur of simplicity, accompanied by her royal consort, and surrounded by her children. She has laid aside all the trappings of royalty, and comes to show the women of Scotland an example of what a wife and mother ought to be. Dressed without any affectation of superiority, she smiles graciously upon all around her, and is altogether a model of what a Queen should be.

Leaving Holyrood Palace, the royal party proceeded up the Canongate, divested of all display, towards the castle, amid the hearty acclamations of assembled multitudes and thus inaugurated the progress of the King and Queen, returning by Leith to Holyrood Palace. The precincts of the Palace have long possessed the privileges of a sanctuary to defaulting debtors, and a great many lodging-houses were clustered around it to afford them shelter. The occupants of these were chiefly soldiers of fortune, who had lived beyond their means, half-pay officers, and rouses, who had kind friends that gave them a certain allowance to keep them out of prison. They were allowed to range through the Royal Park for exercise all the week, while on Sunday they might ramble where they would, none daring to make them afraid. But woe betide the poor refugee who prolonged his visit to the city, whether on errands of love or visits of society, if his watch was slow or he was too happy to reckon the time, until the great bell of St. Giles was heard to strike 12 o'clock while he was dallying with his fair one, or sitting at the hospitable board.

The officers of the law were always on the alert on Sundays, and watched their men, and many a hard run has taken place down the Canongate after an untimely debtor. But it was a race for freedom, which gave nerve and vigor to the victim, and once over the Abbey Strand he could defy his pursuer as effectually as the poor Israelite of old, when he fled from the avenger of blood to the city of refuge.

It must not be forgotten that the White Horse Inn, a few doors below St. Mary's Wynd, in the Canongate, was the hostelry where the celebrated Samuel Johnson took up his abode upon reaching Edinburgh, and to which his friend and biographer, James Boswell, hastened to welcome him to Scotland. The officers of the law were always on the alert on Sundays, and watched their men, and many a hard run has taken place down the Canongate after an untimely debtor. But it was a race for freedom, which gave nerve and vigor to the victim, and once over the Abbey Strand he could defy his pursuer as effectually as the poor Israelite of old, when he fled from the avenger of blood to the city of refuge.

It cannot be denied that the Canongate has fallen from its greatness in more respects than one. Walk up and down its wynds and closes, and it becomes too obvious that the physical comfort as well as the moral condition of the people calls for help. Let us hope that better things and happier times are awaiting them, and that the schools for the young, and the solitary efforts of the mature and aged, may raise the population of the Canongate to a position of moral excellence which may prove more beneficial and lasting than the semi-barbarous grandeur of past ages ever possessed, or could ever achieve for fallen humanity.

FATAL SNAKE CHARMING.—The Mayville (Ky.) Eagle is responsible for the following: "The serpent is endowed with the power to charm birds which they capture, and the ability to fascinate the larger animals, and even to influence the intellect of man, is an old and established theory. A marvellous incident of this character has just been brought to our notice. A little boy four or five years of age, of Irish parentage, in Bracken county, was in the habit, during the whole of last summer, of going out in the woods near his home, to play with his 'pretty things,' as he called them. After much persuasion, one day his mother was induced to follow him to his play-ground to see what attracted him so much, which, to her horror she discovered her little darling playing with a trio of huge black snakes, wholly unconscious of his peril. The boy was completely fascinated, and would advance and retreat, and sport and dally with the hideous creatures as if he were in the charmed circle of his brothers and sisters. The mother in terror ran to the house crying for help, when the father of the lad rushed to the rescue of his boy, and after some difficulty killed the snakes. 'Wonderful to relate,' and we have this information from a gentleman of unquestionable veracity—the little boy soon took to his bed, from which he never arose—he pined away and died—

returned to Holyrood, by the Calton Hill, surrounded by the peerage of Scotland, wearing their coronets and robes of office, according to their ranks, mounted on horses richly caparisoned, and attended by equestrians in gay clothing. These were accompanied with the Highland chiefs and their numerous followers, and as they began to defile below Nelson's Monument, the effect was very imposing.

The Duke of Hamilton, as premier duke, bore the ancient crown of Scotland on horseback before him, attired in his full ducal robe. The Earls of Morton and Errol carried the regent's sword and sceptre, and were attired in the same manner. The last named nobleman formed a very striking figure, he was young, handsome, and the very model of a cavalier, and the grace with which he rode and managed his horse attracted the youngest portion of the spectators very much.

The ceremony of displaying in public the Regalia of Scotland, the symbols of our independence, in connection with the Royal visit, recalled the hearts of thousands with delight, and raised a national feeling of pride in the minds of those who witnessed it that can never be forgotten. The entire proceedings were conducted in such a magnificent style as was never witnessed in this country, and probably will never be seen again.

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an early victim of the fascination of the serpent.

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