A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF LEITH
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by

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SUMMARY

The course of the eighteenth century saw the transformation of the port of Leith from a village community into an industrial town, and from feudal servitude to independence. Beginning with the Poll Tax Returns of 1694, which offer the earliest approach to a description of the population, this study ends with the establishment of Leith as an independent burgh in 1833. During this period the life of the community and the economy of the port developed from a near-medieval pattern, to the complex and many-sided interests of an industrial town.

The changing circumstances of life in Leith are described as these were reflected in Church life, in the Incorporations, in the various ways of earning a living and enjoying leisure. The government of the town, and the welfare of the community are also shown to have developed considerably in the same era.

The eighteenth century was the most crucial period in the long history of the port. Those years represent a watershed for Leith, for in the late seventeenth century Leith was a possession of Edingburgh - her feudal superior - and life in the port was dominated by the influence of the capital city. Throughout the eighteenth century the Leithers struggled against their vassalage, and gradually won various advantages. The Incorporations won legal declaration of their independence; the inefficiency of the city's government of the port was exposed; injustice and neglect were the subjects of many
protests; new industries were established slowly and with much difficulty. A change also took place in the attitude of Leithers to their own town. In earlier times they had perforce accepted the fact of Edinburgh's lordship, protesting only against harshness and intolerance from their superiors, but as time passed the people of the port gained confidence in themselves and finally demanded the right to self-government.

This long struggle and ultimate achievement earned Leith the right to the motto "Persevere".
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THE VILLAGE OF LEITH

At the end of the seventeenth century Leith was still substantially what it had been a century and a half earlier, when the port was first fortified. The Shore, the Tolbooth Wynd, Kirkgate, the Dub Raw (St. Andrew Street), Rotten Raw (Water Street), Quality Street, the Coalhill - these were still the main thoroughfares, and the Yardheads still traced the boundary of the gardens belonging to the Preceptory of St. Anthony. The most obvious extension to Leith was to be seen on the north side of the river, where the massive pile of the Citadel dominated the scene, although partly dismantled. Already this area was becoming the fashionable quarter, which it remained throughout the eighteenth century. Sir Robert Sibbald described the Citadel in 1684 as "now turned into dwelling-houses, wher severall Tradesmen leeve." But the Duke of Gordon, though a papist, was something better than a tradesman, and he had a house in the Citadel. The shipbuilders' yards, rope and glassworks, which eventually jostled for space in North Leith were not yet a threat to the mingled seaside and rural attractions of the place.

At this period South Leith centred not on the Kirkgate,

1. Leith Pilot Annual, 1892.
but on the Shore. One indication of this is that the Shore, and not the parish kirk, was the site of the jougs. (3) This instrument of correction was intended to give as much publicity as possible to the crime and the criminal, so the choice of the Shore is significant. Here was the heart of Leith. William Maitland, in the mid-eighteenth century, sketches the scene for us.

"This harbour, which is a dry one, can contain above 100 ships to ly safely & commodiously. At neap Tides, the Depth of Water on the Bar at the Mouth of the Haven, is above 9 ft; at Spring Tides, commonly about 14, & sometimes by strong Easterly Winds, near 18 ft of Water on the said Bar." (4)

Today, nothing much bigger than a rowing boat can be seen or imagined in the diminutive Water of Leith at the Coalhill, and the idea of 100 merchant ships berthing along the Shore is bizarre. According to a return made to the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1692, there were then 29 ships belonging to Leith, totalling 1702 tons, and valued at £85,200 Scots. This averages at 58.7 tons per ship, and in fact these vessels ranged from 12 tons to 150. (5) After all, there probably was room for 100 such ships to

3. David Robertson in South Leith Records, notes several cases of persons confined in the jougs, and mentions the local tradition that the jougs were removed in 1848 when the church was restored. (SLR.i.34n) While this would indicate that the jougs were then attached to the wall of the church, there is no doubt that in the seventeenth century they were placed on the Shore. A minute of Edinburgh Town Council for 22.4.1676 refers to the "jogs upon the shoir".


5. Wm. Maitland, op. cit. 320f.
tie up at the Shore. Sibbald describes the harbour as he saw it, containing "a great many Ships". The east and west piers or "Heeds" projected as breakwaters from the harbour, and he notes that the east pier was made "of Oken trees with Stones Heeped up betwixt them, and is covered above with frrr Boardes." Leith, he adds, is "the best frequented harbour in Scotland."(6)

Inland from the Shore the built-up area was not extensive. Closes there were, but not in the claustrophobic numbers of a century later. Corntown's Close, Duff's and Bowie's, Lamb's and Willie Water's Closes still left room for many gardens and open spaces within the encircling ramparts. Beyond the town walls the scene was entirely rural, with farm-towns and hamlets scattered over the parish. The community included merchants and tradesmen, brewers, gardeners, ropemakers, soapboilers, seamen and farmers - an impressive variety of occupations, but misleading. Leith was poverty-stricken to a degree that caused remark even in seventeenth century Scotland, where gentle and simple alike were often hard put to it to find cash. Sir William Brereton in 1636 visited Leith, and there partook of a meal he thought worth recording.

"Here are pies (whereof I have had some this day to dinner) which are sold twelve for a penny English."

At the same time he remarked

"This towne of Leith is built all of stone, but it seems to be but a poor place, though seated upon a dainty haven."(7)

Nineteen years later Thomas Tucker reported on Leith, when he surveyed the Scottish ports with a view to organising the collection of customs duty. He describes it as

"a pretty small towne, and fortified about, having a convenient drye harbour...This place formerly, & soe at this time, is indeed a storehouse not only for her owne traders, but also for the merchants of the citty of Edinburgh."(8)

Now in 1645 Leith had been decimated by plague, and had lost half her population, suffering severe famine at the same time.(9) The marks of this suffering must have been very evident to Tucker, but poverty in Scotland was unremarkable. In any case Tucker was concerned rather with harbour and port facilities and communications. A few months later Richard Franck made some observations on the port:

"The fabricks of Leith are built with stone, hovering over the pier, and fronting the ocean, almost drown'd under water; & that which is worse, if worse can be, those nauseating scents suckt greedily from the sea, bring arguments of disease, and sometimes summons for death. On the other hand Scotland cannot present you with a more pleasant port; for here the houses and structures are large and lofty."(10)

All seventeenth century writers seem equally impressed

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8. ibid. 163.
by the stone buildings of Leith, and especially those on the Shore, fronting, and towering above the ships berthed there. Sibbald strikes the same note:

"Ther are many Fyne Buildings at Leith, especially upon the Shore."(11)

This impressive stone came from the sea-shore. It was in the form of water-rounded boulders, packed loosely together, and solidified by pouring hot lime over.(12) This was the cheapest form of building - cheaper than timber or dressed stone. Grenville Collins' map of Leith in 1694 is a chart of the river-mouth and harbour rather than a map, but there is an inset elevation of buildings on the Shore. These appear to be warehouses three and four storeys high. Among them can be seen the King's Wark, which was dilapidated, but having been built of the best materials, it was still in use as a storehouse. This lofty range of buildings must have greatly impressed anyone viewing Leith from the river, and this very substantial frontage effectively screened the humbler heart of the port from the casual view.

The real state of Leith at the close of the seventeenth century is sufficiently indicated by a town council minute of 1st February 1695:

11. Sibbald, op. cit.
12. This form of building may be seen in the lower courses of walls at the Vaults in Giles Street - one of the few remaining examples in the town of this manner of building.
"The Counsell considering the report of the Comity appointed to meet with Baillie Cunningham water bailie of Leith anent the present condition of the poor of Leith representing their mean and low condition and that severalls of the said poor are starving and dying upon the streets And that the present collections collected for the use of the poor does not defraye the expenses of ther Buriall..."

The Town Treasurer was directed to pay the water bailie £200 for distribution to the poor in Leith. The plight of Leith must have been dire to draw such a gesture from Edinburgh. (12a)

Relations between Edinburgh and Leith were normally strained, and from time to time some small incident would erupt into brawling, followed by charges and counter-charges, arrests, fines, and threats of the harshest treatment if Leithers refused to heed the law. In those disturbances the law was always on the side of Edinburgh, for the city owned the superiority of most of Leith. And despite the poverty of the inhabitants, the port still yielded a large annual income to the capital in rents and taxes. In 1694, when we begin this survey, Edinburgh had the use of no less than £32,268 Scots money, contributed by Leith in the twelve months ending at Martinmas 1693. And if this sum, expressed as £2689 sterling, seems paltry enough, it should be compared with Edinburgh's total annual revenue from all sources in that same period - which amounted to £124,410.17.11. Scots (£10,367.11.6 stg). (13)

13. Details of this revenue from Leith are in Appendix A.
Leith's state of vassalage to Edinburgh was deeply resented in the port. The city was not only the superior of Leith, but as a royal burgh Edinburgh had many rights and privileges which worked against Leith's ever achieving any degree of independence. We shall be examining the relationships between the city and the port in some detail, but at the outset it ought to be made clear that anger in Leith was not directed against the legal system which kept the village in subjection. This was accepted without question. Nor did anyone in Leith doubt the right of a royal burgh to enjoy its perquisites and privileges, and to use its special rights for its own profit. Resentment in Leith stemmed from the fact that the port had paid, and dearly paid for her freedom, and had been cheated of her due. And at the close of the seventeenth century the awareness of this chicanery still seethed in the minds of men whose great-great grandfathers had been participants in those events which delivered Leith into a perpetual bondage to Edinburgh.

Trouble began when Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig, in 1555, entered into a contract with "the illustrious, most High and most Potent Princess, Mary of Lorraine, Queen Dowager and Regent of Scotland, in name of her daughter Mary, Queen of Scotland", by which the superiority of
Leith and the Links

"excepting the superiority of lands within the town pertaining to the Abbey of Holyrood and other special places held directly of Her Majesty, reserving the two milns, part of the lairdship of Restalrig..."

for the sum of £3000, which the Queen Dowager, in her daughter's name, promised to pay within three years. This situation presented a wonderful opportunity to the people of Leith, for they well knew that both parties to this contract were in desperate need of money. The inhabitants of Leith therefore offered to pay to Robert Logan

"for relief of the Queen, the £3000 and timber for repair of the King's Wark on the Shore, and to pay annualrent out of every house built or to be built within the town of Leith, if the said Queen Dowager, in name of her daughter, and consent of curators, would erect Leith into a free burgh. To which the Queen Dowager agreed."(14)

This was the transaction of which Leithers built their castles in the air. The £3000 was paid over to Sir Robert Logan, and Leith waited for the Queen Regent to keep her part of the bargain. But nothing happened: no attempt was made to secure the port's freedom. Of course the times were stirring, exciting, and there was some excuse for a local issue being forgotten or thrust aside, when Leith was at the heart of momentous national events. But year succeeded year without any hint of freedom for the port, and the people became restive.

14. Inventory of Writings in the Charterhouse of the City of Edinburgh (IWCH), iv.15. 30.1.1555.
The superiority of Leith was now in the possession of Queen Mary and Henry Darnley, who were as closely beset by money worries as their predecessors on the throne had been. And the Town Council were pulling long faces at the cost of fortifications. The Common Good fund was almost exhausted, and local taxation had greatly increased. Matters being in this awkward state, Henry and Mary decided to realise one of their few remaining assets, and presented the superiority of Leith to the Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of Edinburgh by way of compensation for their great expenses on behalf of the royal couple. That was in 1565 - ten years after Leith had paid £3000 for freedom, and had received nothing. When it became known that the port had been given into the possession of Edinburgh, the fury that seized the people of Leith may be imagined.

No doubt well aware of the treachery involved in the transaction, Henry and Mary had a clause inserted in the contract reserving the right to reclaim the superiority of Leith, "on intimation, Sabbath forenoon, with 40 days' warning, on payment of 10,000 merks Scots." The chances of Queen Mary ever being in a position to pay 10,000 merks to Edinburgh Town Council must have appeared very slight, even to her contemporaries; but when, a few months later, this reversion was granted by Mary, under the Great Seal, to her "cousin and counselor" James, Earl of Bothwell, Lord Hailes,
High Admiral of Scotland, then Leithers must have realised that their £3000 had sunk without trace. Bothwell's story is well enough known. The reversion of the superiority of Leith passed to the young James VI, who granted it to his Vice-Chancellor, Sir John Maitland of Thirlstane. Maitland's son finally sold the reversion to the City of Edinburgh in 1604, on consideration of 10,000 merks paid him by the Council. This sealed the fate of Leith. The port was now a permanent possession of the capital city. Rage and chagrin are powerful emotions; it is no great wonder that Leithers were still angry a century after those events.(15)

But hope never really died in Leith, and the history of the port until 1833 is the story of how that hope lived through generations - of how, with astonishing tenacity Leithers kept trying to assert their freedom, despite constant denials and defeats. If ever a town earned its motto Leith did, for throughout almost three centuries hers was a record of uncommon perseverance.

In the mid-seventeenth century hope soared again, for the Roundhead garrison in Leith got on well with the people, and it was thought that Oliver Cromwell was at

15. IWCH. iv.19. 4.10.1565; iv.21. 8.10.1565; iv.21. 25.2.1566; iv.23. 27.7.1587; iv.25. 28.12.1604.
least not ill-disposed to the aspirations of Leith, of which he had been told. In 1655 the Leithers thought their chances favourable enough to warrant one more effort, and a petition was drawn up and forwarded to Whitehall. This document achieved nothing, and as it listed the grievances of Leith against Edinburgh, it may be taken as a guide to local feeling in 1694, when we begin to examine the scene in some detail.

"Leith is not allowed to choose her own Magistrates; these are forced upon them.
"Arbitrary taxes are imposed on lands and houses; a merk Scots exacted on every ton of goods imported.
"Citizens are compelled to leave their houses in Leith, and live in Edinburgh.
"They dare not offer imports for sale before offering to Edinburgh Council, and are often kept waiting 16 or 20 days to let other ships arrive.
"Edinburgh has set up a weigh-house, and compels all goods to be weighed, charging one penny pro cent for weighing, although Leith has its own weigh-house, which they farm out to Edinburgh merchants.
"Edinburgh compels all sellers of wine and beer, malt-makers and brewers, to pay a yearly duty; limits their number, & levies £1.13.4 stg on every tun of wine going from Leith to Edinburgh, and 4d per lb tobacco, strong waters, &c.
"Edinburgh has laid high imposition on ballast for ships, anchorage, shore dues., which has driven away most of the English merchants who resorted to Leith in time of freedom of Trade; there were 40 then for one since these impositions, as Commissioners of Customs can testify from their books. English ships would come rather to Leith than to other ports to unload. Thus the trade is sold and the Commonwealth is defrauded.
"Edinburgh has excise on beer and ale which they lay upon malt, forcing Leith to pay near the third part of their malt, refusing the liberty of a market, which, Leith being a garrison, is very prejudicial.
"Edinburgh forces them to pay losses laid on 6 or 7 years ago, and owe Leith near £3000 stg for billeting soldiers, whom they imposed upon Leith. (illegible)
and were paid by Committee of Estates, and never paid Leith.
"They collect all the money that they can from Leith and carry it to Treasury in Edinburgh, wherewith they maintain agents in England to keep up the oppression over Leith, who have no public revenue for the officers of the town, maintenance of the poor, repair of churches, paving of streets. And having no faithful magistrates, no care is taken that Brewers, Butchers and Vintners conform themselves to the law, nor lewd persons corrected..."

And so on. Finally,

"Leith begs that it incorporate itself, and choose its own Magistrates. That the petty receipts - ballast, anchorage, shore dues - may go for the affairs of the town, and building an almshouse for the maintenance of English soldiers maimed in the Scots service, and other English that might be reduced to great necessity, and that Leith might be made equally free with other ports in his Highness's dominions."(16)

On the back of this document Cromwell signed a note:

"Petn referred to Gen. Monk, with assistance any 2 Judges in Scotland, to investigate, & compose the matter, if they can; or to certify to us the true state, & give their opinion."

Edinburgh answered these complaints at great length. The petition is described as "full of Untruths, Calumnies, Reflections, and every way seditious." The city's defence, however, acknowledges the abuses charged against her, but claims these practices as the essential right of a royal burgh "of infinite antiquity". The petition was refused. There was no doubt that Edinburgh was the legal superior of Leith, and nothing could now be done about it. This finding was like salt in the wounds of Leith. All the

16. IWCH. iv.201, 309.
bitterness of the previous century boiled up again, and in the 1690s resentment against Edinburgh was shared by all Leithers in trade or business, all who held any representative office, and by each and every man called upon to pay rates.

Added to this ill-feeling were the burdens of poverty, disease and hardship in many forms, which were common to all Scottish towns of that period. And high on the list of hardships imposed by Edinburgh was the billetting of soldiers in private houses. Nobody tried to justify this practice save on the ground of necessity. With Leith fortunately so near, and the links so suitable a place for military exercises, troops were invariably quartered in the port rather than in the city. Payment of the unwilling hosts was by no means punctual or certain, and quartering brought other troubles with it. Something of this was disclosed to the town council in 1694, when Hugh Cunningham, water bailie of Leith, made a report.

Those who could afford it were allowed to escape the inconvenience of lodging unwanted soldiers by making a cash payment in lieu. This was known as "paying dry quarters", and the practice gave an opportunity to some quick-witted soldiers to acquire some ready money. Making a tour of the better-seeming houses in Leith, a group of sergeants and corporals announced to the householders that a number
of soldiers would presently be quartered on them - unless, of course, "dry quarters" were forthcoming. Apparently most people approached in this way paid without a murmur, and the blackmail had been flourishing for some years. There was indeed an act of Parliament against this practice, but ordinary householders were seldom knowledgeable about acts of Parliament. On hearing Bailie Cunningham's statement the town council immediately forbade any Leither to pay dry quarters on the demand of any soldier. The proper procedure, if they were unwilling to lodge a soldier, was to find someone who was willing, and to pay that person directly for undertaking this service.(17)

At this period poverty was endemic in Scotland, affecting not only the people, but also public funds and institutions. Prominent merchants were not well-off by English standards. A ship of 25 tons was valued at £900 Scots, or £75 sterling. Anything over 100 tons was a large vessel for Leith, and in reasonable condition such a vessel might fetch £300 sterling. To be a shipowner did not argue that a man was possessed of a fortune. "Merchant" also was rather a grandiloquent description for a class which included even small shopkeepers. The Register of Testaments offers many examples of Leith merchants who had little

17. MTG. 12.10.1694. ⁸², §.
enough of this world's goods.

Nevertheless when the Company of Scotland was formed, and the Darien expedition launched in 1696, 25 Leithers managed to find £9100 to invest. Their contributions were made up as follows:

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<td>3</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>£1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>£400</td>
<td>£400</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£800</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>£1400</td>
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£9100

These investors comprised

6 merchants
6 skippers
7 tradesmen (including one tradesman's widow)
1 minister
1 gentleman (Jasper Johnston of Warriston)
1 writer
1 merchant's daughter
The Clerk to the Custom House, and Trinity House. (18)

The failure of the venture, together with the seven famine years which began in 1696 no doubt brought several of these investors to poverty.

In the meantime the Government was discovering the greatest difficulty finding cash to pay the army. It was finally decided to procure the necessary money by means of a Poll Tax, and in May 1693

18. From: A Perfect List of...Adventurers in the joint-stock of the Company of Scotland...&c.
"The Estates of Parliament, taking to their Consideration, That the Arrears due to the Country and Army preceding the first day of February 1691 are not as yet payed by the Fonds appointed in the former Session of this Parliament, And that it is most just that the same be duly and truly payed, Therefore...do freely and cheerfully offer the Pole money following...

"All persons of whatsoever age Sex or quality shall be subject and lyable to the pole of six shillings Scotts per head Except poor persons who live upon Charity and the Children under the age of Sixteen years..." (19)

Variable rates of tax were charged, according to the social standing and means of the persons concerned. The basic rate was six shillings Scots, but, for instance,

"All Gentlemen, so holden and repute, and owning themselves to be such, and who will not renounce any pretence they have to be such - £3, if they be not otherways classed."

The returns for Leith have survived in a somewhat mutilated state; and these lists represent something like a census of both North and South Leith. (20)

Some interesting facts can be gleaned from the returns, but inferences can only be made with caution. The intention was to provide complete information about the inhabitants, taking them by households, and listing names, occupations, and tax to be paid. In South Leith 684 households are enumerated, but the information is often defective, and sometimes illegible. North Leith, including Newhaven, comprised

199 households. Assuming the number of households listed to be fairly accurate, we might assess the population at around 4000; but since beggars and children under sixteen, and paupers are excluded — and remembering the floating population of sailors, and of soldiers quartered on the villagers — a figure of 4500 might be a truer estimate.

The return on occupations is so incomplete that very little is to be learned from it. In the South Leith return not a single merchant is listed, and in North Leith only one merchant appears. One can hardly avoid supposing that for some reason now obscure it was thought unnecessary, or inadvisable, to list merchants as such.

Most trades in South Leith appear more or less as one might expect — wrights and tailors, maltmen and coopers, carters, workmen (i.e. porters and general labourers), smiths and weavers — all occur in due proportion. But the cordwainers present a problem: North Leith lists two, but South Leith contains no fewer than 38! Shoes may not have had a long life, but 38 shoemakers in a parish of little more than 4000 inhabitants requires some explanation. Moreover a disproportionate number — 19, no less — lived in the hamlet of Calton. There was one barber in South Leith, and another in North Leith — which might indicate that Leithers paid more attention to their feet than their heads.

21. This preponderance of shoemakers in Calton has also been noted by W. A. Beveridge, who remarks "In the Old Calton Cemetery one buried a large number of shoemakers." (Cf. Third Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. 4, p. 434.)
but the only certainty is that the Poll Tax returns give us but a part of the truth.

Nevertheless, with all their faults, we have taken these returns as our point of departure. This manuscript of 1694 is the earliest attempt to describe statistically the community living in Leith. We are given only a rough sketch; we shall fill in some details of the picture, and then show how the scene changed over the next century and a half, as life in the port developed and became more diversified. This was a crucial phase in the history of Leith. In four generations a village not far removed from mediaeval conditions, was transformed into a thrusting, thriving industrial town, which still knew itself to be a distinct and distinctive community. This development can be traced along certain lines, as in the Church, the incorporations, through family life and leisure activities; and all the time these separate threads are being interwoven in a close and complicated pattern. Today that pattern has become immensely more complicated, but many threads in the life of the modern port are continuous with those which were first clearly to be seen in the eighteenth century.
THE VILLAGE OF LEITH

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many valuable notes. When I have been indebted to  
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name. Other references to these minutes simply  
refer to the date of the relevant minute.)

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THE CHURCH

The Water of Leith is a natural boundary line, and here the lands of the Logans of Restalrig ended. North of the river the ground belonged to the Abbey of Holyrood, but one small area on the south side, around the Coalhill, and extending to the Vaults, was known as St. Leonard's, and also belonged to the Abbey. Towards the close of the 15th century Abbot Balantyne (or Bellenden) had the river bridged, to give access to St. Leonard's, and this "Leith Brig" was only superseded in the late eighteenth century.(1)

From early times Leith was a village in two parishes. Co-extensive with the Logan estates, the parish of Restalrig stretched from Jock's Lodge and Abbeyhill, by Calton to the Water of Leith. Calton was locally known as the Craigend - Lochend and Craigend being the two foci of the parish area. The parish kirk at Restalrig was dismantled at the Reformation, and the chapel of St. Mary in the Kirkgate became the parish church of South Leith. The parish was legally erected in 1609, when the necessary act of Parliament was obtained. Forty years later there was a move in the Town Council of Edinburgh to re-erect the ruinous church at Restalrig, and to separate that village from

1. The Abbot of Holyrood made a gift of the bailiary of St. Leonard's to Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig in a charter dated 27.3.1439. IWCH. ii.117.
the parish of South Leith, but the scheme came to nothing.(2)

North Leith had attained parish status three years earlier. The two chapels of St. Minian and St. Nicholas had served the needs of what was little more than a hamlet, situated rather far from the parish kirk at Holyrood, and these chapels, with the lands annexed to them, formed the new parish. North Leith was peculiar in that the parish kirk was built by the inhabitants themselves contributing the cost from their own pockets. The patronage was therefore vested in "the hail of the inhabitants", which in fact meant the male heads of families.(3) The parish was extended in 1630 by the addition of the baronies of Hillhousefield and Newhaven. This increased the parish area about twenty-fold, and at the same time the financial

2. MTC. 18.4.1649, 9.11.1649, 12.12.1649, 2.1.1650.
   XVII. 183, XVII. 202, XVII. 2.10, XVII. 2/6.
3. North Leith parish was erected by act of Parliament dated 9th July 1606. The act summarises the events which led to its promulgation: "The Inhabitants of the North and South sides of the Water and Brig of Leith, within the Regality & Barrony of Broughton, Hantit, and made Repair of auld to their Parish Kirk of Holyroodhouse att all times, being aged and sickly persons; Quairfore the said Inhabitants of the said North and South sides of the Water and Brig of Leith, upon their own Expences and Charges, bigget to themselves an Kirk, upon the North side of the Brig of Leith...Therefore the Sovereign and Estates Creates and Erects the said Kirk in an Parish Kirk to the saids Inhabitants...to be called in all time coming, the Parish Kirk of Leith benorth the Brig, and grants and gives to the said Parish Kirk, and to the hail Inhabitants thereof, all privileges, freedoms, Liberties and Immunities belonging to any Parish Kirk within this Kingdom..."
resources of the parish were greatly increased by the purchase of the corn tithes of Hillhousefield, and the fish tithes of Leith and Newhaven. These purchases, like the building of the kirk itself, were made possible by subscription, and they proved a very profitable investment. The fish tithes, bought in 1631 for 1800 merks, were in 1836 worth £220 per annum to North Leith Church, even allowing for the fact that they were never fully collected in any one year.(4)

South Leith, of course, was a far more populous parish, and the wide landward area added to the village itself made the charge a heavy one. In 1592 - seventeen years, be it noted, before the church was legally acknowledged as the parish church - a second charge was proposed for South Leith. The plan was that the incorporations of the parish should in partnership with the kirk session provide the stipend for a second minister. To this end the incorporations were divided into four groups, roughly equal in their financial resources.(5) The Mariners, by far the most numerous and wealthy corporation, stood by themselves; the Maltmen took under their wing the Carters and the Porters; the Traffickers or Merchants, not so numerous as the Mariners, but also well-off, were also on their own; and the Crafts or Trades represented a grouping of

nine separate incorporations - the Tailors, Cordiners (shoemakers), Baxters, Barbers, Hammermen, Wrights and Masons, Weavers, Fleshers and Coopers. These groups were the so-called "Four Incorporations" of Leith, and between them they supported the second minister until the charge was suppressed almost three hundred years later.

In the closing years of the seventeenth century both parishioners and clergy were striving to readjust themselves to the fact that Presbyterianism was now the established form of church government. Towards the end of 1692 the Presbyterians in Leith repossessed the parish kirk, and the supporters of bishops took themselves off, probably to the meeting-house in Cables Wynd. This was the building long known as "The Ark" - doubtless a reference to the Ark of the Covenant, which the Presbyterians had so long contended for.(6) All through the reign of Charles II Presbyterians had met for worship at their peril, but in 1687 King James II issued the "Declaration for Liberty of Conscience", followed by a proclamation abolishing the penalties and disabilities hitherto imposed on the Presbyterians. At once the Leith Presbyterians began meeting in a house on the Sheriff Brae, which speedily became too

6. It was later also known as the "Tabernacle" - cf. Edinburgh Evening Courant (EEC), 11.5.1815.
small for them.(7) Alexander Matheson, a wright, and an elder in South Leith, then built the Ark, and rented it to the congregation at 250 merks per annum — about £14 stg.(8)

When the Episcopalians were turned out of the parish church there was no other building for them to use, except the Ark, unless they were to content themselves with accommodation in some private house. In his account of the Leith Episcopalians at this period, Canon Jackson mentions Chapel Lane, the Citadel, and Queen Street as traditional locations of Episcopal meeting-houses, but there is no certain knowledge of the site of any Episcopal chapel until 1805.(9)

The Rev. Charles Kay was the minister turned out of the parish kirk in 1692, and Jackson says "he seems to have had no building set apart for sacred uses. He officiated, we are told, in his own house in the 'Yard Head'". The source of this information is not quoted. Indeed there was no manse attached to South Leith church until 1846, so that Mr Kay would continue to occupy "his own house" after becoming an "outed" minister.(10) But the Ark could also

8. SLR. 6.7.1688.
10. See Appendix B.
be described as standing in the Yardheads, for the site is at the junction of Yardheads with Cables Wynd – in those days known as Matheson's Wynd, from that Alexander Matheson who built the Ark. On 5th February 1695 it was reported to the kirk session of South Leith that

"ye Seats of the Meeting hous were rouped and sold according to appointment for ane hundred pounds Scots to be payed in readie monie, which soume the sessions apoints to be put in the Mortificatione box."

The purchaser is not mentioned, but presumably the Episcopalians, if they were using the building, would buy the seats. This sale took place over two years after the Presbyterians had left the Ark. Did it stand empty all that time? It was the most suitable place in Leith for worship, apart from the kirk itself, and whoever bought the seats, they could not be moved anywhere else. It seems most plausible to suppose that the Episcopalians were using the Ark, that they managed to raise £14 sterling per annum for the rent, and also a further small sum for rent of the seats; but after two years they managed to find £100 Scots to buy the seats. There is no evidence of any local bitterness between Presbyterian and Episcopal; on the contrary we shall see there was much sympathy for the Episcopal ministers.

In reply to a Presbytery questionnaire in 1709, the session clerk of South Leith reports:

"As to Meeting houses the presbytery knowes there is
one in ye yeard heads of Leith where Mr Arthur Miller who is not qwalified did preach. And it being shut up by Authority they took up another wherein Mr Miller did preach sometymes, and sometymes Mr Archibald Mair who (as we are informed) is qwalified, but now they have broken up (i.e. broken into) ye meeting house that was shut up by authority, and keep preaching there every Lord's day." (11)

This meeting house of which "the presbitery knowes" in the Yardheads, can hardly be any other than the Ark, where the now established Presbyterians once worshipped - a fact bound to be well known to their fellow Presbyterians in Edinburgh. Probably this place was closed on a sheriff's order in 1700, when there was a general drive against Episcopal meeting-houses where non-juring ministers officiated. Charles Kay was definitely of the non-juring persuasion: in September 1694 his prayers were quoted to the Privy Council as including such expressions as "That God would bless our king and queen, and William and Mary", and "our king and queen, William and Mary, and the rest of the royal family".

Mr Arthur Miller, who was later Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus, succeeded Mr Kay as incumbent at Leith, and he also was non-juring; but the presence of Archibald Mair, a "qualified" man, presents the interesting situation of "qualified" and non-juring ministers and (presumably) congregations sharing the same meeting-house!

How many Episcopalians were there in Leith at this

11. SIR. 17.3.1709.
time? In 1735 Robert Forbes, (later Bishop of Ross and Caithness) had 111 communicants at his first Easter in Leith, and this number rose to 172 before 1746.(12) A hundred communicants represents an impressive amount of support in a community of 5000 inhabitants, and a congregation of this size required something more than a room in a private house for worship. It is more than likely that the Ark was the first home of the "outed" Episcopalians, and that after its official closure it was still used clandestinely for a period, although other and less convenient places had to serve them eventually.

Clandestine or not, it is hard to imagine where else in Leith 172 communicants could have been served in the 1740s. Hugo Arnot says that the Episcopalian meeting house in Leith was shut up by order of the sheriff of the county after the '45 Rebellion, and it could well be the Ark he is referring to.(13) Jackson mentions a tradition that a "qualified" chapel had existed in Leith from the reign of Queen Anne, but decided that this is not very well founded.(14) On the other hand the minute of South Leith kirk session, of 17th March 1709, mentioned above, is a contemporary statement which there is no reason to doubt. And if indeed both

qualified and non-juring congregations shared a building, it might well have been possible to avoid its final closure until as late as 1746. Neither William Law nor Robert Forbes, incumbents who both left registers and journals from the 1730s and 1740s, ever mention the "qualified" congregation, but that proves nothing. There is no certain knowledge concerning the early years of the Episcopalians in Leith, but these speculations may not be without interest.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the only other identifiable religious denomination in Leith was the Roman Catholics. There had been Baptist worship in the Citadel during its occupation at the time of the Commonwealth, but this was inspired by English soldiery, and does not seem to have survived their departure for long. The Town Council of Edinburgh passed an act in April 1676 against the Quakers in Leith, ordering a £50 fine for each meeting; but they too had disappeared from the scene by the end of the century.(15) Roman Catholics had no organised worship, and whatever priestly ministrations they may have received must have been most secret. Romanists were few in number, and quite well known. The Presbytery questionnaire of 1709, already referred to, asks about Roman Catholics and the answer lists six:

15. MTC. 5.4.1676. XXVIII. 150.
"Lewes Voilung popish from his Infancie.
Catherine Sharelock, Spous to Joseph Wylie
popish from her Infancy.
William Morgan, Carver,
popish from his Infancy.
Catherine Stewart, spous to Daniel Mcpherson,
popish from her Infancy.
William Runch, Lodges in Leith Wynd but works with
William Brown, Cordiner in Caltoun.
John Alexander, Doctor of Phisick.
"As to pagan and popish superstitions, the Session
knows nothing about them in ye paroch."(16)

The presbytery at this period made annual enquiry concerning the state of parishes, asking about the prevalence of profaning the Sabbath day, about the character of schoolmasters, about chaplains to other religious groups, papists, &c. North Leith in 1705 listed as papists the Duke of Gordon and his household, at the Citadel; another Francis Gordon and his wife; and Dr Alexander and his son "who likewise reside in and houses about the Duke's Lodging". (This is surely the same Dr Alexander mentioned in the South Leith return). In 1710 Mrs Collieson and Mrs Margaret Gall are added to the list, and described as "all in the Duke's family"(17) The Duke of Gordon's entourage seems to have constituted the entire R.C. community in North Leith then.

Worship in the parish churches of North and South Leith from Sunday to Sunday followed the pattern general

16. SLR. 17.3.1709.
throughout the country. The Form and Order of service had been but little affected by the change to Presbyterianism, as may be seen from the following "Order at the Communion in Aprill 1673", included in the session minutes during the Episcopal ascendancy. This is, in fact, a list of the elders' duties:

"1. To sitt in Chyrres at the head of the tables at the ministeris bake, the balies William Hume & Charles Charteris.
2. To stand at the head of the table for Decencie be the ministeris. James Cockburn, Robert Douglas, elder.
3. To convey the elements to the table: Robert Douglas, balie of Sanot Anthones & Henery Hay thes¬aurer.
4. To cary the bread, Alexr Swyntoune, Jon Burtoune.
5. For the coupes Andrew Dewar, David Gillies.
6. For the stoupes James Angus, Robert Douglas yor.
7. For the tukites (i.e. tickets or tokens) John Young, James Stevin.
8. To collect at the Inward porch both the Lordis Dayes, Andrew Dewar, Alexr Swyntoune, John Curtenne, Geo: Tait.
9. To collect at the wester stylly both the Lordis Dayes, Jon Fiddles, Alexr Hunter, Ja: Hay, Pat: Hoy.
10. To collect at the mid and easter stylles, Rot. Walker, Alexr Allardyce, Geo: Twydie, Andrew Coates.
11. To collect the two saturdayes two moondayes & all the week dayes, Wm. Andersone, Ja: Gibb, Wm. Noble, Gilbert Storie.
12. To stand at the west end of the Tables to receave in the people to the Tables, Alexr Air, Jon: Fiddles, Alexr Hunter, James Heage.
13. To stand at the south and north pillars at the east end of the Tables to let the people out, Alexr Mathison, Wm. Aitken.
14. To have a cair of the wyn in the yll (aisle) and to draw it, Thomas Jamesone.
15. To bring the wyn to the Tables, Geo: Twydie, And: Coatis. (18)"

18. SIR. 10.4.1673.
There is nothing in these arrangements to distinguish Episcopalian from Presbyterian. The sacramental season envisaged in this minute appears to last about ten days, including two weekends – an even longer period than was common in the Presbyterian eighteenth century.

No particular date or season was specially marked for dispensing "the Sacrament", but minister and kirk session made a point of arranging Communion once in the year. In North Leith, 29th July 1709,

"...The Elders this day reported that many of this paroch, especially Newhaven, were already gone to the haring drave and that the harvest approached, so that it would be inconvenient to have it Adminis-
trate before these were over, but so soon as these are at a close they resolved to set about it."

A month later it was decided to have the Sacrament

"so soon as the throng of the Harvest is over, where-
upon the Moderator took occasion to enjoin the Eld-
ers to a tender and Circumspect walk, and to have a Strick eye to any disorder in their several quar-
ters."

A week later the last Sunday in September was agreed upon as the Sacrament Sabbath. Until now it had been the custom for North and South Leith to have their celebrations on different days, so that the ministers of both parishes could join together and share the long days of preaching, praying and dispensing the elements. This year however, when word was sent to South Leith, the ministers there informed their brethren on the north side of the river
that they had decided to have their Communion on the same day. They thought this was a better arrangement for the town at large, and they hoped no offence would be taken.

It was a sensible proposal, for a local communion meant almost a week's holiday for everyone, and with the North and South Leith communions on separate Sundays, two weeks' holiday was unavoidable, with financial losses men could ill afford. But North Leith session could not see their way to agreeing, and it was eventually agreed to have the two communions separated by a fortnight.

The usual procedure in North Leith before Communion, was for the minister to announce to the kirk session that he had almost finished visiting the congregation. This annual round of the congregation was made for the purpose of examining each member concerning their religious knowledge. Ability to repeat the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed was the bare minimum for admission to communicant membership of the Church. Enquiry was also made concerning the practice of family worship, the religious instruction of children, and the general behaviour of the family and servants. When the minister reported this work was near its end, the elders agreed on a suitable date for Communion - any time from the end of June to the beginning of October or later, according to the
state of the fishing and the harvest.

The presbytery in 1711 was disturbed by

"the great prophanation of the Lord's day by the flocking of Multitudes of Idle people to the West Kirk, Canongate and Leith churches when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administrate there upon pretence to hear sermon in the church yeard, whereas many do only vaig about and spend the Lord's day idly, and these who Communicate are greatly incommoded by the throng of persons who do not communicate."(19)

The matter was considered by the Committee for Difficult Cases, who recommended that in future there should be no churchyard preaching to the people who gathered there waiting their turn to communicate in the church. This was where the riff-raff congregated and made themselves a nuisance. Second, it was proposed that the four congregations concerned - West Kirk (St. Cuthbert's), Canongate, North and South Leith, should all hold their communion services on the same day. This would obviously divide the attention of the rabble, and reduce the annoyance to each congregation.

Third, since this arrangement would deprive Church folk of more frequent occasions to receive Communion, by attendance in each church where the sacrament was being dispensed, it was proposed that the four churches concerned should institute a biannual Communion in place of the present annual occasion.(20)

19. NLR. 23.1.1711.
20. NLR. ibid.
The other Edinburgh churches already operated such a scheme, so the present proposals would simply extend the arrangement to cover the northern suburbs of the city, and include Leith. But the North Leith elders would by no means hear of it. They had no objection to confining preaching to the church; the suggestion for communion twice a year was not received with enthusiasm, but if the Presbytery insisted they would agree, although with only one minister there might be difficulties from time to time. But the idea of all four congregations dispensing the sacrament on the same day could not be entertained for a minute. For one thing, the other three congregations were all collegiate charges, with more than one minister. They could each manage a Communion Sunday alone, without outside help. North Leith was differently placed, with only one minister to do everything — to preach and administer the sacrament, and preach again and dispense again throughout the day, to say nothing of the preceding Thursday and Saturday services, and the following Thanksgivings on the Monday and Tuesday. Then again, no matter how things were arranged, the turnout at Communion in North Leith was never very impressive, owing to many sailors and fishermen being at sea. North Leith depended on flocks of visitors to make the occasion suitably impressive. As the session clerk put it, "the decencie of that ordinance would be Considerably marr'd by
reason of the paucity of Communicants." (21) It was more than sixty years later before North Leith conformed to the general practice. In 1777 the minister, David Johnston, proposed a biannual sacrament to be held on the same day as South Leith,

"it being much more decent to have the whole Town employed together in the same devout Exercises, than on different days. That tho' it would be both an additional trouble and expense to him, yet he would cheerfully submit to it for the greater good of the place...He had mentioned it to the Committee for examining the Treasurer's accounts, when all of them thought it would be an advantage to the Parish, and had often wished for it" (22)

In worship, doctrine, government and discipline the Leith churches conformed to the general pattern of Presbyterian order, which has frequently been described in detail. One special element in the church life of Leith however, was the presence and the strong influence of the incorporations. The opinion of these bodies had always to be kept in mind by the kirk session, and a man who was both an elder and an official in one of the incorporations was a most influential person. And in North Leith there were further complications, since the incorporations there were separate from those in South Leith, and the North Leith Crafts were part of the Canongate Crafts. Furthermore Newhaven, part of the parish of North Leith, had its own Society of Free Fishermen, who had no connection with the Mariners of Leith, and confined themselves to promoting Newhaven interests.

21. NLR. 20.2.1711.
22. NLR. 3.2.1777.
The incorporations all had seats in the parish churches. At a time when the seats owned by the kirk session were not nearly sufficient to accommodate all who wished to rent them, many worshippers had to bring their own stools, or be content to stand through a very long service. The heritors had seats, and so had the incorporations. These were lofts, originally raised on pillars to leave the floor space clear for the rest of the congregation. Each corporation had seats in proportion to the number of its members. If the membership fell, an incorporation might have seats left vacant, and could then let them— a welcome source of income to an incorporation suffering a fall in membership— and a gesture much appreciated by the congregation. The bigger corporations had nothing like the number of seats needed for each member and his family, and only one seat per member might be available. In North Leith the corporation seats were more important as sources of income, as they were seldom occupied by members of the incorporations who lived in the Canongate. Only once a year, on the second Sunday in May, did all the incorporations, with the Canongate Magistrates, attend the kirk of North Leith; and while this was impressive, no one wanted it to happen every week. Corporations were proud of their power and influence, and were fond of showing their authority; but they were generally co-operative, and they had funds which could sometimes be drawn upon to subscribe or lend money for some urgent repair.
In regard to church discipline, one outstanding feature in the two Leith parishes was the zeal with which the elders hunted information about irregular marriages, and the sustained efforts they made to stop the practice. Irregular or clandestine marriage in Scotland was legal, and in various forms was practised long before the eighteenth century. Before the Reformation hand-fasting had been common. A man and woman would agree to cohabit for a year, and at the end of that period they were both accounted free; they might choose to separate or to marry, and in the latter case a priest was called in to regularise their situation. The Reformers soon put a stop to this practice, although it lingered long in remoter areas.

The attitude of the law of Scotland to marriage is put succinctly by F.P. Walton. "All that is necessary to prove a marriage in Scotland is to show that two people, who are free to marry each other, have agreed then and there to do so." Also "It is not necessary that the particular time and place be shown at which they consented so to take each other for spouses. And it is immaterial whether they ever cohabited or not."(23) But the Church could hardly be satisfied with this view of the matter, and the Church wielded considerable authority. But despite clerical

23. F.P. Walton, Scotch Marriages, Regular & Irregular, 131.
disapproval, irregular marriage remained so widespread that in 1661 an act of Parliament was passed condemning "clandestine and unlawfull marriages", imposing penalties of three months' imprisonment, and a scale of fines ranging from £1000 Scots for noblemen down to 100 merks for ordinary offenders. The fines were to be "applyed to pious uses within the severall paroches wher the saids persones duells", which meant in fact that the fines went into the parish poor box. Celebrators of such marriages were to be banished for life.(24)

Irregular marriage was legal, but as there was no record of such a marriage, it was extremely difficult to prove. Church and State were agreed here, but the Act of 1661 seems to have produced little result, no doubt because of the divided Church and the disturbed times. After the Presbyterian establishment however, and with the kirk session in command in every parish, there seemed a better prospect of controlling the marriage situation.

The two kirk sessions in Leith now found themselves in a frustrating position. Sooner or later an irregular marriage was almost bound to be brought to the notice of the elders, for parents usually wanted their children baptised; but if the parties maintained they had forgotten the name

of the celebrator, or had never known it, (which might
very well be true), and that the witnesses were strangers
to them, (as often happened), and if they had also for¬
gotten the date and place where the marriage took place,
there was nothing the kirk session could do about it, beyond
recording the statement that the marriage between the part¬
ies had taken place. The parties were of course rebuked for
the irregularity, exhorted to live together and respect
one another as husband and wife, and ordered to pay the
marriage dues, and the fines - which went into the ever¬
needy poor's box.

It was a second act of Parliament in 1698 that gave
power to kirk sessions to elicit details.(25) This measure
compelled the parties when required to disclose the names of
the celebrator and witnesses. Refusal to comply led to
prison, or to a fine - and the scale of fines was now double
that in the 1661 act. It is after 1698 therefore, that the
kirk sessions are able to include details of irregular
marriages in their records, and they did so with zeal, for
apart from all else, the fines made a welcome source of
income for the benefit of the poor.

The session always insisted on written proof of irregular
marriage. Celebrators did not issue certificates unless
they were asked for, but once the attitude of the elders
became known, the signed paper was generally forthcoming

25.APS. X.149. 1698. cap.6.
without protest. Forgery was occasionally tried, but as most people were then barely literate, the result was generally clumsy enough to be easily detected by the session clerk.

In the early years of the eighteenth century celebrators of irregular marriages were generally Episcopalian ministers who had not found it possible to change their views to suit the new establishment. If their congregations were now Presbyterian, or were too few in number to support them, they were in a hard case indeed. Several of these men were living in Edinburgh, in lodgings that were barely respectable, and the fee for an irregular marriage was very welcome. From time to time one or other of these "broken" men would become popular with Leithers, and there would be a run on his services for months, or even years - as with Samuel Mowat, William Jameson and Patrick Douglas.

The statistics of these irregular marriages are suggestive, and worth examining. It may be safely assumed that in a small town like Leith the kirk session would be well informed, and that few clandestine unions escaped their notice. In South Leith, up to the year 1713, an average of six irregular marriages is recorded each year; from 1714 to 1728 this rate is more than doubled, and from 1729 to 1736 the annual level reaches 22. There was no significant rise
in the population during this period, so these marriages were plainly becoming much more popular. From 1736 to 1766 the annual average remains high at 25, but after this there was a rapid decline. 1768 saw 23 irregular marriages, but by 1784 this had dropped to 10, and the annual total never again reaches double figures. Several years show only one or two entries. After 1806 there is a complete gap until one final entry in 1818. The pattern in North Leith is similar.

The explanation of this statistical rise and fall throughout the years is to be found in the motives behind these unions. It was not cheaper to be married irregularly, for the celebrator had to be paid. There could have been no attraction in the amenities provided, for these marriages generally took place in the back room of a tavern, or in the frowsty lodgings of the minister. This kind of marriage was not confined to any particular class. Some of the parties were poverty-stricken; some were plainly not over-intelligent; but others belonged to well-known families in the port, comfortably off, and of good reputation. One reason for avoiding the parish minister was certainly intense abhorrence of the cutty stool. A girl pregnant before her marriage realised that eventually she would be summoned, and summoned again to be rebuked before the assembled congregation. The celebrator of a clandestine marriage would readily falsify
the date on the certificate he gave - for an extra fee - showing that the child, when born, would throw no reflection on the morals of the parents. And hence the need to keep the real date of the ceremony secret.

Some young people wished to marry without their parents' consent, which was difficult in the ordinary way, after proclamation of banns. The irregular contract was the obvious answer. (26) The practice of quartering soldiers in private houses led inevitably to many irregular marriages, and these often turned out very happily. Many secret marriages only came to light with the death of the husband, and the widow's claim for poor relief. The great advantage of the irregular marriage where soldiers or sailors were involved, was the speed with which it could be arranged. Some celebrators made a pretence of proclaiming the marriage by calling out from the door of their lodgings, but usually they were happy to ignore that side of the matter completely. Witnesses also presented no problem. These were often obtained by asking two passers-by to come in from the street for a minute; but those who regularly conducted these

26. The attitude of the upper classes is described by Miss Balfour-Melville: "In order to escape the expense of a wedding, or the fuss of it, perhaps in order to escape the jocularity of one's too playful friends, for love of romance - for any or all of those reasons it was thought well done quietly to slip away and get married privately before a friendly minister without any other intervention." (Barbara Balfour-Melville, The Balfours of Pilrig, 164).
marriages generally had two convenient witnesses at hand - wife, son, landlord or fellow-lodger. Sailors were liable to come and go with little warning; the press-gang was frequently at work; so young Leithers were often in a hurry.

All these reasons contributed to the popularity of clandestine marriage, but they do not explain the sudden jumps and just as sudden reduction in the annual statistics. Almost certainly the doubling of the irregular marriage rate between 1714 and 1728 was due to widespread dissatisfaction over the reintroduction patronage under the Act of 1712. Far from dying, resentment in Leith built up over the years, as it did in the rest of the country, until the culmination came with the Secession of 1733. This particular form of revolt reached Leith in 1740 when, under the leadership of John Reid, doctor (i.e. assistant master) at the Grammar School of Leith, there was a secession from the parish kirk.(27) Reid himself was irregularly married in 1736, but after 1740 the Leith seceders no longer acknowledged the authority of the established kirk session, and managed their own church affairs independently.

This attitude of the seceders meant that, strictly speaking, all their marriages, celebrated without reference to the parish minister, were irregular. But while an average

of 25 irregular marriages were noted annually between 1736 and 1766, none of these concerned any of the seceders. By the 1760s there were upwards of 200 men and women adhering to the secession in Leith, (28) so it must have been deliberate policy on the part of the parish minister and kirk session to ignore all marriages of seceders. The same attitude was adopted in regard to Episcopalian marriages. And this, after all, was the only practicable course to follow in the circumstances.

Two acts were published in 1753 and 1781, covering "England, Wales and Berwick", providing that marriages celebrated in churches other than parish churches should be deemed valid and legal. (29) and in 1784 these provisions were extended to Scotland. This reduced the concern of the kirk sessions to those people not adhering to other denominations; and while, as we have seen, the elders in Leith had for many years past been more or less following the lines of these acts, yet there is a notable reduction in the entries of irregular marriages from 1784. By the end of the eighteenth century there were two Established congregations, two seceding congregations and two Episcopal congregations in the parish of South Leith, and by 1811 the population had risen to 15,938. (30) Watching the mis-

29. 26 Geo.II and 21 Geo.III c.53.
30. SLR. 30.6.1811.
misdemeanours of all but church members in such a large population was now beyond the power of the elders of the parish kirk.

The secession in Leith was a quiet affair, and for a long time was hardly noticed; but the movement grew and spread until by the end of the century a considerable proportion of the population were involved. The occasion of the breakaway was a vacancy in the first charge of South Leith which happened in 1739. The patron, Lord Balmerino, was disposed to be generous, and made it known that he was willing to waive his right of patronage, and allow an election to take place. Voting was confined to the heritors, elders, and heads of families, and they settled on a Mr Aitken, minister at Larbert. According to the minutes of the Presbytery of Edinburgh everything went smoothly, and the only hitch was at Larbert, from which place the Presbytery of Stirling refused to transport Mr Aitken. The ensuing General Assembly settled the dispute in favour of Leith, and the Rev. William Aitken was inducted there on 26th June 1740. (31)

The Church courts, however, only concerned themselves with that small fraction of the people of South Leith who were entitled to vote; so when the presbytery minute refers to the heritors, elders, and Masters of the Four Incorpor-

31. Hew Scott, Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae, i.163.
Incorporations in Leith "compearing and harmoniously insisting" on being allowed to go forward with the call to Mr Aitken, that is no indication of the real mind of the congregation. The fact is there were two minds in South Leith about this settlement. According to McKelvie, the majority of the congregation would not have Mr Aitken, and petitioned the presbytery not to sustain the call. On the presbytery's refusing the petition the case went to the Synod, and then to the General Assembly of 1740. When the Assembly rejected the petition a number of the congregation, led by John Reid, withdrew from the Established Church and joined the Associate Presbytery.(32)

This narrative, however, will not bear investigation. There is no record of any such petition having been presented to the presbytery, or to the higher courts of the Church. Moreover the relevant minute of South Leith kirk session on 17th January 1740 contains the definite statement that Mr Aitken was acceptable to "the far greater part of the congregation". On 30th January, application for a moderation in the call was made to the presbytery, and the call was finally sustained on 27th February.

The adherence of "the far greater part" of the congregation was enough to see the call through: what the minority

32. William McKelvie, op. cit. 209.
thought, we may gather from a minute of the Associate Presbytery, (the governing court of the recently founded seceding kirk) on March 4th 1740:

"There was read a petition from Mr John Reid, Doctor to the Grammar School of Leith, bearing his adherence to the Testimony and Accession to the Presbytery, craving to be taken under the Presbytery’s inspection. The Presbytery granted his petition."

The remarkable fact, in view of McKelvie’s story of the petition to the Edinburgh Presbytery, the Synod and Assembly, is that John Reid had joined the Seceders before either Synod or Assembly had met! But why did he go to the Associate Presbytery, which met at Stirling? There was an Associate congregation in Edinburgh meeting regularly for worship, though as yet without a settled minister. It was open to anyone from Leith to join the Edinburgh congregation, and certainly it was no mere whim that took the Leith schoolmaster over the abominable roads of eighteenth century Scotland to Stirling in the early spring. The obvious reason is that Reid expected to have himself and his adherents recognised as the Associate congregation of Leith. But the Brethren of the Secession were far too hard pressed to supply the congregations already clamouring for sermon, to think of setting up yet another congregation only two miles from Edinburgh. So John Reid and his followers had perforce to attend worship at the Gardeners’ Hall, where the Edinburgh seceders worshipped.
The following year the Rev. Adam Gib was ordained at the Gardeners' Hall. Times were hard; the last two winters had been severe, with food scarcity amounting almost to famine; but the seceders in elated mood bought ground just outside the Bristo port and built a church there which was opened on 6th December 1741. (33)

By this time the Leith seceders must have been learning that maintaining their principles was like to be a costly business. In the Established Church they were expected to contribute to the poor box, and to occasional special collections for charities. As members of the Associate congregation of Edinburgh they had to bear their part in raising some £1400 for their new church. Probably about £50 was subscribed in Leith. This can be inferred from a subscription list for North Leith which has been preserved, showing a total of £8.15.6. Mr Gib the minister compiled a membership roll of his congregation in 1744, and noted 16 members from North Leith and 80 from South Leith. This group of Leithers remained in connection with the Edinburgh congregation for the next twenty-five years.

During that period a great deal of history was made, but for the Seceders the crisis year was 1747, when the notorious "breach" took place over the Burgess Oath.

This oath was introduced by Parliament in 1745, and was applied to those persons becoming burgesses in certain large towns, including Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth. It ran thus:

"I profess before God and your Lordships, that I profess and allow with my heart the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof. I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the Roman religion called Papistry."

Some Seceders (later called the "Burghers") thought there was nothing in the oath to take exception to; others (the "Antiburghers") maintained that no true Seceder could put his name to it with a good conscience, since the "true religion presently professed within this realm" obviously meant the Established Church, and nothing else. The ranks of the secession movement had now so swelled that the chief court was a synod rather than a presbytery, and at the 1747 Associate Synod the Burgess Oath dispute came to a head, and the Antiburghers excommunicated the Burghers. (34)

For sheer spite and vindictiveness it would be hard to find a historical parallel to "The Breach". Ebenezer Erskine, "Father" of the Secession, remained on the moderate side as a Burgher, and was excommunicated by his son John! But if any one person could be blamed for this shameful quarrel, that person was the Rev. Adam Gib of Bristo. It was his persistence that whipped up the controversy and kept the two

34. The events surrounding "The Breach" are described by Wm. McKelvie in Annals & Statistics of the U.P.Church, and by Robert Small in A History of the Congregations of the U.P.Church.
sides at boiling point; his intransigence prevented any compromise, though many on both sides tried desperately to come to terms.

A majority of Gib's kirk session were against him and took the Burgher side, while a majority of the congregation backed their Antiburgher minister. After litigation, the Rev. Adam Gib and his supporters had to get out, and they built themselves another church at Crosscauseway which was opened in November 1753. (35) Most of the Leith Seceders took the Antiburgher side, and so travelled to Crosscauseway week by week. By 1765 the Leithers felt they had had enough. Those who had followed John Reid in 1740 were now either dead or elderly, and it was a goodish walk to Edinburgh. A petition was presented to the kirk session at Crosscauseway asking for a separate preaching in Leith on Sundays. Besides pleading the interests of the aged and infirm, this petition also urged "the deplorable situation of the people in this place who are groaning under the want of the Gospel". This application was ignored, and a fortnight later a fresh petition was presented, signed by 42 members and 48 adherents — all men, and all from Leith.

Adam Gib was resolutely opposed to the idea of any separate preaching in Leith. That summer he allowed a

35. This was later Nicolson Street Church.
probationer to conduct a single service there to pacify the malcontents, and apart from that he said nothing and did nothing. At the October meeting of presbytery a paper was handed in ridiculing the attempt to set up a congregation in Leith, and declaring that the so-called adherents to the Leith petition were "men of loose principles and practice in a religious sense". This paper was signed by four alleged members from Leith; but it afterwards transpired that Mr Gib himself was the author. Gib also charged his Leith members with attending the preaching of George Whitefield the evangelist, and also with going to the Burgher meeting in Bristo.

There was a furious scene in the presbytery as the duplicity of Adam Gib was laid bare, and the Leithers decided on a further step. Hitherto they had only asked for preaching in Leith; now they petitioned the presbytery for disjunction from Mr Gib's congregation. This they obtained from the Synod of 1766. Robert Small justly comments in regard to these events: "In the origin and early history of this (Leith) congregation we have the Rev. Adam Gib at his worst and at his weakest."(36)

While the Leith seceders thus obtained their independence in 1766, they were not yet a congregation, since they had neither elders nor a minister; and it was not until 17th January 1768 that the first elders were ordained. This was due again to the delaying tactics pursued by Mr Gib, for that

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36. Small, op. cit. Small's account of these events is brief and clear.
astute man knew that without a kirk session the Leith seceders could not receive new members, and indeed would probably disintegrate before long, and return to the Edinburgh fold, considerably humbled. With a properly constituted session however, Leith could now look for a minister. Again there were arguments and delays. In view of the general shortage of seceding ministers some members of the Synod were opposed to granting Leith a minister, the port being so near Edinburgh: others tried to push the business of finding a minister. Bad feeling between Adam Gib and the Leithers was so bitter and sustained that eventually an astonishing arrangement was made whereby Leith was attached to the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy:

Even this did not deliver Leith from the attentions of Adam Gib. When at last permission was granted to Leith to look for a minister, it was only after the Synod had agreed to a list of conditions submitted by Mr Gib. Only under these conditions would the minister of Bristo be prepared to recognize the minister of Leith. One of these conditions is of particular interest:

"...4thly, The Synod agrees, that the Minister of Leith shall supply at Edinburgh, on such warning as may serve for advertising his congregation, whenever Edinburgh congregation shall be unexpectedly reduced to the necessity of a vacancy otherwise, or when no other Supply can be rationally obtained or looked for: Because Leith-congregation can be a great deal sooner advertised of a disappointment than that of Edinburgh; and because the place of worship at Edinburgh can contain Leith-congregation more easily than Leith place of worship can contain a third part of them: and as a
necessary and standing evidence of dutifulness and amicableness in Leith congregation toward that of Edinburgh."

In view of the desperate shortage of ministers at that time, Adam Gib had after all gained a distinct advantage from the situation, and Leith had perforce to agree. When at last the Rev. John Proudfoot was ordained to the Leith Antiburgher congregation on 27th October 1772, the ordination was carried through by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy; but on that same day the Edinburgh Presbytery met at Leith and received back the Leith congregation.

In the meantime the whole town was stirred by events in the parish kirk, in comparison with which the small concerns of the Seceders counted for very little. The Rev. Henry Hunter, in the second charge, had in 1771 accepted a call to the congregation at London Wall, and the business of filling the vacancy was prolonged by a succession of acrimonious disputes. The second charge was filled by the kirk session and incorporations in joint consultation. As the incorporations between them paid the stipend of the second minister - or rather four-fifths of the stipend, the session finding the remaining fifth - the patronage was vested in the incorporations and kirk session jointly. Now in voting to present a call, each of the Four Incorporations was represented by two delegates, but the kirk session voted per capita. This meant that a voting majority always remained with the session,
which was clearly an injustice to the incorporations, without whose money there would have been no second minister. (37) However, an agreement reached in 1754 ensured that the number of elders voting must be equalled by the number of delegates from the Four Incorporations. When a call had been decided upon, the candidate was to be presented to the congregation for approval or otherwise.

On this occasion in 1771, before any candidates were considered, a protest went up that certain men who had resigned their eldership years ago were now being admitted as members of the session without having been restored to their eldership. There was also Captain Robert Moodie, who proposed voting as an elder, and again as representing the Incorporation of Shipmasters. These were other objections, but these two were the principal causes of trouble. (38) Naturally the business was canvassed everywhere, and excitement was high enough for an anonymous author to publish a pamphlet in the form of a play —

"The Planters of the Vineyard: or, A Kirk Session Confounded. A Comedy of Three Acts. As it was Performed at Forthtown by the Persons of the Drama," (39)

"Forthtown" is Leith, and the kirk session that of South Leith. The scene moves from the session house to the Kirkgate.

38. SLR. 13.8.1771.
then to the Shore, and on to a local tavern. It ends with the actual election, inside the church. The author helpfully provided broad hints as to the originals of his characters. Littlewit and Torch, father and son, are listed in the *Dramatis Personae* as Messrs H----y Senr and Junr. Thomas Hadaway and his son were both elders, well-known brewers in Leith - and apparently no friends of the author's.

"RANGER: Pray, what old gentleman is that with his back towards us?
FRANKLY: Why, Sir, that is old Littlewit, who, of all men living, stands in least danger of being damned for his wisdom. However, you must understand he is a man of authority.
RANGER: That other person by him, who is he?
FRANKLY: That is his son, Mr Torch. His father's defects in point of knowledge are supplied by him. He is a sort of index for the old man to use when he is puzzled by anything."

The dozen elders presented in the play provide a fair variety of character. The two Primitives, Sent and Junr, stand for a Mr Sheriff and his son. The old man continually laments "the corruption of the times and the decay of religion", while the son never ceases to sing the praises of the dear departed Rev. Henry Hunter, "who would do nothing contrary to our opinion or advice". Mizen is a sea captain and a villain. This is Captain Robert Moodie, whose proposal to use his vote with the Shipmasters, as well as with the session had given such offence. He has a voice to wake the dead, and all a sailor's bluffness.

The play was only written after matters had become even
more confused, with the emergence of two rival candidates. The Maltmen proposed John Logan, but the Shipmasters favoured John Snodgrass, and neither side would give way. The author of "The Planters of the Vineyard" was a Logan man, and he insists that the majority of both the incorporations and the congregation are in favour of Plainsense (Logan). But his concern is not so much with the merits and faults of the candidates; he is more interested in condemning the elders for a misconception of their office. According to the play, most of the elders are of opinion that the session should be left to decide what is best for the congregation, and are annoyed at the growing volume of protest.

"PRIMITIVE Sen.: Matters are not guided as they were wont in former times, when the sole power of planting a minister was lodged with the session, as being the most sensible part of the people. But now every ignorant being of a mechanic must have an interest in these weighty matters."

It was said that most of the congregation couldn't hear Cantwell (Snodgrass), but "Littlewit" the "Father" of the session, has an answer to that.

"LITTLEWIT": I say we, being endued with more sense and understanding than the incorporations or poor people, have more right to make the election. I hold it pretty reasonable, that as we sit pretty near the pulpit, and can hear distinctly, that we please ourselves, and let the incorporations and vulgar do the same.

"BLINKER: There are plenty of empty seats in the seceder-kirk. Let them gang there.

"TORCH: As you say, sir. Let them go there, in God's name!

"PRIMITIVE: Ay, ay - We'll find a way to make them pay the stipend."
The author is supposed to have been a Mr Lothian, a custom-house clerk - one of the disgruntled people without a vote. He maintains the elders have no right to act in opposition to the wishes of the congregation, and claims the authority of an Assembly act of 1696 in support of his contention.

"The Planters of the Vineyard" offers an interesting view of the circumstances and personalities of Leith at that period, if we allow for some exaggeration and prejudice. In fact the vacancy had lasted almost two years before the Rev. John Logan was ordained to the charge on 2nd April 1773, a man of 25. His ministry in Leith began with great promise. He was well-read, a gifted scholar and poet, and considered to be one of the most eloquent preachers of his time. Appointed by the General Assembly to the Committee for revising and enlarging the Psalmody of the Church, which reported in 1781, Logan was said to have done more than anyone in the production of the Paraphrases.

In this connection an odd thing happened in 1847, when Hugh Miller's paper "The Witness" announced the discovery of a manuscript of several of the Paraphrases, bearing additions and corrections in the handwriting of Robert Burns - and these corrections were identical with the final printed version.(40) The authorship of the Paraphrases had never been divulged;

40. The Witness, 12.5.1847.
but that Burns, of all men, should have been one of the authors - and that before the age of 22! - that was indeed intriguing. Burns' eldest son was shown the manuscript, and said "That is his hand; there can be no doubt of that; no man ever wrote like Burns, but I never knew before that my father had been consulted regarding the Paraphrases. It is certainly very strange, but it is no doubt perfectly true."(41) But it was not true; the handwriting was that of John Logan.

Various claims have been made for Logan as author of the Paraphrases, but only in regard to the 2nd and the 18th does there appear to be general agreement that Logan is the sole author. He certainly revised the work of others in many of the other Paraphrases, but it is impossible to say just which lines or phrases are from Logan's pen.

This man had a curious and tragic career. When he entered Edinburgh University in 1763 at the age of 15, it was his intention to train for the ministry of the seceding kirk, for his family were Burghers. He struck up a firm friendship with another youngster who was also from a Burgher background. This was Michael Bruce, from Kinneswood in Fife. (41a) Bruce was a poet, but his health would not stand the rigours of student life in Edinburgh, and he left the university in 1765. Logan made other friends, and gave up the idea of becoming a Burgher minister, but he still corresponded with

41. Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, June 1847.
41a. Robert Small mentions the father of Michael Bruce as being an elder active in the Burgher Church at Miltoun. (cf. Small's History of the Congregations of the U.P. Church. I. 375).
Bruce and visited him. Eventually Logan published a selection of Bruce's poems, along with some others, (42) and some years later he issued a book of his own poetry, which included "Ode to the Cuckoo" which had been claimed as Bruce's work. (43) The great Bruce-Logan controversy over the authorship of this poem, was never settled, and on the available evidence the only possible verdict is "not proven".

But John Logan soon had much more trouble on his hands than a literary quarrel. In 1780 he applied for the Chair of History at Edinburgh University, apparently relying on the influence of his friends, together with the reputation he had gained from a series of Lectures on the Philosophy of History. He had no success however, and presently went on a visit to London. He had long been friendly with the Rev. Dr. Alexander ("Jupiter") Carlyle of Inveresk, and wrote to him something of an explanation of his sudden departure for the south:

"The chief motive that impelled me was to get quit of some impressions arising from an incident in private life (which people conjecture but do not know) which had very near unhinged my mind altogether."

"Burn this" he prudently adds at the end of the letter - which the worthy doctor took care not to do. (44)

42. Poems on Several Occasions, by Michael Bruce: Edinburgh, printed by J. Robertson, MDCCLXX.
43. Poems by John Logan, R.R.S., Minister at Leith, 1781.
44. Letter to Dr. A. Carlyle from London, 2.4.1781.
Leith was indeed buzzing with rumours, though it is impossible to say how much was known. The Rev. John Logan, living in Tolbooth Wynd, had a maid or housekeeper called Catherine Rogers, and he had got her with child. It was impossible to prevent something of the facts leaking out. Logan's visit to London at the end of March 1781 was ostensibly for the purpose of having his poems published; and indeed they appeared later that year. But the scandalous talk in Leith increased, and news of it reached London. Another letter was addressed to Dr Carlyle on June 14th - unsigned, and written in the third person. The writing conveys a strong sense of acute embarrassment. Referring to himself as "that gentleman", he addresses Carlyle:

"Dear Sir...An event in private life which has recently happened to that gentleman gave occasion to the extravagant appearances which were imputed to another cause. He is not without passions and sensibility, and the event was of such a nature as in much cooler men has frequently disordered the mind for ever. It is needless to describe painful scenes. I can only tell you that he was driven through every point of desperation, that once and again he had seriously determined to walk out of this world, which he could have done, I assure you, with much more ease and pleasure than he writes this letter, and that if the love of letters and literary fame had not aided the principle of self-preservation, the person whom you call your friend would before this time have made his escape from all the miseries of life.

"It was that event which induced him to take a jaunt to London, and he had fully resolved that if he could

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45. The title page reads: "Poems, by the Rev. Mr Logan, one of the Ministers of Leith. London, printed for T. Cadell in the Strand. MDCCLXXXI. 8vo."
not wear off impressions which for many days and nights had deprived him of tranquillity and repose, he would forsake his country and his friends for ever, and go an adventurer into the Church of England.

Apparently there was also talk in Leith about the minister's intemperance, for later in the same letter he feels called upon to defend himself:

"With regard to what they mention of his conduct prior to that affair, there is some strange misrepresentation. In the company of clergymen he will not pretend that he is more temperate than his neighbours. In his own parish he will affirm that he is as uniformly temperate as any Clergyman in Scotland. Except in Houses where there is no drinking at all, he has not dined six times in Leith for these two years past. He never sups from home. These facts can be easily ascertained, and how they are consistent with the account that is given I leave you to determine. Not longer ago than a fortnight before he left Leith, he heard complaints from twenty quarters, that he was trained a Monk or a Hermit. This was nearer the truth."

Judging it wise to return to Leith, we find Logan's name as Moderator of the kirk session in the minute of a meeting held on 29th July 1781; and from this date we find his name regularly in the session records until 19th October 1784. These last years in Leith saw him involved in more and more trouble. Catherine Rogers' child was born - a son.(46) The next summer Logan obtained an interdict against William Anderson, a Stirling bookseller, who proposed printing a second edition of Michael Bruce's poems. In the arguments which followed Logan was on several points exposed as a reckless liar, and the interdict was withdrawn at the end of August.

46. The Rev. Dr. Donald Grant to Dr A. Carlyle from London 4.12.1788. Quoted James McKenzie, Life of Michael Bruce 178.
A second child - a daughter - was born to him by another woman,(47) and from this time he seems to have lost something of his assurance, and sought consolation in the bottle. Dr W. Chambers says he once appeared in the pulpit drunk and incapable, and had to be removed. Nevertheless he did complete the "Tragedy of Runnamede" in 1783, and his literary interests and ambitions were no whit abated.

It is not certain at what date Logan returned to London, but in the spring of 1786 he is again writing to Dr Carlyle of Inveresk, referring to his work as a contributor to "The English Review", and with no hint of having recently arrived in London. At the end of 1786 the kirk session of South Leith compounded with Logan, agreeing to pay him £40 a year on condition that he resigned his charge.(48) London brought him no happiness. Ill health drained his energy and reduced his income. He died in 1788, leaving a little money to provide for his children, who had hitherto been cared for as orphans.

John Logan has left a record of himself as mean, selfish, shameless and cowardly, but he had at least one friend in London who mourned him sincerely. The Rev. Dr. Donald Grant

47. McKenzie, Life of Michael Bruce, 153.
wrote, "By the death of my poor friend Logan, I have suffered a loss which at my time of life can never be repaired." (48a) Perhaps there was something likeable in the man.

Almost exactly contemporary with John Logan was the Rev. John Proudfoot, minister of the "seceder kirk" from 1772 until his deposition in 1785. His was a second ministerial tragedy unfolding and developing in the meeting-house while the parish kirk in the same small town was tholing its own minister.

The "seceder kirk" at the time of John Proudfoot's induction was probably that building in Cables Wynd known variously as "The Ark", "The Meeting-house" and "The Tabernacle". (49) The evidence for this is indirect, but noteworthy. When the Rev. Adam Gib made his conditions for recognising the Leith minister, he remarked that the Edinburgh building where he was minister, at Crosscauseway, could accommodate the combined Edinburgh and Leith congregations more easily than the Leith building could contain a third part of them. (50) As Mr Gib was then claiming to preach to upwards of 2000 souls each Sunday, this suggests that the Leith seceder kirk could seat at least some hundreds. Then there is the remark already quoted from "The Planters of the Vineyard", where Blinker says "There are plenty of empty seats in the seceder-

49. In the early 18th century Cables Wynd was still called Matheson's Wynd, after the builder of the Ark. The open space behind the Ark was still Meeting-house Green well into the 19th century.
50. Minutes of General Associate (Antiburgher) Synod, 9.9.1772.
kirk." This suggests the building used for seeder worship was too big for their requirements. In 1765 ninety male members and adherents signed the petition presented by the Leithers to Adam Gib's kirk session. At that period both the secession movement and the population were rapidly expanding in Leith. There would be at least as many women as men in the congregation; and if allowance is made for children, the "seeder-kirk" must have been able to count at least 200 members and adherents, male and female; and if there were still plenty empty seats, it must have been a sizeable building, and the only known place of such dimensions was the Ark.

George Macfarlane in the Leith Register for 1864 mentions a tradition, also attested by William Hutchison in his "Tales, Traditions and Antiquities of Leith". Macfarlane's version is as follows:

"The Wesleyan Church in Leith may be said to owe its origin to a visit to this place, more than a hundred years ago, of John Wesley...On that occasion he preached to a large multitude of people, in a place of worship called the "Meeting-house", the ruins of which still exist in Cables Wynd, and connected with what is still known as "Meeting-house Green". It is not, however, certain that a Wesleyan Society was formed at that time..."

Wesley was more than once in Leith, and drew great crowds. The great evangelist is said to have preached from the window-sill of the Meeting-house, once the frame had been removed, addressing audiences both inside and outside simultaneously. This may have been on Saturday 28th May 1763, when Wesley
arrived in Leith after a ride from Dundee to Kinghorn, and so over the ferry. Next morning he preached in the High School yard, Edinburgh, so could have been at the Ark in Leith on the Saturday evening.

Even at this time the seceders were probably using the Ark, at least on occasion, since their petition in 1765 would presumably not have been forthcoming from a group without any experience of worshipping together. But they had no intention of remaining at the Ark, paying rent; they meant to have a place of their own. On 31st December 1765 the General Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh recognised the Leith seceders as a separate congregation de facto, although they were not yet a congregation de jure, having neither office bearers nor minister. Elders were ordained in January 1768, but long before that, there were plans for the future of the congregation, and steps already taken to implement these plans.

Immediately north of the parish churchyard in the Kirkgate the Incorporation of Carters had their convening house. This stood on a piece of ground belonging to the corporation, and in 1766 the Carters were approached by eight of the seceders, and a 150-year lease of the Carters' garden was arranged, at four guineas per annum.(51) The tack ran from

Whitsunday 1767, and while there is no documentary proof, we shall see that in view of certain arrangements entered into, there is a strong probability that the seceders worshipped in the Carters' Convening House from Whitsunday 1767 until they managed to erect their own meeting-house in 1775. Communion cups and collection dishes were purchased in 1773. The only conditions attached to the lease of the ground were, first, that the meeting-house would be built to the north of the convening-house, and second, that the congregation would be responsible for maintaining the garden dyke.

John Proudfoot was probably ordained, then, in the Carters' convening-house, and almost exactly two years later, on 25th October 1774, he found himself summoned by the presbytery to face a charge brought by the redoubtable Adam Gib. The Bristo minister alleged that Proudfoot had been poaching members from the Edinburgh congregation. The two ministers had already had a private confrontation, in which the Rev. Adam Gib seems to have met his match, for he complained that he had been sent away "loaded with grievous reproaches". What finally brought the matter to a head was that Proudfoot had added insult to injury by accepting an invitation from one of Mr Gib's elders to officiate at the marriage of his daughter.(52)

Undoubtedly there was a strong case against the

52. Minutes of the General Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, 25.10.1774.
Kirkgate minister, and he was rebuked by the presbytery in February 1775, the representative elder from Leith casting the only vote in his favour. Six months later both Mr Proudfoot and his session were the objects of a fresh charge brought by the presbytery. They were said to have received into their fellowship an Edinburgh man who had never before been a seceder. Again a rebuke was administered, and minister and elders promised better behaviour in future. (53)

It was not a very happy congregation then, which moved into its own church in 1775, but the future was to prove worse than the past. In September 1780 James Simpson, one of the original elders, protested to the presbytery against his suspension from the kirk session. He also asked the presbytery to inquire into Mr Proudfoot's character and conduct. Asked to be specific, and in writing, Simpson stated baldly that on two consecutive Sundays, when assisting at Communions at Dalkeith and Burntisland, the minister "had got too much liquor". Simpson also said Mr Proudfoot had already been remonstrated with by various individuals, and by a committee from four praying societies.

On further inquiry it was found that while most of the congregation sided with James Simpson, the rest of the elders were solidly for their minister. Finally, before the Synod

in May 1781 John Proudfoot confessed that he had been "too frequently, unseasonably and unnecessarily in public houses, with indifferent and promiscuous company, and he freely acknowledges that he has on some occasions been overtaken with drink". After this there is no news of Mr Proudfoot and his congregation for three years, but in this interval things did not improve in the Kirkgate. In August 1784 five of the Leith elders put their names to a narrative and complaint about several things in John Proudfoot's conduct. This paper was handed in at the presbytery, and was read and passed to Mr Proudfoot, that he might prepare answers to the charges it contained. He had no answers at the September meeting, but a fresh paper of complaints was produced, which was also handed to the Leith minister. It says something for John Proudfoot's popularity, (or was it the congregation's sense of its own standing?) that a congregational meeting was called in October, and a defence of the minister was prepared, although he himself had not yet answered the charges.

The chief complaint seems to have been that Proudfoot had been seen to be the worse for liquor again in Leith Walk. An anonymous letter received and read in the presbytery gives details which throw light on the social customs of the time. Mr Proudfoot had been in company with the writer and others

"...at a funeral at Cannon-milns, for about an hour,
till two of the Clock that afternoon, and after the interment, betwixt the hours of three and four of the Clock, he dined in a Tavern in the New Town with (the writer) and another from Leith, after which he came out with them to another Funeral in the Calton: and beside what he might have drunk during an hour in the Funeral Company at Cannon Milns, betwixt one and two of the Clock - and other table drink in the time of Dinner, betwixt three and four of the Clock, he appears to have been one of three who drunk two bottles of Wine."

It was perhaps not so much the minister’s addiction to drink, which was a common enough fault then, but rather the consequences arising from it, that disturbed the congregation. It led him into errors of judgement; it affected his preaching; it was interfering with almost every association he had with his people - and it was a public scandal.

"Several not of our Communion, had said that they wondered how we could put up with our minister’s conduct." It is hardly to be wondered at that Mr Proudfoot was suspended by the Synod in April 1785. At the next Synod meeting the following August the Leith minister acknowledged that he had paid no attention to the sentence, and had continued to occupy his pulpit as usual. Thereupon the Synod unanimously deposed him.

The presbytery committee had permitted itself some general observations on the state of affairs in the Leith congregation:

"...So dismal is now the state of this congregation, that while he (Mr Proudfoot) has now no session at all, it doth not appear how he can have one in time coming. For matters are driven to such a desperate issue as to leave no remaining appearance that the former session
can be got restored; and it is not to be supposed that the Presbytery can acknowledge any new session which he may build upon the ruins of the old, or that they can admit to a seat among them any elder of a session that should be made up from among those who, by their appearances against the old session, have evidenced a more free way of thinking than their brethren about the requisites of Christian and ministerial behaviour..."

We are not in a position to assess the truth of this sombre picture, but the investigating committee consisted of the moderator of presbytery, a Mr Whytock, and the Rev. Adam Gib - from whom the Leith congregation might get justice, but certainly not mercy. Undeniably John Proudfoot had proved a failure: on the other hand something can surely be said for those who took a more lenient view of the man's shortcomings. They might have had small hope of any reformation in their minister's character, and yet have felt the obligation of loyalty to the man they had called to be their minister.

If John Proudfoot were simply the ma'er-do-well he appears to have been from the records, is it not surprising that the majority of his congregation should still have stuck by him after his deposition? Granted he was a hasty and intemperate man, he also appears to have been a genial and much-loved personality. His deposition led at once to a split in the Associate congregation. A minority of members accepted stricter views of Christian behaviour, and keenly felt the affront of their minister's laxity. In a difficult,
uncomfortable position they yet acted with firmness and restraint. After the deposition, the complaining elders, with their supporters in the congregation, returned to Mr Gib's fold, where they remained for two years. Mr Proudfoot and his adherents did not go quite into the wilderness. Two other Antiburgher ministers, the Rev. David Smyton of Kilmaurs, and the Rev. Joseph Hunter of Falkirk, had also been excluded from the Synod, and were trying to found a new sect over the "Lifter" question.

With this controversy the quarrels of the Antiburghers surely enter the realm of the fantastic. The matter in dispute this time was the blessing of the elements at Communion; and one again Adam Gib was the centre and focus of contention. Robert Small gives a succinct account of the matter:

"In the early part of his ministry, Mr Gib dropped the custom of lifting the bread and the cup before the consecration prayer in the communion ordinance, and then persuaded himself that it was nothing better than a piece of superstition or will worship. His example being followed by others, old Mr Smyton of Kilmaurs set himself to stop the innovation, and in September 1782 he brought up an overture in the Synod insisting on the lifting being made an essential part of the observance. But Mr Gib, who was always ready to meet an opponent more than halfway, tabled a paper, in which he declared Mr Smyton's overture to be an underhand attack on him and others for their method of dispensing the Lord's Supper - 'a method to which they believed themselves obliged by Scripture, reason, and the subordinate standards.'"(54)

The question was simply whether the elements should be

blessed while lying on the table, or after lifting them up. Mr Smyton was an old man, enfeebled both in mind and body; but Adam Gib must needs make a first-class theological issue out of the matter. Two parties were formed – the "Lifters" and the "Antilifters". What a spectacle for the world at large! "The result of this dispute", remarked Rowland Hill, "was to give such a triumph to the profane, as to set them against all religion whatsoever."(55)

Nevertheless it was to the Lifters that the majority of the Leith seceders now looked for supply, for Mr Proudfoot joined Messrs Smyton and Hunter. It can hardly be supposed that the Leith minister, who was no great student or preacher, was at all concerned with the fine theological point involved in the "lifting" question; but Adam Heriot, the presbytery elder for Leith, had heard Mr Hunter preach at a Masonic Lodge in Edinburgh, and this may have provided the link.(56)

The new arrangement did not last long. On Friday 9th June 1737, John Proudfoot fell and broke his leg while jumping a ditch in the Meadows. The leg was amputated at the Royal Infirmary, but the patient succumbed at two o'clock on the following Monday morning, leaving a widow and several young

56. This little adventure of Adam Heriot's, by the way, got him into trouble with the presbytery, for the Secession Church was much averse to the Freemasons.
children. (57)

John Proudfoot's supporters, being a majority of the congregation, had retained possession of the church, and after the minister's death they decided to turn to the Burgher Synod. There was no future for the congregation as Lifters: probably nothing but a determination to stand by Mr Proudfoot had induced the Leithers to line up with the other two Lifter congregations, and now that the minister was dead there was no prospect of getting the vacancy filled, even had the whole congregation been convinced that it was necessary for salvation to lift the bread and wine before the consecration prayer. Even after a respite of two years, however, the prospect of further dealings with Mr Gib did not appeal to them, so they applied to the Burghers for admission to their fellowship. In their application they made it very plain that they were not turning their coats.

According to the report to the Burgher Presbytery of Edinburgh, the Leithers had applied,

"declaring their adherence to us upon the footing of the original act and testimony emitted by the Associate Presbytery, burying all differences which have taken place in the Secession since their erection."

In other words the Leithers wanted nothing to do with the Breach of 1747, and simply claimed to be seceders, believing as their fathers had believed when they left the parish kirk of South Leith in 1740. On this sensible understanding they

were accepted into the Burgher Presbytery. (58) Thirty-three years later the rest of the Burghers and Antiburghers agreed to forget the Breach and come together again. It is pleasant to think that on this occasion at least, Leith was able to show the way.

On the same day, 4th September 1787, as the Burgher presbytery received the application from the Kirkgate congregation, the Antiburgher presbytery also met and received an "application for sermon" from those Leithers who for two years had been attending Mr Gib's church again. They were few in number, but determined to regain their former status as a separate congregation. Their case was referred to the Synod, which granted the request. The five elders who had signed the complaint against Mr Proudfoot now met and constituted themselves a session on 5th October 1787. By the following January work was well in hand with a church building in St. Andrew Street, entering from Storie's Alley. This place was used by the Antiburghers for some forty years, before the congregation removed to a site next the High School, which they named St. Andrew's Place, no doubt in reference to their first place of worship. The Storie's Alley building was sold in 1842 to the Leith Church Extension Association for £250. (59)

In the 1870s the building was taken over as an independent

59. John Smart, St. Andrew's Place Church, Leith - A Sketch of its History, 40.
mission hall, and was latterly, before its final removal, in possession of the Y.M.C.A.

Once it was known that the erstwhile Antiburghers were willing to shelve the old quarrel over the Burgess Oath, and forget the ridiculous "Lifter" controversy, many Burgher families in Leith who had continued to worship in Bristo Church, now joined the congregation in the Carters' yard in the Kirkgate, so that the next minister's call was signed by 212 members and 228 adherents.

This same period in Leith saw the extension of the parish church in a more peaceable spirit than anything the seceders had known. On 18th November 1773 South Leith kirk session received a letter:

"Gentlemen, As we have erected a house for Divine Service and resolve to adhere to the plan of Doctrine and Worship contained in the Confession of Faith and Standards of the Church of Scotland, we intend to petition the Revd. Presbytery of Edinr. for Ministeriall and Christian Communion so hope we shall have your approbation and concurrence and as a friendly meeting is proposed on that head, we will take it kind that some of your number be appointed to meet with us Monday first at half an hour after two o'clock Afternoon at Mr Walkers Vintners, Writters Court, your Ansr. will singularly oblige us who are Gentlemen, Your most obedient Humble Servtts. Sign'd. Walter Gibson Robt. Shirreff Willm Marshall Andrew Cassells."

This information was no surprise to the session, who at once agreed to the suggested meeting, and the new church was less than a month later in use as a chapel-of-ease. It remained
in this subordinate state for fully sixty years, being erected into a parish quoad sacra by Act of Assembly of 31.5.1834. And although it then became officially the parish of St. John's it was still for many years thereafter known as the New Kirk. (60)

The alternatives offered by Burghers, Antiburghers and Lifters were not enough to satisfy every secession taste in Leith. Some time prior to 1777, when first we hear of them, a congregation of Glassites established themselves at Mason Lodge Court in the Dubraw (St. Andrew Street), immediately adjacent to the site on which the Antiburgher church was to be built in 1788.

The Glassites had no ordained ministry. The congregation was ruled by elders and pastors, any of whom might be called upon at a moment's notice by the officiating elder for the day to lead in prayer or give an exhortation. Some of their customs were peculiar to themselves, as for example the "kiss of charity" with which they greeted one another, and their refusal to adopt any decision that was not unanimous. They celebrated the Lord's Supper every Sunday, for they counted this as scriptural, and took pride in following scripture exactly. As their exegesis was unimaginative, and as they would not admit to any ambiguity in scripture, they refused to consider as an elder any man who had ventured on a second marriage. For them the elder was the same as the bishop, and Paul said the bishop must be the husband of one wife! (I Tim. iii.2) They also had an order

(60) See Appendix B.
of deaconesses, but these all had to be ladies over sixty years of age. (I Tom. v.9).

Sunday worship at Mason Lodge Court was an all-day affair. At the morning service one or two of the elders "held forth the doctrine of the Lord and His Apostles", but before this there was prayer from at least four of the brethren, and generally about five scripture readings. Between most of these items portions of the Psalms were sung. Morning service was followed by the "love feast" - a communal dinner - and worship then recommenced on the same pattern as in the forenoon, with an offering added. The day ended with the Lord's Supper, followed "if time permit" by more exhortation and the Lord's Prayer. (61)

The Classites bound themselves by too many restrictions ever to extend greatly or to last very long. The Leith congregation appears to have been absorbed about 1810 or 1811 into the newly formed Congregational church, and the meeting-place in Mason Lodge Court was abandoned.

Among the records of the Congregational Church in Leith there is a manuscript of the beginnings of Congregationalism in the port. This account is the work of the Rev. George D. Cullen, minister of the Congregational church in Leith from

Also, Anon., History of the Church of Scotland, 2 vols Edinburgh, 1826.
1822 to 1856. Mr Cullen says the original members of the congregation were those Leithers who had been worshipping at the Tabernacle at the head of Leith Walk - site of the modern Playhouse Cinema. This Tabernacle congregation was born from the preaching of the brothers Haldane, who brought about the revival of Independency in Scotland at the close of the eighteenth century. The Leith members set up their own congregation in 1805, when they began meeting in a large apartment in the Yardheads - a former mal'tbarn. Two years later a chapel was built in Yardheads, financed by a loan from Mr Robert Haldane, who was afterwards repaid. By the time George Cullen took over the pastorate in 1822, this chapel had become too small, for the congregation then numbered 66. In 1826 the church at the corner of Constitution Street and Laurie Street was opened, having cost £2000 to build. Membership had then reached 90, and this remained the approximate strength of the congregation during the rest of Mr Cullen's ministry.

Sectarianism continued to flourish in the port in the early nineteenth century. The Burgher congregation in the Kirkgate divided in 1816, the North Leith residents among the members forming their own congregation in Coburg Street.

62. This building has now been demolished and the congregation dispersed. Congregationalism is now represented by Duke St. E.U.Church.
At first they occupied the old parish church of North Leith, recently abandoned when the congregation moved to their new church in Madeira Street, and there the North Leith Burghers remained until their own place of worship was ready in Coburg Street a few years later. They were followed in the old parish church by still another denomination – that of the Relief, which represented yet another secession from the Established Church dating from 1761. This latest branch of the universal Church in Leith entered their own building in Junction Road in 1822 – on the first considerable site to be occupied in what was then a new route between North and South Leith, by way of the Junction Bridge.

It seemed in the first years of the nineteenth century that the Protestant Church in Scotland was reducing itself to absurdity with the multiplication of sectarian quarrels and divisions; but that same period saw an opposite tendency begin to show itself. The spirit of toleration stirred at last, and a new desire for unity was born. Fittingly, since they were involved in the first division of the Scottish Church after the Reformation, it was the Episcopalians in Leith who set the example of union. About the turn of the century the "qualified" and the "non-juring" congregations came together, and built themselves a new church in Constitution Street, opposite the entrance to the parish churchyard. This building cost £1800, and Jackson describes it as "a plain and
meagre edifice without any ecclesiastical character."(62) It was never consecrated, but was none the less in use as a church for sixty years, before being converted into a wool-store when the present St. James's Church was built. The address of the former church was 129, Constitution Street.

The Associate Church was next in the field of union. Burghers and Antiburghers were by now just a little embarrassed by their division over the Burgess Oath, and united in 1820 as the Unitad Associate Church. In Leith this brought the Kirkgate, St. Andrew Street and Coburg Street congregations together again as members of the same denomination, and as the population continued to rise steadily there was room for all to live and work together.

North Leith had passed through the eighteenth century enjoying a more tranquil church life than the town to the south of the river. This was not so much due to any difference of spirit or outlook, but rather to the smaller population, which made it sensible for the adherents of various sects to join with their South Leith brethren rather than to try separate worship in North Leith. The parish kirk too was blessed under the long ministry of the Rev. Dr. David Johnston, who from 1765 to 1824 exercised a very strong influence in Leith and Newhaven. He was a notable personality, a man of great resolution, of sincere devotion, and considerable shrewd wisdom. His personal character and domestic life set

a high example, and in dealing with the kirk session or the heritors, he showed himself a man who knew his own mind.

Oddly, the most serious trouble in North Leith developed over the proposal to build a new church. By the end of the eighteenth century the old St. Ninian's Church by the riverside at the bridge-end, had become far too small for the parish. Seats were nowhere near adequate to meet the demand for sittings. A site was found, and after much discussion on how the project was to be financed, the building went ahead. But now the real trouble arose. The incorporations each had their quota of seats in the old church, and insisted on having the same proportion of seats in the new kirk. The Magistrates of Canongate also had a claim for seats, and so had the kirk session. Seats differed in value, and so in the rent demanded, according to their distance from the pulpit, and other conveniencies they might or might not possess. Each incorporation owned so many "bottom-rooms" representing so much income for them. The Magistrates, although they only occupied their seats once a year, insisted on having them reserved. All these seat-owners insisted that the arrangements in the old church must be repeated in the new church. The session protested that this would mean the seats available for ordinary parishioners would not be anything like as numerous as had been intended. The argument was so heated the parties went to law, and although the new parish church was
opened in 1816, it was several years later before the seats were apportioned to the general satisfaction.

As the port entered on its independent life the population topped 26,000. To serve the religious needs of this community there were three parish churches, three United Associate churches, a Relief church, an Episcopal church and an Independent church. The main divisions of Protestantism in Scotland were all represented. Granted the 26,000 people of Leith would have been hard put to it to find seats in the nine churches, but then most of the 26,000 had no connection at all with any church. There was work enough for the nine congregations to do.
THE CHURCH

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THE INCORPORATIONS

We cannot begin to realise what life was like in Leith two centuries ago without some knowledge of the incorporations. Every individual in the town was affected by these powerful societies, for even those who were not themselves members of any incorporation inevitably had dealings with those who were. The incorporations decided whether a man should be allowed to work at his trade, and where he should work; the prices he charged were watched, as were the wages he paid and the men he employed. In sickness the tradesman depended on his incorporation to support him, even if meagrely. Widows and orphans of members were looked after, and in deserving cases even the children's education was provided for. Socially and economically the Church and the incorporations were the warp and woof on which, perforce, the Leither worked the pattern of his own and his family's life.

The minister of the second charge in South Leith parish was provided with a stipend by the incorporations, which were divided into four groups, each of which provided one quarter of the stipend. These four sections were originally represented by the Mariners, the Maltmen, the Trades and the Traffickers; but latterly, in the nineteenth century, the Mariners and Traffickers together paid one quarter of the stipend, the Maltmen and Brewers another quarter, the Trades or craftsmen a third, and the remainder was contributed by
"the gentlemen and indwellers" who were not members of any incorporation. (1) Various other corporations were attached to these principal societies, and paid stipend through them, the Traffickers taking responsibility for collecting contributions from the unattached "gentlemen and indwellers". In this way "The Four Incorporations" became a phrase which denoted practically the entire population of Leith.

But it is a moot point whether any of those societies in Leith were in fact incorporations. This issue was fiercely disputed between Edinburgh and Leith for centuries. The Edinburgh magistrates took their stand on a Decree of 1570 against the craftsmen of Leith, which stated:

"...The chief libertie & fredome of ane fre burgh of royaltie consistis in two thingis, the ane in using of merchandice the uther in using of craftis ressaving of fremen thairto chesing of deykinis of craftis for examination of thame that ar admittit thairto That thay be qualefayit swa that the liegis of the Realme be nocht dissairt of thair occupationes..." (2)

Incorporations could only be established by royal burghs: the power to set up incorporations was one of the "marks" of a royal burgh. Leith was not a royal burgh, and therefore could have no incorporations. The matter was as simple as that in Edinburgh eyes; and since in course of time

1. Report from Commissioners on Burghs: Leith, 217f.
2. Miscellaneous Extracts from the Records of the Town Council of Edinburgh, MS file I. Edinburgh City Archives.
Edinburgh came to possess the superiority of almost the whole of Leith, it was all the more ridiculous that a vassal town should try to flaunt this kind of independence before her overlord.

Leithers saw the matter differently. They knew the law as well as the Edinburgh magistrates, but claimed that their incorporations were established long before 1570. Some Leith corporations claimed to have received their seal of cause from Logan of Restalrig, while he was still their overlord; and the Carters maintained they had been incorporated by Mary Queen of Scots in gratitude for their services. The seal of cause was a document of fundamental importance to an incorporation: this was the foundation charter, the one final and unassailable proof of establishment. All the rights and privileges of an incorporation depended on the existence of the seal of cause; without it these had no legal standing and could be successfully challenged. Campbell Irons says the oldest seal of cause of the Leith incorporated trades is that of the tailors, dated 1515; the cordiners' seal of cause is dated 1550, and that of the weavers 1554.(3) On the other hand the Master of the traffickers was asked by the Commissioners on Burghs in 1833, "Have you a charter?" and he lamely answered "We had, but it is lost." The bakers were asked

for their seal of cause by the Commissioners, but could not produce it. No such document was exhibited on that occasion by any Leith incorporation. This makes Campbell Irons' statement questionable, especially as he says nothing about the source of his information. The carters had a copy of a document dated 1655, but this was the charter of the Edinburgh carters, in which reference is made to the Leith carters as an established organisation. Even so, there is no suggestion there that Leith has an incorporation of carters in the proper legal sense. The carters' own tradition of a sixteenth century foundation cannot be supported by any documentary evidence. Perhaps the best clue to their origin is to be found in a lawsuit in which they were involved in 1739, (4) when it was stated that the carters had enjoyed the privileges of an incorporation "for these Eighty or Ninety years bygone" - which takes us back to the period of the Cromwellian occupation of Leith, when General Monk had command of the garrison. He built the Citadel in 1653, and it may well have been to General Monk rather than to Queen Mary that the carters gave their services - perhaps without being offered any choice in the matter - transporting materials for the great work. Monk was well disposed towards Leith, and if he made the carters a grant of incorporation he was not likely to have asked permission from Edinburgh Town

Council. The city magistrates would never accept any such grant as General Monk might have made as valid. Edinburgh carters, however, would at once seek incorporation for themselves - hence the charter of 1655. This reconstruction of events is conjecture, but if the Leith carters themselves in 1739 were able to claim a lifetime of no more than eighty or ninety years for the incorporation, the conjecture is not unreasonable. And there may never have been any written seal of cause, the word of the General being good enough for Leith at the time - apart from the fact that any charter he gave would have been at once challenged and opposed by Edinburgh.

The case of the Carters' seal of cause is really the same as that of every Leith incorporation. The charters of Leith incorporations were all derived from some authority other than that of the royal burgh of Edinburgh, and Leithers claimed to have been incorporated before the superiority of the port had fallen into the hands of the capital city. The charter of the superiority of Leith is dated 14th November 1565. (5) This is why the carters clung so resolutely to their tradition of having been founded by Mary Queen of Scots, but this early date in their case was quite untenable. The cordinors or shoemakers claimed that Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig had granted them their seal of cause after he

5. J. Campbell Irons, op. cit. ii. 79.
had handed over his rights in Restalrig to Edinburgh. This claim was sustained by an interlocutor of the Court of Session in 1729.(6) The cordimers of Leith therefore maintained they had been incorporated since 1398, although the original seal of cause had been lost in the burning of Leith in 1544, and had been rewritten in 1550.(7) The fleshers told a similar story – they too lost their original charter when the Earl of Hertford sacked the town, and shortly afterwards a new seal of cause was written. There is no good reason to doubt these assertions.

This confused legality and peculiar status of the Leith incorporations tried the temper of both sides. In practice Edinburgh generally found it expedient to recognise the existence of incorporations in Leith, although she never approved their existence, nor conceded their claims. Indeed the Leithers might well have organised themselves as they wished, and no harm done, so long as they did not trespass on the rights and privileges of the royal burgh of Edinburgh. But there was the rub: what the Leith corporations existed to do, Edinburgh conceived to be her right alone in a town which was the city’s vassal. It was something salvaged from the wreck of self-respect in Leith

6. MTC. 30.1.1730. /li 47/.  
7. By a charter dated 31.5.1398 Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig ...gave and granted...to the burgesses and community of the city of Edinburgh...all his ways, roads, passages, wherever they pleased, through his lands of Restalrig and town of Leith, with power to make new roads...whenever they pleased. (City Clerk's Report to the Council, quoted, Campbell Irons, op. cit. ii. App.7.)
therefore, when the corporations, apparently despite the law, survived with vigour, and were respected, and their authority recognised within the port.

When challenged, the Trades of Leith never seem to have been unduly perturbed at their inability to produce their seals of cause. Knowing that any such charter coming from Logan of Restalrig, General Monk, or any other individual would never be acceptable to Edinburgh, the Leithers made no attempt to show their charters. Experience of many years and many lawsuits had taught them that seals of cause and charters of incorporation were by no means as important in the eyes of the law as royal burghs might think. For instance, in answer to a complaint which challenged their right to call themselves an incorporation, the Leith carters deemed it sufficient to state in their own defence:

"The Carters of Leith have past memory of man been Acknowledged Ane Incorporation, Have acted as such, and had ye Authority of the Civil magistrates Interponed to their Acts. And like other Incorporations have Injoyed their priviledges & freedoms Exclusive of all others In the Exercise of that Imployment..."

and the remainder of their defence consists of a series of examples showing how on various occasions the city of Edinburgh and the Army recognised them as an incorporation and made use of their services.(8) It seemed to be enough in court to show that "from time immemorial" or "past memory of man" an incorporation had been recognised and accepted.

8. Answers for the Incorporation of Carters to John Scott's Complaint, 1729. Carters' Papers.
locally, for its standing to be upheld. Consequently Edinburgh found it wisdom to accept what she could not change. But there was a further development in 1731, when the corporations of Leith took court action to have their independence of the Edinburgh corporations declared. The Leithers were successful in this, and the other corporations in the port followed suit and were equally successful. By 1734 all the Leith incorporations, to Edinburgh's chagrin, had been declared independent. (9)

After all this discussion about origins and status, it may come as something of a surprise to learn that the membership of several of the Leith corporations amounted to no more than four or five. The Trades comprised nine corporations - bakers, barbers, cooperers, fleshers, hammermen, shoemakers, tailors, weavers and wrights. In 1742 "The whole Incorporation of Baxters of South Leith consisted of Mr Symonds, the Trades officer and three other baxters, with Helen Birrell." (10) In 1814 the fleshers had six members and four widows. (11) The cooperers also had six members at the beginning of the 19th century, (12) but this

9. Irons, op. cit. ii.155. The terms of this judgement can be seen in a Memorial for the Cooperers, 3.1.1801. (Coopers' papers).
10. Baxters of Leith v. Helen Birrell or Penman or Gilchrist. Register House, S.R.O. Bill (Amar Protesses, 53, 674
11. Fleshers of Leith against Lord Alloway's Interlocutor. (City of Edinburgh archives.)
number grew to 32 during the following 30 years.

There were obvious advantages to be derived from such small bodies coming together for their common interests, and it was this fact which brought the Convenery of Trades into being. Commonly known as the Trades or Crafts of Leith, this federation of corporations was counted as one of the Four Incorporations. The Convenery was dissolved in 1832, by which time it was considered to be serving no useful purpose. (13) The exclusive rights and privileges of the incorporations were by then being rapidly eroded, and the Convenery was powerless in face of a change in public sentiment. Each of the trade incorporations was represented on the Convenery by its deacon and treasurer (or boxmaster as he was called), paying a subscription of eight or ten shillings per quarter, used to defray necessary expenses. One of the chief expenses was the annual dinner, to which the magistrates and ministers were invited as guests. Latterly, after the convening house had been sold to the kirk session, there was also rent to be paid for their meeting-place. The Convenery undertook to find the expenses for lawsuits entered into by any of its members. This was not an automatic service, or a bounden duty, but when a trade incorporation felt obliged to go to law in defence of its rights or privileges, the case was considered by the Convenery, and if,

after a vote, it was decided to back the corporation concerned, all members of the Convenery shared the costs. The system worked well, so long as rights and privileges could be successfully defended, for a challenge to one incorporation was often of real importance to all the Convenery. Moreover the smaller, poorer societies could never have afforded to go to law on their own.

When it became plain that the former status of the incorporations was no longer tenable, the Convenery broke up. The old pattern of society in the town was destroyed with the advent of new industries, the rapid increase in population, the conferring of freemen's status and rights on ex-servicemen, the multiplication of occupations for which there was no appropriate incorporation - all these new elements in Leith society inevitably meant that the dominant position of the old incorporations would be undermined. By the early nineteenth century confidence in the corporations was declining. The weavers admitted to the Commissioners on Burghs that only a few weavers now entered with the society; and what they openly admitted was probably true of the other corporations to a greater or less extent. "Exclusive privileges" had become an empty phrase and the chief raison d'etre for the Convenery had virtually come to an end.

The incorporations met in a room in the King James
Hospital in the Kirkgate. This building stood at the southwest corner of the churchyard. Erected in 1614, it was an almshouse for the old and sick. There was no actual nursing of the residents, but they were provided with bed and board, and were admitted on the nomination of the incorporations. In this building then, all the incorporations met, with the exception of the mariners, who had their own seamen's hospital and convening-house in the Trinity House; the coopers, who in 1723 built their own convening-house and hospital in Water Street; (14) and after 1726 the carters had their separate convening-house adjacent to the churchyard, on the north side. The maltmen, traffickers and trades shared the room in the King James Hospital until the early 19th century when, the building having greatly deteriorated, the kirk session bought the incorporations out and demolished it, to extend the churchyard. (15)

In contrast to the trades, with their few members and permanently strained resources, the mariners, traffickers and maltmen were large and powerful organisations, providing the same benefits and privileges as the smaller corporations. But whereas the traffickers, with 263 members at the beginning of the 19th century, paid their widows an annuity of £20,

15. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs - Examination of Deacon Convener of the Trades of Leith.
if the pensioner's income was less than £50 per annum - and this as a right: the tailors at the same period paid their widows £6 per annum, and this not by right, but only if the funds permitted - and indeed the £6 annuity was reduced to £4 in 1779, when resources were strained. Even the major incorporations were in financial trouble towards the end of the Napoleonic wars. It was reckoned that between 1790 and 1813 money values depreciated by 30%, and after the turn of the century both heritable property and land values plunged (16) - and both houses and land were forms of investment much favoured by the incorporations.

To meet this inflation the various corporations increased their "upsetts" or entry fees, and the quarterly contributions, which were the main sources of income, apart from rents. Thus the traffickers' upsett rose from £2 in 1774 to 12 guineas by the end of the century, and to £20 in 1805. The fleshers, who claimed to be the most prosperous of all the trades, (17) increased their entry money in the same period to £60. This was in 1814, when it cost £50 to become a freeman tailor, 50 guineas to enter the coopers' society, and no less than £30 to enter with the bakers or wrights.


17. Petition of the Fleshers of Leith against Lord Alloway's Interlocutor, 1814. Edinburgh City archives.
By 1833 the bakers and cooperers had raised their upsett yet again to £100. In 1732 it cost 50 merks to join the hammermen; in 1820 it cost £50. 50 merks was £33.6.8 Scots, or £2.15.6\frac{3}{4} sterling, so that in the course of some ninety years the hammermen's entry money was increased almost 1800%. Not every society was able to solve its financial problems by increasing subscriptions. The weavers were poor, and by the end of the eighteenth century they were already losing confidence in the future of their trade, since machinery was bringing competition the hand-loom weaver could not face. The weavers' upsett was only £1, and the benefits to be had were negligible. To keep going this incorporation began admitting men of all callings indiscriminately. Even so the society had to be reconstituted in 1830.\(^{18}\)

All the incorporations made concessions at entry to the sons and sons-in-law of members, and to apprentices serving with members of the society with the intention of becoming freemen. For these special categories the fee on entry was generally one half the normal fee chargeable to strangers entering. Several societies also had various grades of membership, adjusted to various occupations within the ambit of the corporation, or to varying levels of skill. The mariners included three grades - shipmasters, mates and

\(^{18}\) Reports from Commissioners on Burghs: Leith 213ff.
seamen; the porters also took in rollers, and the carters included loadmen. The most varied company was to be found among the hammermen, where the bulk of the members were either blacksmiths or locksmiths; but coppersmiths and founders were also admitted, as well as cutlers, nailmakers, ironmongers and watchmakers. Sometimes these other occupations were charged at the same rate as the blacksmiths and locksmiths; sometimes an adjustment was made, each case being judged on its merits.

Quarterly contributions were the rule, and the regular quarterly meetings of the incorporations were primarily for the purpose of paying these dues; but once this was attended to, other business was taken up, and occasionally an ad hoc meeting could be called to deal with an urgent matter. Quarterly payments were very small. For many years the hammermen paid only sixpence a quarter; this rose to a shilling, dropped to ninepence, then to sixpence again in 1771. By 1783 it was back at one shilling, and in 1790 the charge reached the unprecedented level of 1s 6d per quarter! The traffickers paid more than others, but even so, their rate of 2s per quarter could hardly be considered exorbitant. In view of the rapid depreciation in money values towards the end of the eighteenth century, these contributions were plainly unrealistic, but a motion at a traffickers meeting in 1805 to double the quarterly contribution was defeated. However in the following year the
traffickers did what no other society seems to have thought of doing: they employed an accountant to investigate their finances and to report on two questions - first, what rate of annuity could be afforded from the annual produce of the funds of the incorporation, together with the present quarterly contributions of 2s per member? Second, what additional quarterly payment would be required to provide for each widow an annuity of £20?

The answers were rather complicated, with various suppositions as to future income and the number of widows likely to become annuitants; but the conclusions were that at the present rate of payments the traffickers could only afford to pay their widows £5.7.3 yearly. To raise the annuities to £20 would require approximately an extra £3.12.—from each member every year, or a total of £4 per member in quarterly payments of £1. In other words, a ten-fold increase in quarterly contributions would be required! The society finally worked out a system under which the widows were subjected to a means test before being admitted to the roll of annuitants. It was stipulated that the funds of the corporation must not be allowed to fall below £6000, and that any increase in the number of annuitants must be met by a decrease in the sums paid out, or else by an increase in quarterly contributions from members. Under these conditions they found it possible to pay £20 to each widow every year, with
a quarterly payment of 4s per member: and for 2s per member it would be possible to pay annuities of £15. (19) This was an example of how to face the problems of rapid economic change; but it was not followed by the other corporations, who found their financial plight grew steadily worse during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Each incorporation had a treasurer, boxmaster or master, as he was variously called. This office bearer was responsible for the contents of the box into which all contributions, rents and fines were paid, and from which all monies for the various expenses were taken. This large wooden box was secured by several locks - generally three - and for each lock there was a key and a key-keeper. The box could therefore only be opened in presence of all the key-keepers as well as the boxmaster. Once a year, and often at each quarterly meeting, the boxmaster was called to make a statement of his intromissions, and this was followed by the election of office bearers for the ensuing year. The election meeting ended, the members passed to the Election Dinner - the crown of the year.

Each of the craft incorporations also had a deacon who acted as chairman, and with the boxmaster represented his society at the Convenery of Trades - which body in turn elected its own Deacon Convener.

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The most important person in each incorporation was the clerk, but the clerk was not a member; he was a paid servant. It was the clerk's business to keep the minutes, to attend to correspondence, to advise on points of law and procedure. The Articles and Regulations adopted by the tailors in 1810 (a revised edition of previous Regulations) make the clerk's position and function clear. Article VII states:

"The Clerk's office shall be to take minutes of the Incorporation's proceedings, and shall faithfully record the same in their sederunt-book, and shall write all other books, bills and receipts, but (i.e. except) the Treasurer's cash-book, which he shall only balance once a quarter: but shall have no vote in the Society's affairs, nor interfere therein but when he is asked." (20)

The incorporations believed in plain language: when the coopers appointed a new clerk in 1723, the first minute to be written was that of the clerk's own appointment:

"James Walker, writer in Leith, was and is hereby unanimously Elected and Chosen Clerk to this Incorporation, and Admitted to the haill usual Emoluments thereof Dureing all the days of his lifetyme, He allways Behaving himself faithfully and Civilly without Malversation..." (21)

And the hammermen in 1742 dismissed their clerk - the same James Walker mentioned above, in fact - because he had omitted to write any minutes for the past four years. (22)

Their new choice, Alex Neilson, also a writer in Leith,

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was appointed "to Continewe ther Clerk Dureing ther pleasure
and to atend at the Call of the Deacon." The clerk was
always a writer, and very often the Town Clerk of Leith was
the man favoured. Indeed all the 18th century clerks of
Leith - the Homes, father and son, John Pattison, Hugh Veitch
- were clerks to one or more of the incorporations; and when
the Metters were reconstituted in 1826, it was written into
their Rules that:

"The Town Clerk of Leith for the time being shall be
clerk to the Society and have the custody of their
minute-book; And no minute shall be binding on the
Members, or be of any authority, unless it be subscribed
by the Boxmaster and Clerk."(23)

Alexander Neilson died in 1767, and it became necessary
to find a successor as clerk to the nine Trade incorporations.
There was no lack of candidates, but as the tailors record,

"The Meeting unanimously Preferred the offer made by
Wm. Strachan, writer in Leith, of a donation to the
Conveenity of £50 Stg upon his being elected to the
same office, And did and hereby do elect and make
choice of him to be Clerk to this Incorporation dur-
ing his good behaviour in that office, and he being
called into the Convening-house accepted of the office
and gave his oath de fideli. The Deacon also reported
that the said William Strachan had been elected Clerk
to the Conveener on Friday last, and paid down £50
Stg to the Conveener for the use of the poor of the
different Incorporations of trades in South Leith."(24)

It might be concluded from this that the office was a val-
uable one, carrying a large salary with it, for £50 sterling
was a great deal of money to pay for the privilege of election.

23. Sederunt Book of the Society of Meters and Weighers
"Meters" is sometimes spelt "Metters", and this latter is
probably more correct, as these were men who worked with
metts or measures.
At this time, in fact, the coopers were paying their clerk £2 sterling annually, the hammermen paid £1, and the tailors £16 Scots, or £1.6.8 sterling. Each of the Trades incorporations probably paid an average of little more than £1 per annum, so that with the clerkship to the Convenery added, Mr Strachan might count on about £15 a year as his salary. This was not all, however, for as the hammermen's minute of appointment put it, Mr Strachan would be entitled to "the like salary, perquisites and emoluments that Mr Neilson had."

These extras included fees charged for entering or "booking" journeymen newly employed, writing indentures for apprentices, and "booking" the apprentices. There were also payments made for extra work, such as searching the records or drawing up memorials and representations in connection with the lawsuits frequently engaged in by the various corporations. In the later 18th century the clerk's booking fee was 5s - an improvement on the fourpence received by the tailors' clerk even as late as the 1740s. The clerkship to the Convenery of Trades, with responsibility for the nine component incorporations, was at least a desirable, lucrative sideline, with the advantages, first, that unlike many of the writer's clients, the incorporations could be depended upon to pay the salary promised; and second, that the appointment was ad vitam aut culpam. The profession of writer did not lead to riches, and even the town clerk would be glad to have such an appointment as this.
The mariners, traffickers and maltmen had their own clerks. The traffickers were both solvent and sound, and paid their clerk £5 Stg a year; but with an annual intake of around 18 new members, the clerk would collect £4.10.- for entering them, and other "perquisites and emoluments" probably raised his income as clerk to something like that of the clerk to the Trades. The traffickers' clerk had a grievance, however. At the beginning of the 19th century John Pattison, town clerk, was clerk to the traffickers, and he protested that

"his fees at admissions of new members had continued at 5s Stg for many years, and his Sallary as Clerk since ever he came to Leith, and his predecessors had the same sum upwards of forty years ago - That times were now so much altered by the expence of living that no Clerk could subsist on these old allowances without having something else to trust to...That he desired no increase of Sallary, but wished to have his fees of admission raised to what the Corporation pleased."(25)

The corporation raised his fees to 10s 6d, and five years later his salary was trebled - to £15 Stg.

The officer of each incorporation was also a paid servant, although some of the small societies liked to have some "decayed member" filling this position. Decayed members were those who through illness, want of business, or old age, had become a charge on the society. The officer's job was considered to be ideal for such cases - a light job with a

salary just about equal to the sum usually offered in the way of a pension. The tailors' Articles said the first choice for officer should be from among members of the society, but that failing acceptance by a member, the choice was free. The officer personally delivered notice of each meeting to every member, and was in attendance during all meetings, to make himself useful. He was also generally employed in church as a kind of private beadle to his incorporation, opening the doors of their pews. The coopers provided their officer with a waistcoat and breeches. Having their own convening house, the coopers may have felt it incumbent on them to do this much for their man, but clothing was not generally in the officer's contract.

While the various incorporations were thus broadly similar in their organisation, each one had its special features and peculiarities, and some indication of these will help to fill in the picture of these influential bodies.

It is impossible to say which was the senior incorporation since, as we have seen, their seals of cause were of doubtful validity, and since the two largest corporations - the mariners and the traffickers - were never able to produce any charter whatsoever. If, however, we consider the incorporations simply as associations of men of the same
occupation, then the mariners must have a strong claim to be considered the oldest, for the original Mariners' Hospital in the Kirkgate was erected in 1555,(26) and there must obviously have been an association of seamen in existence some considerable time before this event. This, like the later King James Hospital, was an almshouse rather than a hospital in the modern sense, and there the mariners had their convening-room. The building went under a variety of names - Fraternity Hospital, Trinitie House, Leith Ternitie House, Fraternity Meeting-house, Fraternity House, The Hospital House of Leith, Trinity Hospital Leith - these titles are listed by Dr John Mason in his "History of Trinity House of Leith", and the present title of "Trinity House" seems to have been the ultimate choice of name only when the 18th century was well advanced. As will be realised from these titles, "Trinity" is a corruption of "Fraternity", and has no reference to the Holy Trinity.

One special feature of the incorporation of mariners was that at any given time a large proportion of the members was at sea, and so unavailable to attend meetings. The council or governing body was composed of shipmasters alone: the mates and seamen were also members of the society, with rights and privileges, but with no say in government.(27)

27. Report from Commissioners on Burghs: Leith, 216f.
This was also true of other corporations with more than one class of membership; the loadmen of the carters' society, the porters' rollers, do not appear at the meetings, and so had no part in discussion or voting. Until 1684 the shipmasters' council was chaired by the water bailie of Leith, but in that year the first Master of the Trinity House was appointed, with an assistant master, and they received and disbursed money for the support of the poor of the society.

A main source of income to the Mariners was prime gilt. This was "a levy of one penny sterling per ton of all goods imported to Leith, either coastways or from foreign ports, and whether in British or foreign vessels", as it was defined to the Commissioners on Burghs in 1833. The proceeds of this tax were laid out, as need arose, for the relief of the poor, the aged, and the infirm of the corporation. In the year from October 1671 to October 1672 prime gilt yielded £559.10. - Scots - which was a tidy sum, and worth taking some trouble to collect. (28) Gathering in this tax became increasingly difficult however; there were always skippers reluctant to pay, and in 1656, after many months of argument, the skippers of coal and peat boats had their prime gilt commuted to "a man's full burden" of coal or

peat for every 20 creels aboard - failing which the sails and anchors of the boats would be pointed. (29) So much time and trouble were involved in collecting the duty however, that in 1676 the prime gilt was rented to Robert Fraill for £333.6.8 Scots per annum. (30) Thereafter the prime gilt was rouped every year to the highest bidder.

The mariners also had to find money to contribute towards the salary of the Reader in church, and of the schoolmaster. They also had other poor funds which needed constant replenishment. For these purposes they paid Crown Money. This was a voluntary levy, masters and mariners agreeing to pay out of their wages "of ilk crowne two pennies in Scotland; in France and Spain two doubles; in England one halfpenny; in Flanders one oikey; and in the Eastern Seas or Danskin one shilling." (31) This also raised a notable sum annually:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1696</td>
<td>£68.14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>96.17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>94.12.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>105. -</td>
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<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>210. -</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

and after 1711 the annual total reached £225.10. - But always, as with prime gilt, there were objectors, and nothing could be done about them.

The poor, the sick, the aged of the corporation were

31. Mason, op. cit. 15.
thus provided for, but it was felt that something should be done for shipmasters and their dependants, when in need. In 1731 therefore the shipmasters agreed to pay contributions from their wages for this purpose, and this latest effort went by the name of the New Fund.\(^{(32)}\)

The mariners were much concerned about conditions at sea, about the sufficient provision of lights, about harbour improvements, and the appointment, licensing and oversight of pilots. A Royal Charter was granted in 1797, incorporating the House under the title of "The Master and Assistants of the Trinity House of Leith", with authority to examine and license pilots, and to place beacons and buoys on dangerous rocks and shores in the Firth of Forth. The managing body was to consist of the Master and Assistants, with 12 administrators, a treasurer and clerk; and quarterly meetings were to be held.\(^{(33)}\) Thus for the first time did the mariners become an incorporation, conforming in their management to something like the system obtaining in the other corporations.

The old almshouse was demolished in 1816, and the present building erected in the following year. On the

\(^{32}\) Mason, op. cit. 21f.
\(^{33}\) Mason, op. cit. 81, 171f.
front wall are the Arms of the Corporation with the motto: PERVIA VIRTUTI SIDERATA TERRA MARE - "Stars, land and sea (are) pervious to virtue", which might be freely translated, Mason suggests, as "Virtue masters astronomy, geography, navigation." Two carved stones from the former building are preserved in the present fabric. On the south gable one stone bears the date 1555, with an inscription in relief reading: "In the name of the Lord ye Masters and Marinaris bylis this House to ye poure Anno Domine 1555." Over the arched gateway in Giles Street a second stone reads:

"They that goe down to the sea in shippis
That doe business in great waters
These see the work of the Lord
And his wonders in the deep." (Ps. cxxvii. 23f)

There is also an anchor and two triangles in relief, and the date 1570.

The corporation obtained from Parliament in 1820 "An Act for the Regulation of the Corporation of the Masters and Assistants of the Trinity House of Leith", which confirmed existing rights, listed detailed provisions for the licensing of pilots, prohibited the corporation from contracting debt or alienating their property, and stipulated that the pensions and annuities would not be affectable by creditors. At the very period when the corporations as a whole were in rapid decline, the mariners were established more firmly than ever before as a power in the port.
The traffickers or merchants probably came nearest the mariners in wealth and influence. Entry was regulated by a ballot. Giving evidence before the Commissioners on Burghs, Abram Newton, Master of the traffickers, said, "We exclude from the want of character as much as from a bad life; but we take a wealthy man whatever his life may be, as his widow is not likely to become a burden on the society."

It was also a rule that no member of any of the Trades incorporations could belong to the traffickers. This rule was introduced in 1761, after the death of John Man, a trafficker who was a barber to trade, and also a member of the Barbers' Society. Compared with the traffickers, the barbers were in poor circumstances, so the barbers' society applied to the traffickers for the dead man's funeral expenses, and also suggested the traffickers might do something for the widow. The traffickers paid the funeral charges, but refused liability for the widow, as they had already paid her an allowance during her late husband's illness. When next a tradesman applied to enter with the traffickers, it was laid down that no man could be a trafficker and a member of any Trade society at the same time.(34) On the other hand, so long as a man's business was in Leith, he might live as far away

34. Sederunt Book of the Incorporation of Traffickers, 5.1.1761.
as he liked and yet be a member. Those living in Edinburgh, Leith or the vicinity were counted as resident members, but there were always some who were non-resident.

The traffickers were business men, and liked their incorporation to show an annual profit. The treasurer's annual statement in October 1768 showed that on the previous year's working the funds had increased by no more than £14 sterling; whereupon the meeting "unanimously agreed to make a voluntary contribution for the encrease of their funds". They had investments in land, owning some acres at Piershill and Threesteps (Jock's Lodge), but they sold all that holding in 1759 for £1210 sterling, being in need of ready money at that time. They also had land at Quarryholes, where their tenant was John Edington, who gave the traffickers much trouble by his failure to pay his rent. Whether from hard times or mismanagement or just bad luck, Edington by 1757 was so deeply in debt that he suddenly left everything at Quarryholes and took refuge in the Abbey sanctuary.

The sanctuary was a peculiar institution intended for the relief of the financially hard-pressed. It comprised the area immediately surrounding the Abbey and Palace of Holyroodhouse, and included the whole of the King's Park - adjacent therefore to the parish of South Leith, of which
the boundary ran from Jock's Lodge to Abbeyhill. (35)

Sanctuary privileges were not intended for fraudulent bankrupts however, and these could be haled forth for examination. (36) The traffickers were sure that Edington had undeclared assets hidden somewhere, and they had him examined before the Lords of Session. Nothing was proved against him, and he went back to the sanctuary where he remained for the next two years. Debtors were permitted to leave the sanctuary on Sundays to attend divine service, but if at any other time they were found outside the bounds they could be arrested. (37) Edington did not venture out until the spring of 1769, and being discovered then, the traffickers had him committed to the Canongate tolbooth, where he might well have starved, for the jailors did not consider themselves bound to feed their prisoners. Fortunately for Edington, and others in similar case, an act of the Scottish Parliament in 1696 had provided that poor prisoners committed for debt must be maintained by the party sending them to prison. (38) When John Edington in the tolbooth applied to the Bailies of the Canongate for relief in his desperate plight, the Bailies informed the

traffickers that they must maintain their prisoner at the rate of 1s sterling per diem, or else he would be set free. Grudgingly the traffickers remitted £5, and ordered their treasurer to find Edington's assets quickly. Two years later those imagined resources were still undiscovered, and the traffickers were trying to sell their bad debt. There is no record of the final issue of this matter. (39)

Office bearers in the Society of Traffickers consisted of a treasurer and six assistants, "any two of them, with the treasurer, to be a quorum" says a minute of 2nd January 1749. There had also to be a quorum of members attending, and on 22nd December 1757, with only nine members present, a question relating to property came up for decision, and the matter was postponed "in regard the meeting was no more than a scrimp quorum".

Membership at this period was around 100, and it continued to rise until the figure was 181 in 1799, and 263 in 1806; but thereafter there was a steady decline, and when the Burgh Commissioners interviewed office bearers in 1833 membership had dropped again to 100. This was attributed, at least in part, to the fact that there were no exclusive privileges attaching to membership. The Trades

attached the greatest importance to their privileges, and were frequently at law in their defence; but the traffickers were in a different category. They were much more tightly bound to Edinburgh than any of the other corporations. No Leith man was allowed to set up as a merchant without first becoming a burgess and guild brother of the city of Edinburgh. He was also bound to give up his residence in Leith, and remove to Edinburgh — a condition generally ignored by Leith merchants, and only insisted upon sporadically by the Edinburgh magistrates, when they judged it expedient to be severe. At any rate, being already burgesses and guild brethren of Edinburgh, the traffickers of Leith realised there was no point in trying to establish exclusive privileges for their incorporation, since these could only exist by permission of Edinburgh, and under such a sanction no privilege would have been worth much. Occasionally there were tradesmen who preferred to belong to the traffickers rather than to their own trade incorporation, but their reasons were almost certainly financial, the traffickers' benefits being much better than those of the Trades.

In 1782 Ellis Martine moved that in future the incorporation should call themselves "The Traffickers or Merchant Company in Leith", but this was allowed to lie on the table, and seems to have been forgotten. Eventually in 1810 the
old fashioned title of "Traffickers" was dropped, and the incorporation became "The Merchant Company of Leith".

Like the traffickers, the maltmen admitted members by ballot only, and so could exclude undesirables. "Undesirable" could be interpreted in a moral or in an insurable sense. Again like the traffickers, the maltmen, at least in their latter years, had no exclusive privileges, but yet strongly maintained their corporate standing. Membership comprised not only maltmen, but brewers, vinegar-makers, merchants and doctors - but no lawyers. For no stated reason lawyers were expressly barred. (40) Perhaps the maltmen's history had something to do with this antipathy. In the reign of James VI they were deprived of their deacon and lost their privileges. Privileges were restored in 1665, but four years later the corporation was suppressed, and their funds transferred to the King James Hospital. Finally in 1684 the Privy Council authorised the maltmen to resume their meetings, and recognised them as an incorporation. (41)

It was in 1619 that the maltmen ran into trouble with Edinburgh town council. The magistrates accused them of behaving as though they were an incorporation, electing

40. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs: Leith, 221.
41. ibid.
a deacon annually, and admitting their own freemen. These practices were illegal; and while this state of things had existed for some years, the magistrates acknowledged this had been due to their (the magistrates') oversight. The maltmen had no answer to these charges, and thenceforth they were compelled to pay £6.13.4 for admission to their own society - which fee was appropriated by the town council as general revenue. So once more here is a Leith incorporation whose standing was denied by Edinburgh, and which indeed was unable to produce any legal justification for its claim to be an incorporation - and yet the maltmen survived to be acknowledged as an incorporation by the Privy Council, although no seal of cause ever seems to have existed. Membership varied from time to time, but it was stated to the Burgh Commission that it never fell below 25 or rose above 40.

Of the minor incorporations which did not come under the aegis of the Convenery of Trades, there are surviving records of the carters, the porters and the metters. The

42. MTC. 7.4.1619, 16.6.1619. It was true that any incorporation of maltmen was illegal. Under an act of Parliament of 1567 it was ordained "that there be na Deacon of Craft of Maltmen outhere to Burgh or to land, on any other part within this Realme...It sall never be lesum to ony of the Maltmen of this Realme to have Deakons, bot to be repute na Craft." (1st Parlt. James VI.1567) Quoted, Extract Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1604-26, 187m.
carters paid their proportion of stipend to the boxmaster of the maltmen, and from this circumstance might be reckoned a minor society; but they were neither poor nor inactive.

As we have seen, the carters were certainly recognised as an incorporation from the period of the Cromwellian occupation of Leith. Known then and for long afterwards as the sledders, the use of wheeled carts was only gradually introduced in the latter half of the 17th century, and that in face of considerable opposition from the town council. The state of the roads then - deep mud in winter and abundant dust in summer - made runners more feasible than wheels. When the wheel first appeared, the magistrates forbad the use of iron tyres, for these were too hard on the roads. (43) But wooden wheels without iron tyres soon wore from a circle to an irregular ellipse - an intolerable nuisance to the carter. So, on a promise to pay £400 Scots per annum towards the upkeep of roads, the Leith carters were allowed iron tyres for a trial period of one year. But in the following years irons rims were forbidden and allowed again several times over.

The carters were an important section of the community, and were not permitted to pursue their calling solely for their private gain. From time to time their services

43. MTC. 6.6.1655. X VIII. 181.
were required in the public interest. In the severe winter of 1715 several Leith carters lost their lives acting as a transport column for the army in the wilds beyond Stirling. Leith carters carried lead for the new water-pipes to Edinburgh, and they brought gravel for spreading on Leith Walk - which was all the surfacing or repair the Walk ever received until the 1770s. And all this public service was given at half price. (44) The carters did better than that, for in 1738 they approached the town council and offered a day's labour from each of their members once a year, gratis, to repair the Easter road from the Abbey hill to the town end of Leith. (45) This was then the principal route between Edinburgh and Leith, and while the repair and upkeep of the road was nobody's business, the carters were doubtless the most frequent users of that thoroughfare.

For 400 merks the carters rented the grazing of Leith Links, and put over 100 horses to grass there. The rent was secured by charging each member "grass maill" - £2.12. - Scots per horse for the season. Every spring the opening of the Links for grazing the carters' horses was intimated by proclamation through the town by the bellman. For many

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44. Answers for the Incorporation of Carters to John Scott's Complaint, 1729. (Carters' Papers).
45. Sederunt Book of the Incorporation of Carters, 22.5.1738.
years the carters' herd was Jamie Bell. When the horses went to grass he took over their supervision. For this he received 12s Scots per week (later raised to 14s), but eked out this scanty allowance with other jobs. He cleaned the convening-house when the corporation thought it necessary, and performed the other duties of the normal corporation officer - delivering notices of meetings, acting as beadle in church. As and when necessary he was provided with shoes and a coat. (46)

The carters' chief claim to distinction was their building of a convening-house for themselves in 1726. The house stood in its own garden on the east side of the Kirkgate, adjacent to the churchyard and to the north of it, on the site later occupied by the Gaiety theatre. On their feu the corporation had two tenements, one facing the Kirkgate and the other with a front to that part of Coatfield Lane running parallel to the Kirkgate. These were two-storey buildings with attics, and enclosed the carters' "yard", which was hidden from the street, and was entered through a pend beneath the Kirkgate tenement. (47) The convening-house in the yard was an unpretentious building, stone-built, rectangular in shape, and with a slated,

46. Carters' papers. Boxmaster's accounts.
47. Tack between Incorporation of Carters in Leith and John Brown and Others, 1768. Carters' papers.
pavilion roof. In the centre of one of the long walls was a large, iron-bound, double door, with the Carters' stone set over it. The house was lighted by seven large sash windows; the interior measured 22 ft by 15 ft, and was 10 ft high. (48) The carved stone, originally over the door of the convening-house, now stands in South Leith churchyard, against the Kirkgate wall, a few yards from the entrance. Under the weathered representation of a horse and cart is the following inscription:

**INCORPORATION OF CARTERS**
**CONVENING HOUSE LEITH**

**Built 1726**
**Rebuilt 1802**

Great God whose potent Arm drives the sun
The Carters bless while wheels of Time shall run
of old they Drove thy Sacred Ark O God
Guide thou their hands and Steps in every road,
proiect this house we Dedicate to thee
Increase and sanctify our Charity
Thy blessing Lord be its foundation stone
And we'll ascribe the praise to thee alone.

The plastered walls of the convening-house were finished in "blue marble", and the principal item of furniture was a large oval table, round which the carters gathered on 6th October 1726 for a grand celebration dinner, at which a vast quantity of meat and drink was provided. Not that the carters were given to frequent celebrations: like the other incorporations, the regular thing with them was an **Annual Dinner on Election Night - towards the end of Dec**-

48. Carters' papers, Boxmaster's accounts.
December in their case. Apart from this, meetings were strictly for business.

The carters' "upsett", "freedom" or entry fee was for many years 100 merks (about £5.11. - sterling). The son or son-in-law of a member paid only 10 merks, and a loadman £20 Scots (£1.13.4 sterling). Through most of the eighteenth century these figures remained stationary, but in the end the rocketing cost of living sent up the entry from £5.11.- in 1781 to £55 in 1817!(49) Like the maltmen and the traffickers, the carters voted on applications for membership, and rejections were not unheard of. One young man, the son of a member, who might have expected an easy passage, was brought up sharply. He was told his application would be accepted on condition that he stopped ill-treating his mother. Any more of it, and he would forfeit all his rights in the society, and lose all he had paid into it.(50)

There was no definite age-limit for entry, but the committee demurred when they received an application from a boy of 13. The youngster's father had been a freeman carter who had recently died, and the boy was proposing to carry on the family business. The application was rejected; but the very next day, without any further recorded discussion

50. Sederunt Book of Incorporation of Carters in Leith, 22.9.1799.
or vote, the boy paid his upset and was admitted a member.
The point of this peculiar gambit was probably that the
lad was given all the privileges of membership except the
right to vote. (51)

In the 18th century the carters occupied stances in
the wynds and closees adjacent to the Shore and the Coal-
hill, (52) but when Bernard Street became a thoroughfare,
this became the principal stance. Another row of carts
then stood along the Shore. Unfortunately both of these
streets were then extremely narrow, and as the pressure of
business increased in the port complaints mounted over the
space taken up by waiting carts, until Bernard Street had
to be abandoned. Stances were then adopted at the "New
Key" (at the foot of Tolbooth Wynd) and the Ferry-boat
Stairs (the furthest extremity of the Shore); and in 1814
a third position was occupied behind the newly-erected
warehouses at the "New Dock" (now the East Old Dock).
This latter stance was, of course, in the modern Commercial
Street. (53)

Order was strictly enforced, first in line answering
the first call. This rule imposed a great strain on some
men, for certain loads were more desirable than others. A

52. Act of Committee, 3.0.1726. (Carters' papers).
(Carters' papers).
flat rate was charged for carting anywhere within Leith, so a clean, easily handled cargo, going only a short distance, was a "plum". The penalty for "jumping the queue" was a fine, plus the hiring charge of the cart whose place had been taken. If the fine was not paid on the spot, a wheel was removed from the offender's cart, and locked in the public weigh-house until the matter was settled. The actual fining, or removal of the wheel, was the boxmaster's duty, assisted, if necessary, by the committee. Sometimes it was necessary.

Most of the men were amenable to the rules, realising they were for the common good, but there were exceptions. When several carters were employed on one ship's cargo, it was common practice to pay one man the wages of all at the end of the day, leaving him to distribute the money; but in 1704 a complaint was made to the Bailies of Leith, that on several occasions the man who received the wages had absconded with the lot: On another occasion one carter made a private bargain with a shipmaster to cart a whole cargo himself, but when news of this arrangement leaked out the corporation at once forbade it. No member could be permitted to "corner" work for himself in what was regarded

54. Carters' Sederunt Book, 24.2.1814 & 3.3.1814. (Carters' papers).
55. Petition by Thomas Darling, boxmaster, & Andrew Fair-service, late boxmaster, representing the Incorporation of Carters, to Hugh Lin, Bailie of Leith, 6.7.1704. (Carters' papers).
as a common market for the whole incorporation.

As the eighteenth century passed into the nineteenth, the Carters, like other incorporations, found it increasingly difficult to preserve their exclusive privileges. Independent carters were multiplying, paying no attention to the Society, and doing good business. Indeed it was soon evident that the incorporation was hard put to it to establish their monopoly in law. Then events took an unexpected turn in the corporation's favour. The chief shipping companies were becoming disturbed at the number of claims for damages being made against them for goods delivered in faulty condition, or in a broken state. Some of these claims were for substantial sums, and they began to consider what might be done about it. Eventually the Incorporation of Carters received a proposal from the shipping companies. Briefly, they offered to give their carting trade exclusively to the incorporation if the carters on their part would become responsible for all loss or damage to goods while in their hands. And to

(57) In a lawsuit raised by the Carters against a Mr Marr in 1815, interlocutor was given finding that the Carters had failed to prove they were an incorporation. But indeed as long ago as 1739, in an action raised against Alexr Prophet, an Edinburgh carter, the Leith carters had stated they did not pretend to any exclusive privileges. (Copy Bill of Advice, Bishop &c. against Prophet, 1739. Carters' papers).
provide a guarantee, the carters would be required to raise a fund of £500 sterling, out of which claims would be paid. After much deliberation the carters agreed in 1821. (58) In effect they were taking on this large new responsibility in return for what they had always believed was theirs by right; but they had sufficient confidence in their skill to believe they would be gainers in the end.

The Society of Carters derived a large part of its income from property in the Kirkgate and Yardheads. In 1801 rents amounted to £103 and feu duties to £6.16-. There was a brewery in Yardheads, and a building "commonly called the Manufactory" in the same street, as well as the Kirkgate tenements already mentioned. Before their convening-house was built the incorporation seems to have met in the house of their clerk, or wherever else they could. Certainly there is no mention in any of their records, of the King James Hospital, where other corporations met.

A new factor entered the carters' life in 1766, when they were approached by eight men representing the seceders of Leith, who had no church building of their own, and were looking for a building site. The carters granted a lease of ground adjacent to the convening-house at four guineas

per annum, provided the seceders would maintain the garden dyke, and would confine their building to the north side of the convening-house. They were also given permission to construct a pend from the Kirkgate through the carters' tenement into the yard.(59)

It was 1775 before the congregation managed to open a small meeting-house, but the Associate Antiburgher Church of Leith, to give them their proper title, rapidly increased their membership towards the end of the century, and as they increased they grew dissatisfied. A letter dated 23rd September 1799 was delivered to the boxmaster of the incorporation, in which the managers of the congregation sought permission to alter and enlarge the pend from the Kirkgate. They professed not to know why their predecessors had made such a low opening, in which there was not head-room even for a man of average height. During the previous thirty years or so however, the level of the Kirkgate had noticeably risen. This is not surprising when it is realised that the streets of Leith were so notorious, even in the 18th century, for their lack of scavenging, that the town council passed an act in 1771 for cleansing the streets of the port. There were also other matters on which the managers

59. Tack between the Incorporation of Carters in Leith, and John Brown and Others, 1768. (Carters' papers.)
would like to consult the corporation.

Ten days later a meeting took place, when instead of discussing the managers' proposals, the carters charged them with failing to carry out the conditions of their lease in that they had failed to keep the garden dykes in repair. Actually, said the carters, the congregation had taken down a good stone and lime wall on the north boundary, to make room for the gable end of the kirk, and had never rebuilt the wall again. The managers swore they had never seen or heard of this alleged dyke.

The matter rested for a month or two, until in January 1800 the seceder managers made a fresh approach with a proposal which must have taken the carters' breath away. The pend contained the entrance to a turnpike stair serving the tenement. It was now suggested this stair be transferred to the outside - to the street, that is - and to rebuild the pend as a more commodious entry to the yard, and to put a gate across it, to which only the carters and the managers should have keys. Next, the managers proposed to demolish the convening-house, and to rebuild it in another part of the garden. As things were, there was no room to extend the wee seceder-kirk. Having made room for themselves, the congregation would then proceed with their extension. The carters rejected these proposals unanimously, out of hand, apparently without any discussion: they simply
passed to the next business.

That was on 30th January 1800, and the managers, perhaps feeling they were on rather thin ice, held off for another year. On 29th January 1801 James Barrie, boxmaster of the carters, summoned a special meeting at 11 o'clock in the forenoon. This time the managers were on a different tack; they now offered to feu the whole of the carters' property in the Kirkgate. Again there was a swift and unanimous rejection. "And for their part", runs the minute, "they are resolved to allow the subjects to remain in their present state rather than have any further connection with the foresaid Congregation upon any terms whatsoever." So sick of the business were the carters that at the end of the meeting they rounded on the unfortunate boxmaster:

"And in regard many of the Incorporation had been obliged to hire men in their room while attending this meeting this day at this improper hour. They recommended to the boxmaster not to call any such meetings in future unless for business of importance, but not to indulge the Congregation's humour on any future occasion, but only a stated quarterly meeting."

The carters might well be pardoned for thinking they had effectively suppressed the ambitions of the Burgher congregation. (60) It appears to have been by mere chance

60. When the carters first had dealings with the seceders in 1766, they were Antiburghers, but they had changed to the Burgher side in 1787. (See supra 'The Church', p.74).
that they heard, about eight months later, that an application had been received by the Dean of Guild, from the Associate Burgher congregation of Leith, for permission to rebuild their church. Alarmed, the carters demanded an explanation. The managers replied in soothing terms, assuring the incorporation they would be put to no expense, and again offering to feu the carters' Kirkgate property for £50 per annum. Moreover, should the carters feel themselves in any doubt over the offer, they (the managers) would be pleased to submit the question to an independent arbiter.

Once more the managers' proposals were rejected in toto, but this time the vote was not unanimous, six voting in favour of making a deal with the congregation. After the vote discussion was prolonged until a second vote was taken, when by a majority of one it was agreed to consider a feu to the seceders. The carters would ask £55, and another £20 if the congregation wanted to feu the garden, which they already held on lease. In the end, after correspondence and meetings, a feu contract was signed on 30th September 1801, whereby the congregation gave up their lease of the carters' ground, and feued it instead for 10 guineas per annum. They were to be allowed to enlarge the entrance from the street, and also to take down the convening-house to make room for the enlargement of the church. They were to build a new convening-house on any part of the garden.
which would suit them, and the interior measurements were stipulated to be no less than those of the present convening-house. Also the carters' carved stone was to be built in above the door of the new house.

One more condition explains the relatively small feu charged: 22 ft of the garden immediately behind the tenement facing the Kirkgate was reserved to the carters for the purpose of extending the tenement if and when it should be rebuilt. So, amicably after all, the carters and the seceders got themselves new buildings. It was also agreed that both bodies should have free use of the new convening-house: the congregation would use it as a session-house, the carters as a convening-house, and each party to accommodate itself to the other in the matter of the times of their meetings. There had, in fact, been a similar arrangement respecting the old convening-house, but it seems to have been a verbal agreement only. (61)

Peace now reigned in the carters' yard for 15 years. In August 1815 the congregation heard that the carters were planning to take down and rebuild their tenement at the back of the church - the tenement fronting Coatfield Lane, that is. The managers offered to feu the sire for £35. They pointed out that this was a ridiculously high figure,

61. This story may be easily followed in the Carters' papers at this period. All the relevant documents have been preserved.
but that they were anxious at all costs to preserve their back lights, which would be badly overshadowed by a new high tenement standing within a few feet of the church. The feu contract was signed in April 1817, and the price was £36. The advance of £1 on the original offer was probably not unconnected with a diverting incident. The newly appointed boxmaster, Robert Kinnaird, told a meeting of carters that he had summoned the members together in consequence of a serious accusation made against him by one of the carters, Daniel Robertson. Dan, it appeared, had called the boxmaster a liar — a mis-sworn man. And he had been a mis-sworn man from the very day of his election; because Robert Kinnaird had been bribed by the managers of the congregation to arrange things so that the carters would accept £30 for the feu rather than the £35 offered. The wretched Mr Robertson was then asked what he had to say, and he confessed he had been drunk, and had no recollection of having said anything. He was not forgiven; a vote was taken on whether he should be fined two guineas or three, and a majority decided for two guineas — a sizeable sum in 1816. It is not improbable that the managers were then induced to offer £36 — to keep the carters' reputation clear. (62).

For many years thereafter matters stood thus between the incorporation and the congregation. During the 1830s the carters took down and rebuilt their tenement fronting the Kirkgate. They did not use the ground they had reserved behind it, but feued that lot to a builder. Finally in 1886, when the congregation was preparing to move to a new and larger building on another site, they offered the carters £100 for their convening-house, and the offer was accepted. The combined sites of church and convening-house made a desirable building lot, and by that time the Society of Carters was a friendly society, administered from a lawyer’s office.

The traffickers most nearly rivalled the mariners in wealth and numbers; but in the age of their association the porters might well have claimed to be as old as the seamen’s society. A document of 1686 refers to the porters as the "Corporatione of Workemen of South Leith", and porters had been "workmen" since the mid-16th century, before which this had been known as the Pynour craft.(63)

The workman’s labour was varied; he could be found as a general porter in the streets of Edinburgh and Leith; he was a scavenger, a docker, a removal man and an undertaker. Dressed in a broad blue bonnet, blue swallow-tailed coat

with brass buttons, and corduroys, the porter had his coat-tails tucked up to form a rest for the burden on his back.\(^{64}\)

On his shoulders he wore a padded "back" with armlets, and with this equipment he was ready for "tursing", that is, bearing on his back one, two and even three hundredweights. Polkmen specialised in tursing, but the stingmen worked in pairs, one man behind his mate, each taking the end of a sting or pole on his shoulder, from which, between the bearers, was slung a barrel. Calderwood tells of Maitland of Lethington being carried sick from Leith to Edinburgh Castle by six workmen with "sting and ling" - poles and a litter.\(^{65}\) The Porters' Stone - a deeply carved block set in a wall in Tolbooth Wynd - shows two stingmen at work in the top left-hand corner.\(^{66}\)

The scanty records of the eighteenth century porters in Leith consist largely of annual financial statements, but there are a few papers giving some details of their work. In a protest against the proposed repeal of the statutes against Roman Catholics in Scotland in 1779, the porters speak of themselves as "the four old companies of Porters

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\(^{64}\) cf. J. Campbell Irons, *Leith & Its Antiquities*, ii.154, where there is an illustration.

\(^{65}\) D. Calderwood: *The History of the King of Scotland* (ed. W. Kinloch, Soc. 1843) III. 60.

\(^{66}\) This stone has been frequently photographed: cf. Irons, op. cit. ii.420.
in Leith". It was characteristic of the craft in Leith that they worked in companies or gangs, each company specialising in some particular branch of work. Bulloch says that a company consisted of twelve men, and that a society was a union of several companies. Each society had its own set of rules, and carried the usual benefits of a friendly society. In 18th century Leith there was but one Society of Porters. Their records make frequent reference to themselves as the Society of Porters, and there is no mention of any other society of porters in the town. When referring to the members, the usual phrase is "the four companies of workmen", as in the annual statement for 1749 which includes an item, "To cash from the four companies of workmen being 45 men at two merks each for 1749, £5.-.-" Edinburgh Town Council's Regulations for Porters in 1762 laid it down that the number must not exceed 200, but there is no evidence to show that the porters in Leith ever reached anything like that maximum. On 1st November 1782 there were 102 members of the Society present at a general meeting, and the minute refers to them as "A General Meeting of the four Old Companies of Porters". This very large number is probably due to the inclusion of loadmen, who were members of the corporation, but not freemen porters.

67. Bulloch, op. cit. 46f.
68. MTC. 24.3.1762. /x×v1.25/3.
The four companies are listed in 1774, and then comprised 41 men, for each company was short of its full complement of 12 men. They were known respectively as Hodge's Company, Graham's Company, Telfer's Company and Crawford's Company. According to Bulloch, Telfer's (or Telford's) Company had formerly been known as the Wine Company; Crawford's Company had once been the Polkmen's Company. He also mentions the Sugar Company (later known as Gibson's), and the Metter Companies, as being amongst the oldest of the Leith companies; but Gibson's is not included in the 1774 list; and whereas originally the metters had been part of the porters' corporation in Leith, long before the 18th century the Society of Metters was an entirely separate body, a distinct corporation.

The 19th century saw a great increase in the number of dock porters, to cope with the increasing trade of the port, and more companies were formed. Bulloch mentions the Traffickers' or Trafalgar Company, the Leith Mill Company, Grindlay's, Brown's, the Baltic Company, the California Company: he also includes Graham's Company as a product of the 19th century, but as we have seen, this was one of the four old companies of the previous century. The mid-20th century saw the reduction of these to two companies only - Gibson's, and the United Company of Porters.

69. Sederunt of 2.11.1774. (Porters' papers).
- and these two latest survivors were in turn swallowed up in the National Dock Labour Board.

Like most of the incorporations the porters had their own property - Porters' Land in Giles Street. In 1757 they were forced to have this property extensively repaired, and this brought the Society deeply into debt, which overshadowed their proceedings for several years. (70) Benefits had to be cut, and some members showed increasing reluctance to pay their dues. Fearing for the future of their society, the porters in 1763 obtained the sanction of Richard Tod, Bailie of Leith, to draw up a new set of Articles. (71) The first of the twelve new Articles stipulated that no new member should be admitted until he produced a certificate of his moral character. To buy the freedom, that is, to enter as a freeman porter, now cost £3.10.-, instead of the earlier charge of £2, but the quarterly contributions remained the same, at half a merk per quarter from each member. The £3.10.- entry money was in sterling, but the half merk - 6s 8d - was Scots money, and this was not the kind of money to produce large benefits. Sickness pay was 1s 3d sterling a week, and death benefit £3. The Society's ambition was to pay 3s weekly sick benefit, and a pension of 1s 6d weekly to retired members. This would be possible,

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70. Sederunt of Trustees of the Porters' Society. (Porters' papers).
it was thought, when the funds grew to £100. Porters being perhaps prone to swearing, Article 7 said that "any that shall take the Name of God in his mouth sitting in company shall pay 2s 6d"; and personal abuse would be subject to fining by the offender's own company. Cheating, stealing, or any breach of confidence would be met by instant dismissal and the loss of all benefits. Plainly the Twelve Articles of 1763 were meant to reform and discipline the Society, and a footnote bears this out:

"As all Societies are Erected for God's glory and the Good of mankind, we, the members of this Society hope that through the Grace of God we shall Endeavour to fulfil the articles above written."

Porters were distinguished further as stingmen, polk-men and metters; and to these were added the rollers, who figured as members of the society, but of lesser rank. These were probably unskilled labourers, and they entered on payment of 6s 8d as against the stingmen's and polkmen's entry fee of £3.10.--. Rollers doubtless received some benefits, since it was apparently worth their while to enter the society, but there is no hint of what exactly they received. Certainly they had no vote nor any voice in the management of the incorporation, and never seem to have been elected to any office.

Originally the metters formed a branch of the porters' society. A minute of Edinburgh Town Council for 2nd November
139 puts metters on a par with stingmen and polkmen:

"...Anent the metteris, that to haif for metting of ilk chalder victuall and of salt twelf penneis. Followes the names of the saidis persouns quha were admittit and sworn to observer the premisis and tand cawtioun thairvpon as followes: (12 stingmen, 8 polkmen and 2 metters). It is specially injoynit to the said metteris that thai saill be leill and trew, bot falsett, as equall bayth to the byers and to the sellaris vnder the paynes foresaid." 

Unfortunately few of the metters records have survived from the period prior to 1826. In that year the Society of Meters and Weighers was reconstituted, having for some time previously been moribund. There is, however, sufficient evidence in the few documents remaining from an earlier period to place the existence of the Corporation of Metters in Leith beyond all doubt, even before the 18th century. For example:

"Receaved from John Hope the sune of Sixteen pounds Scots and yt for the Minester's Stipend by ye Metsters of Leith for ye yeer 1677 of ye which ye discharge shewn as witness my hand at Leith the fifteen day of Jany 1676.
Geo: Riddell."

Riddell was boxmaster to the traffickers, to whom the porters also paid their share of stipend. Again in 1709,

"Leith the 14th Novembr 1709.
"I James Williamson, present boxmaster to the Incorporation of Trafecours grants me to have receaved from Walter Wilson boxmaster to the Metsters the sune of Sixteen pound Scots as there proportionable pairt of the Minister's stipend for this present yeare. I say receaved by me
Ja: Williamson."

The body which was reconstituted in 1826 as the "Society of
"...there was taken out of the Mettsters Box in presence of the Baillie the soumes particularly underwritten which was given to Walter Wilson to be bestowed by him in Manner aftermented, viz. To pay their proportion of the Second Minister's stipend. ... £16. --. --. To be given to Andrew Simpseone Mettster & others the poor of the Incorporation. £6. --. --. To be given to the Traffecyrs Officer. £.12. --. Archibald Wallace Baillie." (72)

The Incorporation of Metters therefore provided for their poor, and probably did so with difficulty, being from the nature of their calling few in number, and with small resources. In April 1735 they petitioned the town council of Edinburgh, who seemed to be on the point of nominating more metters. The Society protested that there was scarcely work for the existing metters, without adding to their number. They claimed that trade in Leith had greatly declined of late, and as there are 16 metters, with one old man and two women to support, they are finding times very hard. This complaint was probably justified, for from a note of quarterly subscriptions paid in the years 1805 and

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72. Metters' papers.
1807 there seem to have been but a dozen metters then, when trade was much greater than in 1735.

Metters were appointed by the Edinburgh Town Council, to whom they swore to be honest. It was for long a common practice for the town council to nominate women to be metters — generally widows. These were probably the widows of metters, as it was no unusual thing for women in other incorporations to take over business in place of a dead husband, and in such cases women were invariably accepted as members of the incorporation concerned. (73) By the 18th century however, women have disappeared from the Society of Metters.

Appointment by the town council placed the metters on a different footing from all the other Leith incorporations. The metters never had any need to fight for recognition, since from their earliest days they had had the full backing of the town council. The reconstituted society of 1826 was able to proceed with drawing up the Constitution and Rules once an act of the town council had been procured, ordering the formation of a Metters' Society "with the exclusive privilege of metting and

73. cf. Society of Baxters v. Helen Birrell. (Register House). cf. Sederunt Book of Carters, 10.7.1801, when Mrs Pew, widow of a member, is refused widow's aliment, because she carries on her late husband's business, as a blockmaker.
weighing all grain &c. either imported into or exported from the harbour of Leith."(74) The number of metters has always been adjusted to the volume of trade into and out of Leith, and the early years of the 20th century probably saw the society at its peak, with 32 sworn metters, assisted by casual labour which on occasion amounted to as many as 70 men. Increased mechanisation in dealing with grain cargoes reduced the metters to no more than 9 men in the mid-20th century.

The constituent members of the Convenery of Trades behaved and were organised like the major incorporations, each trying to provide for their own aged, sick, poor, widows and orphans, each grimly maintaining such exclusive privileges as it had. Benefits from these small corporations were often derisory, but were still valued, for there was no poor relief, except from the kirk session; and as the population increased the parish poor box became less and less adequate. Some corporations welcomed members from any trade or occupation. If the applicant was healthy, of good character, and with no dependents likely to be making claims on the society, he was received with open arms: his entry fee and quarterly contributions were most welcome. The weavers admitted to the Burgh Commiss-

Commissioners that only half their members were weavers, the rest being from a variety of trades and callings. But should an incorporation itself have no strictly legal standing, it would be unable legally to refuse an unwanted application from a man of another trade. This was the case with the Leith incorporations, and the situation was made very clear in a lawsuit in which the Incorporation of Baxters in Leith pursued Helen Birrell, one of their own members, in 1742.

At that time there were only two bakehouses in Leith, and five members of the baxters' corporation, one of whom was Helen Birrell, relict of John Penman, a freeman baxter. After her husband's death the widow carried on the business, but after a while she married again, and she and her second husband, James Gilchrist, continued to run the bakehouse. It was at this point that the Incorporation of Baxters objected, and raised an action. Their case was that while it was accepted practice with the incorporations to permit widows to continue operating their former husbands' businesses, this could only continue so long as they remained widows. This was reasonable: deprive the widow of her business and she might quickly become a charge on the incorporation to which her late husband had belonged. But on her remarriage she was provided for again, and should not continue to do work
another man might well do. The baxters on this occasion however, were more anxious about another aspect of the matter - the man Gilchrist was not a baker. He had been bred to the barber's trade, and was not fit to exercise the baker's craft. But judgement went against the baxters. It was pointed out that the Society of Baxters was not really an incorporation, but merely an association of bakers organised for the financial benefits they might together be able to provide, and that there was nothing to prevent any man carrying on business as a baxter. There was no legal bar to any man whatsoever becoming a "freeman baxter" once he had paid his entry fee to the incorporation. The so-called Incorporation of Baxters in Leith had no authority to challenge or question any man's ability and training.(75)

No doubt this was the law, and no doubt the law might be rigidly enforced against so-called incorporations without influence sufficient to maintain exclusive privileges. Lacking the goodwill of Edinburgh Town Council, a small society like the baxters, unable to attract more members with substantial benefits, would always remain weak and in danger of collapse, while larger corporations, even within the same federation of the Trades, remained

vigorou. The tailors, the hammermen, the cooper were for long able to prevent unfreemen exercising these crafts, and membership was never just a matter of finding the entry fee or "upsett". Each of these bodies demanded an "essay" from each prospective member – an example, that is, of some work characteristic of that particular craft.

Two or three "essay masters" were appointed to see that the candidate's work was properly carried out within the time set for the task, and when the finished work was produced the essay masters had to swear they had given no help whatsoever. The aspiring cooper had to make a "mask¬ing fat" (mashing vat), and firlot and peck measures: the tailors called for a suit of clothes: the Hammermen, who counted a variety of crafts in their membership, arranged appropriate essays for each new candidate. The would-be locksmith made "a polished pass lock for a Chamber Door, with a crock and a band": the blacksmith was asked for "a Crook and a band for an Outer Gate, a horse shoe and Six Naills, and a Shuffell Iron". John Paton, who applied for membership as a cutler, was appointed to make a razor and a penknife; and John Stead the cardmaker produced a pair of fine wool cards. Some applicants professed skills not shared by many, and the corporation was then in difficulty to find a suitable "essay". Patrick Robertson, claiming to be a founder, was told to make
a pair of "Secrete spring Candlesticks". Eight months later Robertson apologised for his failure to produce his essay, but explained he had not the tools for the job, so the corporation modified their specification, and accepted a pair of "Fashionable Candlesticks without Springs". (76)

The fleshers were an interesting group. Although few in number they were prosperous. There were only six members of the incorporation in 1814, and they supported four widows. The society claimed then that since 1800 their business had multiplied five-fold. Their relationship with unfreemen was on a different footing from any other incorporation. The fleshmarket was divided into the high market and the laigh market. The former section was the property of the Society of Fleshers, and the laigh market was the property of Edinburgh Town Council. In the high market the freemen fleshers had their stalls, while unfreemen, not members of the society, were accommodated in the laigh market, and paid rent to Edinburgh. As there were only 8 stalls in the high market, and as there were often more than eight members of the Fleshers' Society, the high market stalls were allocated to freemen fleshers in order of seniority - seniority as members, that is - those freemen left without a stall in the high market being compelled to take a place in the laigh market.

76. Sederunt Books of Corporations of Coopers, Tailors & Hammermen, various years.
until such time as stalls became available in the laigh market. (77)

While unfree fleshers were thus allowed to trade freely, despite the fraemen's exclusive privileges, they were not allowed to slaughter beasts. The freemen fleshers however were prepared to forgo even this privilege of slaughter, and allowed unfreemen to kill beasts, on condition of their paying "box pennies" to the fleshers' box. This fee brought in a considerable sum for the fleshers' beneficiaries, for the "box pennies" consisted of a fee of 1s for every head of cattle slaughtered; 6d for a sheep, and for each calf or pig 3d. Those were the charges at the end of the 18th century - a big advance on earlier rates, in view of the rising cost of living. Box pennies from unfree fleshers relieved the freemen of the need to pay any quarterly contributions, which put the fleshers in a unique position among the incorporations. (78)

We have confined our attention so far to the incorporations in South Leith. Although North Leith was but a small village, the landward area of the parish included Newhaven, where almost everyone was connected with the fishing interest. Some members of the Incorporation of

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77. Fleshers of Leith against Lord Alloway's Interlocutor, 1814. (Register House)
78 Sederunt Book of the Corporation of Fleshers in Leith, 21.8.1740. Also another sederunt book, undated, but apparently covering the years between 1796-1800 approximately.
Mariners lived in North Leith; the Maltmen had no interests north of the river, as there were no breweries there; and the Traffickers, with a few members in North Leith, had no more need than the mariners to form a second society there. With the Trades, the situation was different, for the trades of North Leith formed part of the Trades of the Canongate, and were separate and distinct from the Trades of South Leith. The North Leith Trades each met and attended to their business under the chairmanship of an "oversman", whose report to the parent body in the Canongate was received, homologated from time to time, and advice and instructions issued on the conduct of North Leith business.

The Trades of the Canongate had seats in North Leith parish church - enough seating, indeed, to accommodate the whole Trades of the Canongate, which was far more space than would ever be needed on any ordinary Sunday. This was acknowledged by the Trades, and seats surplus to the normal needs of North Leith tradesmen were let to the parishioners, the rents providing a useful income for the incorporations. In South Leith all income from seat rents of incorporations' seats was required to meet the stipend of the minister in the second charge; there being no such requirement in North Leith, the incorporations were much better off. But once a year, on the second Sunday in May, the Trades of the Canongate attended the church of
North Leith, and occupied their seats - an annual assertion of their rights. A minute of the kirk session for 6th November 1753 makes arrangement clear:

"The Treasurer reported...That the Incorporation of Cordiners in Canongate & North Leith are willing to sett their Seat in the North Church of Leith to the Session there for fifteen years for the yearly rent of seventeen shillings & sixpence sterling, out of which they are to pay the yearly feu of four merks to the session. But if the rent is not paid yearly per advance, the Tack is to be void and null. They are to reserve the two back seats for their own Members, but the Session are allowed to use them att the time of the Sacrament; only if any of their Members are Communicants they are to be provided. They are to have the freedom of their own Pews in the foreside the second Sabbath of May as usual. All which proposals the Session were satisfied with."

There was one unique body in North Leith - the Society of Free Fishermen of Newhaven. Written records of the Free Fishermen go back as far as 1572, but tradition maintains the society is older than that. In the provision of benefits and in the maintenance of exclusive rights the Free Fishermen were very like any other incorporation; but the village being a fishing community, where sons followed their fathers through generations of seagoing, and where few inhabitants were unconnected with the sea, the Society of Free Fishermen was regarded as representing Newhaven. This was a position no incorporation in a royal burgh ever occupied. The Free Fishermen acted as the town council of Newhaven, and were widely accepted as such, in many matters. The Society was responsible for the care and maintenance of
the streets, and the scavenging and sale of dung; they owned and administered the village cemetery; they regulated the use of the Forth-oyster-beds. (79) For centuries it was open to any man in Newhaven, even to any stranger arriving to live and work in the village, to join the Free Fishermen's Society; but in the later 18th century the increasing population led to such an influx of members that this freedom was curtailed in 1817, when new rules were made, and revised in 1821. It was then decided that no one might become a Free Fisherman who was not "the lawful son of a fisherman whose name was clear on the books". (80) At this period membership stood at over 200.

When Newhaven was detached from the parish of St. Cuthbert and joined to North Leith, the Free Fishermen took responsibility for the poor in their village. This may have been a duty accepted by them from the first days of their Society, for they were far enough from the parish kirk to feel themselves an independent community. The Free Fishermen also had responsibility for maintaining the school in Newhaven - which was also a duty commonly belonging to the kirk session. (31)

The Free Fisherman have a silver cup with the following

81. These two last aspects of the Fishermen's activities will be further considered in the chapter on "The Common Weal".
inscription:

"The Fishermen of Newhaven having voluntarily enrolled to act as Sea Fencibles to oppose the menaced invasion of the French during the momentous crisis in the years 1803-4 & 1805, & it having been represented to them on 20.7.1806 that three French frigates were committing depredations on our trade in the Greenland seas, they immediately volunteered their services to carry H.M. ship 'Texel' to sea, and after a cruise of 30 days off Ireland and Norway, returned. This cup is dedicated by them to their posterity to shew what they did when their services were required to meet the enemies of their country."

The cup is also engraved with a sketch of H.M.S.'Texel', and the name James Vashon, Rear Admiral.

There is also a silver medal inscribed:

"In testimony of the brave & patriotic offer of the fishermen of Newhaven to defend the coasts against the enemy, this honorary mark of appreciation was voted by the County of Midlothian, 21st Novr 1796."

On the opposite side is a Scots thistle, with the words Nemo me impune lacessit aqmine remerum celeri. This medal, with a silver chain, was presented by the Duke of Buccleuch, in presence of a representative gathering of citizens.

"The silver chain", said James Wilson, chronicler of the Society, "at the present time is very short; I have heard several men say that they remember it when it was much longer".

At the beginning of the 18th century the incorporations were very influential bodies, but the end of the century saw a great change. By then a large and increasing number of tradesmen neglected to join any corporation,
and the freemen themselves were finding it more and more difficult to maintain their old authority and their privileges, in the face of multiplying challenges. In particular, the great increase in the number of King's freemen, as soldiers and sailors were discharged at the end of the Napoleonic wars, brought much embarrassment to the incorporations. Ex-servicemen, in recognition of their services, were allowed to engage as freemen in whatever trade they chose, and no incorporation could deny them the right to work wherever they would. These were King's freemen, whom the corporations grudgingly allowed to settle in their midst.

By the time of the Burgh Commission of 1833-4 several of the Leith incorporations were but a shadow of their former selves. The final closure came with the Burgh Trading Act of 1846, which abolished all the old exclusive privileges, and opened the doors of any trade or business to any person. Such of the incorporations as survived this measure lived on only as friendly societies.

82. cf. Sederunt Book of the Incorporation of Coopers in Leith, 18.4.1816.
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BUSINESS IN GREAT WATERS

The chief occupation and concern of Leith had always been with the sea, and by the eighteenth century this involvement with ships and trading was beginning to extend beyond anything known in the past. Maritime business embraces ships and the men who sail them, who build them, who rig and equip them. There are ship-owners and ship chandlers; merchants investing in cargoes, and lawyers giving advice, arguing cases, settling disputes. A small army of customs collectors and surveyors, receivers and waiters make their living from the sea. Not many families in Leith were unconnected with the sea, or unconcerned with what happened there.

Perhaps the most intimate links with salt water were those of the fishing community, centred in and around Newhaven. Here sons followed their fathers to sea, as often as not in the same boat; and mothers and sisters, baiting lines and selling fish, were essential links in the chain which led from the boats to the dining-tables of Edinburgh.

In the early years of the century the fishing from Newhaven was exclusively done from boats, rather than the larger vessels called busses, which were used by the Dutch
long before being taken up in this country. (1) Herring boats were open, undecked craft, intended for fishing off the coast. With 14 to 16 ft keel and 6 to 7 ft beam, these boats suited local conditions, for between 1710 and 1725 herring were very plentiful off the east coast of Scotland, and a short trip from Newhaven took the men to the fishing grounds. (2) Unfortunately the habits of herring are unpredictable: without warning shoals will leave an area they have favoured for years, and there is no knowing when, if ever, they will return. About 1726 the herring forsook the east coast, and the fishing trade collapsed. Whereas 700 to 800 boats had found profitable employment, there were soon fewer than 100 boats on the entire east coast. (3) Still, from time to time the shoals did return, and from about 1775 the coast was again flush with herring, and in the autumn of 1794 they invaded the Forth estuary. For four years then, fishing was easy and profitable, but once more the herring moved away. (4)

James Colston, who seemed ignorant of any previous herring fishing from Newhaven, dates the industry from 1793:

"It is to the late Thomas Brown that the credit belongs, for having found out this fertile source of revenue to the fishermen. The discovery was made by him quite accidentally, near Donibristle, on the northern side

2. 3rd Report from the Select Committee on British Fisheries, 103. cf. p.30.
3. ibid.
of the Firth, when he was fishing near the shore, with hook and line, to catch haddocks and pollies. He suddenly discovered that the waters were invaded by shoals of herrings, which could be gathered together in bucketfuls. The herring fishing in the Firth of Forth was soon made a great enterprise..."(5)

This herring glut at the end of the eighteenth century made a lasting impression on those who experienced it. James Wilson of the Society of Free Fishermen, spoke more than fifty years later with an old man at Limekilns

"who told me there was a great difference now in the herring fishing. He said when he was young there would be hundreds of boats between Bo'ness and Garvie, and when you were looking at them you would have thought easily to step from boat to boat across to the other side."(6)

Those were not all Newhaven boats, of course, for the glut attracted fishermen from all along the coast. Wilson himself remembered from his own boyhood in the early nineteenth century, that herring were fished at Inchkeith, and on one occasion at least, a profitable haul was made off Cramond Island. Herring fishers were then active up the river beyond Queensferry. But the elusive herring had not become a permanent resident in the Forth, and the middle-aged Wilson confesses

"The herrings are now caught many miles from land, the boats taking from 9 to 12 hours to go to the fishing grounds, whereas in former times an hour or half an hour was all that was required. Very often I

6. James Wilson, The Society of Free Fishermen of Newhaven, 100. "Garvie" is of course the island of Inchgarvie.
have seen no sail hoist on a boat from the harbour to where the net would be set."(7)

Herring boats at the turn of the century were small to Mid-Victorian eyes, but the older men engaged in them proudly spoke of them as large boats, as indeed they were, compared to the diminutive shells of two or three generations earlier. In the 1790s there were three classes of boats: the biggest were for the summer herring fishing, and for deep-sea work fishing haddock; next came the half-ling, which could also be used at a pinch for the Lammas herring fishing; and the smallest boat was the drag yawl, used for oyster fishing in the Forth, and never expected to face the open sea. These yaws were 22 to 26 ft in length, which was then a recent increase on earlier measurements.

Under the pressure of foreign competition fishing methods were gradually adapted and improved. When the herring swarmed near our coasts, the Dutch never had any hesitation in coming over in their great busses and scooping the bulk of the harvest.(8) In the early eighteenth century there were few busses on the east coast. A minute of the Scottish Customs Board in 1724 refers to "ye Buss of Leith",(9) and while it might be unwise to conclude from this that there was only one fishing buss sailing

9. Minutes of Scottish Customs Board, 4.3.1724.
from Leith at that time, there certainly were very few.

In September 1728 a news item in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* dated Leith Sept. 12, announced

"The Bushers belonging to this Place are returned from the Drove and are Livring their cured Herrings and white fish."(10)

So by 1728 at least it would seem that more than one buss was operating from Leith.

The Drove or Drave was a description of the method used in herring fishing. In earlier times the boats had simply anchored at the fishing ground, and shot the nets and hauled them without moving from the spot. By the 1720s however this approach to the fishing was seen to pay poor dividends.

"By experience, the best method of fishing for herrings with boats, is that which the Fishermen call the Float Drave, i.e., by the boats and nets striving with the wind and tide, and not anchored as formerly, which requires nets of three times the depth they formerly fished with, consequently of much greater expense to the Fishermen, who, though sensible of the advantage of those deep nets, yet are deterred from providing them, on account of the great expense."(11)

Lack of capital was the greatest single obstacle to the development of the herring fishing industry in Scotland.(12) Want of skill was also a limiting factor, together with ignorance of the best methods of curing; but the two latter weaknesses were also the indirect consequence of the want of money. In the late 1720s the

herring shoals disappeared from the Forth and from the east coast, and for years there was little or no herring fishing. Newhaven fishermen could not afford to have busses built, and could not reach the new grounds in their small boats. Buss fishing was the answer, but this could only be a dream to a poor man. Since herring came close inshore only at infrequent intervals, it was hard for coast fishermen to gain experience of the particular techniques required for this kind of fishing. A newspaper comment in 1764 draws attention to this:

"From the east coast of Fife we have advice, that the herring fishing there last week was pretty successful; but that, through the unskilfulness of some fishermen, the shoal was like to have been quite driven off the coast. It were to be wished that some proper regulations were made for conducting this so useful a branch of the fishing, to more advantage."(13)

The want of practice for years at a stretch made for unskilfulness when the shoals did appear in coastal waters; but the problem of finding money to build busses remained unsolved for a long time. In the early part of the century a boat of 15 ft keel and 5½ ft beam cost £4.10. - to build, and equipment could absorb a further £10. 4. -(14) It was not impossible for a crew to raise £15 amongst them and so to become owners of their boat. A 50-ton buss was quite a different matter. This was an average size, and

cost around £800 to build and equip. This was out of the question for the individual fisherman, or even the four or five men of a boat's crew. The few busses that did eventually make their appearance in Leith and Newhaven were provided by companies organised for the purpose. The Fishery Co-partnery of Edinburgh not only engaged in fishing, but in 1720 bought the town and lands of Peterhead. (15) Whether this speculation ever yielded any profit is hard to say, but the co-partnery was dissolved in 1725, and the assets sold off. Those assets included

"the lands and Fisher Town of Peterhead, with the Pertinents and others belonging to the said Co-partnery, lying in the Parish of Peterhead and Shire of Aberdeen; the yearly rental whereof amounts to 191 Bolls and 2 Pecks Bear, 199 Bolls and $ Pecks Meal, 2 Bolls of Oats and £80. 4. - Stg of Money Rent; and Feu duties being the neat free Rent over and above the Minister's Stipend. Item the feus of 37 Houses in Stonehaven, and Fish Boats in the said town belonging to the said Copartnery lying in the Sheriffdom of Kincardin; the free rent whereof amounts in all to £7.12. 6 Stg." (16)

The town and lands of Peterhead was purchased by the Merchant Maidens' Hospital in Edinburgh for £3000, and the superiority has remained there ever since. (17) The Fishing Copartnery of Edinburgh was succeeded by the Leith Herring Fishing Copartnery, which in 1728 advertised

"A small cargo of Royal cured Bush Herrings, and a few Barrels of small Salt Herrings of the same kind with a few Barrels of Cod Fish, all belonging

15. Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th ed.) article "Peterhead", where the writer says Peterhead was bought by a fishing company in England. This appears to be mistaken.
16. E.E.C. 3-5.5.1726.
to the Leith Herring Fishing Copartnery, are to be exposed to publick Sale on Friday 20th September... &c...&c."(18)

The busses could sail the open sea, searching for herring, or they might try the Shetland fishing for cod. Each buss carried two or three small herring boats which were lowered on reaching the fishing grounds, and shot and hauled the nets. Back on board the buss barrels and salt were stored, and the catch was speedily gutted, barrelled and salted. In this state the fish would keep until a full cargo was on board, or until it was judged time to make for home.(19) By this method profits could be greatly increased, for the men were able to continue actively at work for much longer periods than was possible from a small boat working on its own.

The Government favoured buss fishing, and in 1749 passed an Act to encourage herring fishing. Under this measure the Society of the Free British Fishery was incorporated, with a capital of £500,000, and a bounty system was established, paying 30s per ton on all vessels from 20 to 80 tons, and 2s 8d per barrel on all herrings exported. The Society itself soon dissolved, but the bounty system remained - a system which completely ignored the small herring boats, and attended solely to the needs of the busses.(20) Nothing much resulted from the Act at first,

20. Henry Hamilton, op. cit. 117.
and in 1753 there were no more than eight busses in all Scotland, employing 116 men,(21) and the following year two busses were offered for sale in Edinburgh, both of which were less than 3 years old.(22) The bounty was substantially increased in 1757 to 50s per ton, and this was helpful. The ending of the war in 1763 was an even greater encouragement, and from that time the buss fishing began to expand.

This development in the later eighteenth century was important for Leith, where a larger population brought a greater demand for work than ever before. The small herring boats were worked by a crew of four, five or six men; but each buss carried a dozen to 18 men, according to its size. The buss crew was stipulated by law; five men had to be carried for the first 15 tons, and one man for every 5 tons more. A buss of 50 tons burden was therefore compelled to employ a crew of 12, and they mostly carried a cook-boy in addition. Four or five men were enough to work the ship, so the rest were presumably fishermen. An important aspect of the matter however, was that in a crew of 12 men and a boy, five of the men need have no skill or knowledge of the sea - they only had to be able-bodied. The crew would then consist of the master, one "best

fisherman" for each herring boat carried (generally three), and one net man for each boat, the ship's boy, and the five unskilled men, who worked in the boats. This arrangement gave an opportunity for unemployed landmen to go to sea. The master of such a vessel took 50s or 60s per month in wages, the "best fishermen" 43s each, the three net men 35s each. The unskilled men and the boy averaged around 27s. One fisherman acted as mate and another as cooper. (23) The ship herself was subject to depreciation, and running costs were heavy. 14 to 17 years was reckoned to be the serviceable life of a buss, but she required graving, caulking and painting every year; and rigging, which must always be the best obtainable, was in constant need of repair and renewal. Above all, the sails had to be completely renewed every fifth year, and more frequently if there was much stormy weather. (24)

It was a hard life, but the men had a reputation for gaiety, mischief, and from time to time a bit of hooliganism.

"The crews of fishing vessels are in general disposed to be disorderly; they cut and steal one another's nets and buoys, and some of them have been known to be so much inclined to mischief as to fix nails or knives to the blades of their oars, that by sweeping them over the buoys, as they rowed through a train of nets, they might destroy them with the greater ease,

24. ibid. 208.
and let the nets sink to the bottom..." (25)

With all this it has to be remembered that the buss herring fishing occupied little more than four months in the year - the summer season from mid July to early September, and the winter fishing from November till January. For the rest of the year the busses could be engaged as coasters in the merchant trade, but as the sailing crew comprised only four men and a boy, there was a large pay-off when the herring fishing ended, and unskilled men were hard put to it to find other employment.

Newhaven was fortunate here; haddock, lythe and pollack could be caught in their small boats without going far out to sea, but the main occupation for most of the year was oyster fishing. For centuries large and luscious oysters had been dredged from the Forth, and the scalps were famous. Records of oyster fishing at Newhaven go back to 1592, and even then the industry was well established. (26) In 1682 the town council of Edinburgh fixed the price of oysters at 8s per 100, and 20 years later this price had doubled, and continued to rise. (27) The several scalps belonged to various owners, and from time out of mind the Newhaven men had had an

25. 3rd Report on British Fisheries, 97f.
27. M.T.C. 27.9.1682; 25.10.1689; 30.10.1702.
   XXX.145, XXXIII.46, XXXvII.320.
exclusive right to fish the City of Edinburgh's scalps, which lay adjacent to others which were dredged by the men of Musselburgh, Fisherrow and Prestonpans.

In 1741 the town council issued regulations to govern oyster fishing on the town's scalps. The minute states that "foreigners" - presumably fishermen from places other than Newhaven - have presumed to fish and drag oysters on the scalps belonging to the Admiralty of the City, without leave, causing a risk of extermination. The council ordained:

"1. No fishing from 10 Apr to 5 Sept. Offenders to be prosecuted and lose the right of fishing.
2. No undersized oysters to be sold to foreigners.
3. Newhaven fishers are not to sell any oysters to foreign markets, unless passed by inspector.
4. Newhaven fishers are to enquire for trespassers from the east of Fife, or elsewhere, to lodge information, and to assist in apprehension.
5. Newhaven fishers are to watch for trespassers, they themselves being allowed to fish only on enacting themselves as a body in the books of the Admiralty of Leith to obey regulations, under a penalty of £10 Scots, and loss of privilege."(28)

Throughout the permitted season dredging was constant, for the market was secure, and prices, dictated by the town council, allowed a modest profit. Naturally the fishermen were not averse from selling at an enhanced profit to "foreigners", if the opportunity arose, and this greatly angered the magistrates when they found out; but on

the whole the scene was peaceful.

As the century advanced however, trouble appeared, and trouble remained for many years. Whether the city scalps were more prolific than others, whether the Newhaven men had been poaching on other scalps, whether the origin of the trouble was some private or family feud, there is no knowing now, but the complaints mentioned in the council minute of 1741 increased. The fishing grounds were repeatedly invaded by men who had no business to be there. Eventually in 1788 the matter came to a head, when 24 Fishersrow boats became embroiled with the dredgers from Newhaven. A desperate fracas ended with the capture of two Newhaven craft, which were towed into Burtnisland.(29)

The upshot was an enquiry held by the High Court of Admiralty, in which an attempt was made to sort out the ownership and fishing rights of the various scalps. The enquiry began in 1791, and it was two years later before final judgement was given. Ownership claims were put forward by

The City of Edinburgh, which was sustained;
Lady Greenwich, which was sustained; (her grounds later owned by the Duke of Buccleuch);
Mr Wm. Davidson of Mairhouse, which was disallowed;
Sir John Inglis of Cramond, which was disallowed;
Town Council of Burntisland, which was curtailed;
and the Earl of Morton, which was sustained.

29. James Wilson, op. cit. 61.
The Judge also gave an important decision anent the City of Edinburgh's scalps:

"The Magistrates and Council had the exclusive property of the oyster fishings, but had no other grant of these fishings beyond that contained in the charter referred to, upon which no possession had followed except through the Society of Fishermen of Newhaven."

The "charter referred to" was apparently that granted by James IV, which had been produced at the enquiry by the town council. According to this decision the right of fishing for oysters meant nothing unless it was exercised—and it had been exercised solely by the Newhaven fishermen.(30)

This enquiry cleared the air for the time being, but there was a new development in 1815, when the city decided to charge a rent for their scalps, and demanded £25 from the Society of Free Fishermen. Thereafter this charge was frequently raised, until by 1839 the fishermen were paying £74 a year for the right to dredge oysters.

Not satisfied even with this, the town council in that year leased the oyster fishing rights to an Englishman, George Clark, for 10 years, at £600 a year! This marked the beginning of the end for oyster fishing in the Forth, for Clark had no intention of losing out on his bargain. He brought over 60 dredging boats from England which he set

30. James Wilson, op. cit. 62.
to work from dawn till dusk every day, in an attempt to strip everything from the scalps. But the Newhaven boats doggedly refused to budge from their traditional fishing grounds, even in face of a tug specially chartered to patrol the forbidden area. Clark finally lost patience, refused to pay any rent, and took himself off.(31)

At the end of the eighteenth century oysters were being sold at 6d the long hundred, and after the French wars, when the cost of living had risen steeply, the price was pegged, by edict of the town council, at 1s the long hundred. A notice to that effect was displayed in the Edinburgh fishmarket.

"The railway system has altered entirely this arrangement. It has served to equalise prices over the country, and brought within the reach of all what was previously a speciality in a district. The supply of oysters is now very limited...The current price is now from 1s 6d to 2s per dozen,"(32)

Shore facilities for selling fish were hardly in existence at all before the advent of the railway. There was neither harbour nor a covered market, and yet a great deal of business was transacted daily. Phil Carnie, writing in 1896, says

"...Two or three generations ago the present pier existed, but not the harbour to the westward. The only harbour in those days was formed by the line of rough boulders east of the pier, still visible at half-tide, just opposite the Peacock Inn. But it was sufficient for its purpose. It belonged to the fishermen, and they were practically a law unto

31. See Appendix B.
themselves. The waters teemed with fish right up to the very margin of the shore, and the groaning creel was the only method of conveying the harvest of the sea to the inhabitants of Edinburgh..."(33)

Ten years earlier than this writer, an anonymous article in The Scotsman mentions some old market practices at Newhaven:

"Newhaven fisherwomen were reputed to sell only the fish which their husbands and sons caught in the line boats. Some still do so, and would view the suggestion to do otherwise with dismay...The Newhaven fisherwomen in their warm-looking blue garments, were active participants in the business of the market. They bustled about here and there, peeping into this box and that, and mentally appraising the weight and quality of the fish which were there and on the roadway...Anon the auction sales begin, for all the fish landed, or nearly all, are put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder...

"One woman, it would appear, has acted as buyer for five or six, and immediately the sale is over the process of sub-division commences...When all are satisfied that the six piles of fish (if there are six women in the transaction) are as equal as can be made, still another precaution is taken to avoid all cause of dispute. This is the casting of the lot. Each fisherwoman furnishes a token, or 'turnip penny'. These are put into the hands of a stranger, if one can be secured, who throws a token upon each pile of fish. Each woman then takes her own, and is perfectly satisfied. They all immediately thereafter set off to town."(34)

The Newhaven oyster-woman's cry of "Caller ou!" has not been heard in the streets of Edinburgh for over a century now, and the men's "dreg song" or oyster song has also

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34. The Scotsman, 8.4.1886.
been forgotten with the passing of the trade. There were several dreg songs, and numerous versions, for as often as not the words were improvised as the singing went on. These were rowers' songs. When working over the scalps the dredges were pulled along the seabed at an angle of about 45 degrees. This operation required the boat to travel steadily, and a good stiff breeze supplied the best motive power. Lacking enough wind, the men took the oars, and the dreg song kept them going smoothly together.

"Here we would seem to have the explanation of the tradition that one had to sing to the oyster to get it into the net. Without a song the rowers could not row steadily enough; the dredge lifted, and the knife-edged bar along the bottom of the dredge... failed to cut the oyster from the seabed." (35)

Oyster fishing was a profitable occupation for the winter months until the disputes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ruined the business. During the close season, from early April to mid-September, the summer herring "drave" in July and August came in conveniently, and the late spring and early summer could be filled in with a trip to Shetland for cod and ling. But for the younger, hardier, more adventurous men, a far greater ploy was the Greenland whaling.

Whaling was a recent enterprise in the eighteenth century. The earliest organised venture to the Greenland  

35. F. Collinson, Scottish Studies, v.14f.
seas appears to have been in 1615, when James VI granted to Sir George Hay and Mr Thomas Murray a 19-year monopoly in whale fishing. (36) The object then, and for long afterwards, was the whale-oil, which was used in the manufacture of soap - an industry just then starting in Leith. There are few records of whaling, but the industry operating from Leith seems to have had a precarious existence until 1750. At least it is a fact that while a bounty was granted in 1733 - a grant of 40s per ton on whaling ships - nothing was paid out in Leith until the establishment of the Edinburgh Whale Fishing Company, whose ship, the Trial, of 333 tons, was fitted out for the Greenland fishing in 1750, receiving a bounty of £666. (37)

John Martine writes of whaling from Leith "from the end of last century down to 1842 or thereabouts", and seems to be unaware of any whaling at an earlier period.

"The whalers generally sailed in March, and arrived home in October or November from Davis Strait; if they went only to Greenland, they arrived sooner. They were all biggish ships, of 300 to 400 tons register. Their bows were strongly fortified to protect them from the ice. They carried crews of from 40 to 50 men each, and were provided with young surgeons... The sailing day of the whalers from Leith was always a great event; crowds lined the quays and pier. Being full-rigged, well manned, and fully equipped for their perilous voyage, they made a splendid appearance in clearing out of the harbour." (38)

But this is not the whole story of whaling from Leith. In the eighteenth century the round trip took much less time,

37. 3rd Report on British Fisheries, Appendix 32. 134.
for the ships did not sail until April, and they returned two or three months later - from late June to the end of August - depending on the weather, and their success or otherwise. (39) This was certainly the rule until the nineteenth century was well advanced, for a writer in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, describing the whale fishing in 1815, says that

"Between the latitudes of 75 and 79, off the coast of Spitzbergen, is the situation to which all vessels, either from Britain or the Continent, annually resort, and generally arrive there about the latter end of April."

The end of the season appears to have been governed by weather conditions:

"The thick, hazy weather set in for the season at the usual time, about 20th July. The most of the vessels then left the country. Such as remained after that period had little prospect of success, and had seen no fish for some time." (40)

The earlier whaling ships were not specially built for that purpose. The Trial, already mentioned, was a cargo vessel bought in London. She had been built in America - "Plantation built" was the phrase - as were most of the larger ships of the time: 333 tons, square-sterned, and with ports for 20 guns. In the latter years of the whaling trade, Irons says, the ships were 300 to 400 tons, but smaller vessels went to Greenland in the 1750s and 1760s.

39. E.E.C. numerous references, e.g. 9.4.1751, 9.4.1754, 26.6.1754, 2.5.1758, 18.8.1760, 2.8.1762, 5.8.1765.
The Edinburgh, for instance, also belonging to the Whale Fishing Company, was offered for sale in 1762, and her burden quoted as 285 tons. (41)

Men who a few weeks previously may have been at loggerheads on the oyster scalps, could find themselves at work together on a whaler, bound on the same desperate adventure. If the season turned out well, there would be a handsome profit for every man on board; but there might be few whales, or none at all; and not infrequently ships were wrecked, and men died or were maimed for life.

In modern terms the catches were derisory. Probably the most successful of the early years was 1754. After a homeward passage of 11 days from Greenland, the Royal Bounty entered Leith harbour towards the end of June with ten whales on board. A Dundee ship arrived with seven whales and five tons of whalebone, and the Peggy of Bo’ness brought home three. As usual the ships had arrived on the whaling grounds at the end of April, and for fully a fortnight had had to face very stormy weather. About the middle of May there was a change, and they had had good success in fine weather until they quit the grounds on 8th June. (42)

There were no facilities on board for preserving or

41. E.E.C. 8.9.1762.
42. E.E.C. 24.6.1754.
processing the catch, so they did not wait for full cargoes, but made for home when a successful run seemed to have ended. It was no means unusual for a ship to return without having sighted a single whale. In 1762 the Trial returned to Leith with one small whale, about 3 ft of whalebone and 20 casks of blubber; and a few days previously the Swallow and the Dolphin, both of Newcastle, had slunk home without anything on board at all. (43) That was a black year, and a month later the Trial was up for sale. Few seasons were as lucrative as 1754. Three years earlier 31 whalers from Britain were at work in the Greenland seas, and their combined haul for that season was 43 whales. At that period probably three or four whales was reckoned an average catch after two or three months away from home.

The strong element of risk in whaling has always appealed to certain men, but there was also glamour, for the whalers were among the largest vessels ever seen in Scotland - larger than many ships which crossed the Atlantic, and far bigger than anything ever built at Leith. Shipbuilding was an ancient craft in the port, and was carried on exclusively in North Leith; but the ships built there had always been small. In the year from Martinmas 1726 to Martinmas 1727 the active shipbuilders

43. E.R.C. 2.8.1762.
were John Young, Peter Robertson and James Beatie; and of these three Robertson launched one ship of 100 tons burden during the twelve months, John Young completed two vessels of 80 and 24 tons respectively, and Beatie was responsible for half a dozen, ranging from 100 tons down to 12 tons. In the following year the same three builders completed 10 boats between them, the largest of which was only 60 tons; and in 1729-30 another seven new ships left the stocks, only one of which exceeded 50 tons. (44)

By the end of the century cargo vessels of 200 to 300 tons were being built at Leith, and while this was a small achievement when compared with Messrs Menzies' launching of the Forth, of 1940 tons in 1841, it was still a notable advance on the work of the early eighteenth century. In the 1790s there were five shipbuilding firms at work, employing about 152 carpenters, (44) and the future seemed bright for an expanding industry. But the Clyde yards drew far ahead, and Leith firms turned more to ship repairing. (45)

There was never any lack of local pride, however.

"Yesterday was launched at Mr Robert Drybrough's dock at Leith, a very fine new ship, built for the service of the revenue of Excise, thought by good judges to be the most elegant in point of construction and shape, ever built in Scotland. The dock,

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44. Register of Shore Dues, City archives.
the bridge, and opposite shore, were crowded with spectators, who testified the satisfaction they felt on the occasion by loud huzzas. The ship launched about two months ago, and mentioned in a former paper to be the largest ever built here, was built by Mr Drybrough, in the same dock."(47)

Though these vessels were small, the Leith yards of the eighteenth century were busy places, for small ships were in the greatest demand, the bulk of trade in and out of Leith being coastwise. 1729-30 could be taken as a typical year, and in those twelve months 925 vessels entered the port with victual, coal, peat, other inland goods or ballast, and 397 vessels from England or abroad.(48) In the earlier part of the century the dreadful condition of roads everywhere ensured shipping companies of a virtual monopoly of heavy freights, and this situation provided ample scope for experiment in improved speed and efficiency. Efforts made in this direction however were but fumbling, half-hearted gestures, and by the end of the century shipping services were tolerated only for lack of any adequate alternative. Perhaps the Forth ferry service illustrates the inefficiency of eighteenth century shipping as well as any other example we might choose.

In the middle of the century there was a ferry between Leith and Kinghorn. Two types of craft were engaged on this run: the so-called "Big boats" carried horses, cattle

47. E.E.C. 10.11.1764.
48. Register of Shore Dues, City archives.
and other freight, as well as passengers; and the small pinnaces, some of them no more than 6 or 7 tons, carried passengers only. This was a brisk trade, and until 1773 there appear to have been no regulations governing the service. The pinnaces carried passengers at 6d each, and were popular because of their cheapness and comparative dependability. Especially in summer, it was no uncommon thing for the "Big boats" to get the chance of a profitable cargo, and to go off on a coastal trading trip, leaving the ferry service with one boat less for the transport of heavy goods. On the other hand the pinnaces had the bad habit of taking on far more passengers than was safe. Pinnace owners retorted by alleging that the big boats would not make the trip at all until they had loaded not only their freight, but also what the skipper considered were enough passengers. Undeniably there had been serious accidents with overcrowded pinnaces. Something must also be done to compel the big boats to be more dependable; so the town council issued regulations in 1773.

Business at this period was so good that eight big boats and ten pinnaces were regularly engaged in the service. It was said to cost £300 to build a big boat, and £30 for a pinnace, so that some owners could have a large financial stake in the ferry. A surprising aspect of the running costs was that the wages bill for the owner of a big boat
might not be much more than that faced by the pinnace owner, for while the big boat was manned by a crew of four men and a boy, each pinnace also required four able-bodied men. The reason for this was that while a steady breeze gave the pinnace an easy passage, when there was little wind it had to be rowed over, to maintain the service. In a flat calm the big boats just did not attempt the crossing, and no freight could be got over the firth without them. Pinnacemen also made a nuisance of themselves by approaching the big boat's passengers just before sailing-time, and offering a cheaper passage. This mischievous behaviour had more than once led to fighting between the rival crews.

The town council now laid it down that three of the big boats must sail on each tide, at stated hours for the benefit of passengers, and each boat was entitled to a freight worth five shillings and no more. This was quite unrealistic for a big boat, and it was soon well known that these boats were making anything up to £3 per passage, despite the new regulations. They also took passengers on board when they well knew the crossing was dangerous; but several owners of big boats also owned pinnaces, which sailed after them, and in bad weather, perhaps a quarter or a third of the way over, passengers were transferred from the big boat to the pinnace, which then completed the passage - completed the passage with as many as twenty passengers.
For safety's sake the 1773 regulations limited the pinnaces to six passengers each, and the fare was raised from 6d to 10d, so that each pinnace might draw 5s in fares - the same sum as the big boats were allowed to take in freight charges. This was manifestly unfair. Pinnacemen were also angry, for they claimed they could never induce six people to pay tenpence each, although they could easily find ten people to pay 6d. They also maintained that any pinnace was perfectly safe with even 15 passengers, apart from the crew. Argument over the regulations became even fiercer when the carriers using the ferry addressed a petition to the Justices of the Peace. (49)

The carriers were annoyed because they were now forbidden to cross on the pinnaces, as they had been in the habit of doing. The packman’s bundle was now accounted freight, which must cross on the big boats alone. There were also frequent delays before the boats could be persuaded to sail, despite the regulations as to sailing times. The upshot of this petition does not appear, but its presentation illustrates the picture of general inefficiency.

While the ferry service shows up the poor standards of administration and personal service in shipping, that is not the whole picture of the shipping business at that time. Experimenters and inventors were also at work.

49. Bill Chamber Processes, Register House.
Patrick Millar of Dalswinton tried out his primitive paddle device - a wheel fitted between two boats and turned by hand - at Leith in 1787. (50) Thomas Morton's patent slip, invented in 1818, brought him fame. As it is now a long-forgotten contraption, a contemporary description may be worth repeating:

"The patent slip is a contrivance which supplies the place of dry docks in any situation, but more especially where it is found inexpedient or impracticable to construct the latter... This invention is simply an inclined plane, on which are iron railways. On these a carriage, sufficiently capacious to receive the vessel to be hauled up, and furnished with truck wheels, is placed, these wheels having flanges to guide them, and the carriage being provided with paws (pawls) to fall into the rack of the inclined plane. The carriage being properly adjusted and prepared, is let down this plane generally at low water, but if found more expedient, it may be let down into the water, the weight of metal attached to it keeping it securely in its place, even in this last case, and at a sufficient depth to allow the vessel to float upon it. When the ship to be hauled up has been brought directly over the carriage, she is allowed to settle down upon the machine, which she does gradually as the water subsides. A strong iron purchase-chain being attached to the carriage, and which is connected with, and wrought by a wheel and pinion, capstan, or other mechanical power, at the upper end of the slip, the vessel is hauled up the inclined plane... at the rate of from two and a half to five feet per minute, by six men to every hundred tons.

"The patent slip is now employed in nearly all the principal seaports in the United Kingdom... One of Mr Morton's slips has already been furnished to the French government, and another to the imperial Russian dockyard at Nikolaeff." (51)

None the less the most convincing sign of progress

50. J. Mackinnon, Social and Industrial History of Scotland, ii.28.
51. Alexander Campbell, History of Leith, 211f.
in the shipping industry was not Patrick Millar's bizarre experiment nor yet Tom Morton's impressive device. In popular opinion it was the sailing smack that foreshadowed the shape of things to come. Built mainly for the Leith to London run, and constructed on the "cod head and mackerel tail" principle, the smacks earned a great reputation for speed. They varied up to 75 ft in length with 23 ft beam, the greatest beam being more for'ard than aft, and their burden up to 160 tons and more. (52) Martine describes them as having "a tall thick mast with a heavy running-out bowsprit, and a very large mainsail." (53) Favoured by wind and weather they were remarkably swift sailers, and one of them was reputed to have made the voyage to London in a little over 40 hours, which set the town talking for a long time. (54) But in adverse weather the smacks were poor performers, and most uncomfortable for passengers. It was annoying, to say the least, to sail from London to the Forth in less than two days, only to be held for several days within sight of Leith, waiting for a favourable wind to make the harbour. The first steamers to make the trip did no more than a steady five knots or so, but they kept it up. They were dependable.

The first smacks were put on the London run in 1791 by the Leith and Berwick Shipping Co., who in that year

52. Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th ed.) xx.510, art. "Ship".
53. John Martine, Reminiscences of the Port & Town of Leith, 2.
54. Leith Pilot Annual, 1890.
moved their headquarters from Berwick to Leith. Like the stage-coach, they rapidly gained great popularity, but just as rapidly passed away. The stage-coach was superseded by the railway in barely half a century, and the smacks, in an even shorter period, were eclipsed by the steamers. By the late 1830s the three companies which operated smacks had been given up. There had been several companies in the business at various times, but unions and re-groupings had left three companies in command of the situation - these were, the London and Leith Old Shipping Company, a firm established in 1812 out of the former Leith and Berwick Company; the London and Edinburgh Shipping Company, which emerged in 1809, taking over the Edinburgh & Leith Company, dating from 1802; and thirdly, the London, Leith, Edinburgh and Glasgow Shipping Company was born of a merger in 1820 between two smaller businesses.(55)

In their day the smacks were thought to be the last word in sailing achievement, and they were given privileges and concessions to speed them on their way.

"The Collector has been for some time past in the use of allowing the settlement of the (harbour) dues for...smacks to lye over for a month or sometimes two months...The Harbour-master had instructions from the Collector to allow those smacks to pass out of the old harbour without a ticket, that they might run no risk of detention by the delay in applying for tickets, and thereby incur the danger of losing the tide. But to no other vessel was that privilege granted."(56)

56. Leith Dock Commissioners against the Magistrates of Edinburgh - Bill Chamber Processes, Register House.
The Edinburgh and Leith Shipping Company was established in 1802 by a group of Leith merchants, with six armed smacks, and the crews had special exemption from the impress. At this period the smacks were armed at Government expense, for the protection of the coast, and each ship carried six 18-lb carronades and two 4-lb guns. This hardly made an impressive ship of war, but skilfully and resolutely handled a smack could make a fight of it, and at least one celebrated encounter was described in a letter to a newspaper by someone who knew how to use words to stir the blood.

"The Queen Charlotte Packet, Wm. Nesbitt master, left London on the 22nd of the present month. That day and the following were spent chiefly in adjusting the guns, and properly arranging the ammunition. About 12 o'clock of the day, on the 24th, being then between Cromer and the Spurn, the mate called up the master, who had just gone to bed for a little, to come and look at a suspicious vessel, which the latter had no sooner done, than he immediately pronounced it to be a French privateer, and as from her superiority of sailing, there seemed to be little chance of escaping that way, he ordered all hands to fill cartridges, and to get the guns ready as fast as possible. This determination created no small alarm among us all, both from the apparent great superiority of the enemy in number of guns and men, but also from the uncovered state of the smack, the bulwark of which being little higher than the level of the guns, the men on the deck were nearly as much exposed as if no such barrier existed at all.

"About 10 o'clock p.m. the enemy approached close upon our weather quarter, fired a gun, and hailed us in good English, ordered us to haul down our mainsail - which order he enforced with a broadside, and a shower of musquetry from the deck and yards, which were crowded with men.

"Our Captain asked what brig that was, and desired them to cease firing until that point was settled,
to which the enemy replied only by a new discharge of artillery.

"Mr Nesbitt then ordered the firing to be returned, which was immediately done, but with very little effect in the first instance, as the guns had not been correctly pointed. A brisk firing was then kept up by both sides, within pistol shot, for nearly three quarters of an hour, when the enemy having shot ahead, wore, which Mr Nesbitt did at the same time. This brought us to windward of the privateer, which, however, immediately came up again, and gave us a fresh broadside, which we as readily returned. At this time our jib-haulyards being shot away, the enemy gave three cheers, conceiving that we must now inevitably fall into his hands; but upon his attempting to tack, he found that his own gaff-haulyards had shared a similar fate; and although our vessel came easily round, notwithstanding this disaster, he was obliged to wear; yet he persisted in returning to the charge, and in passing our lee-quarter gave us another broadside, which was returned with so much effect from the smack, that the enemy bore up and left us to pursue our course unmolested.

"Mr Nesbitt and one of the sailors were the only persons wounded on this occasion; the former received a shot in the side early in the action, and the ball fell at his feet, but he carefully concealed this circumstance from every one around him, and gave his directions and managed the helm with the same precision and determined coolness till the affair was over as he had done at the commencement. The packet also received considerable damage in her hull and rigging.

"The enemy was a large brig, appeared to carry 14 guns, regularly fitted up and crowded with men, and from the superiority of her sailing, her commander had a fair opportunity of choosing his station. The Queen Charlotte had six 18-lb carronades, and her crew only 16 in number, more than half of which were boys..."

"Leith 27th Jan. 1804. A. Passenger." (57)

With all the shipbuilding and repairing, and with all the trading in and out of Leith, the lack of anything

57. Edinburgh Weekly Journal, 1.2.1804. It is gratifying to note that Captain Nesbitt was still in command of a smack in 1832, according to the Post Office Directory.
like adequate harbour facilities was a very sore point for a long time.

"Sunday, the Janet of Edinburgh struck on the Bar, in coming in to the Harbour of Leith, but Yesterday Afternoon was brought up to the Key without receiving any Damage. She is upwards of 700 Tons Burden, and the largest that has ever been in that Harbour."(58)

If something were not done to enlarge and improve the harbour, Leith was like to fall very far from her one-time proud position as the first port in Scotland. Already Greenock and Port Glasgow were far ahead. In 1760 the annual turn-round at Port Glasgow amounted to 28,000 tons, at Greenock 25,384 tons, and at Leith a mere 13,475 tons. Twenty years later Greenock had a long lead, with Port Glasgow second, and Leith trailing well behind, and not much in advance of Kirkcaldy.(59) There was no lack of eager desire for betterment in Leith, but there was a chronic shortage of money, and nothing to match the lucrative trade with the American colonies and the West Indies, which would have produced the needed funds.

Admittedly something had been done, but even that little, only after much delay, and at little expense to Edinburgh Town Council, who owned the harbour... As far back as 1659 an enterprising skipper names William Cowston

got into trouble with the town council for building his own dock. He had made use of a site he owned, but Edinburgh challenged his title, and when he produced sasine for the land it was declared to be insufficient, and he was ordered to dismantle his dock. On his showing some reluctance to do this he was put in prison until the order was carried out. (60) Captain Cowstoun seems to have suffered for thinking and acting ahead of his time.

The town council first made a move to improve facilities at the harbour in 1709. They asked the Masters of Trinity House to make an inspection of the harbour and suggest improvements. Among other things the shipmasters pointed out

"That there were two large convenient sites for a dry dock on the north side of the harbour, the ground being of clay and sand." (61)

and adopting the suggestion, the magistrates and council petitioned Queen Anne for permission to build a wet and a dry dock "for building, fitting and carining (careening) H.M. ships of war." (62) The Government, like the town council, had no intention of incurring any expense over the project, but by extending for a further 19 years the duty of twopence Scots on the pint of ale or beer sold within the city or liberties, this side of the matter was happily arranged. After various delays work was finally begun in

60. M.T.C. 1.6.1659; 3.6.1659; 6.7.1659.
62. M.T.C. 30.3.1710. XXX.1.831.
1717, and three years later the first dry dock in Scotland was opened. It may still be seen between the north bank of the river and Sandport Street. Measuring 165 ft by 30 ft it was much larger than was needed for any ship built at Leith, but it was intended to accommodate the larger naval vessels, and this dock certainly played its part in securing local employment fitting, rigging and repairing ships in the Government service. At one time there was a coffer dam constructed in this dock, sealing one end, where small ships could be built or repaired, and launched into the outward end of the dock - a convenient arrangement, considering the crowded state of the river. Many ships then anchored up-river beyond the Coalhill, for there was 10 to 12 ft of water at spring tide 130 fathoms above the bridge. (63)

A little further up the river a second dry dock was built on a site adjoining the old parish kirk of North Leith. This dock was closed in the latter years of the 19th century, and converted into a warehouse basement. (64)

David Loch, a well-known Edinburgh merchant, in 1778 wrote:

"There are two dry docks, well employed, which are of great benefit to all the shipping on the east of Scotland." (65)

and indeed the facilities for repair of vessels that were offered in these docks must have been widely welcomed.

Admitting the benefit derived from the dry docks, and from

63. John Mason, ibid.
64. Leith Pilot Annual, 1889.
65. David Loch, Essays on the Trade &c. of Scotland, 7f.
the stone pier, included in the Queen Anne improvements, and built in the 1720s, many more improvements were urgently needed by 1750. The harbour bar (see p.186 above) effectively prevented any ship of more than 700 tons making the harbour, and for such vessels as did cross the bar, berthing facilities were meagre, and the consequent delay in loading and unloading cargo, a great waste of time and money.

Leith traders submitted a representation to the town council in July 1753, seeking an enlargement to the harbour, and an act of Parliament was obtained early the following year; but the project came to nothing for want of money. (66) Even had the money been available, it would not have been all plain sailing. The kirk session of North Leith were alarmed at the terms of the Bill, for the river bed was to be widened, apparently engulfing the manse and its garden in the process, and bringing the quayside hard up against the church.

"att which sailors might be haling ships out or in, or perhaps loading or unloading in times of divine service."

The kirk session resolutely objected to this, but would have been willing to sell the church, manse, churchyard and manse garden, and rebuild elsewhere with the proceeds. (67)

In the event this issue was not joined, and it was to be another half century before the enlargement of the harbour was undertaken.

In 1787 an Act was passed (28 Geo.III cap.58) for improving the harbour of Leith, but Edinburgh Town Council could not agree with Trinity House on plans for the enlargement, and in the end all that resulted from this measure, apart from minor repairs and improvements, was the building of a drawbridge at the foot of Tolbooth Wynd. This replaced the mediaeval Bridge of Leith which spanned the river at the parish kirk of St. Ninian's of North Leith. Eighteen years later a second drawbridge was sited at Bernard Street - the old Weigh-house Wynd - and they were known respectively as the upper and lower drawbridges.

A further Act of Parliament empowered the town council to make wet docks, piers, quays and dry docks from the harbour westward towards Newhaven, and work on the new docks began in 1800, to the design of John Rennie. (68) The East Old Dock, as it was eventually known, was completed in 1806, and the West Dock, originally called Queen's Dock, was begun in 1810 and opened in 1817. (69) Rennie's plans had envisaged a third dock, much larger

68. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs. Edinburgh 337f.
69. Leith Pilot Annual 1889.
than the other two, which would extend to Newhaven, where a deep-water entrance would be provided; but this magnificent idea had to be abandoned, for, once again, there was no money. As it was, Government loans for various dock and harbour improvements, amounted to £302,290. (70)

The lack of accommodation, both in depth of water and in berthing, was a serious handicap to Leith's expansion, but this was only half the picture. In the opinion of many, a more serious barrier was encountered in the multifarious port charges. These were unavoidable, and were met with in every port; the complaint was that in Leith these taxes were more numerous and costly than in any other port on the Forth, or in the east of Scotland.

"The various charges upon a timber vessel of 305 tons amounted to nearly £70... Ships... can be chartered to any other port in the Frith of Forth for 5% less than to Leith, by reason of the high port charges. In many instances there is, in the charter-parties for the Frith of Forth, an express declaration against delivering the cargoes at Leith, unless on payment of an additional rate of freight, which is usually 5%. In consequence of this, and of the want of good accommodation in the harbour for unloading timber, vessels do very frequently go to other ports, avoiding altogether the port of Leith. ... Vessels have gone to the port of Fisherrow, about six miles distant, and there discharged their cargoes, which were sent by carts to Edinburgh; and notwithstanding the additional expense thus incurred, they find it a cheaper mode than if the cargoes were discharged at Leith..." (71)

This unhappy state of affairs was thought by Leith

71. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, Municipal Corporations, 346.
merchants and shipowners to be the result of one basic fault - the fact that the ownership and management of the harbour and docks belonged exclusively to the Corporation of Edinburgh.

"Their object, whether successful or not, was said to have been so to act as to render the revenue sufficient, not merely for maintaining and improving the works, but affording large salaries to their officers, and a surplus to be applied to the general purposes of the Corporation. In consequence the rates were raised by them, without duly considering what effects the rise might produce upon the trade and interests of Leith."(72)

The list of charges had reached extraordinary proportions. Ships were liable for Anchorage and Beaconage, Flagage and Light dues, Lyage dues and Rowage, the "merk per ton", Prime Gilt, Shore dues, Shed duties, Tonnage duty, Gold Penny, Birthage, Bulkage, Ballast dues, Pilotage - added to which was a strong suspicion that the revenue so obtained was not always properly applied.

After many years of grumbling the first real effort to get some kind of revision of port charges was made in 1783, when a committee of Leith traders made certain proposals to the town council. At this period the charges were not as numerous as they were to become in the next thirty years, when all the new extensions and improvements had to be paid for, but already there was strong resentment at the activities of the Shoremaster, who collected

72. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 347.
Anchorage, Beaconage, Birthage, Flagage and Pilotage. These charges, it was proposed, should be merged into one inclusive tax, to be called Harbour dues. Shore dues were collected at the Ferry-boat stairs on the Shore. Charges here were regulated by printed tables, but the tables did not include everything, and the Shoremaster apparently took it upon himself to levy his own charges on goods not included in the tables. It was proposed that "poor people bringing fowls, eggs, butter or such like small articles to the market" should not be charged anything. (73) The town council did not see their way to accepting these proposals, but were sufficiently impressed by the attitude of the Leith merchants, to explain the basis on which the port charges were founded.

The main authority was a charter granted by King Charles I in 1636, wherein the city of Edinburgh is granted "the privileges, customs, Haven Silver, Anchorages, Dock Silver, Golden pennies, Shore Silver, &c. of the said port and harbour of Leith and Road of the same." These Shore dues had been regularly collected since 1654. Anchorage was a charge for occupying harbour space; Beaconage, first mentioned in 1616, was to pay for lighthouse or beacon fuel. Ballast dues were charged

73. M.T.C. 3.9.1783. CIV. 168.
on stones and soil taken for ballast. There was good reason for every port charge, but the Leithers did not dispute the need for charges; they were querying the amounts charged, and the uses to which the money was put. (74)

The duties of the shoremaster had originally been carried out by the water bailie, but as a result of the 1636 charter, and the consequent increase of responsibility in collecting the various fees allowed for in that document, an official specially detailed to these duties was appointed. After a conference between a committee of the town council and the Governor of the garrison in Leith in December 1653, the first shoremaster — "Key (Quay) Master", he was called — was chosen early in 1654. Benjamin Hushins (or Huskins) held office until 1667; and when the vacancy occurred, the appointment was joined with that of Keeper of the Tolbooth, which had fallen vacant at the same time. There is no apparent connection between shoremaster and jailor, but Alexander Downie, skipper, was given both appointments. Moreover he was enjoined to carry "ane hatchet with the Town's Arms as the Badge of his office." Two years later there was again a vacancy, and two further offices, those of Chief Pilotmaster, and Flagmaster, were joined with those of Shoremaster and Jailor, and the whole group of vacancies

74. M.T.C. ibid.
was filled by James Melville, a merchant and burgess of Edinburgh. This arrangement continued for as long as the town council retained the right of administering the affairs of the harbour.

Pilots were appointed by the shoremaster in his capacity as Chief Pilot Master, and pilotage was charged according to the depth of water a ship drew. A draught of 7 ft paid in pilotage 10s a foot; and 11 ft draught paid 15s a foot, and so on. In addition the pilot's fee for attendance was 13s 4d per day - and these charges never appear to have been altered until the Dock Commission took over the administration of harbour and docks.

As time went on various burdens and charges were added to the shoremaster's lot. When in 1672 a Mr Johnston was appointed to the multiple charge of the Shore, the Tolbooth, Pilots and Flags, he was made to guarantee the town would be freed of all damage that might follow on any negligence of his as jailor. Walter Lermont was made shoremaster in 1689, and was held bound to pay quarterly the sum of 200 merks to the widow and family of his predecessor. The city frequently adopted this method of providing a pension for the families of faithful servants of the town - the successor paid it from his income. With the appointment of William Wightman, shipmaster and burgess, in 1725, the first mention is made of a deposit
of £35. 9. 8 sterling, which was required before the shoremaster was given custody of the silver axe, the badge of his office. This was returnable on his giving up the appointment, but it was a large sum to find in the first place. Wightman became Keeper of the Parliament House in 1753, and was succeeded as shoremaster by Thomas Allan, who had still another burden tossed at him. He was made responsible, at his own expense, for cleaning the harbour, and keeping it clean, by removing silt from the river-bed and ballast thrown from ships — and further, he had to find caution to the extent of £300 sterling for the repair of ships damaged through his negligence. Mr Allan was the first shoremaster to appoint a deputy, and his successors all followed this example.(75)

The proposals made by the Leith merchants in 1783 were rejected by the town council, and when five years later, the building of the upper drawbridge heralded a new era of building and expansion in and around the harbour, many more charges were introduced. There was a pontage levy for the upkeep of the bridges, and shed duties followed the erection of warehouses. The same Act which allowed the construction of the lower drawbridge in 1807, also provided for the opening up of new streets

and approaches to both upper and lower drawbridges. The work was carried out through a Government loan obtained at 4% interest. Tonnage duty was introduced to pay for this - 1d per ton on all goods imported at Leith; and 1½d per ton if necessary - to meet the interest charges and gradually repay the principal. (76)

Flagage was an ancient levy collected by Trinity House, for the Fraternity had been in the habit of setting out marks and flags "in the most convenient places", as they reported to the town council in 1689, and the money gathered had been used for the benefit of the poor. In 1800 however it was proposed to institute a system of flag signals from the Flag House on the pier, to denote the depth of water on the Bar at different states of the tide. This proposal was accepted and the town council contributed £5 towards the cost of flags. Balls were substituted for flags in 1808. (77) Berthage (or Birthage) is not mentioned in any charter. It was said to have originated in a fee or tip given to the harbour-master for the purpose of securing a good berth, and was later converted into a permanent duty. Pilotage, a long-standing charge, was redefined under the Act 28 Geo.III c.58, where it is provided that this duty shall be levied for the use

76. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 347ff.
of pilots. In practice Edinburgh Corporation had given only one half of this revenue to the pilots, adding the rest to the general revenue of the city.(78) This fraud was later stopped after many protests from Leith. Gold Penny was a tax imposed on all ships built within the precincts of the port of Leith. The Burgh Commissioners were told that the produce of Gold Penny (which in fact was 3d sterling per ton), was applied towards the upkeep of the drawbridges; but this tax was included in the 1636 charter - 150 years before the first drawbridge was built.

Another sore point in Leith was the "merk per ton". Granted in the same 1636 charter, this was a duty of 13s 4d on every ton of goods imported. The levy was ratified in 1661, but what rankled was that provision was made that "the haill benefit" of this impost should be appropriated towards the maintenance of the clergy of Edinburgh.(79)

By the 1820s it was plain that the management of the harbour and docks would have to be altered, for disputes with Edinburgh Corporation were almost continuous. The last straw was a proposal from Edinburgh to turn the ownership of docks and harbour over to a joint-stock

78. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 347ff.
79. ibid.
company to be created for this purpose. This suggestion was made public as Alexander Campbell was writing his History of Leith, and he fairly boils over.

"To have completed the total ruin of the trade of Leith, and of consequence Leith itself, there seemed to have been but one measure wanting, and on this, with a singular and mischievous felicity peculiar to them when they meddle unadvisedly with the affairs of the port, the town council of Edinburgh stumbled, when they conceived, and attempted to carry into effect, the iniquitous project of making over the docks of Leith to a joint-stock company, the holders of which were to have been secured in the return of 6¼% per annum...

"Had this infamous joint-stock job been carried into effect, the port would have been not simply injured, but totally and irrevocably ruined; men who cared for nothing connected with it or its interests, but the regular payment of their usurious 6¼%, and who might probably have lived at a hundred miles distance, would have become proprietors; the charges on the shipping would have been multiplied, and increased, and perpetuated to meet this exorbitant return; the docks would have gone to ruin; and the interests of the port, through all its ramifications, would have been neglected." (80)

This is a fair sample of Campbell's style and sentiments. He cares nothing for objective impartiality; he is a Leither recording the wrongs and sufferings of his dear native town. Here he is describing events which were happening almost as he wrote, and his indignation must have been shared by all Leithers at the time. Fortunately the joint-stock proposal came to nothing, and a better answer to the problem of how to manage the business of docks and harbour was found in the creation of the Dock Commission

on 26th May 1826. The management was then transferred to 21 commissioners, consisting of

6 members of the town council of Edinburgh.
2 merchants of Edinburgh (nominated by the town council).
The Master of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh.
9 commissioners immediately connected with Leith.
3 commissioners appointed by the Admiralty.

The Lord Provost was *ex officio* preses of all meetings of the Commission, having both a deliberative and a casting vote. These commissioners were appointed

"for superintending, managing and directing all matters in regard to the maintenance, repair and improvement of the harbour and docks of Leith, and of all works connected therewith (excepting always the collection of the shore and harbour dues and dock duties, and other revenue arising therefrom)."(81)

The Corporation of Edinburgh remained proprietors, and therefore continued to levy shore, harbour, dock and other duties, and received the revenue.(82)

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81. It was soon apparent that the influence of Edinburgh Town Council on the Commission was too great. By the "City Agreement Act" of 1838 the composition of the Dock Commission was altered. The number of commissioners was reduced to 11, of which 5 were appointed by the Treasury, 3 by Edinburgh Town Council, and 3 by Leith Town Council. But no town councillor was eligible for appointment as a commissioner, no neither town council could have undue influence. Since the amalgamation of Leith and Edinburgh in 1920 the Commission consists of 15 members - 6 elected by those paying dock rates of at least £4 per annum; 3 chosen by the shipowners; 3 chosen by the town council, and one each from Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Edinburgh Merchant Company, and Leith Chamber of Commerce.

 cf. Bill Chamber Processes, Admiralty Court Answer for James Phin, &c. 22.

82. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 339f.
Apart from port charges merchants and shippers had to budget for the national levies of customs and excise. This department of the civil service had a great deal of business to do in Leith. Under a Comptroller of Customs there was the Collector, who was served by tide-waiters, coast-waiters and land-waiters - the men who did the day-to-day boarding of ships, inspecting of goods, receiving of monies. Tide-waiters were responsible to their immediate superior, the tide surveyor; and land-waiters were similarly under a land surveyor; and the surveyors in turn reported to the Collector.

There were opportunities in the service for a corrupt man to make easy money in bribes, or in smuggling. The ethics of smuggling were lightly regarded, and cheating the customs was considered a dangerous but exciting game. Officialdom counted it a crime, but had no backing from public opinion, which indeed saw the high duties on certain desirable goods as much more criminal. It is a tribute to the high standards of the service, that in such a climate of thought so comparatively few of these men proved to be venal.

The Commissioners of the Scottish Board of Customs, which body administered the whole Customs Service in Scotland, were strict but fair. Defection from duty was
generally met with a reprimand or, in a more serious case, with suspension. Dishonesty brought instant dismissal. A good example of the discipline applied by the Board can be seen in the following incident concerning two landwaiters, whose business it was to watch the unloading and weighing of cargo:

"Messrs Dent and Crawford, Landwaiters at Leith, attended, pursuant to the Board's orders, upon a complaint of Mr le Grand's, of his having found them sitting in the boxes on the Shore whilst a parcell of flax out of the Eccles from Petersburgh was weighing, and that upon his telling them that they ought to be standing by the scale to prevent the Revenue's receiving any prejudice, Mr Dent answered him in a very rough manner...(83)

Mr Dent was somewhat rash. Mr le Grand might be more scrupulous than he need be, but he was Mr Dent's superior officer. The Commissioners pointed this out to the crest-fallen Dent, and warned him to be more attentive to his business in future. Alexander le Grand had at least been attending to his business, for he was an Inspector General; his duty was to provide a cross-check on the men of the Service and the goods they inspected.

The commonest inducement offered the Customs man was a bribe to turn a blind eye to a bit of smuggling carried out right under his nose. It was far simpler to run a contraband cargo in this way than trying with

83. Minutes of the Scottish Board of Customs, 3.11.1724.
elaborate caution, much discomfort and no little risk and expense, to hide from the watchers.

"William Cheswith, Tidewaiter, with William Jeffrey, also Tidesman, suffered 400 deals to be run out of a Ship from Norway, on which they were boarded in July or August last, for which service they had received 16s each from the merchant.

"Thomas Grier, now Tidewaiter at Leith, charged with allowing a considerable quantity of paper to be run out of the Fisher, Andrew Fowler master, from Holland in April last. He confessed that he had connived at that fraud, as a reward for which he had received of Mr Marjoribanks, merchant, a Guinea and some shillings in silver.

"Thos Morehouse, with James Phelean, William Moncrieff and George Laverock suffered 14 hogsheads of wine to be run from on board the Neptune, John Nairn master, from Bilbao in Febry 1718-19, as a reward for which, says Laverock, he got 4 gns for his share, and supposes the others received as much."(84)

George Laverock had turned informer, and exposed many similar frauds at Leith at that time, which were strictly dealt with.

The Commissioners of the Board were good employers, and an appointment as an officer was well worth having. Wages were low, but were comparable with other occupations. The Land Surveyor was paid £40 per annum in 1725, which was probably at least twice what was paid to a land-waiter; and in 1728 a Surveyor General was appointed in the Dumfries district at a salary of £150 per annum.(85) There was a fund for superannuation, but no automatic payment of this benefit. Application had to be made in a petition

84. Minutes of S.B.C. 28.2.1724.
to the Board, when the case would be considered on its merits. Thomas Maxwell, tidewaiter at Kirkcaldy, was dismissed at the end of 1728, and in the following February his petition was dealt with. It was noted his dismissal was due to old age, and that no misdemeanor was recorded against him. He was now in dire poverty, and the Commissioners granted him £4 per annum from the fund, to begin from the time of his dismissal. Widows and children of Customs officers deceased could also petition and receive such help.

Leave of absence could be obtained at any time, on application. Poor roads and slow transport meant that a man might require several weeks to attend to family affairs at the other end of the country, and customs men were generally stationed far from the rest of their family. It was normal to grant leave, when asked for, with deduction of two-thirds of salary during the time of absence. But again, each case was considered separately, and exceptions to the rule were frequent. Hew Crawford, a landwaiter at Leith, was given a fortnight's leave to visit his wife at Ayr. The usual two-thirds deduction from salary was ordered, (the money thus saved, by the way, was paid into the superannuation fund), but it was later learned that Mrs Crawford had been seriously ill.

86. Minutes of S.B.C. 19.2.1729.
and had died during her husband's visit, leaving children too young to fend for themselves. The Board promptly agreed to make Crawford's salary up to the normal rate, remitting what had been deducted. Any man who fell ill in the Service had his pay continued as usual during his absence from duty. William Moncrieff was forced by his creditors to leave his job and take sanctuary at Holyrood Abbey. He asked the Board to continue his salary during the time he was obliged to remain there. To this the Board agreed. Perhaps they thought that if his salary were to be stopped he would never get out of the sanctuary; but apparently there was another reason.

"The Board, considering the service that Moncrief has done to the Revenue, and the hardships he has mett with in consequence thereof..."

agreed to pay his salary as usual.(37) Could it be that the Board itself was in some degree responsible for Moncrieff's difficulties? Moncrieff himself speaks of his difficulties and hardships as being consequent upon "the service he has done the Revenue", which seems to suggest that this ordinary landwaiter had been out of pocket through expenses connected with his job. That this could happen appears from a Glasgow case which was dealt with in 1729.

A landwaiter who had been responsible for the seizure of a contraband cargo stood to gain a considerable

reward, but only when the matter had gone to trial, and a verdict obtained against the owners of the cargo. In Glasgow, Robert Ellis had seized a large consignment of soap, but he reported to the Board that he did not wish to be at the expense of prosecuting. This was the surprising rule; if the landwaiter was to receive the reward, he must personally undertake the prosecution, becoming liable for all expenses. In this instance the Board "being of opinion that there is good foundation for prosecuting", agreed to pursue the case "at the Crown's charge". (88)

Holidays were frequent - so frequent as to be a nuisance to the business community in Leith.

"Upon complaint of some merchants that they frequently meet with obstruction in their businesses from the officers at Leith observing extraordinary holydays, Mr Colquitt was acquainted by the Board that he is not to allow of any other holydays being kept, than such as are customary in this country." (89)

The Board observed Christmas and New Year holidays - five days at Christmas and four at New Year. Twice a year there was a five-day holiday over the weekends of the spring and autumn sacramental seasons. The King's birthday rated a day's holiday, as did the anniversary of his accession, the Prince of Wales's birthday, the Princess's birthday, the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles I,

88. Minutes of S.B.C., 13.2.1729.
89. ibid., 29.10.1723.
the anniversary of the coronation, Guy Fawkes's Day, five days at Easter, four days at Whitsun - it all added up to a sufficient justification of the Leith merchants' complaint. During these holidays no customs men were available to issue clearance certificates for outgoing or incoming cargoes; time was wasted and unnecessary expense incurred.

Around the Scottish coast the Board of Customs had seven sloops on patrol, all named after princes and princesses. Three of these divided the western waters between them, and four were on the east side until 1723, when the Princess Mary was sold for £250 and no replacement was thought necessary. (90)

The life of a customs officer was not without its adventures and hazards, for some smugglers were ready to use violence, if discovered. The majority of would-be smugglers however, if they could not bribe the customs men, preferred to use their wits rather than their arms.

"The Collector of Leith (reported) that on Friday night last, John Ogilvie and Robert Houston, Tidemen, being boarded on the Grizell of Leith (then at anchor in the Road), Robert Duncan master, from Rotterdam, were confin'd in the Cabbin by sundry persons about an hour, during which time it's believed several prohibited and high duty goods were carried off... The Board direct Mr Parker and Mr Buchanan to take special care that prosecutions be rigorously and effectually carried on against (these persons)." (91)

90. Minutes of S.E.C., 26.11.1728.
91. ibid., 15.4, 1729.
Towards the close of the eighteenth century Leith was rapidly growing and changing. With increased trade and an expanding labour force, various problems of industrial working conditions, wages and security began to emerge, and in 1802 a case came before the Justices of the Peace which revealed something of the shipwright’s lot. The matter was introduced by way of a petition from almost one hundred shipwrights—journeymen employed by Messrs Menzies & Goalen, Messrs Strachan & Gavin, Mr Alexander Hill and Mr Adam Piper, shipbuilders and boatbuilders in Leith. The men protested against a reduction in their wages, lately imposed, which had brought them back to the level of their earnings prior to 1799.

The employers’ case was clear enough: the coming of peace had caused a rapid falling-off in orders, and as they themselves put it, the work now in hand could quite well be done by apprentices. They claimed it was impossible to make even a shilling profit from shipbuilding, and they depended on repairs to keep their businesses going. Wages simply had to come down. And no doubt the employers remembered that as recently as 1793 the wages of shipwrights had been as low as 1. 10d per day. (92)

The petitioners were not impressed. They were being

offered a return to 2s 8d a day, 16s a week for old work, that is, ship repairing; and 2s 4d a day, 14s a week, for new work, which was shipbuilding. In 1799 an increase of 2s a week all round had been negotiated, and this was now being docked from their wages. The increase had been linked to an increase in prices. The *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 18th November 1799 had reported the increase in shipwrights' wages was tied to the rising price of oatmeal, which was then 1s 10d a peck, and still rising. The wages were to remain at the higher level until oatmeal again fell to 1s 2d per peck. The shipwrights claimed the increase had not been tied to oatmeal alone, but to the rise in the cost of living generally; and while the price of meal had fallen by 1802, other prices had not – indeed food, clothing and rents in Leith were greatly increased. Moreover London shipwrights earned 5s a day, and the weekly wage at Shields, at Greenock and at Port Glasgow was a guinea a week.

At that time the working day began at 6.0 a.m. and continued until 6.0 p.m., daylight permitting, with an hour off for breakfast and an hour for dinner. In mid-winter the day was shortened from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., still with two hours off for meals. (93) Apprentices served three years, and were paid 4s weekly the first year,

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93. Petition of Leith Shipwrights - Bill Chamber Processes, Register House.
5s in the second year, and 6s in their final year. The apprentice provided his own tools, and undertook to serve two days beyond the expiry of his indenture for every day he took off "without Liberty asked and Obtained". A boy entering on his apprenticeship obliged himself

"to serve and obey...Honestly and faithfully...
and regularly to attend his Masters Business and
serve them by night and by day, Holy day and work
day in all things lawfull and Honest..."

and the employers undertook

"to teach or cause teach and instruct the said
A..... C..... the whole Art and Trade of Shipbuild-
ing, so far as they know themselves, or shall come
within their practice during said Time, so far as
he has a capacity to learn."(94)

A generation later, in 1838, the apprentice had to serve five years, his pay beginning at 5s weekly, and rising to 9s in his last year.

As one of the busiest and most populous ports in the country Leith had always received the closest attention from the Royal Navy. The wars of the eighteenth century had made heavy demands on the Service, and recruits were constantly sought by every means, both lawful and questionable. Advertisements appeared offering special bounties to suitable volunteers.

"Whereas his Majesty's Service doth at this time require a speedy supply of Seamen and Seafaring men, to man such of his Majesty's ships as are now ready to be commissioned; therefore the Magistrates and Council of Edinburgh do hereby offer a reward of two guineas over and above his Majesty's

94. Indenture of an apprentice to Messrs Strachan & Gavin, 1798.
bounty, to every able seaman, and one guinea to every ordinary seaman, not above the age of 50, nor under the age of 20 years, who shall, on or before the 12th day of September next, appear in the Leigh Council-house, and voluntarily enlist themselves to serve aboard his Majesty's fleet, to be immediately paid by the City Treasurer, upon their being approved by the regulating Captain, or other proper officer in this place." (95)

Bounties were offered repeatedly, but brought nothing like the number of recruits wanted. The press gang was the alternative - a system of legal persuasion which lent itself all too easily and frequently to flagrant kidnapping.

The ruthlessness of the press gang, and the seeming immunity of its officers from ordinary processes of law may be illustrated by two examples of its operations in Leith. On 26th July 1757, James Donaldson, a ship carpenter of North Leith, who was also a constable, was forcibly carried off by the press gang and put on board an armed vessel, the Princess of Wales. The other North Leith constables complained loudly to the Magistrates of Canongate, under whose jurisdiction they served, and the magistrates approached the Lord Provost, who wrote a letter to Captain Ferguson, the Regulating Officer. Ferguson merely answered that Donaldson was a ship carpenter, and had once been at sea, and that was good enough for him - the man was liable for impressment.

95. E.E.C., 8.8.1761.
The fact that he was a constable was neither here nor there. The magistrates now feared they would not be able to persuade any man in North Leith to accept a constable's baton, for there were very few men in that quarter unconnected with the sea. The Lord Provost having failed, the magistrates induced the Lord Justice Clerk and the Lord Advocate to write a letter to the formidable Captain Ferguson - who ignored it. They wrote again, using impressive phrases about illegal acts, and hurt done to H.M. Service. But Ferguson was now able to announce that Donaldson had been sent to London, and no more is heard of him. (96)

James Marylees was a boy of fifteen in South Leith, who was ill-advised enough to go on a voyage to Hamburg with Captain John Thomson, just to see how he would like a seafaring life. He never returned home again, for he was impressed; and the first news his parents had of him was in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, Saturday 13th November 1762, where they saw their son advertised as a deserter.

It was possible to escape the press. Given warning, seamen could keep out of the way, but that only postponed the evil day; next time there might be no warning. The

96. M.T.C., 3.8.1757. lxxiv. 190.
legal way of escape was to pay for a substitute, and that was not cheap; it was so costly as to be quite beyond the dreams of an ordinary seaman.

The boxmaster of the Society of Free Fishermen of Newhaven received a letter at the beginning of December 1812.

"Sir, I have to request you will as soon as possible convene the Fishermen of Newhaven and acquaint them that I have it in command from Vice-Admiral Otway, Commander in Chief of His Majesty's ships at Leith, that the fishermen of Newhaven are immediately to furnish the remainder of their proportion of quota men for His Majesty's Naval Service. As no further time can be allowed, and on their failure of doing so there will be immediately necessary direction given for impress.

Alex. Muir, Capt. R.N."(97)

Send recruits - or else... The Fishermen's answer was to send an appeal "Unto the Gentlemen, Shipowners and others in Leith, Edinburgh and the vicinity", pointing out that the only men of their Society still available for the Service were all married, and if they were lost, their families would become a burden on the community. This was a powerful inducement to subscribe funds for substitutes, for the growing number of paupers was already a major problem. The appeal was successful to some extent at least. The result can be seen in the terms of a receipt dated 9th December 1812:

"Received from the Boxmaster of Newhaven the sum

of Seventy pounds sterling for three landsmen's bounty to serve as substitutes in the Royal Navy for the fishermen in Newhaven, and which men were sent on board the Adaman in Leith Roads. (signed) John Ferney." (98)

The system of impressing men for service was believed to be necessary, but it was arbitrary and unjust, and there were no regrets at its passing. It was not the only example of a muddled and fumbling approach to problems connected with the sea. Another institution to shock the modern mind was the Admiralty Court of Leith. This originated in a charter of James VI dated 3rd April 1616, which granted a jurisdiction of Admiralty to the magistrates of Edinburgh. This was confirmed by Charles I in 1636, and ratified by Act of Parliament, 1661. In particular this Act ratifies

"likewise, a charter granted by our late dear father, under his great seal, to the provost, bailies, council and community of our said town of Edinburgh, of the jurisdiction of the port and harbour, making and constituting them judges between the owners, masters and sailors, as well our ain subjects as foreigners, with their ships, barks and boats within the said port and town of Leith for the time, in all maritime affairs and actions, and other causes whatever, with a power to make acts and statutes for the benefit of navigation within the said village of Leith." (99)

This authority to act as a court of judgement in maritime disputes was not in fact exercised by the town council - ignorance and inexperience marked their unsuit-

unsuitability for the task. But no attempt was made to appoint an experienced person as judge in this Admiralty Court; instead, the baron bailie of Leith was automatically dubbed Admiral Depute. The bailie being no more knowledgeable in maritime affairs than the town council as a whole, he in turn appointed the two resident bailies of Leith as admirals-substitute, and these two last gentlemen in fact conducted the Admiralty Court of Leith. The situation was made still more ridiculous, in that no proper legal substitution was made.

"The mode in which the matter is regulated is this: At the annual election of the magistrates of Edinburgh one of the old bailies is appointed baron bailie and admiral of Leith, and the election is intimated either by letter or verbally by the city clerks to the town clerk of Leith, but no regular deputation is made out. The magistrates thereafter appoint two persons as resident bailies of the barony of Leith. A minute of the appointment is entered in the minute book of the bailies of Leith by the town clerk, in which these gentlemen are stated to have been appointed bailies of the barony, and admiral-substitutes, and they declare their acceptance of these offices. No substitution is granted by the Admiral-depute; and the magistrates of Edinburgh have only authority to appoint deputes directly under themselves. The resident bailies however, certainly do act both in that capacity and as admiral-substitutes..."(100)

This was the court - the so-called court - which heard both maritime and mercantile cases in Leith, and issued judgement, meeting for the purpose in the hall of the Tolbooth. More would have been known of the earlier

100. Petition of Dugald McIntyre.
history of the Admiralty Court, had not many of the books and records been destroyed by the Jacobite troops occupying the court-house in 1745. Those troops were accused of carrying away and destroying a mass of books and papers in which was recorded much of the history of Leith.

The cases tried were various and petty, such as actions for the aliment of natural children, bad debts, sequestration for rent, as well as disputes over damages, and cases with more maritime connections.

"The jurisdiction has also attempted to be extended, not only over the whole city of Edinburgh, but over the burgh of Canongate and other places in the vicinity of the city; going in some instances as far as Fisherv, Dalkeith, Lasswade, &c. This certainly is a most extraordinary practice..."

Extraordinary indeed, but the Admiralty Court of Leith continued to function through two centuries, accepted without question. Such is the hypnotic influence of use and wont.

102. Petition of Dugald McIntyre.
BUSINESS IN GREAT WATERS

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OTHER WAYS OF EARNING A LIVING

The activities of the Company of Scotland, as George Pratt Insh has shown, did not come to an end with the collapse of the Darien scheme. In September 1699 the Company fitted out the *African Merchant* of 170 tons burden, gave the command to Captain William Bell, and provided him with sailing orders to take him trading to Africa, where he appears to have done very well.\(^1\) In connection with this trip there is to be found among the Darien Papers in the National Library of Scotland an "Account of Depursements in fitting out the ship *African Merchant* for the coast of guinea camphier, Sepr 1699."

This includes the following list for furnishing the vessel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the carpenter for putting on an half deck.</td>
<td>£100. - .11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the carver for carved work.</td>
<td>£3. 5. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the painter.</td>
<td>£12.13. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the smith for ironwork and nails</td>
<td>£82.10. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the mason for an hearth.</td>
<td>£1. 4. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the block and pumpmaker.</td>
<td>£9. 2. 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the ropemaker.</td>
<td>£118. - - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the sailemaker.</td>
<td>£116.13. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the brazier.</td>
<td>£20.12. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the carpenter for carinding, botoming, &amp;c.</td>
<td>£66.12. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To tolow, rosein, &amp;c.</td>
<td>£13. 9. 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Total**                                        | **£543.13.10.**

Despite the faulty arithmetic, it is obvious that the main expense in fitting out such a ship was for ropes and sails. Fortunately this gear was obtainable locally,

but the best was expensive, and only the best would do when a man's life or a ship's safety might well depend on the strength of a cable, the toughness of a sail. Even the town council learned that ropes were dear. A few months after the African Merchant sailed, there was a great fire in Parliament close, Edinburgh, and after it was over the City Treasurer paid compensation to John Reid, a Leith ropemaker,

"the price of one hassar (hawser), being 658 lbs weight, at 13 lib per cwt, as also £4 sterling for damage of other two hussars sustained at the late dreadful fire."(2)

It is not clear at what date the manufacture of ropes and sails began in Leith. The editor of the history of the Society of Free Fishermen of Newhaven says

"The Battle of Flodden had immediate consequences for Newhaven because King James had planned to make it the site of a royal dockyard. Some progress had been made with this scheme and it is on record that a factory for making ropes and cables was in operation before the King fell in battle, but with his death the whole scheme was abandoned."(3)

Since we are not told where this record is to be found, we can only note this statement that Newhaven had a ropework as early as 1513. The first reliable indication of the establishment of this industry dates from 1638, when Patrick Wood obtained a tack of ground to the east

2. M.T.C. 3.3.1700. XXXVII. 492.
of Newhaven, a site measuring 460 ells on the links and shore. (4) Wood seems to have been active in the business, for when James Davidson was granted a tack on the links of Newhaven in 1663, it was given "for a rope-works such as the late Patrick Wood had." (5)

James Davidson was a brother of Sir William Davidson, conservator of the Scots privileges in the Netherlands, and the King granted to the two brothers the monopoly of making ropes within the kingdom of Scotland. The Davidsens were more interested in the money value of this gift than in ropemaking, and sold the monopoly to James Deans, a Canongate bailie, transferring the tack of the site for £20 a year. This arrangement was to continue during the lifetime of James Davidson and for 25 years thereafter. (6) Deans took one of his sons, and began ropemaking, but made no success of it, and the venture collapsed. In 1682 the monopoly ran out, and the town council received an application from Jean Debaut for the use of a piece of ground between the Sand port and the Citadel port, "mentioning that he is resolved to set up a work for making rigging for ships." The council made no difficulty, and Debaut was also allowed

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4. Inventory of Writings in the Charterhouse of the City of Edinburgh (I.W.G.H.), v.418.
5. M.T.C. 20.11.1663. XXII. 80.
to build a wooden hut where he could boil his ropes. (7) This site was better than that at Newhaven in one respect at least, for it was adjacent to the Leith shipbuilding yards.

The next development came ten years later, when Thomas Deans, a second son of James, applied to the town council for a tack of the Newhaven site. The existing arrangement between his father and James Davidson had not yet expired, but Thomas wanted security of tenure, and asked for two or three terms of 19 years at the original feu duty. He was granted a tack at 100 merks per annum - a steep rise, for the original feu was only £20 - and this was given for his lifetime and 25 years beyond. (8) It is difficult to say whether this new venture at Newhaven was more rash or courageous. Nothing had been done there for years, the buildings were derelict, the site overgrown; but Thomas was "disposed to venture another stock in the same work", despite the presence of Jean Debaut less than a mile away. Little more than seven months after Deans' application to the town council Patrick Archibald returned from a long residence in France, and was granted a ropewalk in Leith. (9) A year later, in 1694, Deans applied to the Privy Council for

7. M.T.C. 11.1.1682. XXX. 100.
"the privileges of a manufactory" in terms of the Act of 1681, which among other things conferred monopolies on manufacturers. The Privy Council granted the petition "though not to the exclusion of others disposed to try the same business."(10) In fact foreign ropes would be prohibited, but there would be no objection to other local ropemakers competing with Deans. With this he had to be content. John Reid, whom we have already noticed as a Leith ropemaker in 1700,(11) was still at work in 1710, when he was given permission to alter the premises on Newhaven links.(12) There is nothing to show whether he was in partnership with Thomas Deans, but it is not likely there were two ropewalks at Newhaven.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century then, there was no lack of ropemakers in Leith, although local shipbuilding was not on a scale to sustain large and prosperous ropewalks. Better times were anticipated. When the appeal to Queen Anne for a dry dock was first discussed in 1709, everyone with an interest in rope-making must have been alive to the possibilities that would open for the industry if the appeal were successful. The 1707 Union, unwelcome in some respects, was at least

10. Robt. Chambers, Domestic Annals of Scotland, iii.87. Chambers assumes that James Deans was the first to make ropes in Leith, and that Thomas Deans was still the only ropemaker there.
11. see p.220.
expected to be a tonic to business, converting the English from rivals and enemies, into our customers and partners.

Ropemaking now moved into South Leith. John Gilmour got tack of a ropework there in 1710,(13) and he was probably in partnership with Thomas Mayo, who never took a tack in his own name, but died in 1720 possessed of "a convenient dwelling-house, Sail and Rope-work, and haill Utensils for making Sails and Ropes, lying in the Links of Leith, near the Saw-mill."(14) He was also by way of being a ship chandler, for he had a shop on the Shore, the contents of which were rouped at the winding-up of his estate:

"On Saturday next...The Roup will be continued of a parcel of Sea-carts (charts), Compasses, Quadrants, Prospects, Watch and Half-Watch Glasses, Hour, Half-hour and Half-minute Glasses, Tar-brushes, Joiners' and Carpenters' Rules, Scrapers, Genoa Scolates, Sail-cloth, Ropes, Blue, Red & White Say, and several other Sorts of Goods."(15)

This was the year in which the dry dock was opened, and the prospect of repairing and refitting naval vessels must have made Mayo's ropewalk an attractive purchase. A group of Edinburgh and Leith merchants appear to have taken over the business, but under these new proprietors there was small success. At all events two eighth shares

were offered for sale in 1725, one belonging to James McLellan, an Edinburgh merchant, and the other the property of Richard Murray, a merchant in Leith who was bankrupt. About a year later another eighth share was advertised. These offers prove nothing, but they suggest a lack of confidence in the future of the business.

At the end of 1727 the town council was approached by David Deas for a tack of the ropework in North Leith. He wanted a 38 years' lease. The council was reluctant, but after meetings and discussions with Deas he was granted a three years' tack from September 1729. At the end of this period however he was given a renewal for a further 35 years, but long before this tack had run its course, the ropemaking industry in Leith had been transformed. It is not impossible that Deas and Deans are the same, and that David Deas was a son or nephew of Thomas Deans, who got renewed tack of the Newhaven ropework in 1692. David's tack, granted on 5th September 1729, was for "the Rope Work in North Leith and the Links of Newhaven," and this phrasing could indicate both the Newhaven site and the ropework at the Citadel, which was certainly in his possession in later years. The Citadel


lii.492, liii.224, liii.355.
building seems to have been devoted to the manufacture of sailcloth, and this factory was offered for sale in 1751 in the following terms:

"To be set or sold...The Sail Cloth Factory in the Citadel of Leith, possessed by Captain Daies & Co...&c."(18)

This "Captain Daies & Co." brings us a step further through the rather tortuous development of the ropemaking industry. George Robertson reported:

"There are two principal rope and sail manufactories in this town; the oldest under the firm of Leith Roperie Co., which from the best information I can obtain, commenced about a century ago upon the north side of the Links of South Leith, where the works are still carried on."(19)

That was published in 1793, and the information was remarkably accurate, for it was in 1692 that Thomas Deans renewed the tack of the Newhaven ropewalk where his father had previously failed. It could legitimately be claimed that 1692 was the founding date of the Leith Roperie Co., since from that year there was an unbroken line of proprietors and of business done. But Robertson is mistaken in thinking the company had always operated on the South Leith site he knew; there was no ropewalk in South Leith until the early eighteenth century – almost certainly subsequent to 1710, when John Gilmour and Thomas Mayo

18. E.B.C. 2.2.1751.
were at work, probably together. The Leith Pilot Annual for 1892 supplies another piece to add to the jigsaw of ropemaking in eighteenth century Leith:

"In the early part of the eighteenth century there were two companies engaged in the business. The one had its 'Walk' in the links of Newhaven, and the other in the links of South Leith. These two companies amalgamated in 1742, and formed what was long known as the Leith Roperie Company."

We now have the situation in 1742, in which the three ropeworks in South Leith, Citadel and Newhaven are all in the possession of David Deas - or "Captain Daies & Co." - and this was the position until 1750. On 30th May that year the town council considered an application for a feu and tack of a part of Leith Links, which had been submitted by Bailie James Mansfield and Partners, who wanted the ground for a Rope and Sail Duck factory. There is no previous information to connect Bailie Mansfield with the ropemaking business, and probably he "and partners" had newly entered the Deas enterprise, bringing with them much-needed capital. Funds would certainly be required for the operation now in hand. The application for ground in South Leith was granted, and at the end of 1750 an announcement appeared which made it clear that Bailie Mansfield and Partners represented the Leith Roperie Company, which was now seeking to transfer all its business to the one site in South Leith.

"Whereas the Roperie and Sail-cloth Coy of Leith
have removed all their Stock to their Factory in the Links of South Leith, to prevent Mistakes, it is desired, that their Friends will address their Commissions to David Deas or James Mutton their Managers, and to them only. At the above Factory may be had White Ropes of all Sizes, four and three Head Dreet Hemp and Lint Tow at the lowest Prices."(20)

As we have seen (p.226) the sail-cloth factory at the Citadel was now offered for sale. The Newhaven site was retained, but probably used only for storage, for at the end of 1760 the town council granted a tack to John Liston of Newhaven, of part of the ground there, where he proposed building a house. This tack was given with consent of the "Roppery Coy", whose tack still had a year or two to run.(21)

Meanwhile the situation in South Leith had been developing. A few months after the Leith Roperie received their tack in 1750, a second party approached the town council with a similar request, and they were accommodated on a site immediately south of the Leith company's ground - the two ropewalks were separated only by a strip of ground 24 ft wide. This space was intended for a roadway, but that project did not materialise then. This second feu was taken up by the Edinburgh New Roperie Coy, which appeared to prosper from the day of its inception. By 1757 this company claimed to be employing almost 400

persons. (22) If the Leith Company were comparable employers of labour, then ropemaking was certainly the principal occupation of Leithers in the mid-eighteenth century, apart from seafaring. (23) The main outlet for the products of the roperies was the whaling industry, which from 1750 was of increasing importance in Leith, demanding the highest quality of cordage and sailcloth. Edinburgh Roperie and Sailcloth Co. continued to prosper through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Leith Roperie Company had more of a struggle to survive. This was due to a lack of capital rather than to any want of business. The company borrowed £500 from the Incorporation of Traffickers in 1763, and sought fresh loans from the same source on several occasions. In 1778 a further £50 from the Incorporation brought the total debt to the Traffickers to £800. (24) Since the treasurer of the Incorporation appeared not at all anxious for the safety of his money, and the Corporation always approved the loans without demur, we may infer that the

22. M.T.C. 14.9.1757. \{x\}iv. 244.
23. Hugo Arnot estimated that the principal ropemaking companies, (three in number, excluding small private manufacturers) in 1778, were between them employing 150 weavers, flax-dressers and spinners of rope-yarn, 60 ropemakers, and 450 spinners of flax. (History of Edinburgh, 587).
money was looked upon as a worthwhile investment in a prospering business. Indeed in the same year in which the Roperie was increasing its debt to £300, David Loch was describing the industry as flourishing. The two chief companies, he wrote, together with a number of private ventures in the same line, which did not amount to much financially,

"together employ 120 looms for making canvas, from the highest No. 1 down to osnaburgs, for which commodities they have a great demand, as the fabric is very good. The value of ropes, cordage and lines of all kinds for fishing, sewing-twines, &c., with the canvas, and sails made from that canvas, may amount annually to about £35,000 sterling."(25)

In 1793 George Robertson claimed that the canvas, cordage, sails and other products of the Leith and Edinburgh Roperies, were among the best produced in Britain, in proof of which he pointed out that they always commanded the top prices. He estimated that about £40,000 of capital was sunk in the business, but would not guess at the number of hands employed. Wages then ranged from 12s to 20s weekly, and £1 a week was very good payment at that time, although the cost of living rose steeply in the last years of the century.(26)

The Leith Roperie Company was dissolved in 1848, in consequence of the abandonment of the Greenland Whale

26. George Robertson, op cit. 185.
fishing, and the gradual transfer from sail to steam.(27) The Edinburgh Roperie and Sailcloth Co. lived on, and with a high reputation did good business. But the two shore-based industries for which Leith was famous in the eighteenth century - ropemaking and glassmaking - have now left the port, and there is now no visible evidence that Leith ever had anything to do with either industry.

Glassmaking in Scotland began with Sir George Hay, who was knighted in 1609, and in the following year was granted a patent for thirty-one years to make glass.(28) He began manufacture in a cave on the Fife coast near Wemyss, and a report to the Privy Council in 1620 shows that glass was really produced there:

"The braid glass is fully as good as Danskens, but should be thicker and tewchair (tougher); the drinking glasses inferior, but some English specimens should be kept in Edinburgh Castle as models."(29) The venture didn't pay, and was soon abandoned, after which there was a long pause until the second half of the century. According to Leith Pilot Annual

"Glassmaking was introduced by one of the English settlers Monk induced to come to Leith after he had built the Citadel, and here he built the first work of the kind in Scotland for the making of all kinds of bottles and glasses in 1654. A company was afterwards formed to carry on the work, and it long enjoyed a monopoly of the trade."(30)

Apart from the fact that in 1654 the Citadel had not yet

27. Leith Pilot Annual, 1892.
29. Records of the Privy Council
30. Leith Pilot Annual, 1892.
been built, this account is misleading in its suggestion that glassmaking began at the Citadel, and pursued a trouble-free course from the start. The truth is to be found in a very different picture.

The original patent given to Sir George Hay, (later the 1st Earl of Kinnoull), lapsed during the Civil War. As soon as more settled conditions returned with the Restoration, a grandson of the first patentee, Charles Hay, half-brother to the 4th Earl of Kinnoull, applied for, and obtained a fresh patent, which he almost immediately made over to his mother, the Countess of Kinnoull, and his uncle, the 2nd Marquis of Montrose, for "certain good causes and considerations."(31) They in turn conferred the monopoly of glassmaking on Robert Pape, who sank all his capital in the glass-house he built at the Citadel, now free of English soldiery, and partially dismantled.(32) This all happened in 1663, which date may be taken as the start of the glassmaking industry in Scotland. Pape did not buy the patent from the Countess of Kinnoull and the Marquis of Montrose. For a suitable consideration, no doubt, he was permitted by the patent owners to make glass, and all the costs of the business were entirely his. On Christmas Eve 1663 the public

32. Register of the Privy Council, 3rd series, I. xxxix.
was made aware of the new enterprise from an advertisement in the "Kingdom's Intelligencer", the first newspaper to be printed in Scotland - another venture which began at the Citadel while the Roundheads were garrisoned there, and which continued for a few years after the Restoration.

"A Remarkable Advertisement to the Country and Strangers. That there is a Glass-house erected on the Citadel of Leith, where all sorts and quantities are made and sold at the prices following, to wit, the wine glass at three shillings two boddels, the beer glass at two shillings six pence; the quart bottel at eighteen shillings, the pyt bottel at nine shillings, the chopin bottel at four shillings sixpence, the muskin (mutchkin) bottel at two shillings sixpence, all Scots money, and so forth of all sorts, conform to the proportion of the glass; better stuff and stronger than is imported."

Naturally Pape thought the business would pay handsomely in a country where all glass had to be imported, and was both scarce and dear. In fact the trade was very slow. Pape made all kinds of glass except window glass, and he soon had unsold stock on his hands sufficient to supply the needs of the whole country, or so he claimed. There seemed to be some sort of prejudice against him, for local merchants ignored him, and continued to import all their glass, although at the Citadel they were offered better goods at a cheaper rate. (33) To add to his troubles, before the business was a year old, the

cashier, George Abercromby, absconded with a large sum of money, and Pape complained to the Privy Council. (34) They listened to his appeal, reaffirmed his monopoly, forbade the import of all but window glass, and gave the Lord High Treasurer power to confiscate contraband. Any incoming ship could be searched on Pape's information. From this point we lose sight of Pape, but he probably resigned the monopoly when he was finally convinced the business would never show a profit.

The patent for glassmaking remained in the Hay family until 1678, when it was sold to a group of five partners - the Earl of Argyll and his stepson Colin, Earl of Balcarras, a boy in his teens, Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, Sir James Stanfield of Newmills, and James St. Clair of Rosslyn. (35) Of these five, Sir James Stanfield, an experienced business man with a cloth factory at New Mills, near Haddington, alone took an active interest in trying to make the glass-house a paying concern. He did not have his troubles to seek. A major difficulty was to find competent workmen for the highly-skilled craft of glassmaking. There were no native Scots journeymen, and it was next to impossible

34. R.P.C. 3rd series 14.7.1664.
35. Translation, Lady Margaret Hay to the Earls of Argyll, Balcarras and others - Stanfield Papers, 1678. Register House.
to persuade men from England to leave well-paid jobs and come to Scotland, where standards and conditions were lower than over the Border.

Glassmakers wrought in teams of five - two glassmakers, two 'gatherers' and a boy, (36) and Sir James wished to engage a whole team from Newcastle. Within a few days of the purchase of the monopoly he paid a visit to Newcastle, and promised that any recruits would be given their travelling expenses to Leith. Having arranged with Moses Hennell and Joseph, whose surname is never mentioned, that they would find a team of workers as soon as possible, Sir James returned home. Presently he had a letter from Moses which showed that Newcastle workman to be a shrewd negotiator. Moses first wanted a copy of their agreement in writing, and went on to make some further bargaining points. He assured Sir James it would be impossible to persuade any man to go to Scotland unless not only wages and travelling expenses, but also a sufficiency of coal and clay to work with were guaranteed. Moreover both Moses and Joseph were in need of new sets of tools, which would have to be provided, and made by their own blacksmith in Newcastle. Also, as they had heard there would be a shortage of clay and pots in

36. cf. The Scotsman, 8.8.1866.
Leith, they stipulated for payment for any utensils and materials they might bring with them. (37)

This was only the beginning of a long correspondence which continued through the spring and summer, apparently without any satisfaction to Sir James. At the end of October a letter arrived from John Yeaman (or Yeoman) at Newcastle, who seemed to be acting as a go-between in the negotiations with Moses and Joseph, who have still not budged. "They insist much upon their Charges (expenses)," wrote Yeaman. "I believe they are but bare of Silver, yet they are very haughty spirited men." (38) This was not much encouragement to their prospective employer, but eventually agreement was reached, some English workmen arrived in Leith, and the glasshouse went into production. This could hardly have been earlier than the spring of 1679, and ill-luck still dogged the enterprise. There is a letter from the Newcastle glass-house dated 11th June 1681 which throws some light on the situation at Leith. The Englishmen had behaved badly and got into debt, and at least one man was imprisoned. Sir James Stanfield had had to pay their various debts, so that they might continue at work; but

37. Moses Hensell from Newcastle to Sir James Stanfield, 4.2.1678. (Stanfield Papers - Register House)
even their work was indifferent, and in little more than a year the whole arrangement, reached with so much patience and trouble, had fallen through, and the glasshouse had to be closed again.(39)

There is a strong suggestion that the poor workmanship was deliberate, for in an appeal to the Privy Council in 1639 it is asserted that the Newcastle management "seduced the principal servants" at Leith, and so "ruined the Glass Work".(40) Whatever Sir James Stanfield thought, the other partners had now had enough. They regretted their investment and wanted their money back, so it was decided to dissolve the partnership and sell the whole concern by public roup. Alexander Young, (also called Captain Young), was instructed to prepare an inventory. Valuable items of equipment were under lock and key, and not included in the list, but the catalogue is a melancholy one:

"Ane Iron pan and ane lairg tub wanting the most part of Girths.
2 hurrell barrows ane almost brock and other quait brock.
2 hand barrows and ane Brocken ditto.
Ane old Lock without any key therto."

And so on - a great collection of junk. No doubt there was also unsold stock not included.

At the roup Sir James Stanfield, with unshaken

40. R.P.C. Supplication by John Watson & Co. 3.10.1689.
faith, and Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, appear to have bought the business between them. (41) A renewed correspondence with Newcastle brought in some fresh workmen, and glassmaking got under way again. Alexander Ainslie was appointed master or manager of the Glass-house, and the outlook seemed more cheerful. But trouble seemed to cling to the Citadel: Sir James Stanfield was murdered in November 1687, and the trial and execution of his son for that crime was a cause celebre. (42)

The Glass-house was now taken over by an entirely different type of management. Four partners were involved - John Watsone, an Edinburgh merchant, Andrew Pourie, druggist, John Dehew and Alexander Ainslie, who were carpenters to trade. (43) Ainslie was master, so for the first time the business was under the personal supervision of one of the proprietors. One of the first moves by Ainslie & Co. was to secure recognition of their plant as a manufactory, which by the Act of 1681 secured them certain advantages such as protection from cheap imports, and exemption from shore dues. But Ainslie knew he was not

41. The Gordons were prominent in Leith at this period. George, 4th Marquess of Huntly, was created Duke of Gordon in 1684, and he and his family, living in the Citadel, were long noted as the only Papist family of any account in Leith.
42. cf. R.F.C. 3rd series, vol XII.
likely to be given an easy passage. The new partnership had started business at the beginning of July 1689, and within a few weeks it was plain that the English glass-houses both at Newcastle and London were going to fight this attempt to produce glass in Scotland. Just as they had done with Sir James Stanfield's employes, so now again "they have attempted to brybe and seduce one of our principal servants by offering him a considerable soume to desert the work, albeit the said servant be lykewayes bund to serve them in the work for the space of ten yeares to come."(44)

Ainslie decided to specialise in the production of bottles, and in three months he claimed to have made 2000 dozen green glass bottles, as good and as cheap as any made in Newcastle or London - apart from phials and glasses for chemists and apothecaries. When the partners petitioned the Privy Council for the privileges of a manufactory, the Council imposed a ban on the import of green glass bottles and the other items made at Leith, but made one stipulation, "the petitioners always furnishing the choppine glass botles at half a croun the duzone."(45) From this time the business continued

44. R.P.C. ibid.
45. R.P.C. ibid.
modestly under Government protection; but 1695 was an unhappy year, for it was then that Excise duty was first imposed on glass, and in that same year the Glasshouse Co. was refused a renewal of their exemption from shore dues.(46) Shouldering these new burdens, Ainslie was no doubt much gratified by the withdrawal of Excise duty in 1698, but shocked beyond words the following year, when he discovered that his old enemies of the Newcastle Glass-house were secretly dumping their products in Scotland. He complained to the Privy Council that in February 1700 no less than 2600 dozen bottles from Newcastle had been landed at Montrose, "a quantity which will overstock the whole country with the commodity." Leith Glass Company were ordered to seize the bottles and "bring them in for his Majesty's use."(47)

From this point on there is little news of the glass works at the Citadel for almost half a century. In 1706 the Company advertised in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, that bottles and all sorts of glass were made "as good as ever was"; and in 1710 "chopin bottles" were offered at 26s Scots, and in addition

"whoever pleases may have from the clerk a testificat-e, which will prevent the buyers being imposed upon by getting other bottles under the name of Leith bottles."(48)

46. K.T.C. 27.11.1695. \textit{XXXV.27.}
47. Chambers' Domestic Annals, iii.229.
Ainelie made a career out of glassmaking, and it was only in 1728, after more than forty years at the Citadel works, that he sold the business to James Balfour of Pilrig. Balfour was a well-known and influential merchant, one of the founders of the Company of Scotland in the closing years of the seventeenth century,(49) who had bought Pilrig House with the money he received from the Government in compensation for his losses in the Darien Scheme. In September 1728 he was impatiently calling on the town council to hurry up with his charter to the glass-works.(50) From Balfour the business passed to James Nimmo, then to Robert Wightman, and at the end of 1750 to John Syme, a carpenter and shipbuilder, whose name and business were to become well-known and much respected in and around Leith.(51) The premises purchased by Syme consisted of "dwelling houses, office houses, a yard and glasshouse built thereon,"(52) and the new owner cleared the site and set up as a shipbuilder there.(53)

What John Syme bought and cleared, however, was but the burnt-out remains of the glasshouse, for a

52. M.T.C. ibid.
53. John Syme was already a shipbuilder in 1735, when he became an elder in North Leith Church. The Citadel site was probably acquired as an extension for his growing business. He died in 1777 and the business was taken over by John Gavine.
disastrous fire in 1747 had brought all glassmaking there to a stop. A group of partners had set up business at the Citadel in 1746. Robert Wightman on their behalf acquired the Glasshouse from James Nimmo, while another partner, James Milne, acted as company secretary. The fire happening so soon after the establishment of the business was a damaging blow, but it led to the decision to move to South Leith, where the Sands and Links offered plenty of room for development. In 1748 the town council granted a feu on the Sands of South Leith.

"Feu duty 1 merk Scots, if used as glasswork only; otherwise 10 lb Scots. The Company are not a body corporate, the feu is therefore granted to the said James Milne, merchant, Leith, partner and clerk, and his heirs, for the use and behoof of the partners."(54)

The New Statistical Account of 1845 states that this first of the glasshouses to be erected on the Sands, was built by soldiers stationed in Edinburgh Castle, following the '45 Rebellion, "it being impossible then, from the state of the times, to obtain any brick-builders throughout the country." The author continues, "Bottles of large magnitude have been made at these works, and it is a matter of fact, that at one time there was blown by a workman there a bottle equal to the size of fully more

54. M.T.C. 2.3.1748. /xvii. 8/.
than a hogshead." This is interesting in view of a curious advertisement which appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* in 1750:

WANTED
A Complete set of
Shortwinded Bottle Blowers
To Correct the Present
Immoderate Size of the LEITH BOTTLES. (55)

Bottles were still the specialty of the trade in Leith, and the Company was always known in the town as the Bottle-house Company, although their proper title was the *Edinburgh Glasshouse Company*. During their short spell in North Leith the Company advertised for raw materials:

"Any Person who can furnish broken Glass, Wood, Soap, Fern, Whin or Heather Ashes will meet with due Encouragement from James Miln at Leith, or the Glass-house in North Leith, where, in a little time, Glass Bottles of all Sorts will be manufactured, and sold at reasonable rates."(56)

Then, when production had actually started:

"Whereas at the Glass-house in North Leith, Quantities of BOTTLES of all sorts have been lately made, and have given entire satisfaction on trial, the Undertakers expect that every Body will encourage a Manufacture which they have set up as well to advance the Country's Benefit as their own, especially that the Bottles are as good in Quality, and to be sold as cheap as at Newcastle at the Glass-house aforesaid in Wholesale and in Retail by George and James Milns, South Leith; at both which Places good Encouragement will be given for Soap, Wood,

Heather, Fern and Whin ashes, and broken Glass."(57)

Newcastle was still the main rival, but Leith bottles were now making a name for themselves, so that despite the reimposition of Excise duty on glass in 1745 the Edinburgh Glasshouse Company were soon applying to the town council for additional ground on which to build a second glasshouse. And the Excise duty was partly offset by a renewed exemption from shore dues.(58)

There was still only one glasshouse on the Sands in 1763,(59) but in response to growing demand, a second "cone" was in production in the following year.(60) Then John Scott, who lived in the Citadel, patented what he claimed was a cheaper method of making glass, and in 1765 he applied to the town council for a factory site to the east of the Bottle-house Company's works. No more is heard of Mr Scott; he does not seem to have established any business after all.

With more confidence now the Edinburgh Glasshouse Company decided to enter other sections of the market. Hitherto they had concentrated on green glass bottles; now they began making white glass bottles for chemists and others. By 1783 there was a third "cone" where

flint glass was made, and seven years later crown window

glass was coming from yet another kiln. The trade was
prospering, and a second company was set up in 1790 -
the Leith Glasshouse Company. Between them the two
firms were soon operating seven furnaces, and this level
of production was maintained for the next twenty-five
years.

In the boom years for glasemaking, towards the end
of the eighteenth century, the industry was a major
employer of labour in the port. Arnot in 1778, when
there were only two furnaces in operation, estimated
that 80 men and boys were employed, apart from managers
and office staff; (61) and fifteen years later, with seven
cones fully operative, George Robertson said that from
400 to 500 were employed in glasemaking. Skilled men in
this industry were probably the highest wage-earners in
Leith at this time, for from 21s to 30s weekly was being
paid, and Robertson estimated that around £60,000 of
capital was sunk in the industry. (62) Leith glass now
had a high reputation. Apart from the two companies
already noticed, James Ranken had set up a factory in
1773 to manufacture crystal. He was succeeded by his
son Francis in 1798, and the firm specialised in crystal
drops and candlesticks. The famous chandeliers in the

61. Hugo Arnot, ibid.
62. George Robertson, General View of the Agriculture of
Midlothian, 185.
Edinburgh Assembly Rooms were designed and executed by Francis Ranken. (63)

The end of the war with France was followed by a general recession in trade, and after a long decline the Leith glass industry died. The trade might have been saved, but the proper remedy was not applied when it was most needed. It was not so much the trade depression that finished glassmaking, but punitive taxation. Each glassmaking furnace required a licence costing £20 a year. No pot could be charged with fresh materials without notice being given in writing to the Excise office, at least twelve hours before work began; and no alteration in the contents of the pot could be made after notice had been given. Penalty for failure to give timeous notice, £50: penalty for altering the contents of the pot after notice given, £200. These were irksome conditions, but it was the Excise duty which finally strangled the business. First imposed in 1695, it was withdrawn three years later, and only reintroduced in 1745. Duty was then 3s 4d per cwt for ordinary bottles, and was increased to 3s 6d per cwt in 1777. (64) Thereafter it was repeatedly increased until it afforded a prime example of the law of diminishing returns. Thus in the three years before 1779

64. Hugo Arnot, History of Edinburgh, 586.
the duty on flint glass was 9s 4d per cwt, producing £64,138 a year in revenue. By 1822 the duty had increased to 98s per cwt., but revenue from tax totalled only £289,442. This meant that in 1822 less than half the quantity of flint glass was produced that was being made in 1777, although the population had almost doubled in the interim. Duty on glass was reduced in 1825, but this change of heart by the Government came too late. In 1815 the Edinburgh Glasshouse Company advertised their four kilns for sale. The Leith Glasshouse Company, established only in 1790, kept going, but only a couple of furnaces could be maintained, and despite hopes of a revival after the Excise duty was removed, even the two remaining comes were soon cold.

Soap-boiling was another long-established enterprise in Leith, and while never a large employer of labour, it was a business naturally linked with the sea, making use of whale oil and fish offal. The origin of this industry in Leith can be found in a report made to the Privy Council in 1619, anent foreign soap

"with which this Kingdom is maist shamefully and misdecentlie abused, the samyn being composed of such pestiferous and filthie ingredients as no civil Kingdom, yea the very rude barbarians will nicht allow nor permit the lyke to be sold amongis..."

thame, and in the country quhair it is made thair is no person of any condition quhatsoever, maist eris nor servandis, that will make use of it." (68)

Nicolas Udwart, son of the Provost of Edinburgh, offered to make better soap if he were given a patent for 21 years. This granted, he went to work at once, and two years later the Privy Council were informed that he was making green, white and black soap; the green as good as that of Flanders, and the white might be yet able to reach that standard. (69)

Udwart's subsequent career as a soap-boiler made no mark on local history, but the soap-work remained, for there is a reference in town council minutes in 1649 to the "soapworks in South Leith". (70) The occasion of this minute was an attempt by Andrew Dick, acting on behalf of his dead brother's children, to delay the infeftment of the Master of Gray in these soapworks, which he had inherited from his father Sir William Gray.

Sir William had been in debt to the Dick family, but the attempt to delay infeftment was unsuccessful. Udwart's patent had lapsed in 1640, and in those disturbed years of civil war, capped in Leith by plague in 1645, which decimated the population, it is impossible to discover how the soapworks should have passed to the Gray family. In the same year of 1649 however, just two

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68. M.T.C. 2.11.1619. X/III. 84.
69. James Colville, By-ways of History, 168.
70. M.T.C. 7.3.1649. XVII. 117.
months after the Master of Gray's appearance in the town council minutes, an application was submitted from James Riddell for permission to erect a soap work in the Dubraw (St. Andrew Street). This was granted, and the soap work in the Dubraw "at the Sign of the Anchor" was famous for many years. (71)

By the mid-seventeenth century then, there were two soap works in Leith, although the later one, in the Dubraw, seems to have been the more successful, better known and best remembered, for Riddell's Close (later Market Street) was named in memory of the Riddell family and their business. James Riddell was succeeded by George his son, and in 1697 the business passed to James Balfour and Adolphus Durham. Eight years later Durham sold out to Balfour, who thus became sole owner of the Anchor soapworks. (72)

The other soapwork stood at the head of the Rotten Row (Water Street) and was referred to in 1816 as "the old Soap-house of Leith", still standing. (73) Prior to 1669 George Campbell had been the manufacturer there, and in that year William Campbell was dealing with his late father's estate, including the soapwork. (74) George Campbell's widow was Jonet Gray (in whose name we may

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72. Pilrig Estate Papers, Register House.
74. M.T.C. 10.11.1669. Xxvi. 97.
see the connection with the Master of Gray), and in 1670
Jonet complained to the town council of the "considerable
stent" her soapwork was being subjected to. Surprisingly
the council not only agreed she was over-assessed, but
exempted the soapwork from stent altogether!(75) This was
so unlike the normal reaction from the town council that
we are bound to conclude there must have been some hidden
quid pro quo.

William Campbell had no interest in his father's
soapwork, and his mother Jonet had no mind to run it
herself. She sold it to Robert Douglas, who is described
at the beginning of 1672 as a "soap-boiler in Leith",(76)
and in 1676 is warned by the town council that he must
not live in Leith, under a penalty of 500 merks. Here
is Edinburgh insisting on her feudal rights. The capital
city, owning almost the whole of Leith, forbade any but
freemen of Edinburgh to exercise any craft or pursue any
trade in Leith. To be a soap-boiler there, Robert Douglas
must be a burgess of Edinburgh, and being a burgess of the
city he must live there.

In his standard work on Joint Stock Companies,
W.R.Scott committed himself to a misleading statement
concerning Douglas:

75. M.T.C. 15.4.1670. XXVI.123.
76. M.T.C. 24.1.1672. XXVII.80.
"Though Robert Douglas of Leith had obtained encouragement in 1695 to start soap, sugar, starch and earthenware works, he only succeeded in establishing the first-named undertaking."(77)

But Robert Douglas did not establish any soapwork in 1695 - he took over a going concern 25 years previous to that date, and although he was a man of many interests the soapwork was a main occupation of his through many years.

An interesting note on the soapwork in the Rotten Row comes to us from an unexpected quarter in 1719. A Mr Kalmeter from Sweden made a journey in Scotland in 1719-20, and visited Douglas's work in Leith. He made some jottings on the method of manufacture.

"They take potashes and lime crushed very small, mix them together, and steep them in quantities of water in specially made cisterns for about 24 hours, until finally in the last cistern it comes to the required fatness and thickness, they then take it out and pour it into a great lead pan where it is boiled with Train oil and tallow for about a couple of days, and then poured into firkins where it is allowed to cool and so is ready."(78)

Compare this account of soapmaking in 1719 with a description of the method used towards the end of the century:

"For making Soap we have used the Whale unboiled, and likewise the offal and refuse; Herrings in their fresh state, Cod, Skate and Haddocks... In making hard Soap the Fish are put into a caustic ley, either of barilla, kelp or potash, made of the common strength used by the soapboilers; i.e.,

77. W.R. Scott, Joint Stock Companies to 1720, iii.195.
78. Kalmeter: Journal of his Travels in Scotland, 1719-20 MS translated by Dr. T.C. Smout.
sufficient to support a new laid egg, and brought to the boiling-point till the whole Herrings are dissolved, which will happen in about an hour, if kept continually stirred; then an equal part of tallow is thrown in, and the mixture kept boiling until it is completely united, which will happen in about seven or eight hours, and the whole finished in the usual manner of making Soap; some rosin is likewise added; if a yellow colour is required a little palm-oil is requisite; it is then moulded in the manner used by the soap-boilers...

"In making soft Soap, the Fish is dissolved in vegetable caustic ley... one-sixteenth part of common turpentine is added to take off the smell of the Fish...

"From 10 lb tallow and 10 lb Whale blubber, unboiled, the produce was 36 lb hard Soap...which is the same that would have been produced from 20 lb of tallow."(79)

The alkaline solution was produced from local materials; lime was readily available in the form of sea shells, and the piles of seaweed at highwater mark were valued for this purpose. Permission to collect the seaweed had to be obtained from the town council, and in 1735 an application was made by John Carnegie & Co., who manufactured hard white soap. There is no clue as to where this factory was situated. William St.Clair of Roslin, in partnership with other merchants, set up a factory for the manufacture of soft soap in 1750.(80) This was the Leith Soaperie Company, which in an advertisement claimed to make soap as good as any to be bought in London - which was just as well, as they were charging London prices.

Lovers of their country, and supporters of the whale fishing industry, were urged to support the soaperie, which made use of whale oil. (81) As with glass, so with soap - competition from the south was formidable.

For some years the fortune of the Leith Soaperie hung in the balance. One of the partners was David Loch, who many years later set on record the story of how the Leith Soaperie at length got the better of local prejudice. Leithers looked on local soap as they had looked on Robert Pape's glass a century earlier - it could only be a poor imitation of the London-made article. For several years therefore the Leith Soaperie shipped much of its production secretly on board vessels bound from London to Bo'ness. The clandestine cargo was then openly unloaded either at Leith or Bo'ness, and found a ready market as London soap. Eventually Loch called a meeting of local traders who had for years been eager customers for the very superior "London soap", and proved to them by accounts and receipts that what they had been buying had been manufactured within a stone's throw of their own places of business. From that date the reputation of the Leith Soaperie was established. (82)

Creech offers statistics which bear out the great

82. David Loch, Essays on the Trade &c. of Scotland, i.201ff.
increase in the Leith soap trade during the period referred to by David Loch:

"In 1763 every ship from London or Petersburg to Leith brought part of her cargo in soap. In 1783 every ship from Leith to London carried away part of her cargo in soap. In 1763 500,000 lbs were manufactured. In 1790 6,000,000 lbs were manufactured." (83)

Loch was concerned with the affairs of his own company, but there were still two soap works in Leith, and just a year before the publication of Loch's Essays, the firm of Jamison and Paton was established. This soapwork became big business - one of the largest firms of its kind in Britain. They opened a large factory in London in 1789 - which must surely have rejoiced David Loch - and in Leith their business overshadowed the much smaller concern of Anderson and Cundell, when Robertson described the situation in 1793. The smaller firm then employed only 7 or 8 men, and paid £3000 to £5000 soap duty in a year. Jamison and Paton employed 40 to 50 labourers, and paid £21,000 or £22,000 annually in duty. Labourers' wages were low - from 9s 6d to 12s weekly. (84)

This firm became Jamison and Auld, and removed to Sheriff Brae in 1800, where they continued to prosper. (85)

Adjacent to the soapwork in Rotten Row in 1719, Kalmeter found and visited the sugar-work of Leith.

83. William Creech, Letters
84. George Robertson, op. cit. 186f.
85. John Martine, Reminiscences, 92.
This belonged to Richard Morrow and Partners - and Robert Douglas, proprietor of the soap-work next door, also had a financial interest in the sugar-refining business.

In the later seventeenth century there were three sugar-houses in Glasgow and one in Leith. That was the extent of the industry in Scotland, and no one was making a fortune out of it. Refining began in Glasgow in 1667, and ten years later Robert Douglas set up the Leith Sugar-house, five years after he had taken over the soap-work from the widow of George Campbell.

Sugar refiners found that there was a profitable side-line to be exploited in the distillation of rum from the molasses produced as a waste product, but in his early years at the Leith Sugar-house Douglas ignored distilling, and there is no information as to the progress of the business until 1695. In that year he applied to Parliament for recognition as a manufacturer of refined sugar. This same application also covered his activities at the soap-work, and his interests in pottery and starch-making. Then in 1703 he applied again, with four partners, for recognition of a factory "to be erected and set up" as a sugar-house and rum distillery. The reason for this second application is obscure, but

Dr Smout points out that the privileges granted Douglas in 1695 included permission to sell 18 tuns of rum a year free from duty, whereas the Glasgow houses at that time were allowed the duty-free privilege on 28 tuns of rum per annum. If this was the reason for the second application, it was successful, for in 1703 Douglas was allowed a duty-free quota of 28 tuns of rum annually. After the Union of 1707 all such privileges granted by the old Scottish Parliament came under review, and this permission to sell duty-free rum was withdrawn. But the case took so long to argue that it was 1728 before the nullifying statute was published, and Excise duty was only demanded as from 1722. (87)

The sugarhouse produced loaf and powdered sugar, candy, molasses and rum; and Kalmeter, as he had done for the soapwork next door, described the method of refining favoured by Robert Douglas. The raw sugar, which in the early days of the sugarhouse in Leith had been shipped from London, is now, says Kalmeter, shipped from Barbadoes to Glasgow, and thence brought overland to Leith. In the sugarhouse it is boiled with water in copper pans. Raw eggs are thrown into the boiling mixture three or four times, apparently to help gather the scum. A little butter or tallow is added to prevent

too brisk boiling, and after a couple of hours the liquor is poured off and reboiled. It is then poured into clay moulds and left to become slightly thick. Molasses drains from the moulds through a small hole in each, and rum is distilled from this, while the sugar-loaf remains in the moulds. Refinement is carried further by reboiling, and the sugar-loaf finally left to dry for four to six weeks, by which time it is white and saleable. (88)

Robert Douglas may have died in 1725, for in that year the Sugar Company partnership was dissolved, and another company formed. It was then 48 years since Douglas had first set up as a sugar boiler, and 53 years since his soap-work had started: and if soap had made money, sugar-boiling had been slow to develop. The kirk session of South Leith heard from their treasurer of the winding up of the Sugar Company with dismay, for they had lent money to Douglas and Co., and were now worried as to its safety. (89)

For the next thirty years sugar-refining continued in Leith without leaving any records or making any stir. The company which took over from Robert Douglas and partners does not appear to have survived to the middle of the century; but the 1750s brought an important amenity to Leith that had long been desired. After many meetings and discussions, the incorporations between them, assisted

88. Kalmeter, op. cit.
89. South Leith kirk session minutes, 29.7.1725.
by a subsidy from the town council, financed the laying of wooden water pipes from Lochend to a reservoir near the foot of the Kirkgate. From this main pipe a small branch was led into the soaperie at the head of the Rotten Row (Water Street) - an operation requiring only a few yards of pipe. This was a happy development which none the less had some awkward consequences. Just at this time - 1757 - a second sugar-house was in course of erection in the Kirkgate. (90) The proprietors were Mr Alexander Innes and partners, and they had to apply to the Incorporations, who had assumed the role of landlords, when they sought permission to lead a pipe from the main to their new sugar-house. For this privilege the Company offered to pay to the corporations 20s sterling per annum. The incorporations acceded to this request in principle, but they stipulated that the pipe feeding water to the sugar-house should be of one half-inch bore, and that no annual rent or other fee should be charged. Such a narrow bore might well have been thought worse than useless, but it must be realised that piped water did not mean abundance. Supplies from Lochend were very variable, and dwindled alarmingly in summer, jealously watched by all concerned. The Incorporations also insisted that they must have the

90. The sugar-house in the Rotten Row next the soaperie was almost certainly out of action by this time. Arnot refers to the Kirkgate sugar-house of 1757 as the only one in Leith known to him. (History of Edinburgh, 589.)
right to cut off the supply from the sugar-house if scar-
city or other unforeseen circumstances should warrant such
action. And notice was given that the treasurer to the
Traffickers would propose to the other Incorporations
that a stop-cock should be attached to the water-pipe
outside the sugar-house, so that the supply might be
cut off without fuss or argument. (91)

Sure enough, the sugar-house's private supply had
not been long in operation before there were complaints.

"1st January 1759.
At a meeting of Masters of the four Incorporations
they had had under consideration the loud Complaints
from the Inhabitants of the Town of the water at the
Reservoir being stopt from running, which was im-
puted to the giving off a branch from the Pipe to
the Sugar-house."

The shortage of water was principally due to the wooden
pipes from Lochend being too narrow in bore, and this was
eventually recognised, and larger pipes substituted. But
in the mean time the sugar-house partners had to bow
before the storm, and their meagre little half-inch supply
pipe was cut off. It was then suggested that the Sugar-
house should receive a supply from the reservoir or
cistern rather than from the main supply pipe. This is
how the Soaperie in Water Street was supplied. (92) The

91. Sederunt Book, Incorporation of Traffickers, 3.10.1757,
2.1.1758.
92. Water Street was at this period known as Willie Water's
Street. Willie's identity remains a mystery.
sugar-house would, of course, be liable for the expense of connecting the new supply. It was also made a condition of carrying out this work, that the soaperie and sugar-house should share equally with the Incorporations in the expense of keeping the reservoir clean and in good repair.

The sugar-house partners were not worried much longer over all this hard bargaining, for the business failed, the partners dispersed, and all assets were offered for sale in October 1762. (93) No sale was effected, and the property stood empty until March 1766, when a group of Englishmen took it over and began refining again. They also failed.

In November 1770 Messrs Thomas and William Parkers became proprietors and petitioned the Traffickers for a water-pipe of one inch bore. The Traffickers were agreeable, provided the other incorporations assented. (94) Parkers were succeeded by Messrs Anderson and Cundell, who also owned the smaller of the two soapworks which were then in operation. Anderson and Cundell achieved some local fame in 1785 when they refused to pay the impost of a merk per pack on the raw sugar they brought in from Glasgow, and raised an action against John Begrie

93. Arnot says the partners were mostly Edinburgh bankers. (History of Edinburgh, 589)
94. Sederunt Book of the Incorporation of Traffickers, 5.11.1770.
the tacksman who collected the duty.

This "merk per pack" was included in the same charter of 1636 in which the city of Edinburgh was granted a merk per ton on all goods imported at Leith. The merk per pack was chargeable on

"all foreign goods of every sort brought by land carriage into Edinburgh, Leith and Newhaven and other liberties of the city ... a merk for each horse pack consisting of 18 stone, and the like sum for each hogshead of any goods whatsoever imported by land carriage into the city or liberties."

Anderson & Cundell objected that sugar coming from Glasgow had already paid a municipal duty there, and ought to be exempt from duty in Edinburgh. This objection was not sustained. Their second ground was a more convincing argument. The hogshead of raw sugar contained from 10 to 12 cwts only, and to charge a merk on this amounted virtually to a doubling of the tax. When sugar was imported by sea, 20 cwts paid one merk of duty - which was the rate charged on one hogshead of 10 cwts coming overland. The account for duty which Anderson & Cundell were refusing to pay, covered a period of 23 months - 20th November 1782 to 12th October 1784, and amounted to £10.16.10 sterling. The duty was charged in Scots money, so it would appear that the sugar-house's monthly intake of raw sugar averaged 2½ hogsheads - which could scarcely be called a large volume of business.
In the end the firm had to pay the duty, but a Declarator was sought to prevent this kind of unjust imposition being made in future. (95)

In this action Messrs Anderson and Cundell are designated proprietors of the Leith Sugar-house, but towards the end of the century prospects for sugar refining seemed brighter, and other refineries started up. The Leith Sugar Refining Company had premises in Coburg Street. Apparently they were not the first refinery to occupy the site, for digging unearthed broken utensils peculiar to that industry; but no record of previous occupants has been discovered.

William Macfie & Co. began business in Elbe Street in 1804, furnishing their refinery partly with utensils brought from an Aberdeen sugar-house. The building had previously been known as the "Old Red Herring House". (96) Fire destroyed the premises in 1822, and a new refinery was constructed on a "fireproof" principle. This go-ahead firm in 1825 introduced a new patent method of refining to replace the traditional way, and four years later the "fireproof" building was again burned, and again rebuilt and worked until finally closed in the 1840s.

96. John M. Hutcheson, Notes on the Sugar Industry of the United Kingdom, 66f.
The Macfies were a prominent family in Leith in the first half of the nineteenth century. They originated in Rothesay, from whence Robert Macfie crossed to Greenock in 1768 and in course of time became a successful and well-known sugar refiner in that town. His second son John came to Leith in 1801, and was joined there by his elder brother William, apparently about three years later, when the Elbe Street refinery went into production. As senior magistrate for Leith, John Macfie received King George IV on his historic visit to Scotland in 1822. When His Majesty stepped on to the Shore of Leith and held out his hand to be kissed, John Macfie expressed Leith's fervent loyalty by seizing the royal hand and shaking it heartily: John's eldest son Robert Andrew, was later M.P. for Leith Burghs. (97)

In the period under consideration sugar refining in Leith made no one's fortune, and one reason was the low consumption of sugar per head of the population. During the last dozen years of the eighteenth century the average annual consumption was 15 to 16 lbs per head, compared with 85 to 90 lbs per head a century later, and over 2 lbs a week per head in the mid-twentieth century. (98) In the first few years of the nineteenth century consumption rose slightly, to about 18 lbs per head per

97. John M. Hutcheson, op. cit. 83f.
annum, but it tailed off again after the Napoleonic wars, and during the 30 years following 1815 consumption remained fairly steady at less than 18 lbs per annum. In quoting these figures Hutcheson remarks "Probably sugar refining in the United Kingdom was never more depressed than during the first ten years after the Napoleonic wars."(99)

Agriculture around Leith has long since disappeared, but in the eighteenth century it bulked largely both as providing food and work. Robertson points out that towards the end of the eighteenth century Midlothian farms varied between 100 and 300 acres - larger than they had been fifty years earlier. In the vicinity of Leith farms were much smaller, and would have rated today as smallholdings. Tradesmen often had two or three acres on which they kept poultry and grew corn; and fleshers fed cattle till they were heavy enough for slaughter. Brewers kept geese, pigs and hens which grew big and marketable on brewery waste. Indeed the more substantial brewers and fleshers had two or three separate holdings in the adjacent and surrounding countryside. These hobby farmers numbered no more than about one fourth of the whole, but as they did not depend on farming for a living, they tended to raise the price of land, since

they could afford to pay more than the full-time farmer. \textsuperscript{(100)}

Robertson quotes local figures for land rent in 1793. Nursery and market gardens paid rent of £6 an acre, although anything from £4 to £10 was common. Arable land adjacent to the town fetched around £3.10.\textsuperscript{-} per acre; and within 4 miles of town two and a half guineas had to be paid for land which included much poor soil.\textsuperscript{(101)} Rents had not risen much for many years previous to this, but after 1793 land values, and so rents, rose steeply and swiftly.\textsuperscript{(102)}

In the course of the eighteenth century the greatest change in the appearance of the countryside was in the development of enclosures. Early in the century it was necessary to herd sheep, cattle, pigs and horses, once the spring sowing was completed, for this was the only way to protect growing crops. After harvest the

\textsuperscript{100} George Robertson, \textit{A General View of the Agriculture of Midlothian}, 41f.
\textsuperscript{101} George Robertson, op. cit. 55f.
\textsuperscript{102} "Rents frequently rose five, six or seven-fold between 1770 and 1830; and this is separate from the fact that, during the war ... land was frequently sold at five or six times its valuation of only 15 or 20 years before." (A.J. Youngson, \textit{The Making of Classical Edinburgh}, 40.)

"By ... numerous and unexpected failures, houses and building ground in the vicinity of Leith have since 1811 fallen nearly one half. In 1813 the respondents sold nearly two-thirds of an acre of ground ... to the deceased James Thomson, builder in Leith, at the rate of £4000 the English acre." (Answer for Alexr Pitcairn to James Pitkethly. Register House: unextracted processes.)
stubble became common pasture land, and the herd laddies were free to return to school. Then enclosures began to be erected to protect sown crops, and at first stone dykes were in favour — either dry-stone or stone and lime. Hedges came later, with hawthorn the favourite, alone, or in combination with a stone wall. Stone and lime enclosures were made five feet high, and dry-stone dykes four feet, topped with a double coping of turf. Fields thus enclosed ranged generally from six to ten acres.

Farming was mostly arable, and apart from two or three cows for domestic use, few cattle were kept. But horses were numerous, especially towards the close of the century, when much work was done by horses that at an earlier period had been undertaken with oxen. Robertson quotes figures for a large farm (for those days) of 285 acres near Edinburgh. All but 40 acres are ploughed. Four cows and one bull are kept, and a varying number of store cattle bought from time to time "as pasture may require". On this farm 10 plough horses were kept, 2 cart horses, 2 for the threshing-mill, one for riding, and four colts.

Crops in the early part of the century consisted of oats, barley, peas and beans. Wheat was grown, but

103. George Robertson, op. cit. 93, 105.
104. George Robertson, op. cit. 55.
only in small quantities, although the acreage increased as the century advanced, and wheaten bread was more widely used. Potatoes are first mentioned locally in the proceedings of the Burlaw Court in 1741, and George Robertson gives 1744 as the year when they were first cultivated in the fields. In private gardens they had been grown from a much earlier period, and in the 1720s James Balfour of Pilrig was buying seed potatoes. (105) They caught on slowly, but by the end of the century were to be found on every farm less than 6 miles from Edinburgh. Transport charges on this heavy crop would have cancelled all the profit if they were grown further than six miles from a market. Turnips arrived in the 1740s, and swedes were introduced about 40 years later. (106)

The skilled farm servant was hired annually to work in the fields, and look after horses and cattle. With his wife and family he was provided with a cottage, rent free, and was given oatmeal, two pairs of shoes in the year, coal free and carriage-free, plus sixpence a week, breakfast and dinner provided in harvest, and an annual fee of £6. George Robertson, himself a farmer at Granton,

analyses the farm servant's pay as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid in money as fee</td>
<td>£6.-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto as weekly allowance</td>
<td>1. 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto for shoes</td>
<td>-.10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6½ bolls meal at 8 stone Amsterdam the boll, suppose at 1s the peck</td>
<td>5. 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House rent costs, or is worth</td>
<td>1. -----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest diet is worth</td>
<td>-.10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage of coals, commonly 4 cart load of 16 cwt each, worth.</td>
<td>1. -----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£15.10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Head ploughmen or other principal servants earned £1, £2 or £3 more than the above rate as annual wages.

Servant girls, who always lived in, were paid £3 or £4 yearly, and boys according to their ability. Unskilled labourers were hired by the day, and paid 1s in winter, 1s 2d in summer in 1793, as against 7d or 3d a day around the mid-century. The standard rate for women field workers was sixpence a day, and no board.(107)

Every available man and woman was in the fields at harvest, and this was work that brooked no interruption, for it was a business that might make the difference between life and death in a hard winter and a late spring. North Leith was more of a rural community than South Leith, and the farming scene appears more frequently in the records of the kirk session there. On 20th October 1741 the session took note that

107. George Robertson, op. cit. 168ff.
"The Act of the Reverend Presbytrie of Edinburgh of the thirtieth day of September last, setting apart Thursday the fifteenth of October Instant for solemn prayer and Thanksgiving for the good and plentiful Harvest and Crownning of the year with his goodness, was Intimate from the pulpite on Sabbath forenoon the Eleventh Instant, with suitable Exhortations to the Occasion."

This might be taken for a routine insertion in the minutes, were the reader not aware of the desperate food shortage of the previous two winters - especially that of 1740-41. The price of oats rose from 6s 2d per boll in the summer of 1738, to 13s 4d per boll two years later. (108) Thanksgiving for the good harvest was no formal acknowledgement in 1741. Middleaged and elderly folk could remember the seven terrible years of hunger at the end of the seventeenth century. (109) The harvest was vital, and every other occupation must give way before the urgent necessity of getting the crops in.

So on 7th August 1705

"The Elders reported that it was now the time of harvest and behooved to delay their listing examinable persons till it was over."

And again, 14th August 1716:

"The Clerk reported that Janet Davidson, spouse to John Coots desired that the Session would dispense with the prosecution of her complaint against Agnes Blair till the harvest be over in regard she will be employed in Shearing during the season. The Session continues the same till after the Harvest."

The school holidays were also timed as far as possible to coincide with the harvest. The scholars were given three weeks in August, but if the harvest were still in full swing at the beginning of September there were many absentees at the start of the new term. Even the autumn sacrament was manoeuvred clear of the harvest when there was danger of the two events overlapping, for as the sacrament entailed several days absence from worldly business for the faithful, it would have involved them in an intolerable dilemma, were the harvest to have continued over the Communion season.

"28th September 1784.
The Session on account of the lateness of the harvest, agree to conform to the resolution of South Leith, in having the Sacrament dispensed here on Sabbath come three weeks, being the twenty fourth of October."(110)

No review of the farming community in eighteenth century Leith would be complete without reference to the Burlaw Court. "Bylaw" is the local custom or law of a township or rural district, whereby disputes as to boundaries, trespass of cattle, and the like can be settled without going to the law courts. The Burlaw Court of Leith was no ancient institution: it originated in a petition to the town council presented on 20th July 1715. The petitioners were various farmers and occupiers

110. North Leith kirk session records.
of land "lying near to the citie of Edinburgh and town of Leith and upon the highwayes and roads thereto". They complained of damage done to growing crops by "men, horses and other beasts"; thieves had been stealing their cut corn in harvest time, and their grass had been eaten up by strangers' cattle. They craved a remedy, and after due deliberation they were granted permission to form a Burlaw Court, "the said Burlaw Court to commence from Lammas next".

There was no compulsory membership. In some ways it would have been better had every farmer been a member, but as it was, every man who occupied at least five acres was eligible for membership, and in the case of market gardeners even this minimum stipulation was waived. The Court had no jurisdiction over non-members, its authority deriving entirely from the town council, and the two bailies of Leith attended all meetings. Raising funds was a recurring difficulty, for the Burlaw Court was not maintained at public expense. Members on entering paid 3s per acre of entered land, and there was an annual levy of 1s 3d for each ploughgate entered - which was 104 Scots acres.(111) Members did not have to enter all their land with the Court, and many certainly registered.

only part of their holding.

At first the Court met in the open air at the Duckat Yard. This name has now disappeared, but it indicated a site where Vanburgh Place was later built. The Duckat - or Doocot - Yard must have formed part of, or been adjacent to the farm of Coatfield Mains - which farmhouse stood near the foot of Lochend Road. For nine years the Burlaw Court met and carried through its business there, but all the records for this period have been lost. Later it was found more convenient and comfortable to meet at John Clephane's. Clephane was a clubmaker and vintner whose tavern stood at the west end of the Links, a stone's throw from the Duckat Yard, about the end of the modern Duke Street. Here the members were at ease, no matter what the weather, although the Court rarely met in winter. Meetings began in spring, when ploughing began, and continued until the stubbles were cleared in autumn, after which there was hardly any occasion for dispute, with no crops in the ground, and nothing that required protection and watching.

It was the extension of the enclosure system that was mainly responsible for making an end of the Burlaw Court. The Court had an undefined area of jurisdiction, ranging beyond the bounds of Leith, to Stockbridge, Granton, Corstorphine and Castlebarns. To the east,
however, there was a more clearly defined boundary, for
Restalrig had its own Burlaw Court, and on at least one
occasion, in 1725, representatives of the two courts met
to agree where the march stones between their respective areas should be set. (112) The Burlaw Court did not
come to an end for any stated reason, but in the last
two or three years there is obviously a lack of enthusiasm
- members neglecting to attend, office bearers hard to
find. The final entry in the court-book is dated 8th
June 1752. (113)

About the middle of the century a new enterprise
was embarked upon in Leith which reflected high hopes of
the future both in farming and shipbuilding. The Smith
and Wright Work Factory aimed to supply the ancillary
needs of both shipyard and farm steading. The project
was launched in 1747 by William Moyes, a wright "in the
first lane after entering Leith from Edinburgh" - that
is, in the St. Anthony quarter. He claimed to have set up

"the most considerable Manufactory of Wright and
Smith Work that hath ever been attempted in this
Country, chiefly for making Wheels of all kinds,
Waggons, close and open Carts, Wheel-barrows,
double or single Fanners, and Ploughs of all sorts,
&c."

Moyes claimed his work was better and cheaper than any-

112. D.H. Robertson, op. cit. 197.
113. D.H. Robertson, op. cit. 205.
A list of prices quoted in the Books of the Burlaw
Court is given in Appendix C.
anything else of the kind offered for sale. He added that

"having procur'd by Assistance of several Gentlemen
the greatest Stock of Elm, Ash, Plane, Oak-spokes,
Birch, &c. that any Manufacturer hath in this Coun-
try, he sells Oak-spokes, Naves, Fillies, Coach-
poles, Perches, Foot-brodes, Chaise-trams, &c., &c.
Elm, Ash, Plane & Birch, as also all the Work that
he manufactures, at the most reasonable Rates for
ready Money only. He also provides Cart Sadles of
the Scots or English Kind, Furniture for Wagon or
Cart Horses. &c."

Moyes' Manufactory was a promising enterprise, and was
soon well known; but Moyes himself was unable to cope
with the organisation he had set in motion. He was a
good working wright, and he had had a splendid idea,
but he didn't have that sense of order and method neces-
sary in a large business. The work got out of hand;
supervision was inadequate; his employees did not always
share his own high standards, and in less than three
years the rumour got around that Moyes' Manufactory was
finished.

This was by no means so; there was plenty of work to
be done, and a need for such a factory as this - but Moyes
himself was finished. The business was now taken over
by a group of no fewer than thirteen partners, and Moyes
was dismissed. The new proprietors consisted firstly of
nine Edinburgh merchants, James Mansfield, William Hogg,
Thomas Hogg, John Forrest, James Grant, John Walker,

William Nielson, John Stephen and James McDowall. There were also Captain James Campbell, John Dick, shipmaster, and David Strachan, a prominent Leith merchant. The thirteenth partner was Alexander Chalmers, who was accountant in the Excise office in Edinburgh. Apart from the three Leith partners, several of the Edinburgh merchants had strong shipping connections.(115) This team took over the factory on 25th November 1749, although the deed of partnership was not completed until 14th February 1750.(116)

The new Smith and Wright Work factory at once set up a much bigger establishment than Moyes had ever attempted. Several additional workshops and sheds were quickly added to the old accommodation, and while the best of Moyes' employees were kept on, skilled craftsmen were brought in from England, and a new range of manufactures was introduced. As well as the goods formerly offered, the new company advertised

"Barbadoes, Carolina, Garden, Milling & Jamaica Hoes of all sorts; Anvils and Stakes for Black-smiths, Copper-smiths, and Nailers &c., Smiths' Bellows & Vices of any size, Anchors, Grapplings, Bolts, Rudder-bands & all manner of Ship-work; Iron Axles, straight or cranked, for Chaises or Fire Engines, with Press Nails of any size; White & Black Hinges; Spades & Iron Shovels; Paten-ring, Iron Back-bands or Rig woodies; Well Chains, Trace Chains & Chains of any size or length;

115. Carron Company muniments, GD/58/14/1, Register House.
116. ibid.
all sorts of carpenters' or coopers' edge-tools; coach & chaise springs, man-traps, bear-traps, wolf-traps, fox-traps & rat-traps..." (117)

Robert Bull was appointed manager, and housed next to the factory in a large two-storied house set in a garden of one acre. (118) Not content with their factory, the partners planned to import their own bar-iron and work it up for their requirements; so they took possession of Cockle Mill on the river Almond, and Fairfare Mill, further up the same river, from Sir John Inglis of Cramond, and also feued some acres next to the Cockle Mill. These were former corn mills which had been converted to iron slitting mills, and here the partners began producing their own rod-iron for nail-making at Leith. (119) At the end of 1751 another partner was admitted, in the person of Jeremy Pev, who was principal clerk to the Company, and who bought a share which was offered for sale just then. Jeremy was a son of John Pev, farmer at Newmains, (otherwise Coatfield Mains, otherwise Laugh-at-Leith), whose numerous family were prominent in the second half of the century - not always on the right side of the law. (120)

Robert Bull, manager of the factory, invented an

118. E.E.C. 1.1.1760.
119. Carron Company muniments, Register House.
120. David Robertson gives an interesting account of John Pev in South Leith Records II. 196 ff.
improved type of iron plough which he produced at the factory; but he became involved in a lengthy newspaper dispute with Alexander Alison, who claimed to have made a better plough. The public argument failed to prove anything about which man's work was the better, but Bull seems to have made a genuine advance on the Lothian plough in general use then. (121) Shortly after this Bull's house came up for sale, with his son named as the possessor. The proprietors of the Factory had now entered on a new policy, and this sale of the manager's house was part of it. They were also selling their two mills at Cramond, and appear to have been short of money. (122) Advertisements for the Smith and Wright Work Factory's wares always stressed the need for cash payments, but ready money was short among all classes of people then, and it was impossible in practice for any business to refuse credit. A considerable capital was sunk in the business, (123) but the tack of the site was disposed of in 1762, "with all the Houses, Shops and Shades built thereon, lying at the town end of Leith". This seems to have been the end of the partnership, but not of the

121. E.E.C., 11.3.1758; 21.3.1758; 23.5.1758; 15.8.1758.
123. A one-eighth share and a one-sixteenth share were conveyed in 1757 for £3944.16.10 sterling, which sets a value of over £21,000 sterling on the sixteen shares.
Smith and Wright Work factory, which continued for several years to be run by "Robert Bull and Sons". The father certainly died before 1770, and the sons could make no success of the business. This we may infer from the fact that Mrs Bull, Robert's widow, applied in 1770 to the Incorporation of Traffickers, of which her husband had been a member, and received a pension of 30s quarterly. Had the sons been successful, their mother would not have been reduced to such penury, and to the indignity of applying for a pension; nor would the Traffickers have parted with good money, had they thought the sons could have done something for their mother.(124)

The fact that there was money behind the Smith and Wright Work factory had not escaped the attention of interested parties. Leith Mills, consisting of two corn mills, together with a large dwelling house and various offices, belonged to Edinburgh, but were offered for sale in 1751. Hitherto the system of thirlage had kept the mills busy. Thirlage was the right of a superior to compel his feuars and tenants to have their grain ground in his mill; but since 1727 the brewers of Leith had been entering into agreements with the town council.

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to commute their thirlage into a money payment. (125) As a result the town had a steady income from the brewers, but the mills were doing much less business. The advertisement, carried by the Edinburgh Evening Courant of 29th April 1751, made the suggestion that the Mills could be converted to other purposes - for example "a Steel-mill may be erected in one of them." The only connection Leith had with steel mills was the Smith and Wright Work partnership, who owned such mills at Cramond. They had in fact not yet taken possession of the Cockle Mill and the Fairyfare Mill - the charter of sale for these mills was only signed on 17th January 1753 - but no doubt many months of enquiries and negotiation preceded the sale, and the advertisement for the Leith Mills was certainly slanted towards the Smith and Wright Work partners. In August 1754 Leith Mills were again advertised for sale, and although the Cockle and Fairyfare mills had been producing rod-iron for the past eighteen months, the advertisement was again obviously pointed:

"N.B. The Mills may be put to other uses than they now are, such as Iron or Slitting Mills, &c." (126)

The Cockle Mill was an iron slitting mill, but the hint was not taken, and Leith Mills were never converted to

125. M.T.C. 28.4.1727. 1i. 322.
work with iron.

The town council had not been in possession of Leith Mills for very long, for it was only in 1722 that Lord Balmerino sold them the superiority of the Calton, Yardheads, Calton Crags and Leith Mills.(127) When the Mills were exposed for sale, rent and feu duties payable were quoted at £75.15. - sterling, and the value proven to be £922 sterling. Purchase price of heritable subjects was commonly reckoned in the eighteenth century at a 12-year rental.

There were several mills in Leith at this time, and one or two were old even in 1750. In 1658 the Edinburgh city treasurer is ordered

"to make open and straight the common passage into Leith be the windmilne and almous hous as formerly, and to cast doun the wall and fill up the ditch and lay it with calsay; also mend calsay of the Kirkgate."(128)

These instructions were being issued immediately on the departure of the Roundhead garrison. The "almous hous" is the King James Hospital; the wall and ditch are the fortifications which still surrounded the town; and beside the St. Anthony port at the end of the Kirkgate stood the windmill. Bonnington Mills are mentioned in a town council minute of 1630,(129) and these were

127. M.T.C. 17.8.1722. x/i.x.297.
128. M.T.C. 12.2.1658. x/ix.276.
129. M.T.C. 2.7.1630. xiv.270.
operated by water wheels; and in 1695 a sawmill was set up just above the Bridge of Leith, and this was a windmill. It was operated by a company which applied for and was granted a monopoly by the Scottish Parliament. They were given the right of sawing wood, to the exclusion of all others, within a radius of 15 miles, and for a period of 19 years. (130) This sawmill, approximately on the site of the present Junction Bridge, stood quite near Leith Mills, and the superiority, along with that of Leith Mills, passed to the town council in 1722.

Three years later Leith Mills, described as Malt and Meal Mills, were offered on lease along with the sawmill, now referred to as a water sawmill, (131) so presumably a water-wheel had been incorporated either as an alternative to or as an improvement on the sails.

There was another windmill at the end of the Shore. This was erected in 1681 by the Earl of Hopetoun, with permission from the town council, for the purpose of grinding lead ore. (132) This mill stood within the Timber Bush, and the lead yard attached to it abutted on the Weigh-house Wynd (Bernard Street), where was also a lead house, for storing materials. Later in the century

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there was another windmill, on the Links, about the end of the present Elbe Street. This too was a sawmill. Then in 1757 a millwright, Hugh Cameron, sought permission from the town council to erect a windmill on a site at Calton Hill, "for polishing iron, grinding dye-stuffs, ashes for bleaching, making oil, &c." The ground was feued to him at 30s per acre. (133)

Various other projects had their day in eighteenth century Leith. None of them were large employers, but there are points of interest about each. There was the pinmaking factory. "Factory", of course, must be understood simply as a place where things were made, and not by any means like the twentieth century idea of a factory as a large building equipped with specialist machinery. The business of pinmaking in Leith was first established in a room at the King James Hospital. Pinmaking must have started in 1663, when the following entry occurs in the town council minutes:

"Ordaines the Dean of gild & his Counsell to admitt & receive Arthour & Michaeill Paices, pinmakers in Leith, to be burgesses & friemen... in the best forme gratis, they obleidging themselfis to come up to this Brugh and reside therein." (134)

As no master craftsman was permitted to exercise his skill by setting up business in Leith until he became a burgess

133. M.T.C. 24.8.1757. lxxiv. 2.18.
134. M.T.C. 2.10.1663. xxi. 6.8.
of Edinburgh, this council minute can be taken as dating the start of pinmaking in the port. Twenty years later William Corsaw (or Corsare) and Mrs Cox, spouse to James Cox, pinmaker, complained to the Privy Council of wrongous dispossesion from the King James Hospital. They seem to have established themselves soon after in nearby premises in the St. Anthony quarter, and in the following year, 1684, William Corsare applied for and was granted the privileges and immunities given by act of Parliament to genuine manufactories. Thereafter pinmaking continued its uneventful existence in the port. The factory made no history. John Dimbabbine, pinmaker in Leith, is noticed in a town council minute of 30th March 1720, and in 1764 there is mention of Elizabeth Dundas, relict of William Corsar, master of the pin factory. Finally in 1790 a notice appeared in the Courant which established the continued existence of pinmaking in the Edinburgh area:

"It is with the utmost satisfaction we mention a circumstance highly flattering to the manufacturers of this place. Within these few days, a gentleman in the neighbourhood has put up handbills in different parts of the city, inviting boys and girls of eight years of age and upwards, to be employed at a reasonable rate in making heads to pins. In place of being a burden to the community, such children will have an opportunity

135. M.T.C. 30.3.1720; 4.4.1764.
of earning their bread by their own industry." (136)

Whether pinmaking still continued in Leith at this period there is no knowing, but as the first pinmaker in Edinburgh only appeared in 1720, (137) Leith can at least claim to have been in the business at least half a century previous to that.

Cotton and linen weaving and printing was carried on at Bonnington Mills throughout the eighteenth century, but pottery does not seem to have got further than being a good idea. The indefatigable Robert Douglas in 1695 was interested in developing such a business, but lacked sufficient capital, and failed to persuade anyone else to provide enough money. A few years later William Montgomerie of Machrie Hill, with a partner, made some progress, and is said to have erected a "Pott-house" in 1703 for the production of "Laim, purselane, earthenware" (138) but there is no evidence that porcelain ever was produced at Leith.

Wool-cards were made, and a flourishing business it was in the second half of the eighteenth century, when

136. E.E.C. 27.9.1790. Any comment on this joyful prospect for the eight-year-olds would be inadequate, but Charles Boog Watson notes: "Pins were made, up till about 1840, thus: one end sharp, the other reduced and shouldered, and on it was wound a separate head. Such heads were liable to be pulled off, and were dangerous." (MS Notes iv.47).

137. James Grant, Old and New Edinburgh, ii.263.
directed by John and David Stead in their factory off Leith Walk - the site commemorated by Stead's Place. Cardmaking in Leith dated from 1663, but the early years were disastrous, and a great deal of money was lost. The Union of 1707, abolishing customs between Scotland and England, did much to benefit cardmaking, since the smuggling of cheap second-hand cards from England had been a major obstacle to increasing the market for cards in Scotland. John Stead was a prominent Leither, for many years a member and office-bearer in the incorporation of Traffickers.

Brickmaking, distilling and tanning were all pursued in a small way, but one minor business calls for more notice. Dyeing in Leith attained some measure of fame in the later years of the century. This happened through the inventiveness of Cuthbert Gordon. Archel, used to make a blue dye, was extracted from lichens imported from the Canary and Cape Verde Islands, and this source had been closed to us through war with Spain. Substantial prizes were offered for a viable substitute, and Cuthbert Gordon was soon manufacturing a dye he claimed to be better than archel. He had discovered a lichen in the West Highlands, and from it was able to produce a blue powder at a factory he and his brothers had opened in the Kirkgate. The lichen, tartareus, treated with ammonia and lime, made a dye of a fine colour, which was not permanent, but could be used in combination with indigo
to give body and lightness to the dye, and could, with various additions, produce a range of colours from blue or violet to crimson. (139)

Gordon called his invention cudbear - derived from his own name. As ill luck would have it, the Kirkgate premises were burned on Sunday 17th January 1773, and while it was reported that little damage had been done, no more cudbear was produced there. Cuthbert and George Gordon opened a new factory at the foot of the Walk, but the financial position of the firm seems to have been insecure. Perhaps it was common knowledge that the Gordons were not financially sound, for at the time of the fire it was said

"A malicious report has been spread that the Messrs Gordon obstructed persons from assisting in extinguishing the fire and saving their effects, but we are assured from good authority, the report is entirely without foundation." (140)

Be that as it may, Cuthbert Gordon was bankrupt three years later, and his patent was bought by George Mackintosh of Glasgow, who set up a factory in the Barony parish in 1777. Eventually the entire cudbear business passed into the hands of the English archel manufacturers. None the less William Gordon appears in Aitchison's Directory for Leith

139. E. Bancroft, Experimental Researches Concerning the Philosophy of Permanent Colours, 1.300-305.
for 1797-98 as having a cudbear work in St. Anthony Street; and in 1803 a James Gordon of Great Peter Street, Westminster, cudbear manufacturer, was declared bankrupt. (141) These two gentlemen must have been members of the same Gordon family, exhibiting the family propensities for cudbear making and bankruptcy; but there is no more news of the Gordons and their cudbear. After all, cudbear in Leith was hardly more than a flash in the pan.

141. London Gazette for 1803. (Quoted, Scottish Notes and Queries, June 1906, vii.180).
OTHER WAYS OF EARNING A LIVING

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AT LEISURE

The frequent holidays enjoyed by the Customs men were not shared by the community at large, but people did have time to themselves, and made the most of it. In the eyes of the Church, at least, Sunday was a holy day, not meant for enjoyment or frivolity. On the first day of the week men were freed from labour so that they might devote the time to the worship of God and the salvation of their souls. This was a view that did not commend itself to everyone, but the Established Church was in a powerful position to compel obedience to her rule from a sometimes reluctant community. North Leith kirk session reviewed the situation in that parish on 6th April 1697:

"The Session also having taken into their consideration the great neglect and open breach of the Lord's day (as they are informed) by bringing in of water, winnowing of Beir, by idle and unnecessary sitting at home & selling of drink in time of Divine service; by dissolute walking abroad before & after sermons, & by the unanswerable neglect of parents suffering their children to goe astray & run up & down the streets while they should be instructing them at home; as also the too great habit of open cursing & swearing. Therefor the Session doe hereby enact that whosoever shall be found and delated as guilty of the foresaid crimes in less or more, in time coming, shall be proceeded against & censured as scandalous persons, & the parents of such children made to answer for them: & such who shall be found contumacious in not answering for themselves or children to be referred to the civil Magistrates or Constables to be fined according to Law. And that none pretend ignorance the Session think fitt that intimation hereof be made openly from the pulpit the nixt Lord's day after the forenoon's sermon."
The elders were always particularly annoyed about people "vagueing" - strolling out of doors, that is - during the time of public worship. Attendance at church was not enforced for the earlier part of the service, but everyone was supposed to be present to hear the sermon, and the "searchers" in North Leith were instructed to begin going through their districts "immediately after the Lecture" which preceded the sermon. It was relatively simple to reprove and threaten poor and unprivileged sabbath-breakers, but wealthy and titled offenders were not so easily impressed. In South Leith the Earl of Crawford with two servants was observed riding on the sands "in tyme of sermon", and when this was reported to the kirk session they detailed three of their number, considered important men in Leith - Bailie Douglas, Bailie White and Alexander Craufford - "to speak to him and to tell him if the like be found again, the Session will be oblidged to dilate him to the presbitry."(2)

The Church's determination to enforce sabbath observance in accordance with an interpretation of Scripture which had never received popular support in Scotland, was an unfortunate factor in the life of the community. It

1. North Leith kirk session minutes, 4.6.1717.
2. South Leith kirk session minutes, 16.1.1701.
was typical of the thinking of those days, when toleration was not yet regarded as a virtue. Apart from the ministers and elders, it is doubtful if many even in the Church were at heart in favour of such rigid notions of a day of rest. To be seen cutting kail or carrying a stoup of water "in tyme of sermon" was enough to prompt a report to the kirk session and a summons to "compear" and answer for the crime. And yet the power of the kirk session finally depended on the acquiescence of the people, and determined sabbath-breakers were beyond control. A few instances will make this plain. In North Leith Ninian Hay was charged with "keeping Cabals of persons drinking in his house in time of divine service." This was a common crime, against which the elders waged endless war. Hay in his defence talked smoothly, and probably with his tongue in his cheek: "He desired to doe nothing that might give offence any manner of way, & if he had given any he was heartily sorrowful for it, and thro' God's strength should carefully beware of all such in time comeing." But Hay must have known very well that drinking parties during divine service would certainly give offence, for this was true all over Scotland. "et the elders, too, were circumspect. "The Session, considering the Report given, & his being, as yet, but a Stranger, Think fitt to proceed, at this time, no further." Hackles were raised: let Ninian Hay take warning.
Many such parties were known to take place on Sunday fore¬
oons, and perhaps the kirk session had no mind to appear ri¬
cidulous by punishing one newcomer to the district, when so many old offenders went free. (3)

A minute of South Leith session about this time also points up the limitation of the elders' power:

"Some members of the Session haveing this day informed the Session that the open prophanations of the Sabath in this place by multitudes of strangers from Edinr. &c, is a growing evill, and particularly that the last Sabath was horridly prophaned both in tyme of publick worship and after it, to the great dishonour of God, the scandal of religion and the great grief of the Lord's people, by great multitudes of people whereof some in coatches others on horse back and many on foot, all of them repairing to the sands and links of Leith to look after and gaze upon the race horses which were led forth to aire, and by others teaching their horses to pace, The like whereof hath not been observed in this place heretofore. And the Session taking this to their serious consideration, and finding that it was not in their power to suppress the same, and that no externall force that the Magistrates or gaird in Leith could affoord would be sufficent for that end, Therefor they did and hereby doeth referre the consideration of this weighty affair, to the Reverend Presbitry that they may take such course as the Lord will direct to for suppressing such horid and woefull prophanations of the Sabath in this place." (4)

But the presbytery were no more able than the kirk session to find a solution to "this weighty affair".

Feeling against the Church's methods of compelling

3. North Leith kirk session minutes, 10.5.1698.
4. South Leith kirk session minutes, 5.3.1702.
Sabbath observance comes out strongly in another instance. One Sunday afternoon in 1703 Messrs Fulton and Ferguson, elders, were appointed searchers in South Leith. They came across a gentleman walking in the street, stopped him, and asked his business, and why wasn't he at church. He answered that he was just attending to his own affairs, and had no intention of going to church - especially as he was well able to "have his own serious meditations" just as effectively as church attenders. The two elders were accompanied by two constables, and they now directed those officers to arrest this bold stranger. But the man drew his sword and swore he would stab the first man to lay hands on him. The constables being "naked men", that is, unarmed, there was a deadlock, until Mr Fulton thought of sending for a detachment from the town guard. The stranger, however, retired in the meantime to the Links, "where was a great many vagueing whom it was impossible for us to command so wee did forbear pursuing him any more." (5) This was where public resentment boiled over. There were always dozens, if not hundreds of people enjoying themselves on the Links, walking, playing golf, or pleasing themselves in one way or another, and the searchers turned a blind eye, knowing they could not cope with such numbers. But let a solitary wayfarer be caught walking in the Kirkgate

5. South Leith kirk session minutes, 20.5.1703.
during the time of divine service, and he was pounced upon and summoned to attend the kirk session. It was intolerable.

As the century advanced the rigour of Sabbath searching was considerably abated. There may have been no change of heart in the kirk session, but there was certainly a change in tactics. It became fairly safe to walk abroad on Sunday, or to cook a meal for a visitor, or serve a customer with a drink, since there never was any question of closing the taverns on Sundays. (6) But there were many other ways of breaking the Sabbath. In 1742 David Ferguson, a barber, was examined about his practice of shaving customers and dressing their wigs on Sundays. His defence was simple; were he to refuse such services, he would lose his customers, for "the whole Society of Barbers are guilty of the like practices." (7) Since the elders themselves had wigs to wear and chins to be shaved, they must have long been aware of the barbers' practice, but only now is the matter raised. Ferguson's was plainly a test case. As soon as he had been rebuked and dismissed, the session arranged to meet with the Society of Barbers to discuss the matter, and six weeks later

6. It was only in 1836 that, on the initiative of St. John's kirk session, a movement was started to close all public houses in Leith on Sundays.
7. South Leith kirk session records, 3.6.1742.
"The Moderator informed that Henry Shiells present deacon of the Barbers came to him and told that the said Barbers at a Meeting had enacted themselves under a penaltie That in time coming they shall not prophane the Lord's day by Shaving beards or dressing wigs, and desired the same might be intimated from the pulpit to the Congregation which he thought proper to acquaint the Session with before he made publick intimation thereof. The Session having heard and considered the motion and proposal heartily approves thereof and agrees thereto."(8)

Whether this was a final answer to the practice of Sunday work for barbers is not clear. There is no further mention of the matter, but the same question had been raised a century previously, when "the barbers are inhibit to poll or barbarize on the Lords day under paine of 54 merks shillings (sic) apiece for the first fault."(9) This sessional order failed to stop the practice, but perhaps the new co-operation of the eighteenth century proved more successful.

The fight for Sunday observance was of course to continue long after the period under our consideration. The nineteenth century was to see many a protest and campaign against Sunday fishing, Sunday trains, Sunday shop-keeping and what not. Between the beginning and the end of the eighteenth century however, there was undoubtedly a change, or at least a development in the approach of Leith elders to the Sunday question. The North Leith session who in

8. South Leith kirk session minutes, 18.7.1742.
9. Ibid. 9.1.1640.
1710 particularly instructed their searcher to "go by the waterside for preventing swimmers & other disorders on the Sabbath day", were succeeded by their great-grandsons, who in 1800 heartily approved of a suggestion of Dr Johnston's that he should "give an evening Lecture every Lord's day at 6 o'clock during the summer season." The session were "unanimously of opinion, that it would be of signal advantage, and might particularly be a means of preventing unnecessary walking on the evening of that day."(10) The "evening Lecture" has no attraction for the twentieth century, but it was a novelty in 1800, and it represented a new principle, in offering alternative occupation for those who persisted in the sinful practice of walking on Sundays.

The difficulty of inducing the observance of Sunday as a holy day rather than as a holiday was not a mark of anti-clericalism; nor was it a sign of widespread agnosticism: the fact is that for ordinary working folk in Presbyterian Scotland, there were no recognised and regular holidays. Apart from Sundays, there were the sacramental seasons - once a year at first, but twice yearly as the century advanced - when there was a general stoppage of work from Thursday to the following Tuesday. As with the Sabbath however, those were not days for recreation or enjoyment, but rather for increased religious devotion, with services every day,

10. North Leith kirk session minutes, 30.5.1710; 22.4.1800.
and everyone expected to attend. But the people in general were not so devotionally minded, and needed little inducement to seize the chance of a holiday. In the summer of 1714 the sacrament was dispensed in the month of July, and it happened that in the week preceding the herring shoals appeared in the Forth well inshore. July herring are in prime condition, so on the Thursday before the sacrament—designated a Fast Day and a time for solemn self-examination—instead of going to church, "the fast day was much profaned by great numbers of people in several places of the Paroch, especially at Newhaven, going to sea in boats for herrings, and multitudes at night going to the sands for sand-eels, &c." But, as happened so often, the session could do nothing, in view of the very large numbers involved—and also because so many of the same people were off at the herring drave by the time the session had received a report of their misdoings. (11)

Holidays were snatched as and when opportunity arose. Episcopalians had their own observances which Presbyterians looked on as idiosyncrasies of that denomination. The idea of adopting Episcopalian holidays never occurred to them.

"Yesterday being Good Friday, was observed with the usual solemnity by those of the Episcopal persuasion, and the banks and public offices were shut." (12)

11. North Leith kirk session minutes, 3.8.1714.
Leith Customs men were ordered by the Board "not to allow of any other Holydays being kept, than such as are customary in this country." That was in October 1723; yet in following years the anniversary of the King's coronation, Guy Fawkes Day, the anniversary of King Charles's martyrdom, various royal birthdays, as well as Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday were all kept as holidays. Presbyterians took no notice of any of these occasions. Meetings of kirk sessions and incorporations took place on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, with no suggestion that they were met at an unusual time. And yet most people enjoyed not only hours, but days of leisure, even if not in any official or recognised way. Farm work was slack in winter, especially before improvements began to increase efficiency; and any tradesman employing two or three journeymen could always arrange work so as to make a day's recreation possible. When John Scott of Craigentinny, along with some neighbours, determined to preserve game on their lands of Restalrig, they announced their intention in a newspaper advertisement, adding:

"It is hoped none will presume to hunt thereon with dogs, nets or guns, without liberty, otherways they will be prosecute as the law directs." (13)

Such an announcement would be pointless unless poaching were common.

Within the family, births, marriages and deaths were all alike occasions of much social intercourse and hilarity. The public attitude to death and mourning was shockingly callous from our point of view; but death was then so common, and the reasons for it often so mysterious, that for very sanity's sake men were fatalists, resigned to accept what could neither be understood nor avoided. Privately, emotion might cut very deeply, but society allowed little scope for any exhibition of grief. The seceders did not favour any burial service, and the death even of a parish kirk elder did not always rate even a mention in the session records. The eighteenth century was near its close before any expression of appreciation of an elder's services is recorded.

In the early years of the century there is news of much unseemly behaviour in Newhaven, where lykewakes, officially frowned on since the Reformation, were still regularly kept up in any house of mourning.

"It was this day delated that the people of Newhaven generally at their lykewakes are guilty of unaccountable abuses and Extravagances such as playing at cards, debauching & drinking & especially when a child of Robert Duncan, younger, dyed, it fell out to be the Sabbath night in the month of (illegible) last bypast, and a great many people conveend in the said Robert's house on the said Sabbath night at Eleven of the clock or thereabout, pretending that it was past the middle of the night, when the more sober computed it to be about Eleven, at least before Twelve, and presently fell to playing at Cards, Drinking & Revelling, & other abuses, without any regard to the Lord's night or bounds of morality, the Session in the first place ordains that the said
Robert Duncan be summoned to come and here the next sederunt to give an account hereof." (14)

The offence, be it noted, was not so much that the lykewake should have been the occasion for revelry, but that this should have taken place on the Lord's day - before midnight on Sunday. Had Robert Duncan only restrained his guests for an hour, all might have been well.

Contrast this debauchery in a humble Newhaven cottage in 1704 with the behaviour of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers on Leith Links, met together on 14th November 1795. The members had been called to a special meeting "to be held in Memory of their late Worthy Secretary". This was James Balfour of Pilrig, a well-known figure, not only on the Links, but in Leith and Edinburgh business circles. With the length of a century between the Newhaven lykewake and this memorial dinner, the different attitudes in the presence of death are impressive.

"Immediately after Dinner the Captain gave the following Toasts

I
The health of the Company

Then rising up slowly - which the Company also did - said, "I well know you all feel with me on the Melancholy Cause of this Meeting And will join in dedicating this glass

II

to the Memory of our Worthy and late departed Friend Mr James Balfour, whose Benevolent and Cheerful Dispositions and happy Social powers while they captivated all, particularly endeared him to his numerous

friends.

Being again seated - after a pause

III

Comfort and Consolation to the Friends and Relatives of Mr Balfour

IV

May the offices in this Society held by Mr Balfour be agreeably supplied & attended to with that Accuracy and Precision for which he was peculiarly distinguished.

During this Solennity which was truly Affecting - a profound silence was observed.
The Captain then proceeded to General Toasts."(15)

The Honourable Company, of course, belonged to the "respectable" classes, and they were mourning an old friend; but by the end of the century there certainly was a kindlier attitude in society to private grief. Behaviour was less callous; men were readier to show their sentiments.

Christenings and weddings were made for joy, and these were celebrated with gusto. George Robertson describes such celebrations as they commonly happened on the farms around Edinburgh and Leith:

"They still retain a great predilection for the customs of antiquity, particularly on the occasion of a marriage or christening; and where the entertainment provided, and the various ceremonies observed, are conducted on a regular system of etiquette.
Thus, at their marriages, they have not only a best man and best maid, but even a master of ceremonies - Master Household, as he is called - whose business it is to see that the company be properly arranged at dinner, &c., and who is commonly some facetious tailor, as a good deal depends on the homourous disposition of this office-bearer."(16)

16. George Robertson, op. cit. 166.
This was the century of tavern society. Apart from family celebrations, social intercourse was chiefly to be enjoyed in and around the inns and ale-houses which proliferated especially along the Shore and in the Kirkgate. Some of these were well-known far beyond the bounds of Leith, and their names are redolent of the period. The Globe tavern was also known as the Ship; Mrs Oman kept a house at the Sign of the Boar's Head in the mid-century; the Little Carron taproom advertised its address in its name, for Little Carron was in the modern Bernard Street. John Clephane's was for long a famous house in the Kirkgate, and his wife continued the business for several years after his death. This was where the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers dined after their day's play, before the Golf-house was built. Many taverns were kept by seamen's widows, who no doubt could count on the custom of their husband's old shipmates.

There were no halls or public meeting places, so that gatherings of all kinds were held in taverns, when a circulating bottle, tankards and glasses were as much standard furniture for the occasion as a table and chairs. Even the parish kirk elders would foregather informally in an ale-house, and the heritors of North Leith were summoned to meet in Donaldson's Tavern.(17)

The Exchange Tavern was the venue for the annual meeting of the Royal Landing Club in the years following the visit of King George IV to Leith in 1822, when he disembarked at the Shore. This event - the first visit of a reigning sovereign for almost two centuries - made a tremendous impression in Leith. Even today, families long resident in the port still retail anecdotes of that royal visit. One old Leither tells that when his grandfather was an infant he was taken by his mother to see the King's arrival. An old fishwife, dressed in her picturesque finery, pushed forward and offered His Majesty a tray bearing a glass of whisky and a piece of cake. King George was graciously pleased to drink the whisky, but refused the cake. This momentous visit has been described by various observers in great detail. All the incorporations, and everyone with any pretence to any sort of uniform was dressed and on parade, and the entire population - at that time about 20,000 souls - seemed to be in the streets.

The Royal Landing Club did not survive many years. It was an association in the Edinburgh tradition of eccentric clubs, with no other purpose than to recall annually and relive nostalgically the events of the glorious 15th of August 1822. The account of their meeting in August 1824 is of interest, if for nothing else than the length of the Toast List and the nature of the toasts.
This was in effect a public dinner, with the senior magistrate Bailie Mackie in the chair, and about 200 diners present in the great dining-room of the Exchange Tavern. The room was decorated with flowers, and behind the president's chair hung a painting of the Royal Landing, suitably surmounted and supported by appropriate flags and regalia. Without going into detail, the food was reported to have been "of the most sumptuous description", which is probably saying a great deal, since many who were present could recall the gargantuan feasts of eighteenth century society. Boys from the Leith Boys Charity School were present - not the entire school presumably, as there were then 180 of them - but a selected choir.

When the cloth was drawn the President rose and proposed

"King George IV, the father of his people!"

Then the boys proceeded to give tone and harmony to the evening with a rendering of "God Save the King" - not only the original verses, but also several additional stanzas specially composed for the occasion. The President then made his remarks, after which the programme continued as follows:
Toast List

Air: The King's Welcome to Auld Reekie.
"The Duke of York and the Army."
"Lord Melville and the Navy."
"Earl Fife and General Duff."

Air: Highland Laddie.
"Both Houses of Parliament."
"His Majesty's Ministers."
"The British Constitution"
"The Lord Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh."

Air: The Flowers of Edinburgh
"The City of Edinburgh and all its Improvements"
"The Lord Provost and His Fireside"
"Bailie Macfie and the Old Magistrates of Leith"
"The Magistrates of Leith."
"Mrs Bailie Mackie"

Air: Elythe was she but and ben!
"Dr Ireland and the Clergy of Leith."
"Dr Duncan and the Medical School of Edinburgh"
"Dr Kelly and the Medical Practitioners of Leith"
"Mr John Stenhouse"
"Commissioner Cornwall and the Revenue Board."

The following, with other toasts, were afterwards given:

"Captain Duncan and the Trinity House of Leith"
"Mr Philip and the Incorporation of Maltmen."
"Mr Neilson and the Convenery of the Trades."
"Mr Waddell and the Merchant Company"
"Mr Scarth and the Constables of Leith"
"The Other Societies of Leith, who made so respectable an appearance at His Majesty's Landing"
"Collector McNair and the Customs of Leith"

"The company broke up about midnight, apparently highly gratified," concludes the account in the Edinburgh Evening Courant. "Every guest seemed pleased, and mirth and good humour beamed from every countenance." Next day the entire Charity School was given a free dinner by Mrs
Simpson, proprietrix of the Exchange Tavern - no doubt on the left-overs from the previous night. (18)

There were also several coffee-houses in the town - Miln's at the Sign of the Swan, Wood's, the Ship, and the Leith Coffee-house among the more prominent. These were convenient sale-rooms, and auctions of house property and of ships were regularly conducted in one or other of these well known howffs.

No regular theatre was established in the eighteenth century, but that is not to say that stage-plays were unknown in the port. On 13th September 1720 North Leith kirk session took cognisance of an irregular marriage between Thomas Smith, described as "Master of the Figure Play", and Jane Crawford. This obscure occupation "Master of the Figure Play" might conceivably refer to some activity connected with the stage, but there is no evidence of any actual stage performance in Leith as early as that. The presbytery denounced the morals of "a Company of Stage-Players who are acting Plays within the Precincts" of the city, and by pulpit intimation warned all churchgoers to avoid those wicked actors and their plays. This kind of prohibition was not likely to weigh heavily on those who

only awaited an opportunity to set the ministers at defiance. In 1736 Allan Ramsay, the Edinburgh bookseller and poet, opened a theatre in Carrubbers Close, which lasted barely a year, being closed by the magistrates for want of a licence. But it was only a question of time before the theatre would be established in Edinburgh, and many of the ministers themselves be found among its devoted adherents. As for Leith, there is no certainty when the first stage performance was seen there, but it might well be that the following announcement contains the answer to that secret:

"On Tuesday evening next, being the 24th February 1767, will be performed at Mr Wallace's big room in Capel's Wynd, Yardheads, in Leith, a CONCERT OF MUSIC, between the several parts of which will be presented (gratis) a Scots Pastoral called "The Gentle Shepherd", with the original music and songs. Dancing between the acts. The whole to conclude with a comic Scots Reel by the characters. "Tickets to be had of Thos. Lenox on the Shore of Leith. Pit 2s, Gallery 1s. "To begin at six o'clock. "N.B. Care will be taken to light the Close."(19)

"Capel's Wynd, Yardheads" is, of course, Cables Wynd, and "Mr Wallace's big room" is almost certainly the Ark, which was the only building in Leith then to fit the description in this advertisement. Less than two years later the Ark was to become the first Antiburgher meeting-house in Leith. And it should be noticed that it is a "Concert of Music" that is advertised, since stage-plays were still illegal. But the concert was likely no more than a framework for

Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" which was thus given gratis to all concert-goers. That short season of Allan Ramsay's in Carrubbers Close is said to have included among its productions the work of a fifteen-year-old boy. This is stated on the title-page of a book which appeared in 1733 with an Edinburgh imprint - "The Disappointed Gallant, or Buckram in Armour. A New Ballad Operas. Written by a Young Scotch Gentleman."

There is no record of this play, but the author was Adam Thomson, a fact which appears from the Thomson family papers. He was the second son of Andrew Thomson, a factor who appears from the Thomson family. Where he was a friend of George Macartney, who had seen it passed for the production of...

21. "Legend from Memory, Communicated by my dear Mother, (formerly Helen Paton) about the year 1801, to Alex. S. Robertson from Memory, communicated by my dear mother," Edinburgh, 1733. 8vo.

22. Edinburgh, 1733. 8vo.
The father of this precocious youngster was Andrew Thomson, brewer, and bailie of Portsburgh. By his first wife, Jean Broun, he had a son Andrew, who seems to have died young. His second marriage, to Helen Bell, brought him a numerous family, mostly of girls, and three sons. (23) Adam's career we have noticed, and the youngest boy, John, twelve years old when his father died, joined the Navy at 14 as a midshipman on the Marlborough man-of-war. Some years later he was taken prisoner by the Spanish, and spent a long time in Hispaniola, suffering many privations. "My father," wrote his daughter, "to his dying day would never allow a particle of bread to be wasted, collecting all the crumbs with scrupulous care; and any deviation from this was attended with reproof and correction." (24)

James was the eldest of Andrew Thomson's three sons by his second marriage. He succeeded to his father's business, and about 1750 transferred from the Grassmarket to the Vaults in the Dub Row (St. Andrew Street). Here he set up as a wine merchant and shipper, and was admitted a Trafficker in 1753. Ten years later, at the close of the Seven Years War, his brother John gave up the Navy and returned to Edinburgh, where he was well connected, and on intimate terms with

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23. Three of the girls married clergymen, and Elizabeth, notably, became the wife of the Rev. John Mill, minister of Dunrossness and Fair Isle, whose diary, a valuable source-book of Shetland life and manners, was published by the Scottish History Society in 1889.

24. "Legend from Memory, &c...."
such as Nisbet of Dirleton, Henry Erskine, Dr Alexander Webster of the Tolbooth Church, Maitland Bannatyne and other prominent figures in Edinburgh society. John Thomson was one of the forty original members of the Society of Bowlers, formed in 1769. In partnership with James at the Vaults, John was entered a member of the Incorporation of Traffickers in 1765.

We need not follow the fortunes of the Thomsons any further, but before leaving this family - so typical of the prosperous merchant class in the port - we shall take a look at old Andrew Thomson's will. Andrew was the progenitor of the Thomson dynasty at the Vaults, for in his youth he had been a baker, and was the first in the family to turn to brewing and dealing in wine. He dies in 1743, and his will is largely an inventory of his goods and gear, and of various monies due to him. This catalogue sheds a surprising amount of light on the manner of life of an eighteenth century merchant.

From the list of his "Body Cloaths" we can readily picture the Bailie sauntering forth for his "meridian". Under his three-cornered hat he wears his second-best wig. His good one is reserved for the Sabbath and other high days, and he has a third wig fit only for wearing indoors. Below his blue coat he is dressed in black, with breeches and grey worsted stockings. This is his working garb. He

24a. Maitland Bannatyne was a member of the Society of Bowlers, and his name appears with that of John Thomson on the Society's seal of causo, dated 15th November 1769.
also possesses a "Suite of Colored Cloaths" and two pairs of "black plush Breeks". Even at work, his shirt is clean, for the state of a man's linen was considered a sure sign of his respectability - or otherwise. Not only has Bailie Andra Thomson twelve shirts, but also three nightshirts and a nightgown, and six stocks. For winter wear he has a "Bigg Coat of Cloath" and a cape; and for riding in stormy weather he uses a leather cape. These, with a pair of boots and two pairs of shoes, comprise Andra's entire wardrobe. The whole lot was valued at four pounds sterling.

His house was divided into the kitchen and "the roums", and there were eight beds, all told. The family enjoyed feather matresses, but the servants lay on chaff. There were four bolsters and six "Codds" (pillows). As with Andra's personal equipment, we find in the household plenishing the same ample supply of linen. Ten pairs of fine linen sheets, and no fewer than thirty pairs of coarser stuff; four fine tablecloths kept for festive occasions and sixteen coarse cloths for daily duty, while eight dozen "Serviets" were either largely "for show", or else provided plenty work for the three pairs of smoothing irons.

We can describe the kitchen in fair detail. On the bare floorboards stood the table, and in a corner the big box-bed. Although the Bailie possessed 37 chairs, only one
is described as an "Easy Chair", so the seating in the kitchen was not of the kind to encourage lounging. A dazzling array of pewter and earthenware plates graced the shelves, with copper kettles, brass pans, "a Fraying Pann, five Bowells, Eleven Cupps, Eleven Saucers". We can almost hear Helen Bell's lamentations over the twelfth cup and saucer. There was an "aumrie" or press, and a "kitchen Chimney", which was simply a grate. Across the bars of the grate a cran was stretched to support the pots, and a pair of clips hung ready for lifting them when they came to the boil. The saut backett stood to one side of the fireplace, and in a far corner was the beef stand - a barrel for the salt beef which saw the family through the winter.

Mistress Thomson was evidently able to produce much of her own linen, for there were three spinning wheels, one of which would certainly be in the kitchen. There were also two water stoups, "a pair of bellows's" and all the innumerable oddments which have filled kitchens in every generation. The entire plenishing was valued at £50. 5s. 11d, which would hardly encourage a man to think himself well-off in modern times; but in 1743 Andra's brewerymen earned three shillings a week, so that the Bailie, with household furnishings worth more than six years of a man's wages, could cut a respectable figure.(25)

Bailie Thomson lived in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, and died there beside his brewery, the scene of his daily work. And having scanned the inventory of his kitchen, a useful comparison is possible, for we also have the inventory of the kitchen at Pilrig House almost twenty years later – a list compiled for James Balfour of Pilrig in 1761. Socially the Balfours stood a rung or two higher than Andrew Thomson in the previous generation, but in the second half of the century the two families were connected by marriage. (26)

Pilrig House stood in a small estate, and housekeeping was on a more extensive scale than in the Grassmarket, since field workers had to be fed; and the house itself was much bigger than the Bailie's establishment. None the less the equipment of the two kitchens is very similar, although at Pilrig House there was a jack and two spits, two branders, a flaming (basting) spoon, a yetlin (cast metal) pot and a large brass pan for the shearer's meat; a white iron oven, a bakeboard and a rolling-pin, a large wooden pestle and mortar – equipment for the larger household. But still the same range of brass and copper pots as in the Grassmarket, the same standard pewter and

26. James Balfour, the 2nd laird, had a granddaughter, Cecilia Gibson, who married John Thomson, eldest son of that John Thomson who served in the Navy. The son of this marriage was James Gibson Thomson, who became head of the wine business at the Vaults in 1820 and gave his name to the firm.
earthenware vessels, candlesticks, irons, and of course three spinning-wheels and a check reel. Twenty years had made no difference – except for one item, or rather one range of articles which had had no place in the Thomson menage. The innovation – the one article that would have caught the eye of an eighteenth century housewife at once in the Pilrig House kitchen – was a tea-pot. Nor was the tea-pot on its own. The inventory reads:

"A Tea Pott & Flatt (i.e. stand). A Milk Pott & Head or Cover, a Tea Candlestick, 12 Tea Spoons & a Pair of Tea Tongs. A small Silver Pan & a Pair of Silver Juggs."

Tea drinking had reached Leith by 1761, but it was still a luxury, confined to the better-off households, regarded by many as a fad, and by many more as a degenerate habit. Forty years later the use of tea had spread to the working classes, and the Leith shipbuilders in dispute with their employees over wages, charged that

"The Petitioners do not seem disposed to admit that meal should be considered nowadays as forming an essential article of subsistence to their families... It is believed the alteration is usually made by substituting tea in the place of oatmeal; and which of these is best calculated to support the health and constitution of a labouring man, Your Lordships can have no difficulty in determining."

If the spread of a taste for tea hints at a desire for luxury, a hankering after extravagance, as the

27. Bill Chamber Processes, Register House.
shipbuilders seem to imply, this is not evident either in the homes or in the diversions of the people. Their pleasures were informal, spontaneous and inexpensive. An exception to this was Freemasonry, which with its strict formalism and mystique was pursued with enthusiasm in the port, although it was probably largely confined to those who were comfortably above the poverty-line.

The Craft in Leith dates from 1688, in which year certain Leith brethren broke away from the Edinburgh Lodge of Mary's Chapel. If there was a previous dispute, there is no record of it. At the meeting summoned to form the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736 there was a forcibly argued case against recognising the successors of those who left Mary's Chapel in 1688. The "revolt" however, was almost certainly of a piece with relations in general between Leith and Edinburgh - that is, the Leith members of the Edinburgh Lodge simply decided in 1688 that they were strong enough to form a Lodge of their own, and proceeded to do so without asking permission. As these founding members of the Leith Lodge lived in South Leith, Canongate and North Leith, the new Lodge took the cumbersome title of "Canongate and Leith, Leith and Canongate", and for the first half century of its existence there was no fuss.

"Canongate and Leith, Leith and Canongate" met in a
little building off the Dub Raw. Mason Lodge Court was demolished in the 1950s, but the name had never appeared in any directory. For many years it was a slum, difficult to find, through a narrow pend under a huddle of ramshackle tenements. But in the eighteenth century the court gave privacy to the Mason Lodge, and here the meetings were held until near the end of the century, when a move was made.

There were more than a hundred lodges in Scotland in 1736, when invitations went out to send representatives to a meeting at which it was proposed to form a Grand Lodge. No invitation reached Canongate and Leith, Leith and Canongate, although Leith Kilwinning, a lodge formed only a few months previously, had been invited. Thirty-three lodges were represented at the meeting on 30th November, and Leith and Canongate sent an uninvited commissioner. This brother stated to the meeting that Canongate and Leith, Leith and Canongate

"were descended of their own accord from the Lodge of Mary's Chappell & Regularly kept from the year 1688, & ever since, & craved that the said Lodge might be enrolled & have a vote with their other brethren in the Grand Lodge."(28)

Thomas Miln, Master of Mary's Chapel, was not disposed to admit any claim from Canongate and Leith. That lodge,

he said, was "schismatick and unwarrantable", and so had rightly been ignored. The petitioner then offered to exhibit the Leith records complete from 1688, and again claimed the right to a vote in the meeting. It was then agreed by a majority to allow Leith and Canongate a place in the meeting without giving any judgement in the quarrel with Edinburgh - a matter which could be settled later. Leith and Canongate was later formally recognised, and fifty-two names of members enrolled, of which eighteen were operative masons. (29) Harmony with Mary's Chapel was soon restored:

"St. John's Eve, 1740.
The Lodge (of Mary's Chapel) was afterwards honoured by a visit by Hugh Hunter, present worshipful Master of the Lodge of Canongate & Leith, Leith & Canongate, with its wardens and several other members of the said Lodge, who made their compliments to this Lodge in acknowledgement of their being derived from them." (30)

Canongate & Leith, Leith & Canongate is Lodge No. 5.

The early records have been lost, and minutes are extant only from 1830; but a Charter of Confirmation was granted on 8th February 1738, in which the "Leith Lodge is acknowledged "as descending from the Mason Lodge of Mary's Chapel in Edinburgh", and precedency is given as from 29th May 1688. (31)

There were other Leith lodges. Leith Kilwinning was erected as an off-shoot from Canongate Kilwinning in 1735, with William Montgomery, a Leith merchant, as Master. Dr John Moncrief of Leith Kilwinning, was appointed Treasurer of the Grand Lodge of Scotland at its foundation the following year. Vernon Kilwinning was formed by several Edinburgh writers, members of Canongate & Leith, Leith & Canongate. Later known as Edinburgh St.Giles, this lodge was dissolved in 1779, the members joining Canongate Kilwinning. The Thistle Lodge also derived from Leith & Canongate. Founded by a group of Edinburgh lawyers in 1751, Thistle came to an end in 1823, after many years of bitterness and jealousy between it and the parent lodge.(32)

Many Leith sailors were engaged at the Battle of Trafalgar, and survivors who were members of the Craft decided to form a lodge with the appropriate name "Trafalgar". A Charter was granted on 1st February 1808, and the sponsors were Lodge St.David No.35; Lodge St.Luke No.44; and Lodge Roman Eagle No.XVO. Trafalgar was numbered 290, and consecrated the following month. The announcement of the great day appeared in the Edinburgh Advertiser:

"Consecration of the Lodge Trafalgar.
"The Grand Lodge of Scotland having fixed Tuesday 29th instant, to consecrate the Lodge Trafalgar, in the Assembly Rooms here, at 6 o'clock p.m.,

32. D.M.Lyon, op. cit. 139.
the Right Worshipful Master solicits Visitations from the Sister Lodges, and trusts that as many of the Brethren as can possibly attend, will honour him with their presence that Evening, to receive the Officers of the Grand Lodge.

Leith March 24th 1808.

N.B. The Office Bearers of the Lodge Trafalgar will attend in their Lodge Room, head of Broad Wynd, every lawful evening, at Eight o'clock, previously to the consecration, to initiate Candidates.

In the little room at the corner of Broad Wynd and Water Street, Trafalgar had a chequered existence; but after becoming dormant in 1837, it came to life again, and still flourishies. Perhaps "Phoenix" might now be a better name than "Trafalgar"!

The Assembly Rooms, where the consecration of Lodge Trafalgar took place, were still comparatively new at that time. The lack of any public meeting place was increasingly felt after the middle of the eighteenth century, and in 1783 a petition was presented to the town council for a feu at Constitution Hill. The site had once before been feued to a builder in 1741, but there was an immediate and vociferous protest, for Leithers had always considered this area as common ground, and it was a favourite place for walking. Bowing before the storm the town council had withdrawn the feu and offered the builder another site. The heritors and inhabitants between them then enclosed the site, and banked up an area as a "Common walk", which for

33. Edinburgh Advertiser, 22-25.3.1808.
a long time past had been "frequented by Persons of all
Ranks and Conditions, the particular resort of Children,
and of the tender Valetudinary Inhabitants". The area was
also used as a bleaching green. A considerable sum of
money had already been subscribed for the purpose of erect-
ing an Assembly Room. The magistrates granted a feu of
2 roods 15 falls for an annual duty of £6; on condition,
first, that there should be no other building erected on
the area; second, that the area be free to the inhabitants
for their pleasure; and third, that failing the observance
of the first two conditions, the feu would revert at once
to the City. (34)

And so the Assembly Rooms were built, and assemblies
held from time to time - copies on a small scale of the
Edinburgh Assemblies which Hugo Arnot describes:

"The oeconomy of dancing, & other business of the
night, is superintended by a woman of fashion, appointed
by the directors. This lady sits at the head of the
room, & wears, as the badge of her office, a gold medal,
with motto and device, emblematical of charity and
parental tenderness. The tickets for admission are
sold for half a crown. From the receipts of the
house, the expense of lights and musick is defrayed,
as well as of tea and coffee, which are furnished to
the company without any additional charge. The resi-
due is divided equally between the Charity work-house
and the Royal Infirmary. (35)

But the Leith Assembly Room had at least one

34. M.T.C. 21.5.1783. CIV. 71.
35. Hugo Arnot, History of Edinburgh, 381f.
distinctive feature, for behind the building a bowling green was constructed. The game of bowls had been a popular diversion in Leith for a very long time. Not that the port was peculiar in this respect, for it was a widespread favourite in Scotland. (36) Previous to the making of this green behind the Assembly Rooms, (37) there were two other bowling greens in Leith. By far the older of the two - long known as "the bowling green of Leith" - had occupied a site west of Great Junction Street. Kirkwood shows this green still in existence in 1817, and Bowling Green Street today preserves the memory of this original bowling green of the port. It was sited just outside the old town wall, near one of the bastions. Dr Malcolm points out that "until the early 18th century almost every laird's house in and around Edinburgh had its bowling green. In the 16th and 17th centuries ... enterprising innkeepers attracted customers by keeping a smooth, trim bowling green." (38) This, no doubt, is the background

36. "To the Scots we owe the salvation of Bowls. They stripped it of its undesirable surroundings and made a beautiful game of it, an open-air pastime without violence, second to none in its scientific and strategical possibilities, and surpassing all in its promotion of good fellowship. They gave it laws, demonstrated what constituted a perfect green, and how to lay and maintain it." (J.A. Manson, The Complete Bowler, 8)
37. This green was wrongly surmised by Dr Charles A. Malcolm to have been of 17th-18th century origin. (cf. his article on Bowls in a newscutting in the Signet Library.)
38. Malcolm, ibid.
to the appearance of Margaret Mowbray before the kirk session of South Leith on 16th February 1610. She warned that if she continued to allow "valley bowlis" to be played in her yard on Sundays she would be obliged to pay twenty shillings "to the pure", and also to make her public repentance before the pulpit. (39) Changed days: Thirty years earlier Sunday was a favourite day for bowls, and the greens were crowded on the Sabbath; but an Act of 1581 made this practice illegal. (40)

"Valley bowlis" however, was probably the game of skittles. In Scotland commonly, skittles were "the Kiles", but in Leith the name used was "the Quilts" or "Tuilts"—apparently a derivative from the French "Quilles". This was played on narrow strips of turf set between hedges, and was a popular alternative to bowls in winter. And of course a skittle alley was almost a natural adjunct to an inn.

Adjacent to the bowling green outside the town wall there was a twelve-acre site covering the ground between Sheriff-brae, King Street and Leith Mills. This area was anciently known as "Bowling Green", "The Catchpool" or "The Quilts". (41) As these alternative titles were the

39. South Leith kirk session minutes, 16.2.1610.
41. The Catchpool or calchpule — there are various spellings — was the court where caitch-ball was played. It was a game resembling fives. (R.S. Fittis, Sports and Pastimes of Scotland, 207f.)
names of three popular games, this would seem to have been originally a pleasure ground set out adjacent to the town, where Leithers in the 16th and 17th centuries might find ease and recreation by the riverside. In the latter years of the 18th century the ground was occupied by a small estate, and its eventual fate is foreshadowed in 1808:

"This property, from its favourable situation in many respects, and particularly its contiguity to the port of Leith, to the Wet Docks, and to the City of Edinburgh, by the bridge which the Magistrates of Edinburgh are bound to build across the Water of Leith on this ground, by the Act of Parliament passed last year; and the New Street to be opened between said Bridge and Leith Walk, which will run nearly through the centre of the ground, is particularly well adapted for building on, for houses, warehouses, &c.

"Accordingly a plan has been made by Mr Robert Burn, architect, laying out the ground in streets..."(42)

Of course Burn's plan was never carried out, and the only open space remaining in this area is Taylor Gardens.

A second bowling green in Leith was provided by the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, when they built their Golf-house in 1768. This lay on the north side of the Golf-house, but was probably not available to the public. It cost the Honourable Company £19.10. - to lay out this green, and as the cost of upkeep also fell on the funds of the Company, the use of the green was almost certainly reserved to members.(43)

42. Edinburgh Advertiser, 15-19.4.1808.
Sir Robert Sibbald described the pastimes of the Scots as he saw them in 1684:

"The Recreations of the Nobility and Gentry are: Fencing, Archrie, Mounting and Hawking and Fishing, Horse races, the Gouffe, which exercise the Body much more than the pell mell, Curling in tyme of Froast, Tenis Sport, and for House Games, Buliards Tables, Carts. The Commons useth much the Throwing of the Bullets and Throwing of the Stone which they call Putting, and in many places the Foot Ball, and foot Races." (44)

Practically all of these activities had their devotees in Leith, for two hundred years ago the population was not as predominantly working-class as it later became, and people of some means and leisure lived in and around the village. Apart from bowls and skittles, outdoor sports in Leith were played almost exclusively on the Links and the foreshore or Sands.

Maitland, referring to the period about 1603, speaks of "the coney warren, Leith, commonly called the Links," (45) and this evokes the picture of sand dunes honeycombed by the ubiquitous rabbit. At that time, with no buildings apart from farm-towns outside the walls of the town, the Links were much more extensive than in later times. This was true common land, with grazing for all who wanted it - poor grazing, for the soil layer over the sand was thin, and the ground constantly washed by the tide, which crept far inland beneath the surface. Gun emplacements thrown

44. Sir Robert Sibbald, MS Description of Scotland, 1684.
up during the Siege of Leith in 1560 did not improve the land, and as the Links always seemed to the town council a natural spot for weapon-showings and cavalry manoeuvres, not much attention was ever paid to the possibility of improving the ground as pasture. A good deal of whin grew on the Links, valued as winter feeding for cattle, and the "whin stacks" adjacent to South Leith churchyard are frequently referred to in the parish records.46 From the late seventeenth century the Carters rented the grazing of the Links from the town council, and this enabled them to keep other beasts off the ground - which they employed a herd to do. Kings, nobles and commoners had played golf over the Links for generations, and we can only imagine what rules were observed, or what distinctions existed between fairway, rough and putting green.

Seaward from the Links stretched the Sands; and here, annually, the great carnival known as the Leith Races took place. It may help us to a true perspective on this week of festival and licence, to realise that in his famous poem on the Races, Robert Fergusson does not once in all the twenty stanzas, mention either horses or racing. Instead he gives us a series of rapid sketches of the types to be found among the spectators and the side-shows - knaves, thieves, charlatans and tricksters. And through everything

46. D.H.Robertson, South Leith Records, 11.4n.
there flows an unending stream of drink:

"The brewster wives thegither harl
A' trash that they can fa' on;
They rake the grunds o' ilka barrel,
To profit by the lawin;
For weel wat they, a skin leal hett
For drinkin' needs nae hire:
At drumbly gear they tak nae pet;
Poul water slockens fire
And drouth thir days."

Fergusson described the Races in the mid-eighteenth century, by which time they had built up from something much smaller and less sophisticated over the previous century.

As a recognised annual event, Leith Races were instituted in December 1665, when two silver cups were donated—one by the King and the other by the Town Council of Edinburgh.(47) There had naturally been horse racing on the Links long before this, and Campbell quotes from the one and only newspaper printed in Scotland at that time to prove there was racing on the Links in 1661;(48) but the two cups were the first official recognition of the event, and with royal patronage the Races were established, and their future in some measure assured. For many years there was no regular date for the event, which moved through the four seasons to suit immediate convenience. Only when the eighteenth century was almost half gone, were the Races regularly held in

47. M.T.C. December 1665. XX///.
48. Alexander Campbell, History of Leith, 183. Mercurius Caledonius was first printed at the Citadel during the Roundhead occupation. It continued for a few years after the Restoration.
summer. As time went on, too, what had begun as a two-day meeting extended to a week, with several prizes to be won.

The Sands were not at all suitable for horse racing, the only advantages being that they were flat and extensive. Hugo Arnot, himself a Leither, pointed out that the Sands were "heavy and fatiguing for the horses, especially if they are not of strong bottom." (49) There was also the inconvenience of having the sea overflow the course when the tide was near the flood in spring or autumn; and on several occasions the date of the races had to be put back a week because of this trouble. Even so, Leith Races attracted crowds not only from all over Scotland, but from the north of England. The visitors brought much trade to Edinburgh, and at Fortune's, the well-known coffee-house, there was an ordinary for race-week at half a crown a head. To help along the general gaiety also, assemblies were arranged for each evening of race week. (50)

There were some peculiarities about the rules governing the races. The course consisted of a two-mile circuit of the Sands, and a heat generally meant twice round the course - a distance of 4 miles. If the tide was not right, so that part of the course was under water, the judges were

49. Hugo Arnot, History of Edinburgh, 175.
empowered to shorten the course, and order the heat to make three circuits. (51) Two hundred yards from the starting post, (which was also the finishing post), a "Distance Post" was erected, and at the end of a heat a flag was dropped as the first horse passed the finish, and at the same moment a flag was dropped at the distance post. Those horses not past the distance post at the drop of the flag were adjudged to have been distanced, and were eliminated. Most races were run for "the best of three heats". This meant that all entrants ran in all three heats unless they were distanced in the first or second heat. The winner of the race was the winner of the third and final heat. This is made quite explicit in the published Rules for 1719: "If three single Horses win each of them a Heat, the Horse that wins the last Heat, wins the Cup." But if the same horse won the first two heats, the race was not necessarily over, for any of the other riders who have "saved their distance", i.e. who had not been eliminated, could challenge the winner to a third heat. In that case the horse winning the first two heats did not have to win the third heat to win the race – it was sufficient that it should not be distanced: but if in fact the winner of the first two heats should be distanced in a third heat, then it lost the race, which then went to the winner of the final challenge.

heat. (52) This arrangement, whereby any winning horse would have to run in all heats, explains why only one major prize was competed for in any one day, so that although there were not many races, the meeting lasted a week. Each race could involve a horse in twelve miles running over a heavy course, with only half an hour between heats for resting and rubbing down.

The chief trophy for Race Week was His Majesty's Gold Plate, worth 100 guineas:

"There was presented and read in Council an Order from the Right Honourable the Barons of Exchequer in virtue of His Majesty's Royal signed manual to them directed to Mr Whiteford, General Receiver, for paying to Mr Laurie, City Treasurer, the sum of £102. 7. 6 which, with £2.12. 6 retained by the Barons is in full of 100 gns directed to be paid for a Plate to be run for on the Sands of Leith at such time and according to such rules as should be settled and agreed by the Magistrates and Town Council." (53)

This was the royal gift that had established the Races in 1665. The town council made the rules, altering them from time to time as they thought fit. Thus in 1728 H.M. Gold Plate was run for at Leith "the best of three Heats, by any Horse, Gelding or Mare that is not above six Years old this Grass (for which a certificate is to be produced under the Hand of the Breeder), carrying each 12 Stone English" (54)

54. E.E.C.30.4. - 2.5.1728.
That horses, mares and geldings of all ages up to six years, and all carrying the same weight, should race round a four-mile course three times in one day, was a cruel imposition on the beasts. By the 1750s these conditions were seen to be unfair, and changes were made. The race was then made a handicap, without any age limit: it was open simply to any horse, mare or gelding, but the weights were considerably lightened and graded, thus:

"4 years old to carry 8 st 7 lib. Averduois Weight.
5 ' ' 9 st 7 lib. ' ' "
6 ' ' 10 st 7 lib. ' ' "
Aged horses 11 st 4 lib. ' ' "

And if any of them have formerly won a Royal Plate, to carry 10 lib. more than the above Proportions.

Age of horses to be certified by an Affidavit from the Breeder before a J.P. ... &c ..."(55)

A MS Race Book recording all entries for the Races from 1753 to 1770 is extant, and discloses a good deal about the organisation of those meetings.(56) The management was in the hands of the Company of Scots Hunters, whose secretary appears to have acted as treasurer to the Race Meeting, and occasionally added notes of his introductions to the record of horses, owners, riders, certificates, affidavits and entry fees.

In 1754 the King's Plate was converted into a Purse of

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56. This book is in possession of ex-Chief Constable William Merrilees, M.B.E.
the same value. Two years later two King's Plates of £50 each were offered, the second plate reserved for hunters; but the 100 guinea Purse was reverted to in 1762, and this remained the King's Prize in subsequent years. The Duke of Hamilton's Hercules won this Purse in 1777, with Mr Shaftoe's Hazard second, and Mr Kerr's Airderburrow third. The Courant's account of this race sketches a scene that was probably not infrequent:

"Hercules run out of the course the second heat. The third heat both Hercules and Hazard fell, and the riders were thrown from their horses, but remounted, and came in so close together that it was difficult for the spectators to tell the winning horse ... The last heat the horses run the four miles in eight minutes. Several people were thrown down by the horses running out of their course, and two men much hurt."(57)

The City of Edinburgh Plate was in 1665 a Silver Cup worth £10 sterling, but in time this was stepped up to a Silver Plate of £50 value, for a race run under similar conditions to that for the King's Plate. The Town's Plate, or the City's Plate, as it was indifferently called, was restricted however to "actual hunters". The intention was to exclude animals specially bred and trained for racing. Each entrant had to produce a certificate that his horse "had not been in sweats before the 25th March", or "he was not put in training or had any sweats as a race horse till

57. E.E.C. 23.7.1777.
after the 25th March last." The Town of Leith came forward in the early eighteenth century with a Plate worth 20 guineas, raised to 25 guineas in 1726, and confined to Galloways. This restriction did not last long, and a few years later the Leith Prize was a 30 guinea Plate. By the mid-century however, Leith no longer provided any prize.

Cups and Plates fell from favour as the century advanced, and Subscription Races of all kinds were most popular. At the meeting in August 1755 the Edinburgh cadies subscribed for a plate of 10 guineas' value; the stablemen put up a plate of £15 sterling; and the vintners went one better by providing a 15 guinea plate. But it was not long before subscription plates gave way to subscription purses, and in 1796 the Town Council converted their Plate to a 50 guinea Purse. The noblemen and gentlemen contributed for a Purse of 100 guineas, which by 1815, despite the great fall in money values, was reduced to 50 guineas, since even for noblemen and gentlemen times were hard.

It was usual in a subscription race for the handicapping to be related to the height of the horses:
"Fourteen hands usually Carry 9 Stone avoirdupoise as the Standard Weight.
Every inch below or above this Standard Stone or 7 lib. is allowed for it so

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Subscribers to a purse of plate paid a reduced entrance fee.

Spring tides interfered with racing in 1761 and again in 1765. With much of the normal course under water, a new circuit was agreed on the former occasion, but this proving even harder going than the customary course, only young horses under five years were allowed to run. In 1765 all entrants were admitted to the alternative course, but the heats were reduced from 4 miles each to 2 miles. The shoremaster supplied the posts and was paid for them. The town drummer intimated the races, and the two town officers helped to keep order. Their fee was four shillings each; and there was a half crown here and there for odd bits of labour connected with the meeting.

Support for the Races was widespread throughout the Lothians and Borders. Horses were entered regularly from as far away as Northumberland, Cumberland and Durham. Owners ranged from stablers in the city, butchers, drovers,

58. MS Race Book.
merchants, to titled landowners and peers. The Earls of Galloway and of Morton raced frequently, and other nobles patronised the Sands of Leith from time to time.

The Race Book already referred to, covering the years 1753 to 1770 lists all the jockeys engaged during those eighteen years. No fewer than 110 names are mentioned, and of these there were 82 riders who rode at one meeting and never returned, although several were prizewinners on their solitary visit. Only seven jockeys in all those years could be said to race frequently at Leith. Perhaps the difficult conditions on the Sands discouraged most men from risking themselves or their horses there. Of the 175 horses mentioned, only 48 ever returned to a second meeting, and a mere 13 appeared at three or more meetings. Race-horse owners have always had a passion for bizarre and whimsical names. Among the entrants in the Leith Race Book were such unlikely winners as Little Chance, Creeping Kate, Sleepy Maggie, Slouch, Cripple Dick, Drowsy – which could hardly have inspired the rider, although such modest names might have served to wheedle the capricious gods who govern the results of horse races.

By the end of the century the Races had come down in the world. Robert Fergusson would have found them disreputable even by comparison with the raffish circus he had known in mid-century. George Robertson made some pointed
comments. The Edinburgh Races(59), he said

"which take place annually in the summer, tho' they may give entertainment to the rabble and professed jockeys, afford but little amusement to the industrious part of the community, who have not yet entered into the spirit of that species of dissipation. The farmers here, in particular, have not that relish for them that might be expected from their profession, and which indeed forms a characteristick mark of the same class of men in South Britain. They do indeed attend them at the rate, perhaps, of two days in six that they last, but even this is chiefly in the view of meeting with one another, and to talk over their common affairs, or to serve them as a pretext for riding thro' the country, to see who has the best improved fields; for so little do they enter into the true jockey spirit, that it may be confidently asserted, that not ten guineas, among the whole community of them, is betted during the whole course of the races."(60)

Writing thirty-three years after Robertson, Alexander Campbell is full of nostalgia for the departed glory of Leith Races, which in 1816 were removed to Musselburgh. Characteristically, Campbell cannot find a good word to say for Musselburgh, and gives a joyous account of the Races as he remembered them, from the pitching of the long lines of tents eastward from the pier on the preceding Saturday, to the concluding saturnalia a week later.

"As the Leith Races were under the patronage of the Magistrates of Edinburgh, it was usual for one of the city officers to walk in procession every morning during the week, from the Council Chamber down to Leith, bearing aloft a silk-purse, gaily and profusely decorated with ribbons, styled the city purse, on the end of a pole, accompanied by the town-guard drummer, who, being stationed in the rear of this dignitary, continued beating a tattoo at his heels all the way to the race-ground..."

59. The titles "Edinburgh Races" and "Leith Races" were interchangeable.
60. George Robertson, op. cit. 55.
"The procession, which at the outset consisted only of the officer and the drummer, and sometimes a file or two of the town-guard, better known by the familiar appellation of the 'toun rats' gathered strength as it moved along the line of march, from a constant accession of boys ... who preferred, according to their own phrase, 'gaun doon wi' the purse', to any other way. Such a dense mass of these finally surrounded the officer and his attendant drummer, that, long before the procession reached Leith, both had wholly disappeared. Nothing of the former remained visible but the purse, and the top of the pole on which it was borne."(61)

The week's programme latterly comprised the race for the City Purse (value £50) on Monday; the King's Purse (£105) on Tuesday; the Hunters' Purse (£50) on Wednesday; the Ladies' Purse (£50) on Thursday; the Member for the City's Purse (i.e. the local M.P's Purse, value £50) on Friday. Saturday saw the subscription race for beaten horses, "who on this day contended for the humble and negative merit of not being the worst that has appeared on the race-course during the week."

But even Campbell had to admit that the proceedings on the final day of the races dissolved into a chaos of fighting, destruction and debauchery, when every booth or tent left standing was ripped to shreds. Leith heaved a sigh of relief when another year's racing was at last over. William Hutcheson justly remarked that horse-racing was never a favourite amusement in Scotland among the people, and that had it not been for the encouragement given by

certain of the aristocracy, Leith Races would have died a
natural death long before they were removed to Musselburgh. (62)

By 1811 the condition of the Sands was so unsatisfactory that the town council ordered a Plan and Estimate to be laid before them with a view to having a race course constructed on the Meadows; (63) but this came to nothing, and the Musselburgh course - flat, dry turf, an immense improvement on Leith Sands - was adopted in 1816. At Leith the races were defeating their own ends, for in fact it was equine strength rather than speed that counted most there.

For one week in the year horse-racing occupied the Sands and the surrounding area to the exclusion of all else, but the site was not deserted for the rest of the year. Along this stretch of sea-front, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the sport or business of sea-bathing was increasingly popular. But "sport" is hardly the word to describe this exercise, for the attitude to bathing was more serious than the lighthearted approach of the twentieth century. This was a regimen, a discipline advocated and encouraged by the medical profession. Just as spa water, taken internally, would bring a great variety of benefits, despite the offensive taste and smell; so

63. M.T.C. 31.7.1811. C1villi-A o5.
sea-water, applied externally, would relieve a multitude of ailments, despite shivers and general discomfort.

Baths had been known long before the era of sea-bathing, but bathing was no part of the normal person's routine. Baths were curiosities, and the habit of bathing an eccentricity. And yet as early as 1654 there was a warm bath on offer in Leith, according to an entry in the town council minutes:

"William Paul having erected a bath stove in Leith, the Council grants him a warrant to make publication of printed papers by touch of drum, and to affix the same in the usual public places of the city."(64)

This was not sea-bathing, but simply the opportunity of bathing in warm sea-water. Seventy years later a "hot bagnio" was being maintained at the Surgeons' Hall in Edinburgh. Once a year, in the 1720s, a notice appeared in the newspapers:

"The Chirurgeons' Bagnio will not be fit for Bathing from the 17th day of October until the 5th of November 1725, at which Time it will be perfectly clean and in good Repair."(65)

One is drawn to suppose that the bath was cleaned but once a year. But better things were to come.

By 1750 two prominent Leithers were operating a bathing machine on the Sands, just west of the Glass-house. The proprietor of this contraption was Thomas Weir, carter.

64. M.T.C. 31.3.1654. cf. Appendix D.
and the local ticket agent was Mr Bull, manager of the Smith and Wright Work factory. Weir announced he would be in attendance daily, from half flood to half ebb,

"in order to carry in such Ladies and Gentlemen as want to bathe; and no Weather needs to stop the Use of it, as by the Contrivance Persons may bathe securely, without being any ways exposed to the Weather. It will hold four Persons easily, furnished with Pins to hang up their Cloaths and clean Napkins will be there ready for rubbing. The Price is Sixpence Sterling for each; and if any Person want the House by himself, he pays One Shilling, unless they are Subscribers, and get tickets from Mr Bull at Leith, or from Mr William Gordon, Bookseller in Parliament Close, in Terms of the former printed Advertisements." (66)

This "Bathing Caravan" as it was known, lasted only a year or so, and failed because Weir found it impossible to get an attendant. At first the proprietor had himself acted as attendant, to get the business started; but Mr Weir was a carter, in a good way of business, and a prominent member of the Society of Carters. He could not continue indefinitely as bathing machine attendant. In a final effort to keep the bathing business going, he announced he was foregoing any profits on the venture so that the whole income might be devoted to defraying the expense of attendance. (67) Even this was of no avail.

Ten years later a new effort was made.

"Leith Bathing in Sea Water
"This sort of bathing is much recommended and approved of, but the want of a machine or wooden house

on wheels, such as are used at sea-baths in England to undress and dress in, and to carry those who intend bathing, to a proper depth of water, hath induced many in this part of the country to neglect the opportunity of trying to acquire the benefits to health it commonly gives."(68)

To meet this need James Morton and James Farquharson "at the Sign of the Royal Oak, near the Glass-house" promised to give attendance at such a "house on wheels" during the season, the charge being one shilling per person.

Bathing machines now became an established feature of the Sands. Sea-bathing was said to benefit and even to cure a multitude of ailments, and perhaps doctors at a loss were apt to recommend a course of sea-bathing on the assumption that it could do no harm - although that assumption could be wrong. Houses and apartments were now offered to let for the summer as bathing quarters, and soon the business was being plied all along the coast from Granton to Portobello. The town council gave permission to two Leith shipbuilders in 1768 to erect a "bathing house" on the Sands near the pier, "to accommodate bathers and save them from going to England and elsewhere," but it was not foreseen at that time that "elsewhere" might be as near as Portobello. Yet before the end of the century bathing machines were standing on the beach at Portobello, and this was the beginning of the end for sea-bathing at Leith.(69)

68. E.E.C. 30.5.1761.
Another type of sea-water bath should be noticed, although the only record we have is one of gross neglect.

A letter in the Edinburgh Evening Courant for 10th August 1815:

"Sir - Through the medium of your paper, I would lay before the inhabitants of Leith ... an evil which has long prevailed there. I allude to the warm baths in the Broad Wynd, established for the humane purpose of restoring persons who may have fallen into the water ... Either from an inadequacy of the fund, or a most reprehensible remissness in the overseers, they, with a few exceptions, are found cold."

The writer asserts that many people, being pulled from the water, have died for want of hot water in the bath, and he recounts a recent instance. This bath was maintained by the Humane Society, but it was probably impracticable to keep the bath constantly hot, for occasional use - especially as the public had to be excluded, and there would be no income.

The final effort to make sea-bathing pay at Leith was the erection of Seafield Baths in 1813. 160 shares of £50 each provided the £8000 needed for the building, and the shareholders had perpetual free use of the baths. This was considered the spearhead of advance in sea-bathing. There were no fewer than 17 hot, cold and tepid baths, as well as a large plunge bath. When to all this was added in the same building a hotel for the accommodation of bathers, surely enterprise could go no further! But Seafield Baths
came into being in answer to Portobello, which village not only provided bathing machines, but in 1804 had taken the initiative in building hot and cold indoor baths.\(^{(70)}\)

And as the nineteenth century advanced, so did the industrialisation of Leith. Chemical works on the sea-front quickly brought an end to all bathing there, and Leith, having lost the horse-racing to Musselburgh without regret, now saw the far more desirable sea-bathing move to Portobello.

Curling was a game that enjoyed great popularity in the vicinity at one time, but its attraction appeared to diminish greatly in the later years of the eighteenth century. Robertson points out reasons for this. Earlier in the century the unenclosed land was laced with many ponds, where the shallow water froze quickly and afforded good sport. In winter, too, there was little work to do about the farms, and men had time on their hands. As agricultural methods improved, the fields were enclosed and drained, and most of the former curling ponds disappeared. Under the new system of farming too, there was work in winter as well as at other seasons, and leisure was much reduced. Former scenes, when parish played against parish all day, following this with an evening's celebration in some local tavern, became a dim memory. Curling was still good, but time and

\(^{(70)}\) George Robertson, op. cit. 43f.
opportunity were lacking. (71)

A game apparently much in favour in the 1720s was Bullets. This was probably an ancient pastime, for "bullet" in this game had its original meaning of a small round stone. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century this meaning had gradually been giving way to the modern sense of the word as a projectile in a firearm. An item in the minutes of the Burlaw Court of Leith deals with this game as a nuisance to farmers:

"Tho: Shiells, a member, having Complained to the Court That people playing att the Bullets in Broughton Lon, Did on pretence of seeking for their Bullets trade doun his Corn, Wherefor the Court statutes and Ordains That any person so transgressing shall be lyable in a penalty of half a merk and Impouers the said Thomas Shiells to seize the Bullets of the transgressors And detain them till the said half merke be paid, Or that the transgressors find caution to answer the Court." (72)

Another sport of the people was cockfighting. According to Hugo Arnot, cockfighting was unknown in Edinburgh in 1763, although twenty years later it had become all the rage. (73) Long before this however, in 1702, there was a regular cockpit in the Links, where tenpence was charged for a ringside seat, sevenpence for the second row, and fourpence for the third row. (74) Devotion to this barbarous

71. George Robertson, op. cit. 43f.
72. Index of Acts of the Burlaw Court of Leith, 27.5.1728.
spectacle became such a craze among all classes, and led to such disturbances in the streets, that the magistrates in 1704 forbade cockfighting in the street. (75) Probably the cockpit in the Links remained throughout the eighteenth century, for this entertainment retained its following well into the nineteenth hundreds.

There was one sport practised on the Links in which Leithers took no part, but in which they had at least a spectators' interest, and that was archery. Although the Royal Company of Archers visited the Links only once a year, they marched there from Holyrood in pompous and impressive parade. This was a patriotic Society with strong Jacobite leanings - a contradiction in ideas which prevented them parading at all for many years after the Revolution of 1688. Under Queen Anne, and with Sir George Mackenzie as their Captain-General, the Archers secured a Royal Charter, and paraded to shoot for the Silver Arrow in 1714. Sir George Mackenzie was now Earl of Cromarty, and he died before the 1715 parade, which was headed by his successor as Captain-General, the Earl of Wemyss. (76) The occasion was reported in a letter from the Magistrates of Edinburgh to Sir George Warrender, Lord Provost, who was then in London:

"Yesterday the company of Archers to the number of about 110 went down to Leith in very good order as they did the last year, and some of the Magistrates waited on them at Leith after dinner and delivered to my Lord Weems who had gained the prize the last year the Complement that my Lord Dean of Gild had prepared for him, which his Lordship accepted of and drank your Lordship's health and prosperity to the Good Toun &c. ... General Wightman who was with him invited all the company to the play at night, and accordingly the Archers marched up to the play house."(77)

Sir James Balfour Paul, historian of the Royal Company, says that each member paid 10s towards expenses, and that they were marshalled in six divisions, commanded by their respective officers and attended by music. The play-house they attended seems to have been the tennis court at Holyrood, fitted up for the occasion.

Although the connection of the Royal Company of Archers with Leith was a slender one, yet they ought to be noticed, for several of the ideas and practices of the Archers were copied by the Golfers on Leith Links. The Archers had three prizes for competition on the Links - the Musselburgh Silver Arrow, said to have been presented to them originally about the year 1603; the Edinburgh Silver Arrow, dating from 1709; and a silver punch-bowl, which the Company themselves had had made in 1720.(78)

Being so strongly Jacobite in sympathy, the Archers

were under a cloud in the years following the '15 Rebellion. In 1742, the Duke of Hamilton being Captain-General, they paraded in Musselburgh, and this muster was repeated occasionally until 1743, which was their last public appearance for many years. After the '45 Rebellion, says Arnot, "the officers of state looked upon this society with so jealous an eye, that they actually appointed spies to watch their conduct, and frequent their companies." (79) When they had almost entirely dwindled away, the Company of Archers were revived by the efforts of one man, William St. Clair of Roslin, who was also hereditary Grand Master of the Freemasons in Scotland, and a tower of strength to the Honourable Company of Golfers forbye. The Archers recovered to such an extent that Arnot reports their strength at the time of his writing (1779) as being about 300 members.

Golf was a different matter. Here was a sport suited to men of all conditions, and given a couple of clubs and a ball, a poor enthusiast might delight himself for hours on the links. But the sport had an undoubted attraction for kings and nobles as well as for the unlettered and unprivileged. King Charles I, a golf addict, received news of the Irish Rebellion in 1640 while engaged in a game on Leith Links; and his son James, Duke of York, played a celebrated match, so often described it needs no repetition.

79. Hugo Arnot, ibid.
here, which resulted in the erection of "Golfer's land" in the Canongate on the strength of the winnings. (30)

There must have been a recognised course over the Links in the seventeenth century, and probably much earlier; and this no doubt largely coincided with the known course played over in the eighteenth century. The Links were never so extensive as to allow for much alteration in the line of the various holes, although their could be, and indeed was altered at least once to our knowledge. As for rules, none were official, none were published: it was enough that the players should agree together before the start of their game on the few rules deemed necessary.

Changes were coming to this inchoate situation, as the eighteenth century got under way. The game began to lay such a spell on certain well-to-do, leisured and influential citizens, that they were seized with the idea of forming a Company of Golfers. Edinburgh society was for ever forming clubs and associations on the flimsiest pretexts, so that a society with golf as the common interest was nothing out of the way. It was a convenience thus to have opponents and partners in close association, and the society facilitated the making and supervision of wagers. The newly formed Society had everything they needed except a

80. cf. James Grant, Old and New Edinburgh, ii.10f for a full account and estimate of this tale.
prize to compete for. Anyone might donate a trophy, but it would be far better to have the town council make a presentation to the Society. This would give the golfers official countenance, for while they played over the Links they had no more right there than any townsman of Leith. The Society of Carters had grazing rights on the Links, and might not be disposed to welcome organised golf on ground for which they paid rent. But the town council were the superiors; it would certainly be an advantage to have their blessing. Again, it was not lost on the golfers that the Royal Company of Archers had been presented with the Silver Arrow in 1709, and had not suffered unduly after the '15 Rebellion, despite their known politics. The town council was certainly a friend worth wooing.

The request from the golfers for some tangible recognition was sympathetically received in the Council Chamber. In the small Edinburgh society of those days most of the golfers were personal friends of most of the councillors, and in fact a number of enthusiastic golfers sat on the council. Some years previous to this a curious feu charter had been drawn up concerning an area of land south of the links, where John Paterson was granted a feu for 5 merks, or a set of golf clubs annually to the Provost.(81)

81. M.T.C. 1.11.1723. l. '76.
A Silver Club was presented by the town council to the Company of Golfers in 1744 for annual competition, and the fluid state of the Rules of Golf at this period is shown by the fact that along with the Silver Arrow there went a set of rules and conditions to govern the competition. These were suggested by the golfers themselves.

"It being represented that Several Gentlemen of Honour, Skilful in the Ancient and Healthfull Exercise of the Golf, had from time to time Applied to Several Members of Council for a Silver Club to be annually played for on the Links of Leith, at Such time, and upon Such conditions as the Magistrates and Council should think proper: And it being reported That the Gentlemen Golfers had drawn up a Scroll, at the Desire of the Magistrates, of such Articles and Conditions as to them seemed most Expedient as proper Regulations to be Observed by the Gentlemen who Should Yearly offer to play for the said Silver Club which were produced and read in Council." (82)

The winner of this annual competition was given the privilege of appending "a gold or silver piece to the prize". This took the form of a silver ball, as a rule, bearing the name of the winner; but players who gained the prize on more than one occasion did not generally add a ball after their first success, and it was not unknown for even a first-time winner to ignore the privilege of digging into his pocket for a silver ball to add to the silver club. (83)

Each winner was elected Captain for the ensuing year - a parallel to the Archers' practice of making the winner of

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82. C.B.C. The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers on Leith Links, (HCLL) i.51.
83. HCLL, iii.48f.
the Silver Arrow Captain-General for the next twelve months.

The golfers who received the Silver Club had no settled name for their society, either then or for many years thereafter. The Act of Council of 1744 refers to the society as "The Gentlemen of Honour", and in their own minutes the players referred to themselves as "The Gentlemen Golfers" or "The Gentlemen Golfers of Edinburgh". When the Gentlemen of Fife invited the Society to join them in forming the St.Andrews Club, they addressed them as "The Gentlemen Golfers of Leith". The club minutes also, are not always thirled to the same title, for on occasion they speak of themselves as "The Honourable Society of Golfers". The Scots Magazine in 1792 carried an article about the club which played on Leith Links, entitled "On the Society of Golfers". In 1795 an advertisement calling a meeting of the club is headed "Edinburgh Golf Club", although this may have been an editorial gaffe. The matter of a title was finally settled only when the club became incorporated in 1800, when it was erected and constituted "into one body politic and corporate or legal corporation or society under the title and name of 'The Honourable the Edinburgh Company of Golfers'."(34)

Since it has long been supposed that the Rules of

Golf, as the game is played today, stem from the Rules included in the first minute of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St.Andrews, dated 14th May 1754, it is now time to replace this impression with the facts. The Rules of Golf were not invented or first set out at St.Andrews. This honour belongs to Leith, where the Rules of 1744 antedate the St.Andrews Rules by ten years, while the latter are plainly founded on, and largely copied from the Leith Rules. As Leith Links golfers were among the original sponsors of the St.Andrews club, it can certainly be claimed that the Company of Golfers on Leith Links were the founding fathers of the modern game. This is no small claim, but it can be adequately supported by setting forth here the

ARTICLES AND LAWS IN PLAYING AT GOLF
(The Rules of the Gentlemen Golfers, of 1744.)

1. You must Tee your Ball, within a Club's length of the Hole.

2. Your Tee must be upon the Ground.

3. You are not to change the Ball which you Strike off the Tee.

4. You are not to remove Stones, Bones or any Break Club, for the sake of playing your Ball, Except upon the fair Green, and that only within a Club's length of your Ball.

5. If your Ball comes among Watter, or any wattery filth, you are at liberty to take out your Ball and bringing it behind the hazard and Teeing it, you may play it with any Club and allow your Adversary a Stroke, for so getting out your Ball.

6. If your Balls be found anywhere touching one another
you are to lift the first Ball, till you play the last.

7. At Holling, you are to play your Ball honestly for the Hole, and not to play upon your Adversary's Ball, not lying in your way to the Hole.

8. If you shou'd lose your Ball, by its being taken up, or any other way you are to go back to the Spot, where you struck last, and drop another Ball, And allow your Adversary a Stroke for the Misfortune.

9. No man at Holling his Ball, is to be allowed, to mark his way to the Hole with his Club or any thing else.

10. If a Ball be stopp'd by any person, Horse, Dog, or any thing else, The Ball so stopp'd must be played where it lyes.

11. If you draw your Club, in order to Strike and proceed so far in the Stroke, as to be bringing down your Club; if then, your Club shall break, in any way, it is to be accounted a Stroke.

12. He whose Ball lyes farthest from the Hole is obliged to play first.

13. Neither Trench, Ditch or Dyke, made for the preservation of the Links, nor the Scholar's Holes or the Soldier's Lines, Shall be accounted a Hazard, But the Ball is to be taken out Teed and play'd with any Iron Club.

John Rattray Capt.

To this list there is added one amendment:

"The 5th and 13th Articles of the foregoing Laws having occasioned frequent Disputes It is found Convenient That in all time coming the Law shall be That in no case Whatever a Ball shall be Lifted without losing a Stroke Except it is in the Scholar's Holes When it may be taken and teed and played with any Iron Club without losing a Stroke And in all other Cases The Ball must be Played where it lyes Except it is at least half covered with Water or filth When it may if the Player chooses be taken out Teed and Played with any Club upon Loosing a Stroke.

Thomas Boswall Capt."(85)

85. H.C.L.L. 1.39f.
And as Thomas Boswell was Captain of the Club in 1758, this appendix is automatically dated.

The course was far from ideal. References in the Rules to balls buried in filth or water, to the Scholars' Holes and "Soldiers' Lines" make this plain enough, and there are minutes which mention "water-tracks for draining the Links". The Grammar School of Leith was then housed in the King James Hospital at the south-west corner of the parish churchyard. Only the decaying ramparts of the town separated the churchyard from the Links, and it would not be an unreasonable guess that the "Scholars' Holes" were a set of short holes set out near the school, for practice - what today would be called a pitch-and-putt course. There is no other reference to this hazard. The "Soldiers' Lines" were also a considerable interference to the golfers. Until Leith Port was built in 1780, while there was always quartering in private houses, the garrison camped on the Links.(86)

The course consisted of five holes, and a new edition of the Rules in 1775 described the sequence of the holes:

"In playing you are to strike off from the Braehead hole, and play from it to the Sawmill, for the First hole; from the Sawmill, to the North Mid-hole for the Second hole; to the East hole for the Third; to the South Mid-hole for the Fourth, and to the Thorntree Hole for the Fifth, where the first Round ends, and every other Round is to begin at the Thorntree Hole,

86. H.C.I.L. 1.42.
playing from that to the Sawmill Hole, and from thence to the North Mid-hole, etcetera, as above, until you come again to the Thorntree-hole where every Round ends." (87)

The "Braehead Hole" was apparently an alternative name for the Sawmill Hole. Presumably the tee was on top of the so-called Giant's Brae, (more properly Mount Somerset), an artificial gun emplacement from the Siege of Leith in 1560. The sawmill where the first hole was sited, stood near the head of present-day Elbe Street. The North Mid-hole was a little east of the modern Links School - midway to the East Hole, which was at the Seafield end of the Links. Returning, the South Mid-hole was near the foot of Restalrig Road, and the final or Thorntree Hole about the foot of Easter Road.

"A little to the south of the hole where the Goffers now strike off their first ball, formerly grew a venerable thorn; hence it is called at this day the Thorntree Hole." (88)

The field where that thorn grew was also known as the Thorntree park, and Thorntree Street, within the bounds of that park, preserves the name.

Over such a course a match was a variable matter. By agreement between the parties the game could extend over one, two, three or more rounds. The first hole (Sawmill) was 414 yards long; the second (North Mid-hole) 461 yards.

87. H.C.E.L.L. i.42f.
88. Peter Hill, notes in the 1793 edition of Mathison's The Goff.
yards; the third, (East), 426 yards; the fourth (South Midhole) 495 yards; and the fifth (Thorntree) 435 yards. (89) All kinds of bets and challenges were made. A good player might not only offer his opponent a stroke a hole, but also would confine himself to using the same ball throughout the game - a considerable handicap, when it is remembered that balls were of leather stuffed with feathers, which took a severe mauling from iron clubs, and would become waterlogged in a puddle, especially if the seams were strained or burst. Lord Elcho, who was Captain in 1787, offered to play an opponent, using only his heavy iron, and this type of game, called "Irons all", became so popular, that the Captain and Council finally forbade it, as doing too much damage to the turf. After a match the loser commonly sted the price of dinner.

An extraordinary challenge was made in 1797:

"Mr Alexr Wood in the 70th year of his age, and his Grandson in the 7th year of his age - against Dr Duncan in the 50th year of his age and his youngest son in the 5th year of his age, the first Saturday of August 1793, is each hole."

The elder man and his grandson won, and the challenge was extended for an annual match between the parties for the ensuing twenty years - but the Woods won year after year,

89. The length of the first two holes was altered in 1821 to make the Sawmill hole 325 yards, and the North Midhole 407 yards. (cf. J.Cundell, Rules of the Thistle Club, 51). Col. T.E.A.Evans-Lombe, on a map of the course presented to the Honourable Company in 1956, dates this alteration in 1824, saying it was made necessary by the construction of the bowling green on the sawmill site in that year.
narrowly but convincingly. (90)

"28 Novr 1807.
The Captain against Mr Lumsden - at short holes - three rounds, first convenient day for a magnum advanced by the Captain." (91)

The "short holes" was a putting green, as appears from an article in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal for 8th October 1842:

"When unable any longer to play in the usual manner, they resort to what are called the 'short holes' - a series placed in a small circle near the golf house, where, of course, the play consists of putting only. This breaks the fall from the high estate of the 'long hole' play."

The "short holes" not only served to "break the fall from the high estate of the 'long hole' play" - they probably also served to enable the beginner to learn something of the game before committing himself to the "long holes".

The "short holes" of the early nineteenth century were probably the "scholars' holes" of an earlier day.

A set of clubs consisted of a minimum of four, called respectively the common or play club, the spoon, the patter and the iron; but there were various modifications, and many players carried ten or a dozen clubs. (92) The common club was 4 ft long, with a shaft of ash and a curved head weighted behind with lead and faced with horn. (93)

90. H.C.I.E. iii. 87.
91. ibid. iii. 92.
93. ibid.
balls were an inch and a quarter in diameter, made of strong leather, toughened with alum and stuffed with feathers.

"The feathers are forced in at a small hole left in the covering, by a blunt pointed iron instrument which the maker applies to his shoulder, and the operation is continued till the ball acquires a degree of hardness scarcely credible to those who have not seen it. The balls, when sufficiently dry, are painted with white oil paint to exclude the water and render them easily seen." (94)

This was exhausting work, and a good man could only count on making nine balls a day. Thomas Mathison, author of what is probably the earliest example of golfing literature - a poem called "The Goff", printed in 1744, must have watched the ball-maker at work before composing his high-flown description of the craft:

"...the work of Hobson; who with matchless art Shapes the firm hide, connecting every part, Then in a socket sets the well-stiched wid, And thro' the eyeley drives the downy tide; Crowds urging crowds the forceful brogue impels, The feathers harden and the leather swells; He crams and sweats, yet crams and urges more, Till scarce the turgid globe contains its store: The dreadful falcon's pride here blended lies With pigeons glossy down of various dyes; The lark's small pinions join the common stock, And yellow glory of the martial cock. Soon as Hyperion gilds o'er Andrea's spires, From bed the artist to his cell retires; With bended back there plies his steely awls, And shapes, and stuffs, and finishes the balls. But when the glorious God of day has driv'n His flaming chariot down the steep of heaven, He ends his labour..."

"A good player", remarked James Grierson, "will strike a ball to the distance of 180 or 200 yards." (95)

94. J. Grierson, ibid. 218.
95. ibid. 219.
To drive 200 yards with such clubs and balls was certainly an achievement worth recording, and the standards of play on Leith Links are of some interest today. Figures have been set down which give at least some idea of the skill of eighteenth century golfers. In the minute book of the Honourable Company,

"1783 June 21. The Silver Cups were this day gained by Alexr Duncan of St. Fort Esqr at 63. Will. Inglis."

A similar entry on 4th August 1792 records Thomas Stoddart junr's win at 65. (96) These competitions were played over two rounds, that is ten holes, which averages out at 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) strokes a hole; and these being winning scores were presumably better than average. Evidence from the Bet Books confirms this level of play

"7 June 1783. Mr Robertson is to compleat the round at thirty five strokes - lost by one stroke by Mr Robertaon."

Seven strokes a hole. Again,

"29 Novr 1783. Messrs Fettes and Nairne bet with Mr Allan that he takes more than 30 strokes to the round. The 1st at 28 - 2nd at 31 - 3rd at 28. A 4th round at 28 also."

These entries show the bets made, and the results. Mr Allan was the outstanding performer of the Honourable Company, having a long string of competitive victories to his name. The careful entry of his strokes to each round suggests that

96. H.C.I.L. ii.18f.
such scores were considered phenomenal. On this occasion Mr Allan averaged $5\frac{1}{2}$ strokes a hole over four rounds. Six strokes a hole was good enough to win cups, and seven strokes was probably regarded as a good level of play. Lower scores were then being made at St. Andrews, but Leith was a long course and a wet course, with many hazards. Driving a ball up to 200 yards was not as important as driving a ball straight along the narrow fairways of those days; and in wet weather, with balls apt to split when struck with an iron club, even Mr Allan would not be at his best.

The jargon of golf develops and changes as the language itself does. The eighteenth century knew nothing of "par", "birdie" or "eagle", but from early times there was a strict vocabulary connected with scoring. Thus, when A plays B,

A, playing from behind, making one more stroke than B has so far made = "one more" or "the odds".

A, playing from behind, making two more strokes than B has so far made = "two more".

A, playing from behind, making three more strokes than B has so far made = "three more", and so on.

Then when B plays, he plays "one off three";
and when B plays a second time, he plays "one off two";
and when B plays a third time, he plays "one off one", or "the like".

Whichever plays the next stroke, plays "the odds". (97)

A member of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers could not simply go to the Links, pick up his clubs and

97. James Grierson, op. cit. 224.
begin to play. He had to be distinguishable on the Links as a member of the Honourable Company. To this end he donned the uniform - and it was a strict rule that he should do so. The earliest form of this dress for which we have evidence is to be found in the portrait of William St. Clair, Captain of the Company in 1771 - a portrait commissioned from Sir George Chalmers, and now hanging in the Hall of the Royal Company of Archers. St. Clair wears a round blue Kilmarnock bonnet, with a red jacket, and a waistcoat apparently of the same colour. The rest of his dress forms no part of the uniform. (98) This garb did not commend itself to the members for much longer, for in November 1776 it was agreed that the uniform should now be a light blue stocking stuff jacket, and a white waistcoat with plated buttons. Six years later they changed their minds, and reverted to the former scarlet jacket. Yet another change was made on 17th November 1787, when an official tailor was appointed; but what this latest version of the uniform was, is never mentioned. In April 1790 it was decided to dress Robert Thomson, their faithful waiter in the Golf House, in a uniform to be made by John Paterson, the Club tailor. Possibly Thomson's uniform was the same as that of the members. The order given to John Paterson was for "a scarlet plush Coat with a blue velvet Cope and a Bluff Waistcoat and

98. H.C.A.A. ii.35.
Breeches of Cloth." (99) Presumably "Cope" is a cap.

In the early days of the Society "Play Day" was Saturday, and on Saturday evenings the members met for dinner at Luckie Clephane's house in the Kirkgate. Her husband John Clephane was vintner there, but he was also widely known as a formidable golfer. The dinners were organised and kept going mainly for the purpose of matchmaking and laying wagers, and doubtless Clephane provided accommodation for changing and for storing clubs. In later years there was a similar arrangement at Mrs Straiton's tavern. Eventually, however, this rough and ready arrangement was felt to be unsatisfactory. The Society would be much more comfortable in quarters of their own, so an approach was made to the town council for a piece of ground on which to build. A feu charter on three roods at the south-west corner of the Links was granted on 22nd April 1767. Feuduty was charged at 20s per annum; but if the premises were ever to be converted to any other use than that of a Golf-house, the duty would be raised to £5. (100)

The builder's estimate for a golf-house measuring 70 ft by 30 ft over all, was £415.2.1. Twenty-two members were found prepared to subscribe £25 each - which would leave about £135 to furnish and equip the house once it was

99. H.C.L.L. i. 1664. 100. H.C.L.L. ii. 1667. The site is that of the present Leith Academy Secondary School.
built; but in fact the sum eventually spent was £759.5.2½, and the subscribers had each to provide a further £5. (101)

All this money was spent on a very unpretentious building. It bore no resemblance to a modern club-house, but was simply a tavern in which one large room was reserved for the golfers to dine in, while they had the use of a second room for lockers and changing. The Honourable Company even complained about the indifferent accommodation for changing in their own golf-house. (102)

The foundation stone was laid with Masonic honours on 2nd July 1768. This was hardly surprising, since William St.Clair of Roslin, a prominent member, was hereditary Grand Master Mason of Scotland, and many other members belonged to the Craft. When eventually the Golf-house was completed, and a suitable tenant found to run the tavern, while paying rent of £40 a year, the Honourable Company found the premises a great improvement on their earlier days in the Kirkgate. There was just one unsatisfactory element in the situation: the Golf-house belonged, not to the Company, but to the 22 subscribers who between them had paid for the building. In 1785 the Company resolved to acquire possession from the proprietors. A valuation of £500 was agreed, and 22 members now contributed £22.14.6

101. H.C.L.E. ii.68.
102. ibid. iii.33.
each towards the purchase price. (103)

The Golfers were also much concerned about the state of the Links - their playing ground. From time to time, and as funds permitted, they tried to improve the state of the course by laying drains, but their efforts were impeded by the fact that this was common ground. Grazing animals left droppings, riders in wet weather cut up the turf, carts and carriages made ruts. These conditions had given the Company cause for anxiety long before 1744, when an Act of Council, passed at the time the Silver Club was presented, sought to give some relief and protection to the golfers. Article 10 of that Act read:

"That no coaches, chaises or other wheel machine, or people on horseback, are to be allowed to go through the Links, but by the high roads, when the match for the Silver Club is a playing, or at any other time, and that the said Captain shall from year to year have the care and inspection of the Links, and shall be at liberty to complain to the Lord Provost and Magistrates of any Incroachments made upon them by High roads or otherwise." (104)

This was a gesture of goodwill from the town council, but no more, and had little or no effect in abating the nuisances. In the summer of 1757 Mr Robert Clerk, Captain of the Company of Golfers, with the Earl of Rothes and others, brought a Petition and Complaint before the town council, stating

103. H.C.L.L. ii. 55, 59f.
104. ibid. i. 20.
"that Gentlemens servants Carters and others who have occasion to pass these Links with Horses and Carriages do frequently leave the high Roads and go upon the green Turff which practice will in a little time as the Petitioners apprehend break up and spoil the Links and altogether put a stop to the Diversion...

"...The Petitioners humbly suggested that the most proper way to prevent this bad practice would be to make an Act of Council Impowering the Captain of the Golf and his Council for the time being to put up Posts in such parts of the Links as they should think proper with Labels and Inscriptions containing the substance of the Prohibition, AS ALSO Impowering the Captain and his Council as above to draw Ditches and make Banks or Breastworks at proper places to defend against such Incroachment AND in Case the said order should be transgressed that there be a Clause in the said Act Fining and Amerciating the Transgressor in such sums as the Lord Provost and Council should think fitt AS the said Petition bears. WHICH having been Considered by the Magistrates and Council THEY with the extraordinary Deacons DID and hereby DO Grant the Desire thereof and hereby prohibit and discharge...&c."(105)

Seven years later the golfers were still plagued by carriages and horses being driven and ridden all over the Links, and offered a reward of five shillings for information leading to the conviction of any trespasser.

The running battle against the destroyers of the turf continued over the years without much satisfaction to the Honourable Company, but they did manage a step forward in another direction, when in September 1787 they got a tack of the Links for 19 years at an annual rent of £37.14.6 sterling. The petition they presented to the town council

105. H.C.L.L. i.58f.
explains the circumstances which led them to make this considerably investment. They allude to

"the very considerable expence in making drains; one of them in 1778 cost above £28 sterling, and they have been at a constant yearly expence in repairing and cleaning of drains, besides carting of earth, sewing Grass Seeds, and many other Articles not necessary to be mentioned."

Hitherto the Links had been rented by the Carters, and latterly by graziers who had been putting sheep on the ground. But

"The Society are now informed of an application for a Tack of the Links for a period of years by some Gentlemen having houses adjoining to the Links, for the declared purpose of keeping Cows for the use of their Families, and who, not regarding profit so much as convenience, may pasture the Golfing Ground with black Cattle and thereby render useless all the Grants made by your predecessors in favour of the Petitioners, and all the expense incurred by them for the accommodation of themselves, as well as others wishing to take the benefit of that healthy exercise. The dung of black Cattle, of all others, is most hurtful to Golfers; even in dry weather it smells, and is encrusted, but so thinly that a ball lighting upon it will break it, will sink and be out of sight. In short, pasturing the Golfing Ground with black Cattle would be much worse than travellers riding across the Links, which is prohibited by you under Severe penalties." (106)

In the course of time it became apparent that the Links would require much more extensive drainage, if the golf course were ever to show much improvement. Another petition was presented to the town council on 1st September 1802, for a fresh tack of the Links, to follow immediately on

106 H.C.L.L. ii.71.
the expiry of the present one, which then had four years
yet to run. The Honourable Company had decided to spend
another £50 to £60 on drainage, but would not proceed with
the scheme without further security of tenure. Their crave
was granted; a second period of 19 years was covered by
the new tack, beginning in 1806, at the same rental as before.
This was satisfactory, but in 1803 the new drains were hardly
in place when without any warning "the Mid-Lothian Volun-
teers and other Cavalry" had exercised and ridden over the
Links, and "from this time forward horses and even carriages
of every description had paraded the Links in all directions." (107)
But this was war-time; the struggle with France had just
been renewed, and civilian rights were not so much regarded
as in more normal times. The Golfers were also in the
rather weak position of being three years behind with their
rent to the town council at the time they sought their
second tack. To help balance their accounts the Company of
Golfers now leased grazing rights to various tenants, but
these refused to pay their rents, claiming that the quality
of the grazing had deteriorated. The fact that the Golfers'
tack was so easily renewed in these circumstances suggests
that the town council saw little chance of attracting other
tenants in the then state of the Links; and in the following
years it became increasingly plain that the magistrates

107. H.C.L.L. iii.45.
were more interested in feuing parts of the Links for building than in renting either to golfers or graziers. (108)

By the 1820s the Honourable Company of Golfers was in a sad financial state. A second club - the Thistle Golf Club - had been founded in 1815, and occupied a wooden annexe to the Golf-house. "Through the severity of the winter" this shed collapsed in 1822, and the Honourable Company suggested that the Thistle Club might lease part of the Golf-house proper. This offer was refused. Perhaps the Thistle Club had an inkling of the financial state of the older society. Members of the Honourable Company themselves had little idea of their real position at this time, and were happily engaged in adding to their club-house amenities, at no small cost. It was found necessary in 1824 however, to mortgage the Golf-house for £500, and four years later a second mortgage for £200 was obtained. The details of the club's finances need not concern us, but a significant development, which did nothing to help the Company on Leith Links, was that an increasing number of members were now playing mostly at Musselburgh, where a much better course had been found.

If any Leithers were still in ignorance of the state of affairs with the Honourable Company and their Golf-house,

108. H.C.L.L. iii.23.
they were enlightened by this advertisement in the Evening Courant:

**BY WARRANT OF THE SHERIFF**

To be sold by public roup on Thursday the 29th August current, within the Golf house, Leith Links

THE HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, PAINTINGS, SILVER PLATE, etcet. situated therein, among which are a set of Mahogany Telescope Dining Tables, 18 ft long, 19 chairs in Haircloth, Mahogany Side Tables, large carpet, three large Screens, a quantity of Silver Plate and Plated Goods, Cut Crystal Etcet. Etcet; Full length Portrait of Sinclair of Roslin; Do of James Balfour Esq., by Raeburn; Do of John Gray Esq., by Do; Do of John Taylor Esq., by Watson Gordon; and several other Portraits by eminent Masters.

Catalogues may be had on application to Dalgleish & Forrest, Auctioneers, Adam Sq., Edr.

The Sale to commence at 12 o'clock noon.

Ready Money.

Sheriff Clerk's Office
17th August 1833. (109)

This was a melancholy end to the Gentlemen Golfers' stay at Leith Links - a public sale by order of the Sheriff at the instance of the mortgagees to recover unpaid interest. For a long time after that sale Leith was full of rumours as to what had happened there. One persistent story had it that the pictures listed in the advertisement "and several other portraits by eminent masters" had been sold for a song. (110) In fact there were five portraits of members hanging in the Golf-house, and the present whereabouts of all but one

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110. This story first appeared in print in Kay's Edinburgh Portraits (1838) -(cf. ed. by Maidment, ii.153) and has been repeated by subsequent authors.
are known. Lord Drummore's portrait was painted by an artist named Medina in 1769, and this now hangs in the hall of the Writers to the Signet. Two years later Sir George Chalmers completed a portrait of William St. Clair of Roslin, which is now in possession of the Royal Company of Archers, to which he belonged, as well as being "Captain of the Golf". James Balfour's portrait was done by Sir Henry Raeburn, and Balfour himself paid £30 for it. Raeburn's receipt for this sum is still preserved, and the picture passed into possession of Lady Babington at Pinnacle Hill. Sir John Watson Gordon painted John Taylor, and this picture is now at Muirfield, where the Honourable Company have long been settled. It had been intended that Raeburn should have painted Taylor's portrait, but Dr Andrew Duncan played golf with Raeburn on 7th June 1823, and later set on record what happened that afternoon:

"After the game we enjoyed a temperate meal in the Golfers Hall. That Hall is already ornamented by several good pictures. It contained two from the pencil of Sir Henry — the portraits of John Gray Esq., and of James Balfour Esq. "At that meeting it was agreed that a full-length picture of Mr John Taylor should be drawn by Sir Henry."

But Raeburn died a month later, so the commission went to Watson Gordon. The second Raeburn at the Golf-house — that of John Gray — was on loan to the National Gallery in Edinburgh prior to 1889, but all trace of it has now been lost. At the sale the Royal Company of Archers bought
St. Clair of Roslin's portrait for £18, and Raeburn's picture of James Balfour was actually bought by a caddie, who sold it for £8.13.- to a Mr Melville, a family connection of Balfour's, who had arrived at the sale too late to bid for it.(111)

The last professional golf tournament was played on Leith Links in 1867, but by then golf on the Links had long been regarded as a great nuisance. Forty years earlier, Alexander Campbell had expatiated on the golfing scene in the 1820s:

"The golf-playing on the Links of Leith has grievously degenerated from its pristine character. In the days of yore it was conducted with a degree of frank and free hilarity which has long since ceased to animate the modern practice of this manly pastime. The solitary parties of players which may now occasionally be seen wandering over the Links, go through the business of the game with a coldness and heartlessness of manner which sufficiently announces that the true spirit of the sport is gone..."(112)

And so he goes on and on, in the manner of crusty old gentlemen in every generation. What does seem plain in Campbell's remarks, however, is that even in the 1820s the Links were no longer popular as a golf course. The ground was too wet, too much cut up, and year by year was more and more encroached upon by the new villas of local merchants and shipowners on the south side, and by industry to the north.

111. H.G.L.L. iii.32-33.
Small boys could bang about for practice, as they still do, but the great days of Leith golfing were gone for ever. There need be no regrets. The port has had a long and happy reputation as a resort where the exercise and comradeship of sport might be enjoyed as long as a man had leisure. The changing world cannot destroy memories, or take away the satisfaction of a fine tradition.
AT LEISURE

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The welfare state of the twentieth century is the fruit of a long gestation. Two hundred and fifty years ago there was concern in Leith for the plight of the poor, the sick, the underprivileged. This aspect of the community life presented problems and challenges which weighed the more heavily on the public conscience since the comparative prosperity of the more fortunate was precarious. Concern for the common good was channelled by three main arteries - education, poor relief, and provision for the sick. Nothing revolutionary or original was achieved or attempted in Leith, but in retrospect the embryo of the modern concern for national welfare may be recognised. The problems were hardly understood, and the rapidly mounting needs were being met with quite inadequate resources. Nevertheless some brave beginnings were made in the eighteenth century. It was an age more noted for callousness than compassion, but good seed was sown, none the less.

Even at the close of the seventeenth century the Grammar School of Leith was an ancient institution, probably established in the mid-fifteenth century by the monks of St. Anthony. The argument for this view is presented by John Edgar:
"Even in religious houses which went by the name of Hospitals, some attention was paid to the work of instruction. The Canons of St. Anthony had a monastery of this kind at Leith. The name Hospital suggests that these institutions were primarily meant to be homes for the aged and the poor, their governors were called Praeceptores, and they also fulfilled the functions of schools for the benefit of the community."(1)

At the Reformation the Grammar School was taken over by the kirk session, and the elders continued as sole administrators until 1806. They rented premises for the school, appointed and paid a master, dismissing him if he proved unsatisfactory. The kirk session decided what fees should be paid, and inspected the work of master and pupils from time to time.(2)

The Grammar School of Leith was peculiar in being thus under the sole management of the kirk session. These schools were normally to be found only in burghs, and were controlled by the town council - and Leith was not an independent burgh, but a mere possession of the royal burgh of Edinburgh. Moreover, the port was but a village, and the school remained a very small establishment until the eighteenth century. The entire school was accommodated in the basement of Trinity House, and for two years during the Commonwealth the boys were taught in a loft in the Dubraw.(3)

The school remained in the "laich vout" of Trinity House

   See also numerous references in SLR.
3. SLR. 1.11.1655, 26.11.1657.
until 1710, when the Incorporation of Mariners raised the rent to £3 sterling, and the kirk session refused to pay. The school was transferred to the King James Hospital, which stood in the churchyard, and there it remained for almost a century. (4)

The master had a basic salary of 200 merks a year, which was supplemented by the pupils' fees. When John Couper was appointed master of the Grammar School in 1703

"The moderator told him that he was to have Two hundred merks of sallary when he wants a doctor, and three hundred merks yearly when he hath a doctor." (5)

The doctor was the master's assistant. He was entitled to 100 merks annually, paid by the master, who employed him. But the elders kept an eye on the school roll, and had a rule that no doctor was to be employed unless the number of scholars in attendance reached at least 30. The same Mr Couper mentioned above employed an assistant without consulting the kirk session. When the news reached them the elders visited the school and found only 21 boys in attendance. The master claimed there were about 30 scholars, but that he kept no roll. Clearly the Grammar School was not a large establishment. (6) Much depended on the master. An able teacher with a strong personality could bring in many pupils, as apparently happened under

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5. SLR. 27.5.1703.
6. SLR. 14.6.1705.
John Forrest, who succeeded Couper. But Forrest in turn was followed by Thomas Kirkwood, who had been his assistant, and Kirkwood's tenure of office was a disaster for the school.

Attendance had fallen below thirty again in 1729, when Mr Kirkwood was brought before the session to answer charges of gross negligence and unseemly behaviour. Kirkwood's defence included an enlightening description of his teaching methods:

"I've no fixed time for prescribing the lessons and examining them. I humbly beg leave to lay before my reverend patrons my method of teaching, viz—Every Monday morning I take an account of the sacred lessons which were presented the Saturday before, together with the repetition of the Catechism and the notes of the sermon. And, in the afternoon I prescribe a lesson in their rudiments, grammar and authors, and appoint the boys to give an account of them the next day. And likewise I prescribe Mondays night a general pense which I take an account of next morning immediately after prayers are said; the superior classes having with the same pense either a theme or version to write, and so on from day to day. This method was for most part observed excepting when some things fell in my way to divert it ... It has always been my practice to punish the boys that were absent at the hours of convening unless they brought from their parents a written excuse mentioning that they were necessarily detained."(7)

The Grammar School provided the best education then obtainable for the sons of better-off parents. If the master expected written excuses from parents, he evidently assumed his pupils came from homes where at least some

7. SLR. 13.3.1729.
formal education was taken for granted. Nor were the fees negligible. Half-a-crown a quarter for each son at the school was not money a labourer could afford at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and a hundred years later the charge was 7s 6d per quarter. (8)

For their fees the boys were taught Latin. That was the exclusive business of the grammar schools — to teach Latin grammar, which led to the reading of various Latin authors of various degrees of difficulty. The specific object in view was entrance to a university, so a boy whose ambition did not lie in that direction was not likely to be found at the grammar school, even if his parents could afford it. The way to the university was a hard and stony path. The new boy entered the grammar school at the age of nine, and was ready for the university five years later. (9) Some of the details of the curriculum at Leith were set down in a report to the kirk session in 1729:

"The Moderator with six of the elders and six of the deacons ... went to the Grammar School, and examined the scholars, finding the first class reading the 4th Aenid of Virgil with Terence; the second class reading the 1st Eclog of Virgil with Cornelius Nepos; the third class reading the first book of Ovid's Metamorphosis with Erasmus Minor; the fourth class reading the first of Ovid's Epistles with Cordenius; the fifth class gone through the declension of nouns and pronouns in Rudimans; and the sixth class begun the vocabulary." (10)

10. SLR. 8.5.1729.
This was surely a weary pilgrimage for boys of nine to fourteen. And added to the chilling curriculum was the fact that the longer daylight lasted, the further were school hours extended. The seventeenth century grammar school commenced at 6 a.m. in summer, and continued through all the live-long day till 6 in the evening, with breaks of one hour each for breakfast and dinner. With an eye to saving coal and candles the winter hours were shortened, and the scholars set free earlier, that they might enjoy the cold and the dark outside. Such barbarism was mitigated by the mid-eighteenth century, when the hours were 7 to 9, 10 to 1, and 3 till 5. It was still a tough course, however, demanding both physical and mental hardiness. (11)

The King James Hospital, not to put too fine a point on it, was a poor-house, and that was where the sons of prosperous Leithers spent their formative years. The building was an unhealthy place, and towards the end of the century this fact had become so obvious that the kirk session could no longerignore it, for there was a growing volume of protest.

"Complaints having long been made of the present Grammar School being damp, confined, and otherwise unhealthy for the Boys, Several of the respectable inhabitants of Leith had resolved to make an application to the Town Council of Edinburgh for ground to erect a new and well-aired School house and that as this application was intended to be made in the

11. Alexander Mackay, op. cit. 18f.
name of all the public bodies in Leith the Gentle-
men concerned requested the concurrence of the kirk
session as a public body principally interested in
the business."(12)

The session, of course, agreed; a site was obtained on the
Links, and a public subscription set going. Not that this
happened at once; it was eleven years after the kirk session
minute quoted above before the Police Commissioners issued
the public notice launching the subscription:

"The want of publick schools for Accommodating the
Youth of Leith has long been a subject of Complaint
and regret. The Rooms now occupied by the different
Teachers are too small, placed at a great distance
from each other, and some of them in improper and
even unhealthy situations.
To remove these inconveniences, an application was
lately made to the Lord Provost, Magistrates and
Council of the City of Edinburgh for as much ground
upon the South-West of the Links of Leith at the
back of Mr Alison's garden as Might be requisite
for building School Rooms, for the different branches
of Education upon a neat and Commodious plan. This
request has most readily been granted. The situation
is pleasant, central and healthy, and nothing but the
want of a publick Fund now prevents the accomplish-
ment of this most important and desirable object."(13)

The response was immediate and generous. Robert Burn,
who later designed the Nelson Monument,(14) was engaged
as architect, and in March 1804 the foundation stone of
the new school was laid with great ceremony. Leith re-
garded this as an event of first importance - as it was -
and at 1 o'clock a procession set out from the Assembly
Hall in Constitution Street, in the following order:

14. Father of the much better known William Burn, who later
designed the Edinburgh Academy.
Artillery attached to the Royal Leith Volunteers.
The Magistrates in their Robes.
The Ministers in full Dress
The Masters of the Incorporations
The different Teachers
The Scholars, three & three.
Band of Music.
The Phoenician Lodge, with all the proper Insignia, &c., attended by a number of Brethren, the Golden Compass, Plumb, Level, Square, Mallet, Cornucopia, &c. carried by Operative Masons.
The Committee of Managers.
The Subscribers.
A Company of Volunteers.
The whole line being guarded by the Royal Leith Volunteers.(15)
The new school was opened in the autumn of 1806. Alexander Mackay notes that the cupola and clock were added in 1811,(16) and this is the clock that still adorns the present Leith Academy Primary School.

The transfer to the Links was the most important development in education in Leith that had so far taken place. In the public notice of March 1803 quoted above, reference is made to teachers in various parts of the town. The Grammar School was not the only source of education in the port, for when boys entered that school at the age of nine, they already had some competence at reading and writing English, which was a sine qua non of any approach to the study of Latin.

The kirk session minutes provide ample evidence of other teachers at work in the town, who were in no way

15. E.E.C. 2.4.1804.
16. Alexr Mackay, op. cit. 22f.
connected with the Grammar School. In 1661 David Forbes approached Edinburgh Town Council, and was granted

"...libertie and Licence ... to keip a vulgar schole in Leith for teaching of youth to read, wrytt and
know arithmetique, and recommends him to the Baillies
and kirk session there to encourage him with a little
annuitie for defraying of his hows rent and uther
necessar chaire for accommodatioun of a schule."

A week later the kirk session rather grudgingly allowed
Forbes' petition "for a tym, during the will of the Session,"
but refused him any financial "encouragement". Forbes
would have to live entirely off the fees he could collect
from his pupils. By the eighteenth century the kirk sess-
ion had reached a more enlightened view of the educational
needs of the community, and were paying small salaries
to several schoolmasters. These were mostly engaged in
teaching reading, writing, and sometimes a little arith-
metic to both boys and girls. At the end of the seven-
teenth century there was even a "woman's schooll" in Leith
where girls were taught "to read and work stockings."

James Watt, one of the schoolmasters paid by the session,
complained about this female establishment, for one of his
pupils had been withdrawn from his instruction and sent there.
The girl was called Eupham Broun, whom the elders, in a
truly enlightened spirit, had sent to Mr Watt's school.
Usually, when the session paid a schoolmaster's salary,
it was agreed that any "poor scholars' nominated by the

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17. MTC. 15.8.1661. X×1.5.
session would be taught for nothing. In case Mr Watt should have objected that teaching girls was not in his agreement with the session, the elders paid Eupham's fees, and provided her with five shillings Scots weekly, for she was an orphan. Despite these favours the girl had been removed from Watt's school (presumably by her guardian) and sent to the "woman's school" where she was combining more formal education with an apprenticeship as a stocking-maker. The kirk session took the only step possible - they stopped Eupham's "pension". (18)

These "English schools", as they were called, were essential to the existence of the grammar schools, for it was there that the children received their elementary education. In the villages and smaller towns, this work was undertaken by the sessional schools - where, indeed, a bright boy would sometimes be coached in Latin too. The Grammar School of Leith was properly the Grammar School of South Leith, for the parish was the extent of the kirk session's responsibility, and in Leith the Grammar School was managed by the elders exclusively. There was a sessional school in North Leith, where the dominie was also session clerk and precentor. A small salary was attached to each office, and together they provided just enough to keep

18. SLR. 13.3.1701.
body and soul together.

The salaries paid by the South Leith session to teachers of English Schools in the parish were modest enough - 50 merks was paid one teacher in 1728, (19) but this small retainer was doubtless considered large enough to encourage other teachers. Anyone proposing to set up school was bound to get a licence from the session, and it was only when a licence was granted that the question of salary arose. When Colin McKenzie, an Episcopalian, started a school in 1724 without consulting the kirk session, they stepped in and asked for a testimonial to his character. As this was rather long in appearing, the case was passed to the Magistrates, and only the last-minute production of the needful certificate saved a prosecution. (20)

The English Schools were in the seventeenth century known as Vulgar Schools, for they taught the vulgar, common tongue, which was then Scots. (21) The 1707 Union of Parliaments, however, brought increasing contacts with England, and the desire to master English grew as the century advanced;

19. SLR. 23.5.1728.
20. SLR. 26.11.1724.
21. James Grant in his History of the Burgh Schools of Scotland, p. 389, says that Scots was taught at Leith in 1661, and refers to Campbell's History of Leith p. 317; but in fact Campbell says nothing about the teaching of Scots in Leith.
so now the children of Leith went at the age of seven to one or other of the English Schools, and learned the rudiments of reading and writing the language of South Britain. Two years were thought sufficient for the brighter boys to have learned enough to take them to the Grammar School, but others could stay on at the English School, and advance somewhat further. Arithmetic was also offered as a subject in these schools, but parents attached little importance to it. Only when the business of the port began to expand and diversify in the latter half of the century, was arithmetic taken more seriously, and by then simple book-keeping was available also. (22)

These were not all the schools in Leith in the eighteenth century. Grammar, English and Sessional schools were all alike in one respect - they were officially sponsored. Pupils at these schools were drawn from the middle classes - that is, from those families able to pay the fees. The kirk session sponsored certain "poor scholars" at these schools, but even they were children who would normally have expected to attend these schools, but who through the death of a father, or financial

misfortune were like to be deprived of what might have been considered their birthright. But the educational system netted much more than these children, and drew in both the children of the wealthy and of the very poor. For the former, there were Private Schools, and for the latter the Charity Schools. Both of these groups were well represented in Leith.

The private schoolmaster was in business. He depended for his livelihood solely on the fees drawn from his pupils, having no basic salary from the kirk session or any other source. The cost of this kind of education was therefore considerably higher than what was to be had at the English or Grammar Schools. On the other hand the private teacher had to be good, to draw and retain enough pupils to live on; and his situation stimulated any gifts or versatility he might have. The private teacher tended to specialise in certain subjects, or groups, and as his reputation grew he could earn a very comfortable living.

Although receiving no kind of financial assistance, all private teachers in the earlier years of the eighteenth century had to make themselves known, and swear an Oath of Allegiance to Church and State. The presbytery looked after this, and made annual enquiry of the various kirk sessions. In October 1720 the North Leith elders considered
the presbytery's annual questionnaire.

"Inquiry was made at the Elders concerning the Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses, who Reported, that they knew none within their bounds, besides Mr John Simson, present master of the school of North Leith, and one George Urquhart, who Teaches Children to read English, both of Orthodox and Loyal principles."(23)

Yet the following year, in reply to the same annual inquiry,

"The Underwritten schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, to wit, Nicholas Misbet, relict to the deceased John Brown, Agnes Jarvy and Janet Spark, George Urquhart and Margaret Mill his spouse, Margt Ferrier, Margaret Key, Marrion Garret, spouse to Robert Malcolm, and Jane Hutton, spouse to William Cunningham, being cited to this diet, all Compared, except Geo Urquhart, who is unable to come abroad: and being examin'd, did every one of them for themselves declare, that they were well satisfy'd with the government of Church and State, that they had the confession of Faith, and taught their Scholars the Assembly's Catechism, that they attended the ordinances in the Church, and Injoins their Scholars so to do, and that they prayed with their Scholars, & taught their Scholars to pray, upon which they were dismissed with an Exhortation to teach their Scholars the principals of our holy Religion as far as they were capable, according to the Scriptures, our confession of Faith, and Catechisms, and that they themselves gave a good Example to their Scholars, in Sanctifying the Sabbath and Walking circumspectly."(24)

If it is somewhat surprising that in 1720 there were no schoolmistresses in North Leith, and that twelve months later eight of these ladies appear before the kirk session, no doubt there was an explanation, although it is hidden from us. North Leith was a small village, and each mistress could have had only a very few pupils. There were private teachers in Restalrig, Calton and Abbeyhill — some of them

23. NLIR. 18.10.1720.
24. NLIR. 14.11.1721.
of doubtful ability, but every one of impeccable orthodoxy and loyalty.

There were some able men engaged in teaching. In 1680 the Incorporation of Mariners took a notable decision and appointed a "professor" of mathematics. What was intended was a course of instruction in the mathematics of navigation for the sons or apprentices of shipmasters. Each member of the incorporation being a shipmaster, was to contribute five shillings a year, to meet the teacher's salary of £120 Scots per annum; and each scholar paid £1.10. Scots a month for his food. This put Leith at once in the forefront of one branch of education. The first man to hold the new post was George Drennan, and nothing is known of him: but he had some notable successors. (25)

John Man, from Edinburgh, succeeded Drennan in 1699, and to his salary was added £40 Scots for house rent. Man published an annual series of "Prognostications" for Edinburgh, and in 1704 made a similar book of forecasts for Leith - for that is what these "prognostications" were - weather forecasts based on various astronomical observations and calculations. On the elaborate title-page Man succeeded in incorporating a personal advertisement in these terms:

"There is to be taught, by the Author, Arithmetick, Vulgar and Decimal; Geometry, Trigonometry, Navigation in all its Parts, viz. Plain, Oblique, Mercator and Circular Sailing; with the Use of the Globe,

Celestial and Terrestrial: Likeways those who want any Mathematical Instruments, as Cross staffs, Quadrants, Plain Scales, or Gunter Scales, or any sorts of Navigation Books: As also any who desire to have New-Compasses, or their Compasses Touched or Drest, Let them Repair to the Sign of the Glob Cross-staff and Quadrant, Where and with the Printer, at his Shop in the Parliament Close, this Almanack is to be Sold."(26)

The Trinity House "professor" was prepared to take pupils, presumably in his own house, and independently of his work with the sons and apprentices of shipmasters. In other words John Man was running a private school in Leith. This was probably a personal arrangement with his employers, and did not extend to his successors, for in 1719 Robert Lauchlan, who held the same "professorship" with the Mariners, sought their permission to open a school in Leith, pointing out that there was then no teacher of mathematics in the port. Twenty-two years later Lauchlan was made a Member of Trinity House in recognition of his services as a teacher—and that was certainly a rare distinction.(27)

Another outstanding teacher of mathematics was Alexander Wood. He succeeded Lauchlan, and made his own lasting memorial, when in 1777 he published a map of Leith based on a survey he had made. This was the first reliable map of the port ever to appear. Alexander Ingram followed Wood in 1783, and did not retire until 1826, after twenty

27. John Mason, op. cit. 163.
years teaching in the new High School on the Links, where he transferred in 1806.

We may now look more closely at the school, erected by public subscription, after many years of dissatisfaction with the condition of the schools in the town. This new building was eventually known as Leith High School - but not at first. For several years after opening it was known as "The New Schools". Since the middle of the eighteenth century the Grammar School had frequently been referred to as the High School of Leith,(28) but the Grammar School occupied only part of the new building. Ideas on education were changing: instead of being confined almost entirely to Latin learning, a variety of subjects was now in more general demand. By drawing English School and Grammar School teachers together under one roof, by bringing Mathematics into the same building as French, Latin and English, new prospects for more wide-ranging instruction were opening.

Putting the new ideas on education into practice however, required more than a change of building: the management of the new school would be at least as important as the curriculum. The old Grammar School had been under the sole authority of the kirk session, and during almost the whole

28. cf. e.g. EEC. 8.11.1762; Sederunt Bk of Traffickers, 2.4.1761.
of the eighteenth century the school had met in the King James Hospital - kirk session property. But now the elders themselves had acknowledged the shortcomings of the Hospital and joined in the clamour for proper accommodation. Both the building and site of the new school were vested in a body of trustees, consisting of the two ministers of the parish kirk, the two resident magistrates, and three each from the Commissioners of Police, Trinity House, and the Incorporations of Maltmen, Trades and Traffickers. (29)

The role of the kirk session in school affairs was therefore drastically altered, for now they could only influence the trustees through the ministers, who represented the session. The kirk session however did retain the right to appoint the Latin and English masters, and to pay their salaries. Trinity House agreed to the transfer of Alexander Ingram, their mathematics teacher, and they still paid him a salary of £10 sterling per annum. (30)

There were six different classes in the new school - two for classics, one for mathematics, one for writing and arithmetic, and two for English. (31) Those teachers not appointed by the kirk session or Trinity House were engaged

29. Sederunt Book of Traffickers, 15.3.1803.
30. This payment continued until 1839, in which year Dr Bell’s School was opened. Trinity House then transferred their annual payment of £10 to provide for the education there of 20 seamen’s children. (Mason, op.cit.164)
31. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 214f.
by the Trustees. This, at least, was the arrangement by the time Leith became an independent burgh in 1833. The Trustees were then paying small salaries to two of the teachers, since a share of Dr Bell's mortification had by then been paid to them. At this period the High School was managed in a ridiculously confused and complicated manner. The heterogeneous company of Trustees had very little idea of how a school ought to be run. At first, in 1806, there were but four teachers, and each one paid rent for his accommodation in the school, besides being responsible for all repairs except those needed to keep the building wind and watertight. Originally the rent for a schoolroom was one guinea per annum, but after some years the ground-floor rooms were reassessed at £5. The Classics and English teachers on the ground-floor had small salaries, but those appointed by the Trustees were expected to live entirely off the fees received. (32)

There was no janitor in the early days. Arrangements for cleaning the premises were simple - the teachers were responsible. Each master kept his own room, and the upstairs masters cleaned the stairs, while the ground-floor occupants looked after the hall. Mr Foggo was English master and Mr Bayne taught Classics, and neither took kindly to housekeeping. Hence the despatch of a letter to

the Trustees by Mr Foggo, who could not help noticing some remissness on the part of his colleague across the hall:

"Mr Bayne's half of the lobby not being swept since St. James's Chapel was consecrated. It is as thick of dust as if Mount Vesuvius had showered ashes upon it since the days of Pliny the Younger." (33)

There was no set curriculum; pupils attended whatever classes they fancied, or as many as their parents were prepared to pay for. Attendances therefore varied considerably, swinging between 150 and 250. Teachers also came and went according to the availability of accommodation and the response of pupils. The Burgh Commissioners found no French class when they made their enquiries in 1832, but there had been a French master at an earlier period, who advertised his class:

**TO THE INHABITANTS OF LEITH**

John Wilson, Bachelier es Lettres et es Sciences, Graduate of the University of Paris, and Teacher of French in Leith High School, has the honour to announce, that he will open his French Classes for Ladies and Gentlemen, upon Monday 15th inst. in Leith High School, and at his own house, Janefield Place, foot of the Easter Road. Sept. 11, 1828. (34)

In the old Grammar School, fees had been so much per quarter, plus a gift to the master at Candlemas, amounting to about the same as a quarter's payment. This system was continued in the new High School until 1828, when the Candlemas Fee was abolished, and the four quarterly payments

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33. Charles McAra, *Leith Academy, 1560-1960*, 14. — Mr Foggo seems to have been under a misapprehension. According to Canon G. Jackson, *The History of St. James's Church Never was Consecrated*. See above, p. 80, and Jackson's *History* p. 29.
adjusted accordingly, so that the total annual payment remained the same. The quarter days were 1st January (there being no holiday at that time), 1st April, 1st July and 1st October. Coal Money was a separate charge, and when a janitor was finally engaged his wages were made up from another charge on the pupils. (35) The fees then worked out at:

- Classics: 13s per quarter
- English: 7s 6d per quarter
- Writing: 12s per quarter, reduced in 1830 to 7s 6d
- Mathematics: 9s 6d per quarter, reduced in 1830 to 7s 6d. (36)

The janitor was not a mere cleaner and timekeeper. Part of his duty was to mingle with the scholars in the playground and superintend their games - and no doubt prevent fighting and too much exuberance. (37)

At the end of our period the High School was ripe for reform, and eventually great changes were effected. It was not until 1663 however, that Peter Macfarlane was appointed headmaster - the first man to be given responsibility for the whole school. (38)

The Charity Schools provided the only chance for the children of the poor to find any kind of education. In

35. EEC. 15.9.1828.
36. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 215.
37. James Grant, History of the Burgh Schools of Scotland, 175.
38. Alexander Mackay, op. cit. 30.
1867 a visiting Commissioner acidly commented that the town council had managed in the preceding twelve months to spend £23.13. 8 on a bowling green, but all that education had cost the burgh was £10 granted to purchase prizes for the High School. (39) No such charge of parsimony could have been levelled at the community at large, for the Charity Schools — separate schools for boys and girls — were established and entirely supported from appeals to the public.

No account of the founding of the Leith Boys Charity School has survived, but we may infer with some confidence that 1806 was the year of its establishment. The Charity Schools had to make constant appeals to the churches and other public bodies for grants and subscriptions to finance the schools, but it is only in 1813 that the Boys Charity School first appears in the minutes of South Leith kirk session. It was then that James Wood, secretary to the Charity School, wrote a letter thanking the session "for the use of the old Grammar School free of rent for so long a period." (40) The old Grammar School, of course, was the King James Hospital, which the Grammar School had quit in 1806 on transferring to the new High School. Only then would the premises become available for the Charity School.

39. Alexander Mackay, op. cit. 29.
40. SLR. 12.10.1813.
If we suppose the Charity School existed before 1806, we should have to find a place in Leith at that period where such an institution could meet, apart from the King James Hospital. There was no such place - and certainly nowhere on offer rent-free. It may have been early in 1807 that the Charity School got under way, but not later, for there is a minute of the Incorporation of Traffickers in October of that year, in which is drawn up a "List of Boys at present taught in the Charity School, with a State of their Circumstances, and that of their Parents." This careful minute looks like an attempt to investigate the Charity School, probably in response to an appeal for help. The school being new, the Traffickers are prudently informing themselves about the institution before giving any help. The result of their enquiry makes interesting reading. There were 49 boys then attending the school, and the Traffickers' minute breaks down the Roll of Scholars as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Circumstances of Boys</th>
<th>Circumstances and Occupations of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Having Parents alive.</td>
<td>{ 4 Fathers in Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 2 Fathers in Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 2 Fathers in French Prisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 2 Fathers left their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>without providing for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 1 a porter, 1 a carter,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 2 labourers, 1 a taylor, 3 sailors,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 1 weaver, 1 a coach driver,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ 1 a farmer, 1 a servant to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>{ Mr Brunton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Circumstances of Boys</td>
<td>Occupations of Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Fatherless</td>
<td>2 sailors, 2 taylors, 2 shoemakers, 1 nailor, 1 corkcutter, 1 baker, 2 carpenters, 2 carters, 1 soldier, 1 glass-blower, 1 porter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Motherless</td>
<td>2 sailors, 1 brickmaker, 1 gentleman's servant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>2 were masons, 1 was a sailor, 1 was a carter, 1 was a labourer, 1 was a sawer, 1 was a soldier.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three months after receiving this report the Traffickers agreed to donate £5 sterling to each of the Charity Schools for boys and girls, "but this is to be no precedent in time coming."(42) The Girls Charity appears to have commenced along with the Boys School. They were no doubt all accommodated in the King James Hospital, although taught separately.

Relying entirely on public subscriptions, the Charity Schools yet went ahead with confidence. There being nowhere else to meet, and the King James Hospital being far advanced in decay, the Charity School directors built a new school in King Street, and this was opened in July 1813, although a considerable sum had to be borrowed in order to finish the building.(43) But the very fact that it was possible to raise a loan for this purpose argues a certain assurance of continuing support.

Leithers in those days were avid for processions, and

41. Sederunt Book of Incorporation of Traffickers, 5.10.1807.
42. " " " " 11.1.1808.
43. NLR. 28.9.1819.
the entry of the Charity Boys to their new school was accomplished with the Magistrates, Ministers, and a large company of subscribers walking in procession with the boys from the old Hospital in the Kirkgate, to King Street. Almost 100 boys were now in attendance at the school, and the removal to King Street was at once marked by holding the annual examination of the school.(44)

There could be no pretending that the Charity Schools provided for anything like the number of children untouched by the High School and the private schools. An immense number of children in the town had no schooling, and this in an age in which the ability at least to read and write and count were becoming necessary for any advancement in the world. When the Seamen's Friend Society was founded in 1820, attention was very quickly directed to the neglected state of a great many children of seamen. At the same time it was resolved to provide instruction for masters, mates and men, in an academy, which was forthwith set up. This proved an enormous success, hundreds of men taking advantage of the education provided. And for the children, no less than three separate day schools were organised. The eighth annual meeting of the Society heard figures which gave them no little satisfaction. The three schools for children had rolls of 210, 120 and 185 respectively,

44. EEC. 31.7.1813.
and the problem of accommodating 515 children was solved by using the hulk moored in the harbour, known as the Floating Chapel, since it was used for Sunday worship for seamen. As with all schools then, an annual examination of the pupils in public was considered essential, and the published account of the 1828 examination gives a glimpse of the character of the school, and of its promoters.

"At 9 o'clock the Society's flag was hoisted as the signal for muster, and, in a few minutes afterwards the quay of the Government Dock, on one side, was completely thronged with a numerous assemblage of clean and healthy children, upwards of 500 of them, together with a crowd of anxious and well-pleased parents...

"... The examination was continued until 5 o'clock, during which time the children went through various exercises in reading, grammar, recitation, history, geography and arithmetic, both mental and mechanical, and displayed much intelligence in answering the numerous questions put to them.

"As a great proportion of these boys choose a maritime life, the education afforded them in the day schools is adapted, as much as possible, to qualify them for the duties and the difficulties of the sailor; and, after passing through a series of classes, they are transferred to the Academy, where they are instructed in every branch of nautical science, so as to make them complete theoretical seamen."

Another line of action for those anxious to do good to the poor, was in the establishment of Sabbath Schools - an enterprise in which Leith was in the forefront. A letter from the Society in Edinburgh for Propagating Christian

45. EEC. 5.6.1828 and 23.8.1828.
Knowledge to the kirk session of South Leith in 1788 resulted in a joint effort by the parish kirk and the two Episcopalian clergymen. The chapel-of-ease, then known as the New Kirk, and later as St. John's, was approached, but the managers there did not see their way to joining in, and the seceders were ignored. A room in St. Andrew's Street was rented for three guineas a year, and a teacher engaged for £10 per annum. (46) Shortly after, North Leith followed suit, setting up a Sunday School in the school-house. (47) The new venture was amazingly successful, large numbers of children crowding the limited accommodation and straining the teaching resources. Within a few weeks there were 100 children on the roll in North Leith, gathering every Sunday evening at 6 o'clock. The movement continued to grow rapidly, and early in the nineteenth century Sabbath Schools were being started in many elders' districts, the chief limiting factor being the difficulty in finding accommodation.

It has to be realised that the early sabbath schools were not congregational organisations; they were benevolent efforts to occupy idle children on the sabbath, when Satan so readily found work for them to do. A sabbath day meeting was an excellent opportunity for trying to inculcate

46. SLR. 10.12.1788 & 15.4.1788.
some religious knowledge, some moral principles. The spirit of the age was not markedly religious, and a great many people would have nothing to do with religion or the Church. The sabbath schools were directed towards the children of the poor, and once the basic idea had taken root, the promoters sought to expand their programme. In 1812, closely following the trial of a number of hooligans for rioting in the streets of Edinburgh at the New Year, an announcement from the sabbath school planners was widely circulated. In each parish, the poor children who, with their parents' consent, attended Sunday School, would assemble at 9 o'clock in the morning. They would proceed to read the Bible and commit to memory the questions and answers of the Shorter Catechism. This exercise was to continue until the time for the forenoon service, when they would all be shepherded to church, where it was hoped that seats would be made available for them. They would meet again for the afternoon service, and the evening was to be spent in the same devout exercises as occupied the morning, "for such a number of hours as may hereafter be agreed."(48) The astonishing thing is that on such a programme the Sabbath Schools flourished, but it was not until the 1830s that in Leith these schools were adopted as congregational organisations.(49)

48. EEC. 28.3.1812.
49. NLR. 21.5.1834; SLR. 15.1.1836.
The provision of educational facilities was an aspect of community welfare affecting all classes. Those who could be made to pay were charged fees; but those who could not afford to pay were still catered for, as far as possible. There was a growing feeling that at least an elementary education was a basic right of every citizen in a civilised society. But the problem of the poor was a much older challenge, and a wider concern than that of formal education. The poor in eighteenth century Leith could neither be ignored nor forgotten: they made their presence felt. Beggars were always part of the scene — on the streets, on the quays, at the church doors and in the market-place; they appeared at christenings, weddings, funerals; no public activity could take place without them, for the beggar was active wherever people gathered together. Beggary was accepted as unfortunate, but inevitable, so that no one even dreamed of eliminating poverty. What was attempted was poor relief.

Since the Reformation, responsibility for the parish poor had been laid on the kirk session, and in every parish the session's poor fund was the principal source of help for the poor. There were also private benefactions, mortifications, occasional gifts. Some parishes had almshouses. Such resources might be adequate or the reverse, according to the number of poor in relation to the total population.
In this respect Leith could hardly have been worse off, for as a seaport, and for most of our period the principal port in Scotland, the town was inevitably visited by many who stayed for a short time before moving on. Adjacent to the capital city, and the scene of horse races, field-sports, military manoeuvres and spectacles, public hangings, processions on various occasions, Leith was infested by the riff-raff. It was said that Edinburgh was more thickly populated with beggars than any other town in Scotland, so the port lying only a mile and a half distant, was in an unenviable position.

No able-bodied man, be he never so poor, was entitled to any relief in Scotland; only the "aged poor, impotent and decayed persons, who of necessity must live by alms" could expect any relief. The "sturdie beggar" was therefore only too common, and lacking employment, he depended on the good-will of private citizens. But if the citizens were generous, the trouble was merely aggravated, for at the slightest hint of a dole, the begging community seemed at once to be multiplied. One of the first principles governing poor relief in Leith then, was to defend the town, as far as possible, against unwanted beggars from elsewhere. The following order by the Magistrates of

51. ibid. 103.
Leith, made during a winter of severe food shortage, makes the town's attitude very clear:

BY ORDER OF THE MAGISTRATES OF LEITH
Whereas the inhabitants of Leith have contributed very liberally for the support of their own poor during the present scarcity, the Magistrates think it the more necessary at this time to put the laws strictly in execution against vagrants and beggars, with which the town has been much infested for some time past. They therefore give this public intimation, that all persons found begging within the town after Wednesday 15th January 1785 will be taken up and put into confinement.

It is expected that none of the inhabitants will encourage beggars, by giving them anything on the streets, and that they will not suffer anything to be given at their houses, excepting to the poor of the parish, who are supplied with badges from the kirk session.

The Magistrates recommend it to all the inhabitants to aid and assist the town officer and other persons in apprehending and confining the vagrants and beggars.(52)

There were plenty native poor in Leith, without the addition of rogues from other parishes who thought the pickings in and around the capital would be better than their chances at home. The staffman was therefore one of the most important officials in Leith. It was his business to rout out all strangers found begging, and to send them packing - helped by the stout staff he carried. This functionary first appears in the kirk session records in 1646, when Jhone Borthwick was appointed "staffman and under bedill"(53), but the office was probably much older.

52. EEG. 15.1.1783.
53. SIR. 18.8.1646.
than that. The genuine local poor were licensed to beg, and were issued annually with badges to make their standing clear to the public. The staffman acted as a kind of herd to the licensed beggars, rounding them up when necessary, for at weddings and funerals and other public occasions it was convenient to give the staffman money for the poor, which he then distributed among the assembled beggars. In 1721 George Hay the staffman was haled before the session, and after examination was severely reprimanded for keeping to himself some of the money given him at burials for distribution. (54) Hay did not retain the job much longer. His successor, Andrew Adamson, was presented with a list of his duties:

1. That he behave himself civilly and Christianly And attend publik ordinances duly both Sabbath days and week days.
2. That he have the Number of such Beggars as belong to the Parish, and Inspect their Manners, And inform the session of anything scandalous in their Conversation.
3. That he use his outmost endeavour that no Stranger or Vagrant Beggars come in to or reside in the Toun. And if any such frequent the place That he give account of them to the session.
4. That he take care to prevent all Disturbances by Beggars at Marriages, Baptisms and Burialls, and keep them from troubling the houses of such Persons as upon such occasions give Charity at the Church, to be distributed among them. And that he suffer none to beg within the Church Yard at any time, but especially at Sacrament occasions.
5. That he attend at the door always when the Session is sitting, And weekly wait upon the Treasurer for carrying the weekly Pensions from him to the several

54. SIR. 18.5.1721.
Deacons.
6. That he help to suppress any Disturbance made by Boyes running to and fro and making noise either in the Church or Church Yard in time of publick worship. (55)

The staffman's office appears to have fallen into desuetude about the 1760s. The last mention of him in kirk session records is in 1756, when Thomas Sclaiter's salary as staffman was raised from one shilling sterling to eighteen pence weekly. (56) The increasing population added greatly to the staffman's responsibilities, and even a 50% rise in wages was not enough to make the post any longer attractive. The town had presumably been without a staffman for some years, when a proposal was made to employ a man paid by the incorporations, each society contributing 30s sterling per annum. This would almost double the wages the kirk session had offered in 1756. This plan was announced in 1777, and the Traffickers, at least, agreed to pay their 30s "on condition the staffman is got to do the business properly." (57) There was the rub, of course, and whether the incorporations ever managed to find a staffman is not known, but the chances were against it. The work of this official was only possible in a much smaller community than that of Leith in the later eighteenth century.

The mainstay of the helpless poor was the fund held

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55. SLR. 26.3.1724.
56. SLR. 25.3.1756.
57. Sederunt Book, Incorporation of Traffickers, 6.10.1777.
and administered by the kirk session. The elders kept a list of widows and orphans, chronically sick and invalid, cripples and half-wits and foundlings. It was a formidable list to be supplied from the resources that went to maintain the fund, and the session had to make the best of a depressing situation. They carefully scrutinised each addition to the Poor Roll; they kept a sharp eye on the circumstances of their pensioners, and they cut payments in time of dearth and scarcity, when the number of the poor greatly increased, and the better-off could only afford smaller contributions. This could hardly be called a system of poor relief, unless "system" is to be taken in a grotesque sense, for the greater the need might be, the less were the funds available; the more desperate the case of the poor, the less could be done to help them.

Those who were able-bodied were ignored; those who were less than able-bodied, but who were judged fit to earn something, were given less than others who were completely helpless. And above all - a most important aspect of the situation - no one was eligible for relief who had lived less than three years in the parish without claiming any benefit. (58) This hard-faced scrutiny of many pathetic cases was forced on the kirk session by the general severity

of the times. Resources were so restricted that there was no scope for experiment, or for taking chances of any kind. Even in times of relative plenty the lot of the poor was hard; in the not infrequent seasons of scarcity the poor died first. The parish of North Leith in the year 1817 had its poor fund and its poor, and we are able to survey the situation in some detail.

EXPENDED FOR THE POOR DURING THE YEAR 1817

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly pensioners' allowance.</td>
<td>£40. 2. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly &quot;</td>
<td>255. 4. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing poor orphan children</td>
<td>6.13. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for education of poor children</td>
<td>9. 9. 6½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for coals to the poor along with Mr John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstones £10</td>
<td>19. 3. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for sending poor people to the Infirmary</td>
<td>-.11. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for burying poor women dead in Infirmary</td>
<td>1. 8. -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for coffins to the poor:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 for children at 7s</td>
<td>7. - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 8 for grown persons at 14s each</td>
<td>- - - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for making graves to these poor people.</td>
<td>- - - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost by light gold received in collections.</td>
<td>- - - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£349. - - 9½ (59)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population of North Leith in 1817 was about 6000,(60) but from this must be subtracted the population of Newhaven, for which the North Leith kirk session had no responsibility, as we shall see. No fewer than 110 monthly pensioners are listed. There were also seven widows whose benefit was stopped at the end of March, for the summer

59. NLR. 1.5.1818.
60. This is an estimate. The 1811 census found the population of North Leith to be 4875, and ten years later this had increased to 7025. cf. NLR. 24.12.1811 and 26.6.1821.
season, when it was judged they ought to be able to find casual work—presumably in the fields. Five other widows had applied to be put on the Poor Roll, but had not yet been accepted. The reasons for the various recipients being on the Roll were:

- Widows with children: 24
- Ill health: 24
- Infirmary: 23
- Lame: 9
- Debility: 7
- Blind: 4
- Mental debility: 3
- Insane: 2
- Bedrid: 2
- Disabled hand: 2
- Lost use of an arm: 1
- Abandoned by father and mother: 1
- Orphans—McClaren's children: 1
- Ruptured: 1
- Asthmatical: 1
- Sore leg: 1
- Deserted by father: 1
- Husband went to sea two years ago and not heard of since: 1
- Husband wrecked off Shiant and not heard of since June: 1
- Mother dead and father enlisted. No relation to look after them; Robertson's children: 1

Diagnosis was not an exact science, and a note was added to the list:

N.B. Where 'infirmity' is placed opposite the name, it appears to be the gradual decay of age, and where 'debility', it appears to have been the effect of disorder. (61)

No attempt was made to elucidate any more exact meaning for 'ill-health'. Most of these pensioners received 4s

61. NLR. 1.5.1818.
per month, but one was as low as 1s, four as high as 6s, and Robertson's children received £1.16. --, but this may have been but a single payment, or else a special allotment from the fund.

The position at Newhaven was peculiar. This exclusive community became part of North Leith parish in 1631, and thereafter attended the parish church. But they did not contribute to the collection plates at the church door. When they agreed to become North Leithers, the Newhaven people stipulated that they be allowed to continue looking after their own poor, and so a bond was subscribed between the parishioners at Newhaven and the kirk session, allowing the fisherfolk to "maintain the poor and decayed persons of their Vocation." Accordingly, instead of placing their Sabbath offerings in the plates at the church door, collecting dishes were set up in the roadway at the east end of Newhaven every Sabbath day, and on any weekday when there were church services, as at the sacrament season. Here the pious gifts of the fishing community were placed, as they made their way to the parish kirk.(62) The plates were uplifted by the boxmaster of the Free Fishermen, who saw the monies distributed to the needy in Newhaven alone. It seemed a workable arrangement, and the parish kirk session were satisfied; but in time it led to trouble.

62. NLR. 26.4.1737.
At first the arrangement seems to have worked well enough, but in the later seventeenth century the fishing community was added to and diversified, as ropeworkers, farm labourers and glassworkers joined the original seagoing elements. The village of Newhaven was distinct enough, but it was often hard to decide whether a particular person was to be counted a Newhaven responsibility. A man might be born in the village, and be at work elsewhere in the parish; or he might be a ropeworker living and working in Newhaven, but boundaries had never been agreed, and it was a question whether the ropeworks on the adjacent links came within the sphere of the Free Fishermen’s responsibility.

In 1737 there was a dispute over a foundling—a child exposed in Newhaven. Whose responsibility was this unwanted child? Found in Newhaven, the kirk session saw the child as quite plainly a charge on the Newhaven poor fund. The fishermen thought otherwise, claiming the child was none of theirs, and that its finding was an act of God—something unforeseeable, happening within the parish of North Leith, and therefore a session responsibility. In the end the elders gave way, agreeing to clothe the child, and to pay half its maintenance. (63)

There was more serious trouble in 1760, when it was found that the boxmaster of the Free Fishermen had had the

63. NLR. 26.4.1737.
box lying in his house for almost two years, without bothering to get in any quarterly contributions from the fishermen. The depletion of the Fishermen's Box meant that the poor had been grossly neglected, and the kirk session sent a committee to investigate. When this committee reported back, the elders decided that they themselves would in future look after the fishermen's money for them. They would visit Newhaven once a quarter, collect the dues for the box, and also superintend the distribution to the poor. It cannot be supposed that this arrangement would be agreeable to the fishermen, but since it had been their own neglect that had brought about their humiliation, they could find little to say.\(^{64}\)

Matters stood thus for a few years, but the kirk session had given themselves the trouble and inconvenience of coping in this way with the Newhaven poor, when the fishermen were only too eager to do their own business again. On 1st November 1768 therefore, a new bond was signed, whereby the Newhaven people would once more attend to their own poor, but under the supervision and on the advice of the kirk session.\(^{65}\) Henceforth the fishermen only opened their box in the presence of delegates from the session, and all their accounting was inspected. Even at that, however, misunderstanding was frequent. The actual

\(^{64}\) NLR. 8.1.1760
\(^{65}\) NLR. 30.10.1798.
distribution of the poor fund was done by the Free Fisher-
men themselves, without supervision, and it was only after
many years, and several doubtful incidents, that the kirk
session discovered how the poor were treated at Newhaven.
In September 1814 a Newhaven woman, Elizabeth Grant, was
added to the poor roll by the kirk session, and granted
4s a month. It was only then, apparently, that someone on
the session asked why this woman should be on their roll,
when she was a Newhaven woman. A committee was sent to
ask questions, and examine the accounts at Newhaven. They
brought back the astounding report that in Newhaven, if a
person was not a Free Fisherman, or related to a Free
Fisherman, no pension was ever paid to them, no matter
what the extent of their distress might be - or in the words
of the committee's report:

"The Committee appointed to examine the Fishermen's
Box reported that they had met and examined their
accounts, and found they had supplied their own
poor, but that they declined supporting any excepting
those connected with their own society."(66)

It would be wrong to conclude from this that the
fisher people were selfish and heartless: their attitude
was that apart from the poor of their own Society of Free
Fishermen, the needy, even in Newhaven, were parishioners
of North Leith, and so ought to be provided for by the

66. NLR. 29.11.1814.
session. This was never what the session understood by the arrangement to allow the Newhaveners to uplift their own collections. In return for this privilege, the elders' view was that Newhaven should be independent and self-supporting, in caring for the poor of their village. Kirk session and Fishermen's Society must be held as equally at fault in allowing this tragic misunderstanding to persist for so long — especially as the total neglect of many destitute people must have been well known to both elders and fishermen.

Another kirk session committee had a conference with the Fishermen in 1820. This time the committee reported that the Fishermen "did not seem themselves to be of one mind", but they stuck to their attitude of accepting responsibility only for members of their Society, and the committee "did not think it expedient to push the matter any further."(67) The whole unpleasant business was only settled when an assessment for poor rates was introduced. The law took no notice of such local bickering. In the eyes of higher authority the kirk session was responsible for all the poor in North Leith parish. This was doubtless a great relief to the elders, who could now order the Fishermen to discontinue the old practice of setting up their collection plates in the road, and to turn over all funds raised.

67. NLR. 27.6.1820.
in this way to the parish poor fund. (68)

In Edinburgh the system of giving doles to the poor was brought to an end in 1743 with the erection of the workhouse at Bristo. (69) This move sent a stream of beggars into the streets of Leith, which caused the kirk session to warn the townpeople not to give to any beggar not wearing one of their badges. (70) The idea of a poor-house was soon attracting more attention in Leith however. It was easy to see the advantages of housing all the local poor under one roof; but the stumbling-block was the lack of money. Not all the funds for the relief of the poor could be directed to the provision of a poor-house. In South Leith at this time the church-door collections averaged only £102.18.9 per annum. Apart from these collections there was little to draw upon, so a poor-house in Leith could neither be built nor maintained. (71)

But others beside the kirk session were interested in erecting a poor-house. The Traffickers met on New Year's Day 1750 and agreed to meet with the Magistrates, Ministers, and delegates from the other incorporations, to go into the possibilities of such an establishment for

68. NLR. 28.1.1823.
69. James Grant, Old and New Edinburgh, ii.325.
70. SLR. 20.1.1744.
71. SLR. 18.11.1762.
South Leith, but this and subsequent discussions came to nothing, and it was a century later before South Leith had a poor-house. (72)

North Leith did better. On 29th April 1760

"The Moderator represented that as the Neighbouring Parishes were all getting Poors houses, it would be convenient for this Parish to think of getting one, that they might be free of the great Number of begging Poor that are every day strolling about..."

The project for a North Leith poor-house went better than the abortive proposals in South Leith, and in August 1763 the kirk session were able to take possession of a house built for them in the Citadel. (73) The ridiculous relationship with Newhaven was not forgotten in administering the new house:

"The Session agreed to receive Elizabeth Semple into the Poor House, but at the same time, (as she belongs to Newhaven) they reserve a power to dismiss her at pleasure." (74)

A Newhaven pauper might be turned out of the poor-house without any reason given, but discipline was strict with all the inmates:

"Widow Meldrum in the poor-house acted in a very imprudent manner, getting drunk, and striking the other lodgers there. The session ordered their officer to turn her out of the house." (75)

"Imprudent" indeed; there was a waiting list to get into the poor-house; Widow Meldrum would have to shift as best

72. Leith Pilot Annual, 1889, 51.
73. NLR. 2.8.1763.
74. NLR. 30.4.1771
75. NLR. 29.8.1815.
she could; she would never see the inside of the poor-house again. Paupers who put a foot wrong were seldom or never given a second chance - there were too many others eagerly waiting to take their places.

The chronic shortage of funds for the poor from time to time induced a mood of near-panic in the elders. In that frame of mind they were apt to take a sledge-hammer to crack a nut.

"A member having stated to the session that Ann Cooper, one of their paupers, had received upwards of £30 from the Exchequer ... while at the same time she continued to receive 3s per month from the session ... the session express their high disapprobation of the conduct of the said Ann Cooper ... and ordained the said Ann Cooper to be erased from the Roll of Paupers in this Parish, and were unanimously of opinion that she should in all time coming, on account of her conduct, be rendered incapable of receiving any benefit from the Charitable funds of this Parish. The session ordered an extract of this minute to be given to Dr Hohnston and another to Mr Douglas, with a request that he would read said extract to Ann Cooper in presence of the other paupers tomorrow when they come to receive their monthly allowance, in order to put them on their guard against such nefarious practices."(76)

Yet from time to time both the kirk session and various individuals bestirred themselves to do something extra for the poor. In the hard winter of 1756-57 a group of merchants bought a load of oatmeal which they stored in a cellar in the Sheriff-brae, and sold to the poor of South and North Leith at 10½d per peck.(77) On another occasion,

76. NLR. 29.3.1814.
77. NLR. 14.1.1757.
despite their chronic lack of funds, the North Leith elders managed to give each monthly pensioner a free peck of oatmeal, in addition to the usual monthly dole. (78) John Gladstones, (79) brother of the North Leith schoolmaster, and at one time a corn merchant in North Leith, had removed to Liverpool, and from there sent a letter announcing a gift of £10 per annum to be distributed to the poor on Christmas Eve. Another donor provided coal at Christmas time, and in January 1810 the session heard that its committee had distributed 23 tons to "about ninety inhabitants, and none had less than 5 cwt". Mr Ramsay of Chancelot received the hearty thanks of the session for the free use of his horses and carts to distribute the Christmas coal, with the hope that his kindness would be continued. (80) One way and another, it seems to have been possible to be poor in North Leith, and to survive.

South Leith was a much more populous parish, and here also there was more than one community within the bounds. The ancient township, with Yardheads and St. Anthony's, formed one village in the early eighteenth century, but at Abbeyhill, Calton and Restalrig there were separate hamlets with their own way of life; and Restalrig in particular had

78. NLR. 25.1.1785.
79. He was later Sir John Gladstone of Fasque, father of the Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone. In North Leith records the name is invariably spelt "Gladstones".
80. NLR. 24.12.1816.
a sense of its ancient standing and importance. The old life of Restalrig was suddenly destroyed in 1560, when the parish church was dismantled and the people directed to worship at St. Mary's kirk in South Leith. The awareness of being an ancient community did not fade in the village however, and in a curious and unique way a certain independence came to be maintained, through the Restalrig Society of Friendly Contributors.(31)

When St. Mary's became the parish church of South Leith in 1609, Lord Balmerino, with the other heritors and farmers of Restalrig formed themselves into a friendly society. After the transfer of the parish church and minister to Leith, Balmerino retained the chapel of St. Triduana and the adjacent churchyard, under his control. The friendly society "purchased mortcloths at their own expense for the use of themselves and others, and the money that arose from them was given to the poor."(32) How effective the friendly society was on behalf of the poor, or, indeed, how active it was in any respect throughout the seventeenth century, cannot be known, for no records have come down from that period. Probably it had become moribund. Its early history

81. The following narrative is based on an article by the Rev. W. Burnett on the Restalrig Society of Friendly Contributors, in the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, iv.
82. Burnett, ibid, 120.
is only known to us through a "Memorial anent the Kirk of Restalrig" which prefaces the first surviving volume of the Society's minutes, and was apparently written about 1795.

The friendly society was reconstituted in 1726 as the "Restalrig Society of Friendly Contributors" (or of "Neighbour Contributors"). Under the patronage of Lord John Balmerino and his son Lord James Couper, there were thirteen original members - Mrs Wood "heiress of Warriston and portioner of Restalrig", 4 heritors, 6 farmers, a writer and the local schoolmaster, Patrick Petrie, who seems to have acted as secretary.

The new Society began by purchasing four mortcloths - two were velvet and the others "common" - larger and smaller cloths of each kind. Mortcloths were then deemed indispensable at a funeral, when it was seemly to cover the rough work done on a cheap coffin with a sumptuous-looking black cloth. All the incorporations had their own mortcloths, and every kirk session owned a set. The hiring charges went to the poor fund of the corporation or of the session. The Friendly Contributors of Restalrig intended to look after their own village poor in this way, and they made an impressive start:
Given to the Poor of Restalridge of the Mony arising from the Mortcloths.

To Robert Fleeming and his wife when sick. £1. 4. -
To Archd Rae and his son when sick. 1. 9. -
To a supply to P.P. . . . . . . . . . 24. -.- -
To certain uses belonging to the Poor. . . . 2.12. -

£29. 5. -

"P.P." was probably Patrick Petrie the schoolmaster, who was employed by the Society. Over the years however, the poor did not benefit very much, since the Society was engaged for a long time in paying for the mortcloths they had bought, and for which, with some adjuncts, they had acknowledged their debt for £382. 8. 2 Scots. Hiring fees were £3 Scots for the large velvet cloth; 30s for the small velvet; 30s for the large common cloth, and 15s for the small common cloth. The "Keeper of the Cloths" - Mr Petrie once more - was also entitled to a fee over and above the hire charge. This scale of fees was applicable to "the Contributors and the Inhabitants of the Toun and Barrony of Restalrig". Strangers paid double. The one benefit the poor of Restalrig could rely on getting from the Society was a cheap burial, for "It is hereby provided that the Treasurer and Assistants and their successors in office shall give Gratis the above Cloaths to any person not Capable to pay for the same..."(83)

It cost £1 sterling to become a "contributor", and in 1737 a general meeting of contributors awarded themselves the

83. Burnett, ibid, 164.
further privilege of hiring mortcloths at half the price charged to the villagers. (84) The fact that the benefit to the contributors would be at the cost of the poor, does not seem to have influenced the meeting at all. Contributors were really investors, concerned to secure an adequate return for their money.

The Society did however, build a school adjacent to the churchyard, and continued to pay a schoolmaster. The building of the school in 1771 not only used up all the funds of the Society, but brought the Contributors once more deeply into debt. Nevertheless a village school was undeniably a major benefit to the community, and emphasised the value of the Society of Friendly Contributors to Restalrig.

The kirk session of South Leith looked on the Restalrig Society's activities with no friendly eye, and in 1326 they tried to obtain legal possession of Restalrig churchyard. This effort failed, and six years later the Friendly Contributors got a decree in the Court of Session declaring them to be proprietors of the church and churchyard of Restalrig. (85)

A somewhat similar Society in Calton, dating from 1631, and interested in burials in the Calton burial ground, has

84. Burnett, ibid, 167.
85. SIR. 7.2.1826 and note.
left even less information about its activities. The Calton Society seems to have petered out in the course of the eighteenth century, but the Restalrig Contributors only wound up their Society in 1868, when they transferred all their rights and privileges to the Home Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland. (86)

Robert Chambers observed,

"The number of poor in Leith appears to be very great. They are crowded into all the various mean alleys, and loiter on the streets in all directions beseeching alms from the passengers, or melting them into compassion by more indirect appeals from fiddles and other instruments of music. The favourite station of these musical mendicants has been from time immemorial the thorofare of Leith Walk, where at one time every loathsome object was daily exhibited to the passengers." (87)

Chambers should certainly have known, for he once kept a bookstall on Leith Walk. There was however one charity which did much good in removing from Leith many young boys who might well have grown up to swell the number of beggars on the streets. From the mid-eighteenth century the Marine Society arranged for boys to enter the Royal Navy. This was a national organisation which over the years gave many Leith boys a free passage to London. They were medically examined at Leith, and issued with clothes and bedding before being sent on board ships of war. This Society came into existence through the urgent need for recruits in the Seven Years

86. W. Burnett, ibid, 185.
87. Chambers' Gazetteer of Scotland, ii. 710.
War. 5452 men went to sea through the Society, and 4787 boys were shipped as officers' servants, while they learned to be seamen. When peace came in 1763 the Marine Society did much to help discharged seamen, including 342 boys. At their meeting on 12th July 1764 the Society resolved to continue their benevolent activities, although the country was now at peace.

"Resolved: That we will, as usual, select those objects who are the most pitiable, and in the lowest stages of human misery, preferring the orphans of sailors and soldiers, if such should appear, and particularly such boys in general, whose parishes are not ascertained, and who are in most danger of being bred up as vagabonds to beggary or robbery; and that we will place them out as young, and as speedily, after they apply to us, or we discover them, as possible, to all businesses relating to the sea; as mariners, fishermen, and particularly fishermen in new fisheries, boatmen of all kinds, shipwrights, shipjoiners, anchor smiths, ropemakers, sailmakers, blockmakers, riggers, caulkers, boatbuilders and oarmakers, in the merchants service."

And while making cautious enquiry and sharp assessment of their proteges, they would provide them with clothes and apprentice-fees. In this work the Marine Society claimed to "do a service which no other charity performs, and with less money than the nature of any other charitable institution seems to admit of."(88)

Inevitably the question of an assessment for poor relief had eventually to be considered. The heritors viewed the proposal with distaste, but the aftermath of the French wars

88. EBC. 22.8.1764.
brought the matter to a head. Unemployment figures rose alarmingly, and a flood of ex-servicemen, many of them disabled, swelled the hordes of beggars on the streets. From year to year a decision was postponed, but finally meetings of heritors and of elders were called in South and North Leith in August 1828. An assessment of 8d per £1 of real rent was agreed, the landlord to pay 4d and the tenant 4d. (89) This was the final effort to cope with the problem of the poor in Leith before the town attained the status of an independent burgh.

The social problems of education and of poor relief merged at certain points, and the poor in turn were commingled with and inseparable from the sick in certain aspects of the community life in eighteenth century Leith. Sickness ravaged the population to a degree unimaginable in the present century. The Burial Registers for Leith are enlightening, if horrifying. For the year 1705, 222 burials were recorded in South Leith, of which 138 were children under 10 years of age - 62% of the total. From that date until the middle of the century the figures read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Burials</th>
<th>Children under 10</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89. EEC. 24.7.1828; NLR. 24.9.1833.
After 1750 the records are too incomplete for any figures to be reliable. North Leith kept no burial register until the nineteenth century, but the figures for that period indicate that there was no appreciable improvement in the incidence of deaths among children over the early eighteenth century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Burials</th>
<th>Children under 10</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>53.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>65.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>56.6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>61.6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>43.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>48.8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>46.7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>56.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>56.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>56.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child mortality in 1808 was even higher than usual, because of an epidemic of measles in that year, which accounted for 77 out of the total of 180 burials.

Diagnosis was often vague, and medical ignorance matched popular credulity. In a breakdown of the 1805 mortality figures for North Leith, we find that two died of "nerves", seven of "water in the head", and one each of "bloody issue", "cramp in the stomach" and "convulsion", and a negro on board H.M.S. Roebuck actually had the ill-nature to die of "sulks":(90)

90. cf. Burial Registers in Public Record Office.
Various societies directed their efforts to the relief of sickness and distress. Among these were the Destitute Sick Society, the Female Society for Indigent and Sick Women, the Sympathetic Society — and in the Mariners' Hospital, and the King James Hospital the sick found some asylum. But the kind of help offered in these hospitals consisted of board and lodging rather than nursing, for sickness and disease were still great mysteries, and generally the most that could be done for an invalid was to make him as comfortable as possible, and commend him to God. The charitably minded were much more confident when dealing with emergencies. The Humane Society in Leith specialised in the treatment of men fished from the water in a semi-drowned condition. The following extract is a good example of this Society at work, and of public reaction to their efforts:

"On Friday the 20th inst a boat belonging to the Prince of Wales revenue cutter was overset at the beacon, opposite Leith harbour. The crew, consisting of 5 men, were in the most imminent danger of perishing, as it was a considerable time before assistance could be procured. When taken out of the water, they were much exhausted, and two of them apparently dead. They were immediately carried to the house occupied for the purpose by the Humane Society of Leith, and we have much pleasure in stating, that, by a laudable perseverance in the means of recovery, they were all restored. The utility of this institution we have on a variety of occasions pointed out, and among the many benevolent societies depending on public subscription, none are more deserving of encouragement. Of 60 cases which have occurred since the Society was established, 48 have been rescued from an untimely death, and restored to their families and society." (91)

The Edinburgh and Leith Humane Society was united with the Leith Dispensary in 1826. There was need for the work of the Dispensary. At the annual meeting of the combined societies in 1828, a year's work was succinctly described in a sentence:

"During the last year 1480 of the sick poor have received Medicines and Advice gratuitously, and seven individuals apparently drowned, were, after considerable Exertions, restored to life." (92)

If the Dispensary succeeded in weaning some of the sick from using the patent medicines and quack remedies of those days, then it performed a useful service. "Dr Brodum's Restorative Nervous Cordial" was widely advertised as able to cure 26 named groups of illnesses, from loss of appetite to plague, from heartburn to jaundice, (93) but comment is superfluous, since the twentieth century has not outgrown the passion for such all-embracing remedies.

Preventive medicine was an idea that had not yet taken root even in medical minds, but the first hint of the revolution in thinking that was to come, was given to the world in 1798 when Edward Jenner published his method of vaccination against smallpox. It is said that a Dr Anderson of Leith was speedily in correspondence with Jenner, and introduced vaccination to Leith soon after. This tradition

92. EEC. 10.1.1828.
93. EEC. 2.4.1796.
cannot be verified, but out of 97 burials registered in North Leith in 1804, only five were smallpox cases, and in the following year only a single death from smallpox occurred. When it is realised that at this period over 50,000 deaths from the disease took place every year in Great Britain and Ireland, the figures for North Leith are noteworthy. (94)

One type of illness ought to be mentioned, if only for the part it played in the life of the community. Insanity was a condition everyone was aware of, and to some extent lived with, for the lunatic was left largely undisturbed unless he turned violent. The mental defective or half-wit was present in every village community, and on the whole the "daftie" was kindly treated, and was generally a successful beggar. (95) But when the lunatic became a public nuisance, the kirk session had a difficult problem on their hands. Bedlam, the Edinburgh lunatic asylum, was run on business lines - a fact brought home to the elders in North Leith in 1788.

"The Moderator produced to the Session a Letter directed to them from Mr Richard Richardson ... setting forth that unless the Session would give their obligation for the maintenance of Alexander Philip's son, carpenter, now in Bedlam, that he would immediately be turned out." (96)

The session quickly agreed to maintain the patient; but

94. Address to the Revd the Ministers of the Church of Scotland from the Managers of the Vaccine Institution at Edinburgh, 1803, 4.
96. MiR. 29.1.1788.
several such cases could become a serious drain on the poor fund.

Bedlam adjoined the Workhouse at Bristo, and was the subject of a report by the Workhouse managers in 1806.

"All attempts towards medical treatment were in a great measure excluded as inapplicable to a disorder supposed to be placed beyond the reach of human art," the report said, and went on,

"The buildings are extremely small and situated in a confined and airless spot, without any of those local accommodations and advantages which are now universally regarded as indispensable to the treatment of lunatic patients."(97)

In 1818 North Leith session had another lunatic on their hands, and wrote to Mr George Spankie, the superintendent of the Edinburgh Asylum for his terms. In reply Mr Spankie said:

"Dear Sir, The person mentioned in yours of this date can be admitted into our Asylum upon payment of the Board. Our terms are £20 per annum, paid in quarterly payments of £5 per advance, £1. 1. - to the Surgeon at Entry and £2. 2. - per annum for Cloaths, if their friends do not furnish them. The above are our terms for all Strangers & those only are admitted Gratis who have a legal claim upon us. In this case the claim is on your Parish."(98)

After a long dispute with the parish of Geres in Fife, where this lunatic woman had been born, and after obtaining an opinion from the Procurator Fiscal, North Leith finally became responsible for her maintenance. She was confined in the Edinburgh Asylum for the year during which the argument continued; and when the kirk session at last accepted

97. EBC. 15.3.1806.
98. NLR. 29.9.1818.
responsibility for her, they had discovered a cheaper asylum at Fisherrow. Once she was settled there, the treasurer submitted his statement to the session:

"Account of Money Disbursed on Account of Janet McDonald.

"To cash paid her Father from 13th Aug. to 2nd Sept Inclusive at 5s per week for maintenance and care of her till it would be seen what effect the Medicines she was then receiving from the Dispensary would have on her health. 

£15. 6.

"Cash paid for postage of a letter to Daniel Monro to see if he could take her into his Asylum for Lunatics .

- . . . 

- 2

"Cash paid Mr Wilson the Sheriff Clerk for the City of Edinburgh for Sheriff's Licence to place this Woman in a madhouse pursuant to 55 Geo III. c.69

2. 2.

"Cash for postage of a letter from Mr Wilson with the Sheriff's licence .

- - . 1

"Cash paid a man, horse and cart, with Tolls, to bring her from Leith to Fisherrow.

- 6.

"Cash paid Dan. Monro for her Maintenance and Lodging, including cloths and bedding from 3rd Septr to 2nd Decr 1819.

5. - .

£8. 3. 3 (99)

Charity was a cold business. It could hardly have been otherwise when such tremendous need was provided for from such small resources. The common good demanded not only generous subscriptions, and an even-handed justice in administration, not too easily moved by the pathetic and often heart-rending cases which came before the kirk session.

as their last hope. By 1833 the elders knew they were losing the battle to cope with the poor, and that it was more than time for a wider authority, with greater resources, to take over.
THE COMMON WEAL

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During the 140 years of this survey Leith developed from a village into a town, but the rate of growth was not constant. Dr Webster estimated there were 9405 inhabitants in Leith in 1755, which represents a population increase, since 1694, of almost 100%. Spread over more than half a century, this is not a remarkable increase, and Maitland in 1753 could still refer to Leith as a village; but 25 years later David Loch reckoned the population at about 11,000, and the first census, in 1801, showed 15,272 people living in the port. Thirty years later this figure had swollen to 25,855. Such figures might almost be represented as a geometric progression, for the population which almost doubled in the first 60 years of our period, doubled again in the next 60 years, and this rate of increase continued in the 1830s. During this same century and a half there was a massive shift of population into the Central Lowlands of Scotland, but Leith, which was the fifth largest town in the country in the mid-eighteenth century, still retained that position in 1831.

The whole aspect of the port was transformed. At the

end of the seventeenth century Leith was wholly contained, south of the river, within the lines of the crumbling ramparts, while North Leith clustered round its church and citadel. Newhaven followed its own way of life a mile further west. The hinterland was gentle sloping, unenclosed countryside. The next three generations enclosed the land, turned much of the best of it into market gardens, used more space for villas with large gardens, and some with small estates attached. The village itself burst through the old walls, pushing new streets towards the Links, stringing new houses along the roads. Industry made its own demands on space. Shipping crowded into the harbour found the greatest difficulty in berthing, although the pier was added to and extended again and again. Shipyards on the north bank increased in number and extent, and the ancillary carpenters' yards, blacksmiths' sheds, block- and sailmakers' lofts, chandlers' shops, warehouses, timber yards multiplied and crowded together. Shipmasters and mates sought lodgings, seamen wanted refreshment and relaxation, vessels outward bound bought provisions, so that vaults and lofts were extended, counting-houses enlarged. The village became engulfed in the thriving town.

One disconcerting result of industrial expansion is that old place-names disappear and are forgotten, and this impoverishes the distinctive atmosphere of any locality.
This careless unconcern with the history and topography of Leith is hastening the day when there will be neither character nor distinction left in the port. The process of forgetting continues without pause. Today "Quarryholes" is a name still known to middleaged Leithers, because the last remnant of the farm of Nether Quarryholes was still unoccupied waste ground in the 1920s. Now that the area is built over the name and its associations will be lost to future generations, unless it is newly applied to some street or building or public house. Many of the present street names refer to undistinguished builders or proprietors. Glover Street and Couper Street, Tennant Street and Waddell Place, Smith's Place and Laurie Street provide a catalogue of worthy citizens it would be no great loss to forget. But no street name reminds us of Robert Barton, Leith's greatest sailor, or George Sinclair, its most versatile and distinguished schoolmaster. Nothing has been done for John Home the dramatist, nor for the family of Balmerino. Many place names were not only picturesque but kenspeckle: the Green Tree is now part of Giles Street; Laugh-at-Leith, at the foot of Lochend Road, has gone without trace. Who knows now of the Barnyard Park or the Beir Hill, or the Fairy Holes, beside Newhaven Road? Tye Quilts, Threesteps, Clayholes, Balram's Walls, Oliver's Mount — these and many other names in general use in the eighteenth century have disappeared
entirely, and Leith is much the poorer for this loss.

Development in North Leith was slower, but the same obliterations took place in course of time. The hamlet of Damhead stood where the river was dammed for the mill-race at Leith Mills. Hillhousefield House has now been demolished, and with it has gone even the memory of the village of Hillhousefield. And where, save in some book, shall we find the names of Monypenny or Kirkwood - the families owning the Pilrig estate long before the Balfours?

In the early eighteenth century the growth of Leith required no extension beyond the ancient bounds. The growing points were to be discerned along the Kirkgate, the Rotten Row, the Yardheads. These thoroughfares still had vacant lots and large gardens on either side. As the need arose closes were built, and generally known by the builder's name - who, as often as not, occupied the principal house in the close. Originally a close was an enclosed, private area in front of a house. Around this yard it was profitable for the owner to erect other dwellings, and the entrance was provided with a gate. Later, the gates disappeared, but the close remained a cul-de-sac, unlike the wynd, which was a thoroughfare, open both to pedestrians and wheeled traffic. The narrow entrance to the close ensured that none but pedestrians could even enter.(5)

5. cf. Charles B.Boog Watson, MS Notes, i.87.
There never was any need in Leith for the skyscraper type of building characteristic of old Edinburgh, for there was plenty available space beyond the old ramparts. One famous tenement, however, stood in the midst of the roadway at the foot of Tolbooth Wynd. This was Babylon, presumably erected in the mid-seventeenth century, for by 1734 it was a ruin, and was then rebuilt. In 1750 the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th stories were advertised for sale, (6) and how many more stories there were, there is no knowing. The name "Babylon" seems to have been acquired by this building in its later years, for it latterly had a notorious reputation for vice and violence.

It became more obvious that Leith was growing, when little groups of cottages began to appear outside the old bounds. A growing town meant increasing traffic along the approach roads, and new building tended to concentrate along these lines. Just outside the Bonnytoun port - a gateway in the town fort where Cables Wynd now joins Great Junction Street - a cluster of cottages appeared, and was known to the neighbourhood as Lang-gate side. The Lang Gate was the road to Edinburgh by Bonnington and Broughton. This was an ancient route, and an alternative to the Easter Road. Until 1774 Leith Walk was mainly a pedestrian way. A few carts made use of it on short, local trips, but it was only

6. BEO. 20.2.1750.
after the North Bridge in Edinburgh was opened that Leith Walk became the Wester Road to Leith, with a fast-growing, two-way stream of traffic. And long before this development, houses had been appearing along the side of the road from the Foot of the Walk towards Pilrig, and this locality was well enough identified to Leithers as Walkside.

General Leslie's troops in 1650 had thrown up a defence work against the threat of an English attack on the city, but the long earthen ridge from Leith to the Calton was never called into use, for Scottish resistance ended at the Battle of Dunbar. Before long this embankment was in constant use as the shortest route between the city and the port. It was not in any sense a made road, consisting simply of piled earth, without either bottoming or surfacing, so it was at first restricted to pedestrians. Even so, it was constantly in need of repair, and the unvarying remedy was a cartload of gravel thrown down and left for the traffic to grind into the surface. Defoe described it in 1725 as "a very handsome gravel walk, twenty feet broad, which is kept in good repair at the public charge, and no horses suffered to come upon it."(7) Defoe presumably meant that riding was forbidden on the Walk, for carters had been using it for many years before 1725. When wheeled traffic began to use the crown of the road, foot-passengers were driven to make their own

7. Daniel Defoe, A Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain. Vol iii "Account and Description of Scotland" p.35.
side-walks, several feet below the surface of the ridge, on either side. Despite the horse-drawn traffic, however, this route, already long known as "The Walk", remained just that, although sometimes distinguished as the "Wester road to Leith".

The North Bridge was opened to traffic in 1772, and soon a plan was before the town council, and an "Act for making the western road to Leith" passed on 17th April 1774. Now that direct communication between Edinburgh and Leith was opened along this way, it was proposed to make a proper and adequate road of it; but for many years this remained nothing but a good idea. Edinburgh was now expanding rapidly to the north, where the classical lines of the New Town were beginning to be seen. The improvement of Leith Walk had to take its place in the general scheme of building, and the town council kept the plan for making Leith Walk well down the priority list. Over many years Leith Walk was made a paved street bit by bit, here a little, there a little.(8) As late as 1815 a writer commented:

"It is but within these very few years that the entrance to the town from Glasgow, from Dalkeith, and, we may add, from Leith, were in a safe state, being in winter time nearly impassible; now these roads are not only completely paved, but altered so as to make the different approaches direct, and of a width corresponding with the consequence of a great city."(9)

A series of Parliamentary Acts from 1714 onward, estab-
lished and developed the system of tolls on the main roads of

8. MTG. 4.3.1789.
9. EEC. 12.8.1815.
the country, and road repairs were expected to be financed out of these tolls. After 1751 however, the roads leading from Edinburgh to Leith were expressly excluded from all the Road Acts, and were made the direct responsibility of the Magistrates of Edinburgh. (10) The first toll-bars were set up in the vicinity of Edinburgh under the Turnpike Road Act of 1751, and the Toll at Bonnington dates from that time; (11) but it was only in 1764 that toll-bars were placed on all roads leading from the city. (12) Tolls were collected by farming out the various toll-bars for a year at a time. (13) Road repairs were carried out sporadically, for the income from tolls was nowhere near adequate to maintain the roads, and only when public clamour could no longer be ignored, were the meagre funds drawn upon.

What might have proved a more satisfactory solution to the problem of road maintenance was proposed to the town council as early as 1686, when John Hunter in Abbeyhill, and John Paterson, a merchant, together made an offer

"to repair, uphold and maintain the public streets, including...the calsay of Leith, public wynds and streets thereof...&c...and all other calsays outwith the City that the town has been in use, or obliged to repair and uphold; for as long as may be agreed upon." (14)

10. cf. 24 Geo II, c.35; 4 Geo III, c.86; 29 Geo III, c.105.  
11. "Septuagenarian", Edin. Even. News, 29.10.1934. The Toll system remained until the Roads and Bridges Act of 1878, which abolished all road tolls, but allowed county road authorities five years' grace, so that tolls and toll-bars only came to an end in 1883.  
12. 4 Geo III, c.86. cf. MTC. 14.1.1834. ccxv.95.  
13. BEO. 23.6.1764.  
Terms proposed were £3000 per annum for the first three years, and £2000 annually thereafter. The Town offered £3000 a year for two years, and £2000 in following years. Whether anything was settled eventually does not appear, but Leith continued in its former state of neglect: and it is worth remarking that whereas in the late seventeenth century the streets of Leith and Edinburgh alike were in an appalling state of filth and disrepair, the city streets were transformed in the course of the next century and a half, but in 1831 the Chambers brothers saw fit to remark:

"The town of Leith is equally disagreeable from the filthiness of its streets. A person in proceeding out of the boundaries of Edinburgh into those of the seaport will perceive an immediate change in the appearance of the streets. Such an evil may perhaps be chiefly attributed to a laxity in the discipline of the police, and partly to the trading character of the town."(15)

Maybe; but another share of the blame for the long continued neglect of the streets of Leith, (in itself only one aspect of a much more widespread neglect) must be attributed to the uneasy, grudging, suspicious relations between the city and the port.

One of the privileges accorded the citizens of royal burghs was that they were never called upon to perform any statute labour on the highroads, for the burgh revenue was supposed to meet such costs. It was also imagined that roads from the ports would be maintained out of the petty customs. A legal decision at Perth in 1757 changed all this,

15. Chambers' Gazetteer of Scotland, ii.711.
when it was ruled that the inhabitants of royal burghs were responsible for the maintenance of roads outside the royalty.(16) Edinburgh magistrates then decided to introduce statute labour on the roads, and citizens could escape this obligation only by paying a composition. This action by the magistrates was homologated by the Parliamentary Act of 1764, which stipulated that "composition money paid by the inhabitants of Leith for their statute-work shall be applied towards repairing and keeping in repair the several roads and avenues leading to the said town.", excepting Leith Walk and Easter Road.(17)

Easter Road was the most ancient route between the capital and the port, and this is where the first experiments in transporting paying passengers by coach were carried out. As early as 1610 Henry (or Henric) Anderson, from Stralsund in Pomerania, applied for and secured a 15-year monopoly to run coaches between Edinburgh and Leith.(18) Whether this service ever came into existence remains an open question, for coaches were then virtually unknown in Scotland, and Anderson proposed to import not only coaches, but horses and even drivers! At any rate Anderson and his coaches had long been forgotten, when in 1660 Adam Woodcock was given

16. Charles B. Boog Watson, MS Notes, vi.104.
17. 4 Geo III, c.86.
18. Leith Pilot Annual, 1889, 44. J. Campbell Irons repeats this, (Leith & Its Antiquities, ii.439) but neither of these authors mentions the original source of their facts.
liberty by the town council to set up a stage coach to travel between Edinburgh and Leith at a charge of one shilling, or fourpence sterling for a single individual. (19) This was twice the fare Anderson had been allowed to charge. Moreover, while Woodcock was supposed to be working mainly between Leith and Edinburgh, this arrangement was

"Bot (without) prejudice always to the said William Woodcock, to serve others going to and frae the country, to other places, as he and they can agree." (20)

"In this state of matters," dryly comments Campbell, "we may presume that the first inquiry would be, not 'When does the coach start for Leith?' but, 'Will there be a coach for Leith today?'" (21)

There is no more news of Woodcock, and the next effort to provide a stage coach for the run to Leith was made in 1677, when William Home (or Hume), an Edinburgh merchant, was granted a 12-year monopoly to run a four-horse coach carrying ten persons at 2s in summer and 3s in winter, between Edinburgh and Leith, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in summer, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in winter, leaving from a stance at the foot of Leith Wynd. (22) Home was not long in the business, and

19. Leith Pilot Annual, 1889, 44.
21. Alexander Campbell, ibid, 158.
22. MTC. 21.4.1677/ Home had his eye on richer pastures than the run between Leith and Edinburgh. In 1678 he negotiated an agreement with the Glasgow magistrates for a coach to run between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the terms of the indenture are of interest:— "At Glasgow the Saxt day of
transferred his monopoly to Alexander Daes, who was complaining to the town council of an infringement of his monopoly in 1682. (23) But Daes was dead before October 1684, when his widow brought a petition to the town council. (24) Several operators then seem to have taken over, and in 1686 the magistrates issued instructions that coaches were to be wind and rainproof, and that each owner must supply ten cartloads of shingle or gravel for road maintenance. (25)

The next man to think he could make a business out of running coaches to Leith was Robert Miller, an Edinburgh burgess. He obtained a 9-year monopoly in 1702, and seems to have been more successful than his predecessors, for the town now began to make rules and regulations for coaches.

August 1678 ... The foresaid parties finally agree that the said William Hume shall, with all diligence, have in readiness ane sufficient strong coach to run betwixt Edinbro' and Glasgow, to be drawn by sax able horses, to leave Edinbro' ilk Monday morning, and return again (God willing) ilk Saturday night..." The fare was to be £4.16.- Scots in summer and £5.8.- Scots in winter. "As the undertaking is arduous, and cannot be accomplished without assistance, the said Magistrates agree to give the said William Hume 200 merks a year for 5 years, the latter agreeing to run the coach for that period, whether passengers apply or not, is consideration of his having actually received 2 years premium in advance..." (EEC. 8.9.1828). It is improbable that Home could have kept both services going at once, considering he had been not much more than a year in business as proprietor of the Leith coach.

23. MTC. 23.8.1682. XXX 139.
24. MTC. 24.10.1684. XXX 1. 9.
25. MTC. 27.10.1686. XXXII. 44.
They must not be driven by young boys, and must carry lighted links, or similar lights, at night, and these must be carried in front of the coaches, or else fixed on the boxes. All coaches were forbidden on the Sabbath, except by special licence. (26)

Miller probably did not renew his monopoly, but gave up the business in 1711 or earlier. The next we hear of public transport is in 1722, when John Balfour and some associates formed the Leith Coaching Company. This firm took a feu immediately east of the Timber Bush, where they built coach-houses, stables, and a hay-yard. (27) Provided with a 21-year monopoly, the Company ran coaches for six passengers at threepence each in summer, fourpence in winter. (28) These fares proving uneconomic, they were increased in the spring of 1727 to fourpence for the summer and sixpence in winter. The increases hardly had time to take effect, when a disastrous fire destroyed the premises and equipment. The partners claimed to be ruined, and unable to carry on the business; but now there was a felt need for the service, and a public subscription produced sufficient capital for the firm to make a fresh start - but it was almost a year after the fire before the coaches were on the road again. The announcement in the Evening Courant would be glad tidings for those who

27. MTC. 17.8.1722. X/IX. 490.
found the mile and a half between the city and the port rather much for their elderly legs:

"We hear that the hourly Stage Coach between this City and Leith, which for some time bypass has been interrupted, by reason of the great loss the Proprietors sustained by the late fire, which consumed their Stables, Horses, &c., will this Day begin to go again." (29)

That is the last news of the Leith Coaching Company. It might be inferred that the service continued with that quiet efficiency that makes no news; but if the company gave up there would similarly be nothing to say. It could not have been easy to keep the coaches travelling over the appalling surface of the Easter Road, summer and winter, with any pretence of maintaining a stated time-table.

There had certainly been a break in the coaching service for some time previous to 1751, for in December of that year John Paxton, innkeeper at the White Lion in the Canongate, announced his intention to start up a "New Stage Coach for Leith", using a stance at William Burnet's, a little above the Covenant Close, and running to David Watson's, near the Timber Bush. "The Mark of the said Coach, a White Lion on each Door." (30) One coach would hardly provide an adequate service: thirty years earlier the Leith Coaching Company had used two coaches to maintain an hourly service each way, and since then the road had grown worse. Still, one coach was presumably better than none.

29. EEC. 25-29.7.1728.
These coaches had more to contend with than the abominable state of the road. This was the hey-day of highway robbery. Fortunately there was more than one coach on the road when the following adventure took place:

"Tuesday last betwixt 7 and 8 o'Clock at Night, as one of the Stage Coaches was returning from Leith to Edinburgh, in which were four Ladies and two Gentlemen, they were attacked on the Road near Mr Alston's Parks by a Fellow on Foot, with a cockt Pistol in his Hand, who demanded their Money. Two of the Ladies had already delivered him their Pockets, being obliged to cut them off with their Scissors, and one of the Gentlemen a Handful of Silver, and the Rest ready to give up theirs, when happily four other Coaches came up, which obliged the Villain to retire with what Booty he had got. In the Ladies' Pockets there was in Money to the Extent of about 30 Shillings, besides Keys and some other Things. The timely coming up of the four Coaches prevented the Loss being much greater, as there were several Watches and other Things of very considerable Value in the Coach at the Time."(31)

It was almost too easy for the highwayman. Fortunately stage coaches were not the only wheeled vehicles on the roads. The rescuing coaches were hackneys.

While the stage coaches had been providing intermittent service to the public, hackney coaches had also been available for hire - the early equivalent of the taxi. They appear to have been on the roads for as long as the stage coaches, for there is a town council minute of 1669 ordering hackney coaches using the causey to pay ten merks yearly.(32) Hackneys were ordered to be numbered in 1673, a list of owners was

31. EEC. 24.1.1754. William Alston, W.S., was tacksman of the farm of Upper Quarryholes. (MTC. 8.3.1758).
32. MTC. 18.11.1669. xx.8/10 vx.1.98 /xxiv.371.
drawn up, and the fares regulated. (33) Over the years that followed, both town council and coach operators grew careless, until public complaint of "Abuses and Oppression" drove the council to take action in 1725. The magistrates summoned "all the Masters of the Hackney Coaches in Canongate and Leith" to appear before them. They were each presented with several copies of printed regulations, so that both they and each of their employees might have a copy. Every coach must be numbered, and a complaining customer could demand to see a copy of the regulations. If still dissatisfied, the aggrieved party could note the number of the coach and complain to the magistrates. (34) So matters were arranged for the better-off citizens who could afford to hire hackneys.

David Gun was a hackney coachmaster, with premises at the foot of the Canongate; and in 1765 he decided to compete with the stage coaches. Hitherto the hackney had been the dearer way to travel, since it was private; but going by hackney rather than by stage coach was not noticeably quicker. At this period the two stage coaches in the Edinburgh-Leith run were great, heavy, springless contraptions. Each had a coachman, postilion and three horses. David Gun now proposed to operate two machines on the journey, and claimed he would cover the distance in a quarter of an hour. The coaches

33. MTC. 29.10.1673. ××vii.170.
34. EEC. 3-5.8.1725.
would leave at hourly intervals - and in time at half-hourly intervals, if the demand justified it. This was not a public service; the "Leith Fly" as it was called, would have to be hired; but there were considerable advantages. Hitherto, if a Leith merchant wished to travel to Edinburgh and back with the same coach, he could have at most but a few minutes in the city. If he missed the coach on its return journey he had to wait an hour for the next one. With the Fly he could reach Edinburgh in fifteen minutes, spend up to three-quarters of an hour doing his business, and return with the same vehicle. "The Machines are hung on steel springs," explained the proprietor, "are drove with two horses, and hold four people, and will run fully faster than any common Hackney." (35)

From this time matters began rapidly to improve. By 1767 stage coaches were running far beyond Leith, to Dalkeith, Musselburgh, Haddington, Stirling, Perth, Glasgow and London. (36)
There was a new spirit of enterprise on the roads now. Three years before David Gun's "Fly" Leithers must have rubbed their eyes one Saturday morning at the end of September.
The story in the invaluable Courant is well worth transcribing:

"We hear that on Saturday last Mr Roger Parkinson went from his house in Canongate down to Leith in his most surprising machine, which goes upon land without the assistance of any animal to draw it; and at 9 in the

35. EEC. 6.7.1765.
morning set out from the shore of Leith to the Island of Inchkeith, with three servants and himself in it; to the surprise of a great number of spectators; and in less than two hours reached the island, though five or six miles distant; where waiting till evening to avoid the crowd, he was overtaken with a storm, and detained all night upon the island, and was given up by everybody for lost; but to the wonder and astonishment of numbers, Mr Parkinson and his three servants landed safe at Leith at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning."(37)

Wheeled traffic was now increasing to such a degree that Parliament made its first attempt at control, with the Traffic Regulation (Scotland) Act of 1772. Identification was of prime importance, so every commercial vehicle was now compelled to exhibit the name and address of the owner. The driver of a chaise must have another person riding one of the horses. It was forbidden for two vehicles to drive abreast, and so obstruct the highway; and "Drivers of loaded Horses &c., and Drivers of Carts, Coaches and Carriages, shall on meeting other Horses or Carriages, drive to the left hand or near side". Penalty not exceeding 20s nor less than 5s.(38) Thus and at this time was the rule of driving on the left introduced.

Until well past the middle of the eighteenth century it was more economical, and often much more feasible to travel by sea. The fare from Leith to London for cabin passengers was two guineas, and for steerage one guinea. And in one advertisement the further inducement was added: "N.B. The

37. EEC. 1.10.1760.
38. Scots Statutes Revised.
Cabbin passengers to be 2 gns and each a single bed, and the best of usage." (39) There was in fact a good deal of grumbling about ill-usage of passengers, bad food and poor accommodation, but the development of better facilities by road forced the shipping companies to pay better attention to their passenger traffic.

The early nineteenth century was the high season of the stage coach, and in 1806 coaches for Leith were leaving William Bell's in the Edinburgh High Street every half hour, and separate coaches for Newhaven ran three times a day. As well as the coaches from Bell's, opposite the Tron Kirk, there was also a half-hourly service from Porteous's at the head of Covenant Close. Tickets from the High Street to the Shore cost sixpence. (40) At the same time travelling by hackney coach from either the Old or New Town of Edinburgh to Leith cost 2s 6d - and hackney passengers also paid a 3d toll at the toll-bar on Leith Walk, although if they did the return journey the same day they did not pay a second toll. Hackneys travelling into the country paid 6d per mile King's Duty, beyond the toll-bars. (41)

The escalating population made the introduction of the omnibus almost inevitable, although when the first omnibuses arrived in the city in the 1830s the stage coach was not

39. EEC. 4.6.1766; 11.6.1766.
40. P.O.Directories, 1300-07.
41. P.O.Directory, 1804-5.
immediately forced off the road, and continued to receive popular support for another twenty years. The advent of the horse-drawn omnibus comes right at the end of our period, but something of the manners and humour of those days is conveyed by an article in The Scotsman, printed while the omnibus was still a novelty:

"Never hail a galloping omnibus...by employing (such a driver) you not only put your own neck in jeopardy, but you encourage cruelty and ruffianism...

"Being seated, keep your knees close together... if you don't) you thereby occupy the space of two people... Besides, it is a very unpicturesque attitude, and displays a susquepedality of paunch to great disadvantage.

"Never stare the women out of countenance... If you must stare, stare at a man.

"Don't intrude your talk upon those who don't want it. Most people are of opinion that the clatter of an omnibus's windows is quite enough noise without the addition of coxcomb chatter.

"Don't bring brown paper parcels with you into an omnibus - nor bundles of any sort. An omnibus is not a van...

"Never turn up your nose at your fellow passengers; but whenever you feel your gorge rising at their humble condition, recollect that they pay the same fare as you do, and that you are all travelling at the humble price of one penny per mile!

"Don't spit upon the straw - and take care never to blow your nose with such energy as to startle your fellow travellers.

"When you are about to alight, have your money ready in the exact coin; the conductor is not a banker, that he should give you change."(42)

The fact that stage coaches were running between Edinburgh and Newhaven at the beginning of the nineteenth

42. The Scotsman, 7.9.1836.
century is evidence of progress in another direction. The road to Newhaven, via the village of Broughton, and Bonnington Mills, involved crossing the Water of Leith at the Mills. The wooden bridge there had always been at risk, and time and again was severely damaged, and even carried away when the river was in spate. On at least two occasions, in 1747, and again in 1761, the town council granted the Newhaven fishermen £5 towards the cost of repairs,(43) but there were many other occasions when that vital link had to be re-established. Edinburgh never underestimated the importance of the road to Newhaven, and the fresh harvest of the sea. By contrast, the coast road between Newhaven and Leith was consistently neglected, to the extent it became a hazard at the best of times, and quite impassable in severe weather. The trouble came from the sea, which continually encroached on the roadway. Instead of buttressing the road, the town council in 1767 proposed to redirect the road somewhat south of the old route; but this did nothing to halt the advance of the sea. In 1810 William Glover, a well-known Leith wright, (commemorated in Glover Street), unsuccessfully applied to the town council for help in buttressing his house against the sea at Anchorfield, where the tide came to within twelve feet of the roadway.(44)

43. EEC. 8.11.1747; 17.6.1761.
44. MTC. 3.6.1767; 25.7.1810.
Other roads converging on Leith in the eighteenth century came from Lochend, from Restalrig, and Portobello; but these were hardly better than tracks. Portobello only came into existence when a seaman built himself a cottage with that name in 1742, but the path through the Figgate Whins, and along the coast towards Musselburgh was much older - a dangerous route, avoided after dark, when smugglers and footpads were apt to be more numerous than law-abiding citizens.

Apart from farm cottages there were few country houses around Leith in the early eighteenth century. Misbet of Craigentinny and Purves of Abbeyhill were old families and estates; Bonnington House and Hillhousefield House dated from the seventeenth century, and Pilrig House was erected in 1638. During the first fifty years of the eighteenth century, only a few more large houses appeared. The Incorporation of Mariners purchased land in 1720 and erected the farm-house of Trinity Mains - named from their convening-house in the Kirkgate. From this farm the district of Trinity was named. Thomas Peacock built Stanwell Lodge in 1747. He had been gardener at Stanwell Manor in Middlesex, and feued 6½ acres of the Pilrig estate for development as a nursery. Laverockbank was originally Larkbank. Maurice Trent, a Leith merchant, bought the land from the

45. James Grant, Old and New Edinburgh, iii.144.
47. John Russell, quoted by C.B.B.Watson, MS Notes, iii.9.
Crown in 1660, but does not appear to have built on it. Henry Mackenzie says the name derives from the large number of larks or laverocks which came thither in time of snow. In that unsentimental age they were caught and sold in Newhaven for eating. The erection of Laverockbank House banished the birds - to the Solway, it was said.\(^{(48)}\)

Another Leith wine merchant, Patrick Anderson, bought the land and built the house in 1748. Like Stanwell Lodge, the Laverockbank ground extended to 6 1/2 acres.\(^{(49)}\) Nurseries and market gardens were multiplying around Leith by the mid-century, for the land was fertile, the climate equable, and Edinburgh provided a large market near at hand. Another portion of the Pilrig estate was feued in 1750 to William Brown, who took over the area between the Stanwell Lodge ground and Junction Road, where he established a nursery and orchard, naming it Bowershall, after his wife, Grizel Bowers. When Junction Road Church was built in 1825 the apple trees of Bowershall brushed the windows.\(^{(50)}\)

Six and a half acres was the normal size of feu. Hew Craufurd had 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) acres from James Balfour in 1729, and built the mansion-house of Redbraes.\(^{(51)}\) Six years later the adjoining portion of the Pilrig lands - also 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) acres -

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49. Charles B. Boog Watson, MS Notes, xii.96.
50. Charles B. Boog Watson, ibid, x.217.
went to Humphrey Colquhoun. This was later known as Stewartfield, on the west side of the present Newhaven Road, at Bonnington Toll, and bounded by Broughton Road on the south and by Redbraes to the west. These houses were roomy, and extensively equipped, well-furnished with what that generation considered desirable for the normal life of a well-to-do family.

Hermitage House was somewhat bigger than others built at that time. Erected in 1753, it was rented from year to year by various families before Lady Fyfe settled there. The agent's description is informative, although naturally it mentions no defects:

"The House, which is all newly finished in the best manner, consists of a kitchen and scullery, 12 fire rooms, 2 without fires, 7 closets, several garret rooms and other conveniences, with a pipe of water into the kitchen. There are several Lodging rooms also in the pavilions, a coach and chaise-house, stables for 8 horses, a hay loft, vaulted cellars and other offices, and a gardener's house without the gate. The place is capable of lodging a large family very commodiously, and by its near situation and easy access may serve both for a town and country house. The possessor may also have any quantity of fine grass land from 8 to 20 acres, properly laid down and well watered, with the kitchen garden, and a long fruit wall planted with the choicest trees...&c..." (52)

It was considered a good selling point to be able to offer a residence suitable as a town or country house. The environs of Leith were then country quarters to the citizens of Edinburgh, and in the latter part of the century any house within a few minutes' walk of the sea was advertised as "good bathing quarters." (53)

52. EEC. 6.4.1758.
53. Edinburgh Advertiser, 22.1 - 2.2.1808.
The wine merchants of Leith then had money to invest, before the Napoleonic Wars brought hard times. James Chalmers bought land from the Hillhousefield and Bonnington estates, at the east end of Ferry Road. Madeira Street, which runs through the ground Chalmers bought, reminds us of his business. This section of his purchase, north of Ferry Road, was from the lands of Bonnington, and the portion south of the Ferry Road, now Keddie Park, was from Hillhousefield. Chalmers built Leith Mount, surrounding the house with extensive gardens and a pond. He died in 1791, and his heirs sold 4½ acres of the Hillhousefield land to Archibald Cleghorn, who built Bank House in 1804. This was demolished in 1876 to make way for Largo Place. Leith Mount, which had served since 1866 as the manse of North Leith parish church, was only removed in 1930 to make a clear site for the new Town Hall and Library. The old name of Leith Mount has been adopted for a neighbouring villa.(54)

The largest and most important house in eighteenth century Leith was undoubtedly Balmerino House in the Kirkgate. The Balmerinos(55) were of all the local landowners the nearest to being the lairds. The family possessed the baronies of Balmerino and Cupar in Fife, as well as Restalrig. The Restalrig holdings included Piershill, Kilnacre, Parsonsknowes, Gardenneuck, Hawkhill, Lochend, Calton, subjects in Leith,

54. John Russell, Bonnington, its Lands and Mansions, OEC.xix.
55. The original pronunciation is "Balmirrno", as is plain from the phonetic spelling in South Leith kirk session minutes - e.g. 1.1.1708, 6.12.1711.
and what were known as the South-east Room, Missle-room and North-east room. Balmerino was also superior of the lands of Coatfield and of houses in the village of Restalrig; but these latter, with Restalrig House, were settled by John, 3rd Lord Balmerino, on his son Alexander Elphinstone. John the 5th Lord died on 5th January 1746, and was succeeded by his half-brother Arthur, who was a steady Jacobite. He had fought at Sheriffmuir on the Royalist side, but immediately afterwards crossed to the Jacobites. He went abroad in 1727, and only returned in 1745. He fought at Culloden, and was beheaded at Tower Hill in 1746, his entire estates being forfeited.

The Balmerino estates were put up for sale in 1753, and purchased by John Mackenzie, W.S., acting for James, 8th Earl of Moray, a nephew of the late Lord Balmerino.(56) After this the house passed through several hands until in 1848 it was disposed of to the Roman Catholic Church for £1800.(57)

Balmerino House became extremely dilapidated. The original front door, on the east side, behind the R.C. church which was built in the garden, was converted into a window. Originally this front entrance was reached by a flight of steps from the garden. It opened directly into a large room which stretched from front to back of the house,

57. D.H.Robertson, Antiquities of Leith, 89n.
with windows facing both ways; and the floor above had a corresponding room. A curious feature was a doorway in the first-floor room, directly opposite the entrance-door. This was copied exactly in the room above. It seems that an outside stair must originally have connected these two doorways, and this appears to have been the sole communication between the two floors. There was no staircase indoors. The room immediately south of the large first-floor room had a cupboard, privy or secret place, entered by a narrow door forming part of the panelling. In its original state this door must have been very difficult to detect, and may well have been found useful on occasion.

Alexander Kincaid, writing in 1787, gives a precise account of the streets of the port as he knew it:

"South Leith consists of five streets running north-west to south-east, three from east to west, and two from north to south. To the latter belongs the Kirkgate, and indeed the principal street in Leith. It begins at the Well, otherwise called the Pipes, and extends south to the foot of the Walk from Edinburgh, in length 1300 feet. The other, Called Quality street, begins on the south side of St. Bernard’s street (formerly called the Weigh-house wynd) and runs south till it is intersected by Charlotte's street, which leads from the north end of the Kirkgate eastward to the Links, in length 700 feet. The others run from north-west to south-east. The most easterly, called the Yardheads, begins at the west end of King's street, extending 840 feet, when it terminates near where St. Anthony's Preceptory and Hospital stood. 2. St. Giles's street, from the west end of the Sheriff-brae, to where it joins the Kirkgate, opposite the church, in length 1090 feet. 3. St. Andrew's street (formerly called the Dubb-row) begins at the east end of the Sheriff-brae, opposite the bridge, and extends to the Kirkgate, in length 810 feet. 4. The Tolbooth wynd begins at the
New Quay, and extends to the west in length 480 feet. 5. St. Bernard's street, from the line of houses facing the harbour to the New Assembly Rooms, 720 feet. Those running east to west, the most northerly is called the Sheriff-brae, in length 350 feet. 2. King's street extends from the west end of the Sheriff-brae to the Yardheads, in length 420 feet. 3. Cable's wynd begins on the west side of St. Giles's street and terminates at the Yardheads, and is of the same length.

"The most centrical place in South Leith appears to be at the Well, from whence, describing a circle with a radius of 1900 feet, it would nearly encompass the whole, including North Leith." (58)

The extreme density of population to be found in Edinburgh before the overspill to the New Town, was mirrored in Leith, but only to a minor degree. Since the days of the Commonwealth at least, Leith had had to accept the quartering of troops in private houses, while the citizens of Edinburgh, with a garrison at the Castle, never had the annoyance of these unwanted boarders. There were always soldiers in Leith, and although no company stayed very long, the departing troops were invariably succeeded at once by their successors. The allowance for a soldier's board was fourpence per week, which certainly left no profit to the unwilling host. (59) Quartering was an unmitigated nuisance, and in 1729 the incorporations sought the support of the inhabitants for an appeal to Parliament to provide proper barracks in Leith. (60)

60. SLR. 20.3.1729; 27.3.1729.
Fort was only built in 1780, after the scare produced by the appearance of Paul Jones in the Forth. (61) Piershill Barracks went up in 1793, bringing a further easement of the old burden of quartering. (62)

The New Town of Leith began to take shape in 1777 with the first villas built around the Links. (63) Within the next few years shipowners and well-to-do merchants were finding the spaciousness and the many amenities of these houses a charming contrast to the cramped quarters and filthy surroundings of the old port. Most of the successful business and professional men and busy merchants however, were wedded to the principle of a full day's work for a fair day's return, and had no wish to move too far from their counting-houses and vaults. They had long lived with their businesses in Quality Street, the Broad Wynd and the Kirkgate, and now they removed their domestic quarters only a few yards round the corner into Charlotte Street, James Place, John's Place, and in the last years of the century into the new Constitution Street. Vanburgh Place belongs to this period, and was soon followed by Smith's Place and Pilrig Street. The French wars brought steeply mounting rents and land values, (64) but Leith

61. MTC. 4.10.1780. C.28
62. James Grant, Old and New Edinburgh, iii.142.
continued to expand in the early nineteenth century - Wellington Place, Trafalgar Street, Pitt Street, by their names proclaim their age.

There was a disposition in Leith to copy the improvements made in Edinburgh, but there was always an interval of several years before anything new penetrated from the city to the port. Leithers were no sycophants, anxious to model themselves on their Edinburgh superiors: they thought rather, that what was considered needful for civilised life in the capital was just as necessary in Leith. But getting anything done in Leith - anything at all - took immense effort, and endless negotiation. An example was the naming and numbering of streets, which was long overdue. Edinburgh made a start, numbering some of the New Town streets in 1782,(65) but it was 1813 before the practice was adopted in Leith,(66) and even then only the principal streets were numbered, and none in North Leith. No doubt it was enough to tell a Leither that David Allan the excise officer lived "opposite the pipes", or that the minister of the Associate congregation was to be found "in the middle of the Kirkgate", but such directions were not good enough for the stranger. The naming of streets, wynds and closes had also become long overdue. Once the whereabouts of a street or wynd was known, a good memory was perhaps all that was needed; but closes were

different. Many closes were known by more than one name, and a change of proprietor was often accepted as good enough reason for a change of name. This pleasant eccentricity was indulged in Leith as well as Edinburgh, to the annoyance and confusion of everyone not born in the district. It was only on 25th August 1790 that the town council ordered streets to be named. Henceforth, streets and closes alike were known to be what the painted notices claimed them to be. It is not known when this rule extended to Leith, but since it took thirty years for street numbering to advance a mile and a half down Leith Walk, street names were probably just as laggard.

These are trivial examples, but they typify the situation in Leith, where amenities were always introduced with the greatest difficulty. In regard to every kind of advance or improvement Edinburgh always had to be consulted in the first place, and pleaded with until town council permission was obtained. The necessary finance had also to come from Edinburgh, as a rule, although the money may originally have been raised in Leith. A more important matter than street names was the finding of a sufficient water supply for Leith.

Although Edinburgh had had a supply of piped water since 1675,(67) Leith was still entirely dependent on well water as late as 1752, when on 6th January the Traffickers were

67. Charles B. Boog Watson, Cleansing the Town in Early Times, OEC. xv.App. 18f.
informed that Edinburgh intended applying to Parliament for a renewal of the Crown grant of twopence on every pint of ale brewed within the royalty. (68) As this tax had always been intended to provide for local amenities, the Traffickers decided that now was the time to press for a piped water supply for the port. Industry was increasing, but without a more adequate supply of water there could never be the kind of development all merchants and business men hoped for. The Traffickers appointed a committee to consult with the other incorporations, and to approach the town council on the matter. In due course representatives of the council met with the Masters of Incorporations, the Bailies of Leith, and two members of the kirk session of South Leith. It was pointed out to the Leithers that the grant of twopence on the pint of ale was not entirely at the disposal of the town council, but that Parliament appointed "overseers" who decided what was to be done with the money. The men from Leith had had the idea of having all beer brewed for shipping exempted from the twopenny impost, so that the money might be used to bring water to the town; but it was made plain they would never be allowed to interfere with the collection of the tax. The town councillors then suggested the Leithers should go away and decide where they might obtain the needed water supply, and then lay before the council an estimate for the

68. Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 6.1.1752.
whole scheme. (69)

Delighted, the Masters of Incorporations and their friends returned to Leith. There was no argument over the source of a water supply; Lochend Loch had always been agreed as the obvious and natural reservoir, so no time was lost in calling for tenders. When it appeared that laying pipes from Lochend to Leith would cost almost £500, the committee was convinced they must abandon any idea of help from the tax on ale. There were already many claims on that fund, and anything that might be made available would certainly be far too small to be of any real use. When they went to the town council with the estimates however, they were most pleasantly surprised, for the city agreed to meet half the cost, provided the other £300 could be found in Leith. Moreover, despite all that had been said, Edinburgh now proposed to take the £300 from the twopenny tax on ale, for they judged the scheme eminently desirable and sensible. (70) It was odd how the insuperable difficulty of getting money from the ale tax was now ignored. Perhaps the town council was so relieved to see the estimates, and to have the Leithers' ready agreement to find half the cost, that they jumped at the chance of getting rid of what they foresaw might become a big social and financial problem. It was appropriate too, that the money should be got from a fund built from the extensive

70. MTO. 2.9.1752. /XK. 264.
brewing industry of Leith.

The work was put in hand at once, and subscriptions were called for, but the response was meagre. Surprised and mortified, the promoters were soon in trouble, for the work was already costing more money than they could lay hands on. This was not a development scheme as the twentieth century understands such things. No extensive credit facilities were available. This was an immense contract for the local plumber, whose stocks were nothing like adequate for the work. He must buy lead, and he must have money to buy it. But the local industrialists who had been relied upon to back the scheme were not wealthy, and their businesses were mostly in the throes of early struggle. Altogether the promoters raised about £110 in Leith. A good deal of their confidence drained away, and they approached the town council for payment of the promised £300 from the ale tax. When the council heard that Leith had produced hardly more than a third of their share of the costs, they would only agree to give £150, with a promise of the rest when Leith showed more sign of fulfilling their promise. (71)

The incorporations were badly worried. The town was in desperate need of water, but £300 would never be forthcoming from voluntary subscriptions. Many meetings and long discussions must have taken place in the early months of 1753, while

71. MTC. 17.11.1752. /x×.3=8
the work went steadily forward. Matters were now too far advanced for the scheme to be cancelled, and to add to the irritation of those responsible for seeing the business through, all the local pundits and wiseacres were now shaking their heads and saying "I told you so" in various ways.

Perhaps the most trenchant points were made by William Maitland, who was just then writing his famous History of Edinburgh. With a truly journalistic sense of timing, he added a chapter on Leith, and seized on the new water scheme for detailed criticism. The choice of Lochend was in itself an egregious mistake.

"The Magistrates and principal inhabitants (of Leith) are of Opinion that Lochend is fed with a Spring therein, without the least Reason for this their Belief."

Maitland was of opinion that the loch was supplied only by rainwater and snow percolating through the surrounding catchment area. In summer the loch diminished markedly, and it was folly to imagine such a source as being anything like adequate for the growing needs of Leith. (72) He also believed the water from Lochend to be unhygienic. But he had other criticisms:

"By laying the present Pipe so very deep in the ground (said to be about 15 feet) for so great a Space, the Expence of Repairs will be very great...

"And to conclude the Errors of this amazing Project, we need only show the great imprudence of the Projectors,

in entering upon a work, of which one moiety of the
Expence was to be raised amongst the Inhabitants by a
voluntary Contribution, which of all other Things,
ought at first to have been gone upon to save themselves
from being saddled with the Sum un contributed, by the
People's Caprice, in refusing to contribute (which they
have already done), by which they would have acted
securely, by putting it out of their Power to impose
upon them. And if the Work at last should not answer,
Query, who must pay the Expence already incurred? And
if it should be found necessary to bring Water to Leith
from another Place, how is the Money to be raised to
defray the Expence?”(73)

This was fair enough criticism, no doubt, but what Mait-
land failed to appreciate was that Lochend was the only source
of water within the bounds of Leith. As for money, it was
easy enough to charge Leithers with imprudence, but industry
could never expand without piped water. Edinburgh had many
resources, but Leith, trying to find a sum that was paltry
to city minds, was on the brink of a crisis.

In the meantime it had become necessary to take further
estimates for work to follow on the initial laying of the
pipes from Lochend. The Traffickers dolefully scanned the
list of absolute necessities:

"Estimate for bringing Water to Leith
from Lochend"

"Charge of bringing water from Lochend to the Reservoir
at the head of the hill,(74) as by the severall Trades-
mens' Accots given in to Mr John McFarlane, to whom
alone the whole Neighbourhood are obliged for a thing
of so general benefit is. . . . . . £598. . . .

There will still be wanting to complete so good a work:

73. William Maitland, History of Edinburgh, 503.
74. "The Hill" was an old name for Tolbooth Wynd.
"For making good the damages to the Roads, and for carrying in a Conduit from the well at the Lochside to the Loch, about. . . . . . £15. - -

For 180 yds of ¾" bore from the Reservoir to Babylon (75) at 2s 6d per yd . . . . . . 22.10. -

For a brass Cleanser and Stop Cock there . . 2. - -

150 yds of do. pipe from Babylon to the foot of the Sheriff brae . . . . . 18.15. -

For a Stop Cock there. . . . . . -. 6. 9

150 yds do. pipe from Babylon to the Broad Wynd 18.15. -

For a Stop Cock there. . . . . . -. 6. 9

Or if judged fitter to be carried to the Weighhouse, 100 yds further . . . . . . 12.10. -

For 4 small Cisterns to the Wells. . . . 2. 8. -

4 Cocks for the ends of the pipes. . . . 1. - -

4 Brass faces . . . . . . . . . . . . . 4. - -

4 Wells yet to be built, guessed at . . . . . . 20. - -

£715.11. 6

"Of which the Town of Edinburgh have paid and are to pay . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 300. - -

There has been already collected from several of the Neighbours, about. . . . . . . . 150. - -

There is still wanting about . . . . . . 265.11. 6

£715.11. 6.(76)

The location of the four wells to be supplied from the main reservoir at the foot of the Kirkgate, was decided the following month at a meeting of representatives of all the incorporations:

"The meeting are of opinion that the following places will be the most convenient and proper for building the wells yet to be erected, viz. - at the corner of the churchyard dyke opposite to the Brick-house in the Kirkgate; at the south-west corner of Provost Stewart's

75. See p.439 supra.
76. Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 14.5.1753.
Vaults;(77) one near the south end of Leith Bridge; one near the New Key; and the 5th at Bernard's Neuk - and this resolution to be communicated...&c...

John Stead, Preses."(78)

The fifth well - presumably that one at the New Quay - was solely for the use of shipping.

The incorporations now realised that they themselves were likely to be left to find the £265.11. 6 needed to meet the estimates. After much consideration it was agreed to submit to a voluntary assessment of one halfpenny per £1 Scots of valued rent, to be paid by all members of incorporations. This would last for three or four years only, by which time the debt should have been paid off.

It was apparent before many months had passed that the whole scheme was totally inadequate, but it was not until 1771 that an Act of Parliament made provision for an sufficient water supply for Leith, and the original wooden pipes were then replaced by others of a larger bore. But Maitland had been right; Lochend itself was not sufficient to supply the demands made on it. Casting around for a more copious source, Leith did manage to wring one concession from Edinburgh. In 1785 the town council were considering the desirability of opening a road southwards from the city by means of a bridge spanning the Cowgate, and it was proposed to raise the money by taxing the citizens - including Leith. Leith, however,

77. That is, the Vaults now possessed by Messrs J.G.Thomson, wine merchants.
78.D.Robertson, The Bailies of Leith, 158f.
objected to paying tax for a road that would be of no benefit to that town, and only withdrew opposition on receiving a promise that Edinburgh would supply Leith with sufficient water for 40,000 or 50,000 persons. Incredibly, this supply for 50,000 Leithers was to be passed along a 2-inch pipe, leading from a point near the Register House down to Leith.(79) And four years later the promises had not yet been honoured, although the town council still protested their good intentions.(80)

The water supply for Leith was to remain unsatisfactory for a long, long time. As the population still increased, and the demands of industry became ever more clamant, the water from Lochend had to be augmented by water carts plying between St. Margaret's Well and the port.(81) The establishment of a Water Company in 1819 brought some improvement, but the town's needs were not fully met until the setting up of the Water Trust in 1869, under which Edinburgh and Leith share the same supplies.(82)

Water was only one of several problems connected with public amenities in Leith. The state of the streets raised questions of watching, cleansing and lighting - and presented difficulties peculiar to the port. As with the water supply, the condition of the streets in Leith was something Edinburgh

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80. MTC. 20.5.1789. C W.312.
81. Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland, ii.711.
82. J. Campbell Irons, Antiquities of Leith, ii.331.
seemed unable to cope with. Chambers in 1831, himself a native of the city long notorious for the cry of "Gardyloo!", writes in contempt of the surpassing filthiness of the streets of Leith - and no one protested. (83) The streets of any seaport were bound to accumulate an abundance of litter, and the scarcity of water in Leith made matters worse. When the numerous obstructions in the thoroughfare caused by projecting forestairs and an irregular building line are also taken into account, the permanent layer of mud and dung on the streets is at least understandable.

Until the mid-eighteenth century the only effort made to clean the streets was to sell the right to cart away the dung. (84) Apart from this, the constables of Leith were instructed by Edinburgh Town Council to see that the streets were kept clean; (85) but this was merely a verbal gesture, since the constables had no means of compelling street cleanliness. Complaints were unceasing, but from time to time became more than usually urgent - and then the town council would pass another resolution, as in 1738, when the bailies of Leith were empowered to agree with the inhabitants on an arrangement for cleaning the streets. (86) The Coalhill and Sheriff brae had the sad reputation of being the dirtiest
streets in a very dirty town. No doubt this was true, as these streets fronted the river, and ships were berthed along their length. The town council in 1752 specifically instructed the people of Coalhill and Sheriff brae to rake the dung into the middle of the street, so that the tacksman of Leith dung might be the better able to remove it. (87) The 1771 Act, already referred to in its connection with the water supply, also dealt with lighting, cleansing and policing the streets of Leith, and some improvement followed on its publication. Kincaid reported:

"Of late years Leith has undergone many useful and necessary improvements; and among them, pulling down all the stairs projecting on the street, is not the least. There has of late years been great attention paid to keep the streets clean, which, considering the situation compared with Edinburgh, is very difficult." (88)

And yet as late as the 1860s there were many complaints about the narrow and tortuous thoroughfare in Tolbooth Wynd, due to the projecting staircases, which were only then removed. (89)

Paving the streets of Leith and keeping them in repair did not present themselves to Edinburgh councillors as urgent matters. A representative committee of Leith magistrates, Police Commissioners and Masters of Incorporations approached the town council in 1774, to have the terms of the 1771 Act put into force. After all, it was now three years

87. MTC. 27.9.1752. /×××. 239.
89. cf. Leith Burghs Pilot, 1864, various letters and reports.
since the Act had appeared. When might they expect action in regard to repairing and paving the streets of Leith? The councillors answered that this would be done all in good time. In the meantime the resources of the city were fully extended in repairing the streets of Edinburgh; once that was done it would be time to consider Leith.(90) This was an unexpectedly naive declaration of Edinburgh's attitude to the needs of Leith. Not surprisingly it was "deemed unsatisfactory by the Commissioners of Police" in Leith, who realised perfectly that as there was no hope of repairs to Edinburgh streets ever being finished, Leith's chances of attention were less than nothing.

The Police Commissioners were brought into existence by the 1771 Act - "An Act for cleansing and lighting the streets of the Town of South Leith, the territory of St. Anthony's and Yardheads thereto adjoining, and for supplying the several parts thereof with fresh water." The Commissioners included "James Balfour of Pilrig, Alexander Sheriff of Craigleith, Robert Mylne and William Mylne, the Admiral and Magistrates of Leith for the time being, the Town Clerk for the time being, the Masters of the Four Incorporations, the Bailie of St. Anthony for the time being...or any seven or more of them."

"And be it also enacted, That the said Commissioners...

90.Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 3.1.1774; 3.5.1774.
shall have power...to direct, order and appoint, in all matters and things respecting the providing, collecting, supplying and distributing of water to the said Town of South Leith...and to the houses and inhabitants within the same; and to the cleansing and lighting of the streets, lanes, ways, avenues and passages within the limits aforesaid; and also to nominate and appoint Treasurers, Clerks, Collectors, Scavengers, Rakers and Cleansers of the streets, and Keepers and Lighters of Lamps, and other Officers and Servants necessary..."

To finance all this the stentmasters of Leith were empowered to assess "All Heritors, Life-renters and other Proprietors of Houses, Lands and Tenements" at the rate of sixpence sterling in the £1 of valued rent.(91) This Act was certainly beneficial, and while Kincaid may have been inclined to exaggerate the improvements, Hugo Arnot, himself a Leither, is also appreciative, and even Alexander Campbell rather grudgingly acknowledges that the Act of 1771 was at least the beginning of better days for the town.

"Even so lately as the year 1770, the whole of the streets of Leith, excepting the Kirkgate, were in such a deplorable condition, that no one could pass through them after dark, but at the imminent hazard of breaking his legs, or his neck, or probably both, in consequence of the large and deep ruts with which they were ploughed up."(92)

Oddly enough, to the modern mind, the Police Commissioners had nothing directly to do with crime or criminals, in all their concern for the streets. Watching and warding were

91. D.Robertson, The Bailies of Leith, 208f. Robertson mentions that only a single copy of this Act is extant in the town. 92. Alexander Campbell, History of Leith, 208.
outside their remit. Not that there was no need: in 1768 the Traffickers approached the other incorporations about the possibility of "raising a fund for prosecuting Thieves." (93) The matter was pressing, and without any recognised responsible authority to turn to, it was left to the incorporations, as usual, to do something. Eventually in 1802 the Police Commissioners had to listen to complaints, although they did not consider it their business.

"Leith 9th Sepr...Meeting of Commissioners of Police for Leith. Bailie Sibbald reported that for some time past many people had been knocked down and robbed within the City of Edinburgh and neighbourhood, and several vessels had been broken into lying in the harbour of Leith... (This meeting has been called)... to take under consideration how far it would not be proper to appoint Watchmen in Leith, and to raise a fund for that purpose to protect the persons and property of Individuals and Companies..." (94)

The incorporations were of opinion that an Act of Parliament would be necessary for such a plan; but the Traffickers proposed that a voluntary watch might be recruited from Heads of Families, and that 30 seamen might turn out each night, in rotation, to watch the town. Thirteen years later the question of appointing voluntary watchmen is still in the news.

"We observe with pleasure that the town of Leith is following the example of other places, by a voluntary patrole of the inhabitants through the streets during the night, for the protecting of their property and persons." (95)

93. Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 4.4.1768.
94. ibid. 20.9.1802.
95. EEC. 14.1.1815.
The situation in 1815 however was due rather to the exigencies of the long French wars, and the shortage of able-bodied men, than to a want of legislative powers. The old 1771 Act had been replaced in 1806 by a second Police Act, under which the provisions of 1771 were extended to include North Leith, which had grown considerably in 35 years. Also, since the need was so obvious, provision was made for the appointment of watchmen.

"7. It shall and may be lawful for the Commissioners aforesaid...to appoint such a number of watchmen as they shall judge necessary for guarding, patrolling and watching the streets of the said town of South Leith and territory of St.Anthony and Yardheads, North Leith, Coalhill and Citadel, in such a manner and under such rules and regulations as to the said Commissioners shall appear proper and expedient."(96)

The Act of 1806 was in turn replaced by a third Act in 1827, which was much more detailed, and ran to 155 clauses. The town had again grown since 1806, and the area covered by this third Police Act was wider than ever. It was bounded by "Seafield Toll on the east, and the westermost point of the wet docks, and on the south by Bowling Green Street, Junction Road, Duke Street, Burns Street, and the north side of the road leading round the East Links to Seafield." This area was to be known as the "Town of Leith" - and this appears to be the first attempt ever made to define the boundaries of

96. 46 Geo III. "An Act for amending an Act passed in the 11th year of His present Majesty entituled an Act for cleansing and lighting the streets of the Town of Leith &c," Robertson, The Bailies of Leith, 216.
the town. (97)

Under the 1827 Act an assessment of 1s 6d per £1 of rental was made to produce a fund to meet the provisions of the Act; and the Commissioners were also empowered "to provide a suitable Court House and other proper and necessary offices for the use of the said Sheriff Substitute." The Magistrates and Masters therefore had the Town Hall, Sheriff court-house and Police establishment erected in Charlotte Street, and the Police Commissioners took a lease of the premises for 99 years. (98)

The Town Hall was the most impressive building to have appeared in Leith for a very long time. Indeed nothing comparable had ever been built in the port. This was the status symbol of a community which was an independent, self-governing unit. Leith had never before been allowed to appear as anything but an appendage of Edinburgh, and all the local government was under the control of, and by permission of Edinburgh Town Council. But here in Charlotte Street was the centre from which Leith would be governed in future. There was strong and growing feeling that the time for the port's independence was overdue. The creation of the Dock Commission in 1826 had given a fillip to this sentiment, and now the appointment of a Sheriff Substitute

98. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs: Leith, 208.
was another step forward. Not surprisingly, the foundation stone of the new Town Hall was laid on Thursday afternoon, 13th March 1828, "before a large concourse of the inhabitants". (99).

The new building cost £3300, and included a jail. Prisoners were not only tried, but also passed the time of their sentence in these premises. This was the outcome of a ridiculous situation. The old Tolbooth, despite the protests of antiquaries, headed by Sir Walter Scott and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, was demolished in 1819, and a new one built on the same site three years later. (100) Owing to some defect in the security arrangements however, the Court of Session refused to sanction the use of the new Tolbooth as a jail, and prisoners were therefore confined in "a lock-up house, consisting of cold, damp and unhealthy cells, such as endangered life." Only when the Charlotte Street buildings were opened, were prisoners more properly provided for. (101)

Under the 1827 Act the dock police were established - appointed, paid and supervised by the dock commissioners, and quite distinct and separate from the Leith police force. And yet there was a connection between the two organisations. The dock police patrolled the dock area, but they had no police station. Prisoners apprehended in the docks were brought to the office of the town police, where they were

99. EEC. 15.3.1828.
100. James Grant, Old and New Edinburgh, iii.230.
101. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 68.
charged, tried and sentenced - all at the expense of the town police.(102)

Despite these developments in the policing of the town, the modern conception of the police force as the friends and protectors of the private citizen, and the public agency for the detection and pursuit of criminals, was not by any means clear. Traditionally, every man was expected to defend and maintain his own rights and property. In the large and complex community that had grown from the village of Leith, this accustomed attitude was not easy to keep up, but there were still many Leithers willing to make the effort. The period of the third Police Act was also the time of Burke and Hare the resurrectionists. The demands of the anatomists at the Medical School of Edinburgh had established a market, and "body-snatching" had become so common as to evoke public nervousness - and hysteria was not far below the surface. Where St. Ninian's Church, Ferry Road, now stands, the body of a woman was discovered in 1829, about a foot below the ground. The corpse was recognised as that of a woman buried a few days before in North Leith churchyard. It was assumed that the "snatchers" had been disturbed, and had hastily got rid of the body where they might easily recover it when the scare had subsided.(103)

The horrifying trade of the resurrectionist was nothing

102. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, 68.
103. Leith Pilot Annual, 1889, 50.
new in Leith. As far back as 1721 the session clerk of South Leith minuted:

"5 Jan'y 1721 - Francis Thomson reported that he and John Weir having searched the grave where the corpse of Ann Wright was buried, they found the chist in the grave but the corps away, Whereupon the Session appoints... &c.... Elders and James Suttie Deacon with the R.R. Ministers as a Committee to consider that and several other gross abuses committed in the Church yard, and to report next Session day."

North Leith was similarly troubled, and on 29th October 1728, the session "considering the Inconveniencies to which the people of the parish are put, for want of an hutt or lodge in the Church Yard, for sheltering those from the cold in the Winter Time, who watch the dead," agreed to have a suitable hut built, and to reimburse themselves by adding something to the funeral charges. Nor was it only the resurrectionists who caused trouble. It was the custom for the friends of the deceased to arrange for watching in the church-yard following the interment, and the watch was maintained for a few days - or rather nights. If the watchers were badly behaved, it was not easy to control them; and as the watchers were generally young men, they were also high-spirited, and apt to indulge in horse-play.

"31 July 1735 - The Session being informed that on Saturday night last and Sabbath morning a number of unruly youths being assembled in the Churchyard under pretence of watching the corpse of Patrick Falconer, they did commit a great deal of disturbance and abuse and damage not only in and about the Churchyard but also in many places of the Town even down towards the foot of the Shore, And finding that David Yule and John Ponton were the persons, they being appointed to
watch that night gott access into the Churchyard and
the key of the Watchhouse, The Session recommends...&c..."(104)

This kind of thing was not infrequent, and could be serious.
On several occasions the South Leith session had to issue
instructions forbidding watchers to carry firearms, or to have
too much liquor with them.(105) Worse still, in 1742 the
South Leith grave-digger, George Oarkettle, was suspected
of selling corpses. This charge was not proved against him,
but as he was certainly guilty of various other misdemeanours,
he was dismissed.

The business of watching the dead did not concern the
poor. They must take their chance, for watching cost money.
Even when the duty was undertaken by friends, there were
still charges. In South Leith the dead were watched from the
Cantore, a small building at the entrance to the churchyard,(106)
but fire and light had to be provided for the dark, cold
nights, and suitable refreshment for those on duty. And
when North Leith session provided a new hut in the churchyard
early in the nineteenth century, it had to be paid for by
fees charged to those using the shelter.

"The Session considering that they had been at some
considerable expense in erecting a Watch-house in the
Kirkyard for the accommodation of those who choose to
have their dead watched, resolved that those of the
better rank should pay one guinea, and those of the
inferior rank half a guinea for the privilege of the
house during the time of their watching."(107)

104. SLR. in loc.
105. cf. SLR. 4.1.1739; 4.7.1745; 6.12.1770.
106. SLR. 18.3.1725.
107. NLR. 24.5.1808.
Only people of a certain standing chose to arrange for their
dead to be watched, but where did the kirk session draw the
line between "better" and "inferior" rank? Were there no
border-line cases in which it would be doubtful whether to
charge a guinea or half a guinea? Or was every Leith gentle¬
man so obviously a gentleman that there never was any doubt
what to charge the family?

Funerals involved the relatives in many charges, and
both the rate and the number of these increased throughout
the eighteenth century. Earlier on, burials were simpler and
more perfunctory than the nineteenth century would have
tolerated. Once the coffin was provided, the only unavoid¬
able charge was a contribution to the "funeral box", which was
placed in the churchyard. From time to time this box was
opened, and the contents disbursed to the beadle, the grave¬
digger, and to the poor.

"This day the Funeral Box was opened, when there were
found in it seventeen shillings and two pence sterling,
which was Immediately distribute in the following
manner. To William Adam, Beadle, Eight shillings; to
Ralph Lowtit, Grave-digger, one shilling and sixpence; to
a poor man named Jackson, his family being all in
distress, two shillings; to a poor woman named Bogle,
who has a broken Arm, One shilling and sixpence; to
Margaret Watt one shilling and sixpence; and to
Christian Watson Eightpence; which is the whole that
was in the Box." (108)

The arithmetic appears to be at fault, but the way the
contents of the box was divided is plain enough.

108. NLR. 30.12.1760.
One custom of earlier times was abandoned in the course of the eighteenth century. The ringing of the funeral bell was an acceptable mark of a village community's sense of loss; but as the village grew to a town, deaths were more frequent, but the passing bell was heard less frequently and finally stopped. In 1720 North Leith acquired a new bell, made in London, and much heavier than the old one. This piece of furniture weighed 3 tons 15 cwt 3 qrs 5 lbs, and was very costly to hang. Formerly the fee for ringing the passing bell had been 1s 6d; in future the charge would have to be 2s for the bell (which money in fact went to the poor) and 6d to the beadle for his trouble.\(109\)

Headstones for ordinary people savoured of ostentation, and were not encouraged. A prominent local family, however, could be granted permission to commemorate their dead in this way, for a fee of 10 merks Scots.\(110\) This charge remained constant until 1808, when the Gladstone family grave was adorned with a "pillar'd stone". This was a grander monument than had ever before graced the churchyard, and the treasurer asked what should be done about the fee. It was decided to leave the matter to the well-known generosity of the Gladstones.\(111\) As the generosity of others could not always be relied on, and as the practice of erecting headstones

109. NLR. 8.3.1720.
110. NLR. 25.6.1720; 29.10.1734.
111. NLR. 24.5.1808.
was now rapidly increasing, a charge of two guineas was now made for this privilege. The old fee of 10 merks Scots was equal to 11s sterling, so this was a substantial increase - and the rate was altered again in 1829, to 5 guineas for an erect stone, and 10 guineas for a horizontal one. Horizontal slabs were much in favour with those substantial families who feared the resurrectionists.(112)

Gene were the simple old village ways; now was the era of class distinction. When the Book of Discipline and Directory for Public Worship still carried weight, there was no religious ceremony at a burial, and no minister present.(113) In the later eighteenth century the minister arrived, and funerals gradually separated into different categories. The arrangements are neatly set out in the North Leith kirk session minute book in 1829:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF DUES.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearse Funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 5s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Coach or Hearse &amp; carried to grave shoulder high 3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 4s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 2s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. The Graves to be 5 ft deep; but, if deeper,

(1 ft deeper 1s 6d) (1 ft deeper 9d)
(2 ft deeper 4s) (2 ft deeper 2s)
(3 ft deeper 7s) (3 ft deeper 3s 6d)

and so on in proportion of greater depth.

112. NLR. 27.1.1829.
113. E.G. Graham, Social Life in Scotland in the 18th Century, 301n.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hearse Funerals</th>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Spokes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults 2s 6d</td>
<td>Adults 1s 6d</td>
<td>Adults 1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in hearse or coach 1s</td>
<td>Children 1s</td>
<td>Children 6d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Turfs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10s</td>
<td>5s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. These dues for Turfs to be paid by all classes of persons, and for every description of Funerals: and no half turfs are to be allowed to be brought into the Churchyard without paying the same fee to the Session for behoof of the Poor, as if they were whole; i.e. 2s 6d for an adult and 1s 3d for a child.

**Mort Cloths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Mort Cloth in Hearse</th>
<th>Shoulder High</th>
<th>Spokes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21s</td>
<td>11s 6d</td>
<td>8s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. These dues for Mort Cloths include the Grave-digger's fee for carrying, i.e. for Adults 1s and 6d for children. (114)

One way and another, burying the dead had become more complicated and expensive than ever before. At the same time even the poor in the 1820s were more decently buried than their predecessors at the close of the seventeenth century, when famine claimed them.

"24 January 1695 - The session considering that the poor are in a very starving condition and that much of the money is spent in getting chists to them when they are removed by death, Therefore they appoint the bier to be made use of in burying the poor of the place and stranger poor." (115)

Coffins, or chists, were felt to be an unjustifiable drain on the poor fund in those hard days, so a simple bier was

114. N.I.R. 27.1.1829.
to be used, with the corpse wrapped in a shroud. Grey Graham
mentions a similar kind of economy in burying the poor. A
public coffin was used, with a hinged bottom, whereby the
body could be dropped into the grave, and the coffin used
again. (116)

As the seventeenth century ended, the town drummer was
still the ordinary source of news. He had an important func¬
tion as town crier, making official announcements, and shouting
out the news it had been decided that all should hear. He
beat a general reveille in the early morning, and curfew
in the evening, as well as doing a special round to announce
"closing time" to the taverns, (117) for there were few clocks
and fewer watches. The drummer's office fell into desuetude
as the eighteenth century advanced. News was now to be had
in the Edinburgh newspapers, and as more people were able to
read, this seemed for a time to be adequate. But local
feeling in Leith was hardening; new ideas were stirring,
new prospects opening. Leithers had long accepted their
state of vassalage, even if impatiently, yet the alternative
of independence had never been seriously considered. Had the
capital city shown more generosity and toleration, had the
town council known how to turn a blind eye on occasional
peccadillos, then attitudes in the port might have been

117. SIR. 2.8.1632; 10.11.1636. cf. Robertson, SLR, i.26n.
softened. But it was not to be expected that any royal burgh would forego its rights. If Edinburgh was rapacious and unfeeling, expecting a steady income from a village whose needs the city ignored, and whose wellbeing she seemed to hold in contempt - in that kind of behaviour Edinburgh merely typified the spirit of those days. Every royal burgh vigourously upheld its privileges, and Leithers themselves were just as ardent to maintain whatever advantages they managed to secure to themselves. In the second half of the eighteenth century this relationship between the city and the port was changing however. The village was swiftly becoming a thrusting, growing, forward-looking seaport, where men more and more resented the heavy hand of authority which seemingly feared and avoided all change. As the century drew to its close Edinburgh's very right to govern Leith was being questioned and challenged. The nineteenth century opened with the population of Leith rapidly approaching 20,000, and it seemed as though the time was ripe for the port to assume as much of the trappings of an independent town as might be practicable.

A group of enthusiasts decided to launch a Leith newspaper, and on 26th July 1808 appeared the first number of the "Leith and Edinburgh Telegraph and Advertiser". Not a single copy of this newspaper has survived, but it was printed twice weekly by William Oliphant junior. It seems
to have made heavy weather from the start, and in September 1811 it was taken over by new proprietors. The printing was done by William Reid, a local bookseller on the Shore, whose shop occupied the site of the present Labour Exchange. This was Reid's first venture as a printer, and this side of his work was operated at 19 Broad Wynd. But the "Telegraph and Advertiser" did no better under the new management. On 11th January 1813 the Traffickers listened to an agonised appeal presented by William Reid in a letter to the Master of the incorporation. He complained that the business community of Leith had entirely failed to support the "Telegraph", when local patriotism, if nothing else, might have induced them to take an interest in it. The paper was being run with efficiency and economy, yet the proprietors had suffered continual losses. This could not go on. A prosperous and growing town like Leith ought to have its own newspaper, but publishing a paper was a business, which must show a profit like any other business. (118) The Traffickers resolved to recommend the "Telegraph" to their friends, but the paper ceased publication a few weeks later.

While the "Telegraph and Advertiser" was painfully trying to make ends meet, a second newspaper was launched in 1810. This was "The Pilot". Nothing is known of the early days of this paper, for, as with "The Telegraph", no copy

118. Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 11.1.1813.
has survived; but it seems likely that it shared the fate of the "Telegraph". There is indeed one copy of the "Pilot" to be seen, or rather part of a copy, for one section is missing.(119) This issue is dated 14 April 1825, and is number 24. Along with the title is the date 15th August 1822, and the motto "O felicem diem". This was the date of the landing of King George IV at Leith. Nothing for centuries had given such a sense of pride and uplift to Leithers as this royal visit, so presumably the significance of the date and motto on the "Pilot" is not that the paper was founded then - since number 24 only appeared in April 1825 - but rather that the occasion of the King's visit was the inspiration behind the venture. This was apparently the "Pilot's" second run. Our knowledge of an earlier "Pilot", appearing in 1810, we owe to the Leith Pilot Annual.(120) The "Pilot" of 1825 was printed by J.Burnet, at 16 Bernard Street, and Burnet first appears in the local directory in 1813.

Even on its re-establishment, the "Pilot" seems to have had no success. Leith was not yet ready for a newspaper of its own, although the second half of the 19th century saw many comings and goings, and seventy years after the demise of the "Pilot" the town was supporting no less than three newspapers. "The Pilot" had addressed itself chiefly

119. This is in the Edinburgh Room of Edinburgh Public Library.
120. Leith Pilot Annual, 1839, 48.
to the trading interests in Leith. It claimed to be a "Commercial and Literary Miscellany"; but as the literary giants of the country were writing and publishing their work less than two miles from Leith, a literary paper in the port was not a hopeful project. When the "Telegraph" failed in 1813, William Reid at once started the "Leith Commercial List", which was entirely and exclusively a trade periodical, and was an immediate and lasting success.

To the people of Leith the most depressing and frustrating aspect of their situation was the refusal, or inability of the city to realise that circumstances were rapidly changing. Despite the great development of the port, and the need for business men to make their own decisions in an atmosphere free of unnecessary restrictions, Edinburgh still insisted on treating Leith as her vassal, and exercising the medieval rights of a superior in a world that was no longer medieval. Many pin-pricks kept Leithers in a constant state of dull anger.

An example of the unreasonable burdens the port was expected to bear, was the rule whereby every letter posted in Leith for other parts of the country cost one penny more to send, than if it had been posted in Edinburgh. This was a serious matter for the business community. Repeated inquiries failed to elicit any authority for this extra
charge, but still it remained.

As far back as the days of the Commonwealth the postal facilities in Leith had given cause for complaint. Master Mewes was postmaster of Leith in 1659, when he was accused of exacting "two pence or a grott" for every item travelling from Leith to Edinburgh, "whereas they should be delivered free, without payment". So Master Mewes lost his job; but his successor, one Barrenger, turned out to be a similar sort of rogue. (121) The matter appears to have rested, but the abuse continued, and Leithers soon adopted other methods of maintaining a postal system more acceptable to them. They simply avoided the official postal service, and made private arrangements with various willing parties. How many other small towns imitated this practice is hard to say, but in 1764 appeared an Act of Parliament "for preventing frauds and abuses, &c..."

"...And whereas great numbers of letters are privately collected and delivered contrary to law, to the prejudice of the revenue of this office: all carriers, coachmen, watermen, wherrymen, dispersers of newspapers, Higlers, and all other persons whatsoever, hereafter detected in the illegal collecting, conveying or delivering of letters and packets, will be prosecuted with the utmost severity. The penalty is £5 for every letter so collected or delivered, contrary to law, and £100 for every week such practice is continued; one moiety to his Majesty, and the other to the informer.

"By order of the Postmaster General,
"Wm. Jackson, Secretary."(122)

The Traffickers were most annoyed, and set up a committee

121. MTG. 16.11.1659. X X. X5.
122. EBC. 25.4.1764.
to consult with the other incorporations, and the rest of the inhabitants, anent the extra penny on their post, and also "several necessary regulations relating to the carriage of letters between Edinburgh and Leith that were needed."(123) No good seems to have resulted from this, for at the turn of the century the next generation of Traffickers are still complaining that "they have to pay one penny Extra postage for every letter coming to or going from the Town of Leith by the Scots post - Altho' other towns in the Kingdom similarly situated are not subject to any such charge."(124) The Penny Post from Edinburgh delivered to Leith, Musselburgh, Prestonpans, Tranent, Dalkeith and Lasswade,(125) and the extra penny charged for mail to and from Leith remained a mystery.

When the Commonwealth troops garrisoned Leith in the 1650s there was a wild hope that the port might achieve her independence, for General Monk was thought to be not unfriendly to the idea. Optimism was so raised that in 1655 a petition was drawn up and sent to Oliver Cromwell, enumerating Leith's grievances against the Magistrates of Edinburgh. This appeal, and what became of it, makes the position of the two parties to the Leith and Edinburgh quarrel very clear.

Leith's complaints were listed as follows:

123. Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 22.1.1766.
124. Incorporation of Traffickers Sederunt Book, 7.4.1800.
125. Edinburgh Almanack, 1801.
"Leith is not allowed to choose her own magistrates:
these are forced upon them.

"Arbitrary taxes are imposed on lands and houses, a
mark Scots exacted on every tun of goods imported.

"Citizens are compelled to leave their houses in
Leith and live in Edinburgh.

"They dare not offer imports for sale before offering
to Edinburgh Council, and are often kept waiting 16
or 20 days to let other ships arrive.

"Edinburgh has set up a Weigh-house, and compel all
goods to be weighed, charging 1d pro cent for weighing,
although Leith has its own weigh-house, which they
farm out to Edinburgh merchants.

"Edinburgh compels all sellers of wine and beer,
maltmakers and brewers, to pay a yearly duty; limits
their number, and levy £1.13.4 stg on every tun of
wine going from Leith to Edinburgh, and 4d per lb
tobacco, strong waters, &c.

"Edinburgh has laid high imposition on ballast for
ships, anchorage, shore dues, &c., which has driven
away most of the English merchants, who resorted to
Leith in time of freedom of Trade: there were 40 then
for one since these impositions, as Commissioners of
Customs can testify from their books. English ships
would come rather to Leith than to other ports to
unload. Thus the trade is sold and the Commonwealth
defrauded.

"Edinburgh has excise on beer and ale, which they lay
upon malt, forcing Leith to pay near the third part
of their malt, refusing the liberty of a market, which,
Leith being a garrison, is very prejudicial.

"Edinburgh forces them to pay posses laid on 6 or 7
years ago, and owe Leith near £3000 stg for billeting
soldiers, whom they imposed upon Leith. (Edinburgh)
were paid by the Committee of Estates and never paid
Leith.

"They collect all the money that they can from Leith
and carry it to Treasury in Edinburgh wherewith they
maintain agents in England to keep up the oppression
over Leith, which have no public revenue for the
officers of the town, maintenance of the poor, repair
of churches, paving of streets. And having no faithful
magistrates, no care is taken that Brewers, Butchers
and Vintners conform themselves to the law, nor lewd
persons corrected."(12c)

126. Inventory of Writings in the Charter-house of Edinburgh,
iv.308.
This document was received and read at Whitehall, and on the back of it the Lord Protector wrote:

"Whitehall 26.6.1655. Petition referred to Gen. Monk, with assistance any two judges in Scotland, to investigate, to compose the matter if they can; or to certify to us the true state, and give their opinion.

(signed) Oliver P."

Edinburgh was directed to provide answers to the charges made by Leith, and the magistrates did so at great length, describing the petition as "full of Untruths, Calumnies, Reflections, and every way seditious." But taking this very longwinded answer as a whole, Edinburgh really acknowledges the various abuses, but claims them as the essential right of the city, as being a royal burgh of infinite antiquity. In the end the petition was refused. Since Edinburgh owned the superiority of Leith, the port had no right to choose her own magistrates, or to be incorporated as an independent burgh.

Matters had rested thus ever since, and had Edinburgh been alive to her responsibilities, as she was to her rights, things might not have gone so badly between the two communities. But the bailies of Leith were appointed by Edinburgh; they lived in Edinburgh, and had no interest in their bailiwick. They were reluctant even to make the twice-weekly journey to Leith to hold court there, so that sittings were not infrequently abandoned, as the magistrate failed to appear. The kirk session of South Leith addressed a petition to the
town council, calling attention to the frequent cases of law-breaking and disorder in the port which the kirk session could not deal with, and asking that the magistrates for Leith in future might be resident in the town. (127) They got no satisfaction. Then at last, in 1792, there was a sudden change. In that year the town council agreed to consider for appointment as bailies of Leith only those who should be recommended by the retiring bailies. This was a great step forward, and enabled Leith gradually to secure residenters as bailies. During the succeeding thirty years or so, the bailies became so effective as administrators of the town, and so persistent as gad-flies to the Edinburgh Town Council, that in 1826 Lord Provost Trotter decided it was time for a change. He pointed out that Leith had no legal right to elect magistrates from her own residenters, that this recent practice had only been allowed to develop through mistaken lenience on Edinburgh's part, and that this must now cease, and the election of Leith magistrates revert to the old system of nomination by the Town Council of Edinburgh.

The resultant storm seems to have taken all Edinburgh observers by surprise, but in the Police Act of the following year Leith's right to nominate her own magistrates was confirmed and legalised:

127. SLR. 2.10.1693.
"The Magistrates, Masters of Incorporations, and past magistrates shall make choice of a leet of nine persons qualified to hold the office of resident magistrate of South Leith, to be presented to the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town Council of the City of Edinburgh. The Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council of the City of Edinburgh shall... out of the leet of nine persons to be presented to them in manner foresaid elect and choose three persons to be the resident magistrates of Leith for the next ensuing year." (128)

This declaration was really momentous for Leith. Despite frequent gestures of independence, the port had for centuries been helplessly resigned to the will of Edinburgh. As often as the city chose to exercise her rights as a royal burgh over her feudal inferior, Leith had had to capitulate. By the end of the eighteenth century however, Leithers were becoming convinced that in the new world of industry and commerce, in which the port had a growing stake, the people of Leith could look after their own interests more efficiently than Edinburgh had ever been able to do. When the 1827 Act confirmed her right to name her own magistrates Leith at last felt her feet on the ladder that would take her to real independence.
VILLAGE INTO TOWN

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THE INHERITANCE

After almost three centuries of hope deferred, Leithers entered their Promised Land in 1833. Almost unbelievably they found themselves in charge of their own affairs; but when the celebrations ended and the excitement died, the scene perhaps was not so exhilarating. Many problems confronted the Town Council of Leith; many reforms and improvements were needed; rivals and competitors in trade and commerce had to be outpaced, and day to day administration brought many needs to light, many apparently unanswerable questions. This is the normal situation of any town council, but the Leith councillors were inexperienced. 1833 marked the end of an era in the port, and this survey of the preceding century and a half may fittingly end with a view of the situation of the town at the point where self-government began.

Municipal reform was preceded by Parliamentary reform. The Scottish Reform Bill of 17th July 1832 (1) brought Leith, Portobello and Musselburgh together as the Leith district of burghs, forming a Parliamentary constituency, with the right to return a Member to Westminster. This advancement was of course celebrated by a great procession on Friday 10th August 1832, when every person in Leith, Portobello

1. 2 Will IV c.65: "An Act to amend the Representation of the People in Scotland."
and Musselburgh who belonged to any organisation, or was entitled to wear any uniform, turned out, and with bands playing and banners waving, rejoiced in the new dignity of belonging to a Parliamentary constituency separate from Edinburgh. This was the greatest public procession there had ever been in Leith. It was said there were 3000 people on parade that day. This was also the last occasion on which the now enfeebled incorporations appeared together in public, and they made a brave showing on that joyful day.

The procession formed on the Links in front of the High School, and was led by the Carters, mounted. They were followed by the members of Trinity House, but it was a sign of the times that the sailors paraded separately from the Trinity House, and far removed from the incorporation in the procession. The Tailors came next, followed by the Wrights and Masons. The Maltmen and the Traffickers now stood rather too high in local society to take part in such a popular demonstration, but the Trades were well to the fore. Once again however, it could be seen that things had vastly changed in the course of a generation or so, for the number of trades had multiplied to the extent that only a selection, chosen by ballot, took part. There were old-time societies, as the Shoemakers, Porters and Coopers; but there also appeared the Cork-cutters, Grocers, Shipwrights, and employees of the Sugar Refining Company, and many other
trades and crafts. All of these bodies carried flags and banners, many of them invented and produced for the occasion. Several trades carried examples of their work; the Blockmakers exhibited blocks, pumps, a ship's steering-wheel: shipwrights had a series of models showing various stages in ship construction. The Blacksmiths showed a miniature steam engine, which was actually at work as it was borne in procession, and no doubt earned a special round of applause. The Joiners, not to be outdone, but having nothing as dramatic as a working model, carried around a sash window with shutters, and a lobby door! The Free Fishermen paraded separately from all other seamen, bearing many ship models, from fishing-boats to frigates. It was a never-to-be-forgotten celebration, in which the Portobello Trades also joined; and as Edinburgh was also en fête with a similar procession, the two pageants met and saluted each other at Pilrig, before making their way back to their starting points and dispersing. (2)

At the election in the following December, the candidates were John A. Murray, an Edinburgh advocate, and William Aitchison of Drummore, a wine-merchant in Bernard Street. From the general excitement and high feeling evinced, it might have been supposed everyone in Leith was personally

2. W. Millar (ed.) An Account of the Edinburgh Reform Jubilee, celebrated 10th August 1832; also the Leith Reform Jubilee, celebrated same day, &c., &c.
involved in the return of a Member. In fact a mere 94 qualified voters were listed for the town of Leith at this election. (3) Aitchison was a determined opponent of reform, and was against voting by ballot; and considering the solid backing in the country for Parliamentary Reform, it might be thought surprising that Mr Aitchison should ever have dreamed he had a chance of success. But the tradesmen and labouring classes had no vote, and among the few who were qualified Aitchison had various business friends, whose votes he confidently expected. But this first Leith election ended in an anti-climax inconceivable in the twentieth century. Polling had been fixed for Thursday and Friday, 20th and 21st December - surely ample time for the 94 voters to register their choice. Both candidates, however, had little difficulty in canvassing all the electors beforehand, and as a result, when nominations were called for on Tuesday 18th December, Mr Aitchison withdrew from the contest.

"After the most deliberate consideration, I am induced, by the advice, and with the full approbation of my Committee, to withdraw from a contest which I can no longer flatter myself would be attended with a favourable result." (4)

Disappointed, and still full of election fever, the voteless now eagerly discussed the chances of hearing something to their advantage soon from Whitehall. In due

course the momentous news broke. On 28th August 1833 there was passed "An Act to provide for the Appointment and Election of Magistrates and Councillors for the several Burghs and Towns of Scotland which now return or contribute to return Members to Parliament, and are not Royal Burghs". Under this Act the Leith Town Council was to comprise sixteen members, including a provost, four bailies and a treasurer. The magistrates and council, themselves expressly prohibited from the office, could elect a town clerk, although the existing clerk, if any should already hold that office, was confirmed in his appointment ad vitam aut culpum. (5)

The election of the first Leith Town Council was held on Tuesday 5th November 1833, and the results were published two days later in the Edinburgh Evening Courant:

**First Ward**

Mr Adam White, merchant. . . . . . . 136
Mr Henry Johnston, banker: . . . . . 109
Mr William Taylor, soap manufacturer . . 95
Mr Thomas Hutchison, merchant) . . . . equal
Mr Robert Matthew

A new election will take place in this ward for the 4th councillor.

**Second Ward**

Mr James Wishart, merchant : . . . . . 103
Mr James Scarth, merchant. : . . . . . 101
Mr George Thomson, merchant . . . . . 71

**Third Ward**

Mr John Veitch, cork-cutter . . . . . . 118
Mr James Neilson, cooper . . . . . . 96
Mr William Morrison, merchant . . . . . 83

5. Scots Statutes Revised.
Fourth Ward
Mr John Carr Beaddie, merchant ... 109
Mr Robert Liddell, broker ... 94
Mr Frederick Schultz ... 84

Fifth Ward
Mr John Mitchell, junr., general agent ... 78
Mr James Carnie, fisherman, Newhaven ... 74
Captain Liston ... 48

N.B. The First Ward returns four councillors, and the other wards return three each.

It was very much a business man's council. No professional men, no retired men or titled notabilities, no citizens of independent means, far less any common tradesmen were included. The voters, in fact, had elected their own friends, and this was to remain a strong characteristic of Leith Town Council, as distinct from its Edinburgh counterpart. In the relatively close-knit community of the port, each councillor was always well-known to all the inhabitants - if not as a personal friend, then at least by character and reputation. This fact had several important consequences which lie beyond this survey. It will also be noticed that the 94 voters of 1832 had now considerably increased. Many Leithers in the previous year had not realised in time for the Parliamentary election that they were entitled to vote, but they had rectified matters in time for the municipal election. A new "List of Qualified Voters" for the Leith District of Burghs was printed in 1835, and totalled 1192 names.(6)

6. List of Qualified Voters for the Leith District, including Newhaven, Portobello, Fisharow and Musselburgh, 1835.
Oddly enough, although Leith had been a burgh of barony since 1636, the precise boundaries had remain unspecified. Until 1827 Leith was held to consist of the barony of South Leith, that part of North Leith connected with the burgh of Canongate, the regality of Citadel, belonging to the Corporation of Edinburgh, and the bailiary of St. Anthony, belonging to the kirk session of South Leith. The harbour, quays, and adjacent streets, including the King’s Wark, came within the royalty of the City of Edinburgh. As John Russell observed, all this left more than half the town totally unprovided with any municipal government, for the bounds of the barony of South Leith, for example, were so uncertain, that the magistrates did not know the limits of their own jurisdiction.(7) The 1827 Act, providing for the municipal government of Leith, described the boundaries of the town for the first time. Leith was held then to extend between Seafield toll-bar on the east, the Firth of Forth on the north, the stone bridge at Leith Mills on the west, and the foot of Leith Walk on the south.(8) These limits of course excluded North Leith, and as they also cut out the whole of Leith Walk and the neighbouring lands, they were plainly quite inaccurate, and six years later a much wider area was defined in the Act 2 & 3 Will.IV cap. 65. Leith was now held to lie between a line from Lochend to the sea on the east,

8. Reports from Commissioners on Burghs, ibid.
to the Wardie burn on the west, and from the Firth of Forth on the north to the middle of Leith Walk on the south (i.e. Pilrig). This was the territory to be administered by the new town council.

The 1831 census gave the population of Leith as 25,855, and this in comparison with little over 15,000 at the beginning of the century showed the town growing rapidly. But all was not well; the shipping business was languishing, and as this was the very life-blood of the port, the new councillors were greatly perturbed. Chambers' Gazetteer describes what would appear to be a lively coastal trade. Three companies engaged in the Leith and London trade employed 22 vessels. There were five ships trading with Hull, five with Liverpool, four with Newcastle, four with Aberdeen, two with Inverness, two with Wick, one with Helmsdale, and four with Greenock, besides trade done with smaller ports in Fife, with Dundee and Stirling. Seven whalers sailed each year from Leith for Greenland, and eight vessels did a round trip between Leith, Hamburg and Rotterdam.(9) The catalogue is impressive, until some other facts are taken into account. What of the Baltic trade? one may ask. Leith had long enjoyed the lion's share of this trade among Scottish ports, but by the 1830s the business had mysteriously left Leith in favour of Aberdeen, Dundee and Kirkcaldy. The bar

at the harbour mouth, and the fact that the harbour itself practically dried out at low water, deprived Leith of almost all the new steamer trade, and Newhaven, with much more water, was frequently preferred, at least for taking on and disembarking passengers, although port facilities were very inadequate. But the greatest handicap Leith laboured under, according to the Gazetteer was "the levying of enormous dues from ships for its harbour and docks."

This view of Leith's trade, and the causes of its decline, represented the general opinion in the port. Edinburgh's long mismanagement of the docks, in which high port charges had figured as a conspicuous fault, had produced the conviction that only by reducing those charges could the shipping trade be revived. The newly formed Dock Commission found little favour, for there was a suspicion that this was one more manoeuvre by the city to avoid reducing the port charges. Moreover the Commission was heavily overweighted with Edinburgh interests and representatives; it did not properly represent business and shipping interests; and the Dock Commission was neither able to cope with the problems of shipping, nor very interested in reform of any kind.

In 1836 however, there appeared a penetrating analysis of the state of Leith shipping, which challenged the accepted opinion that the port charges were exorbitant. The author
of this little book was William Marshall, and while his conclusions were published in 1836, the facts he argued from come well within our period. (10)

Marshall began with the rather surprising fact that while annual statistics of imports, exports, tonnage of shipping employed, and other details, were made up and published for various ports in Scotland, nothing of this nature had ever been done for Leith. Arguments about the trade of Leith were therefore largely guesswork. But in the 1830s it did not require detailed records to make it plain to anyone familiar with the harbour and docks, that while the coastal trade was flourishing, foreign trade was in a decline. It had always been characteristic of Leith however, that foreign trade amounted to but a small percentage of the total business done. Yet Marshall found that since 1760 there had been steady, and at times even a spectacular growth in maritimetrade at Leith, and he backed this finding with a Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>34,000</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>256,000</td>
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<td>1821</td>
<td>312,000</td>
<td>1834</td>
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<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>186,000</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>342,000</td>
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</table>

This Table, taken along with another list confined to the

foreign tonnage arriving annually at Leith, sheds some light
on the true situation of Leith in the 1830s:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Tons</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tons</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>43,500</td>
<td>1827</td>
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<td>65,200</td>
<td>1821</td>
<td>45,500</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>42,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>49,600</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>86,500</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>46,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One thing at least is plain from these figures; the
long French war did Leith's trade no harm. Regular convoys
sailing from the port encouraged merchants all over the
country to make use of Leith both for exports and imports.
As Marshall remarked, "From being the most extensive, she became
the only port in Scotland that carried on a direct trade
with the Baltic, and continued thus to monopolise the whole
of this important traffic during the eventful contest in
which the country was then engaged."(11) This favourable
situation was transformed with the coming of peace, when
other ports at once resumed their own wonted traffic on the
sea. The high figures for 1818 and 1825 are left unexplained,
but the opening of ports in 1827 for the import of corn gave
a distinct fillip to trade at Leith. Since then there had
been a steady decline in the number of foreign vessels using
Leith. Tonnage figures by themselves may not make the picture
plain; foreign trade must also be seen in relation to the

total business done at the port. From the above Tables, looked at in this way, Leith councillors saw a depressing picture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%age</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lively coastal trade, which gave the port such a busy aspect, was by no means all that it should have been. Coal imports, for example, which in 1820 were running at 56,842 tons in a year, had dropped by 1834 to 33,315 tons, despite increasing demands by industry - particularly breweries and distilleries - and a steadily growing population. This decline was due to the opening of the Union Canal in 1822, which siphoned away much of Leith's trade with the west of Scotland. Marshall reckoned this inland waterway deprived Leith of about 8000 tons of shipping annually. Another blow was the Edinburgh and Dalkeith Railway, which began operations in 1831.(12)

The trend of Marshall's argument, and the figures he quotes, show quite clearly that in the 1830s Leith was holding her own with great difficulty. Considering the current expansion of industry and the increasing population

---

in Edinburgh and the Lothians, Leith ought to have been forging ahead. Moreover, favourably placed as the port was to trade with the Baltic, the low level of her foreign trade was cause for serious concern.

To blame everything on exorbitant port charges at Leith was an over-simplification of the problem, Marshall argued. High as they were, these charges were not always inappropriate. To illustrate this Marshall instances a cargo of 320 tons of sugar brought from the West Indies in a ship of 350 tons register. He works out the following interesting calculation for (A) Importing at Greenock and transferring by canal to Leith - which was a frequently used route: and (B) Direct importation from the West Indies to Leith.

A.

Freight of 320 tons of sugar from W. Indies to Greenock at 90s per ton. £1440. - -
Shore dues at Greenock. 6.13. 4.
Harbour dues on vessel at Greenock. 8. 6. 8.
Freight from Greenock to Leith at 1s 1d per ton 241. 6. 8.
Shore dues on cargo at Leith. 28. - -

£1724. 6. 8.

B.

Freight of 320 tons sugar from W. Indies to Leith at 90s per ton. £1440. - -
Shore dues on do. at Leith 23.17. 9.
Harbour dues &c. on vessel at do. 22. 9. 2.

£1486. 6.11.

Difference in favour of Leith 237.19. 9.

£1724. 6. 8.

Voyage to Greenock is made on average in 42 days.
Leith " 49 days.
The rate of insurance to Leith is 5s per cent higher.
than to Greenock — upon £15,000, the supposed value of ship and cargo, the difference would be £37.10. — (13)

There were other anomalies in the port charges at Leith. For example, a ship using the harbour regularly was only charged for eight voyages per annum, although she might be tying up at Leith every week in the year on coasting business. This practice told heavily against all foreign trade. Then again the way in which various types of cargo were assessed and charged made no sense. A hogshead of whisky could be charged the same as a hogshead of ale; a ton of rags rated on an equality with a ton of tobacco or a tun of wine. This was the logic of bedlam, urgently calling for reform. Nevertheless, taking the rates levied on shipping along with the charges on goods, Leith made a much better showing than was generally supposed. Dundee and Aberdeen were continually complimented on their low rates for shipping, but once more Marshall does a little research and finds an unexpected result:

Statement of the Revenues collected on Goods and Shipp- ing at the Port of Leith in 1832, with the Sums which the Aberdeen & Dundee Rates would have produced, had these Rates been adopted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gross Amount</th>
<th>Aberdeen Rates would have produced</th>
<th>Dundee Rates would have produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Shipping</td>
<td>8969.5.6½</td>
<td>1700. - -</td>
<td>5452.13.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On gds imported</td>
<td>8636.16.7</td>
<td>15,300. - -</td>
<td>8526.18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On gds exported</td>
<td>1204.17.9</td>
<td>5,700. - -</td>
<td>4226.1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£18,810.19.9½</strong></td>
<td><strong>£22,700. - -</strong></td>
<td><strong>£18,205.14.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This did not justify the high port charges at Leith, but

the comparison with Dundee and Aberdeen did at least show that
the rates levied on goods were also important in attracting
trade.

There were some peculiarities in the shipping business
of Leith, for which even the industrious William Marshall
could find no reason. For one thing, Leith had practically
no Mediterranean trade while Glasgow did a great deal of
business there. On the other hand Leith had a near monopoly
of sailings to New South Wales. Again, Leith imported more
sugar from Mauritius than was imported into all the Clyde
ports put together - and port charges notwithstanding, Leith
still kept a far greater share of the wine trade than went
to Glasgow. Even so, the business was run in a most uneconomic
way, for wine, more often than not, was brought in as part
of a general cargo. The wine ships were really tramps,
picking up various cargoes in a succession of ports. The
wine, often of high quality, spent far too long at sea; it
was high time importers got together and chartered vessels
for wine shipment alone.

The fruit trade afforded another example of gross
inefficiency. Leith had long had a name as a fruit importing
town, and a large share of the trade, but almost all fruit
was brought into Leith from London, instead of being shipped
direct from Spain or Portugal. The reason for this peculiar
arrangement was that fruit from London reached the Forth
two or three weeks earlier than it did when imported directly from abroad. And the reason for this was that the vessels employed in the fruit trade were the oldest, clumsiest, heaviest ships then afloat. This kind of boat was surely the least appropriate for a perishable cargo, but the owners were reluctant to invest in new bottoms.

Adam Whyte, the first provost of Leith, was an able and successful merchant - "a capital specimen of an active, clever, shrewd and prosperous merchant". (15) Himself the soul of efficiency, he must have been well aware of the widespread lethargy and carelessness that characterised much of the Leith business world. It had for too long been a habit in the port to blame every failure, error or shortcoming on Edinburgh, but this would no longer serve. Marshall points out that conditions in the business world had vastly altered since the days of the French wars.

"Every little consideration in the way of accommodation, despatch and economy, is now marked and taken into account...Thirty years ago, half a dozen of successful voyages to the Baltic would have cleared the value of the ship, and laid the foundation of a competency for life. Such a thing can seldom be accomplished now... There is now introduced into business a mode of calculation which, for strictness, was formerly unknown..."(16)

Those who were living in the past must change their attitude and their methods, or go under.

By modern standards Leith in the 1830s was an unsophisticated community. A letter to the Edinburgh Evening Courant

makes this point more adequately than much explanation:

"I have often been surprised at the absurd practice, which is too common here, of walking upon the causeway, which, you know, is specially provided for horses and carriages. If you are riding or driving, these good people never think of getting out of the way, but look at you as if you were interfering with their rights in pursuing your ordinary course..." (17)

Within the space of a long lifetime Leith had grown from a village into a town, and perhaps was still inclined to village attitudes. But already in 1833 the first omnibus had started to run between Edinburgh High Street and Seafield Baths; (18) the streets had been gaslit since 1822; (19) the prototype of a gas cooker was exhibited at the Mechanics Institute; (20) and in the summer of 1833 a Prospectus and Plan of a railway between Edinburgh and Leith was published. (21)

The Leithers who marched in the Reform Jubilee procession, the crowds who waved and cheered from the pavements and windows as the procession passed, were sure that the sun had risen on a bright new morning for their town. As happens so often, the brilliant morning presaged a changeable day, the sun hidden for long spells by rain-clouds, the morning breeze turning to a chill wind. But the record of Leith as an independent burgh belongs to a different era from the eighteenth century struggle towards emancipation. The

19. By an Act of Parliament, under which the South Leith Gas Company was formed.
community which was first discernable in detail in the Poll Tax Return of 1694, achieved, as it were, its majority in 1833, and the story of its adult life must be told elsewhere.
THE INHERITANCE

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Newhaven, Portobello, Fishterrow & Musselburgh.
APPENDIX A

Revenue received by Edinburgh from Leith for the twelve months ending at Martinmas 1693 - from the Minutes of the Town Council 29.6.1694.

Merk on the tune from Leith to Jas Balfour merchant there............. 846.13. 4.
Weigh-house of Edr/Leith to Jas Balfour........................................... 4433. 6. 8.
Shoar dewes to Jas Guthry................................................................. 5333. 6. 8.
Timber buish to Baillie Menyies......................................................... 466.13. 4.
Imposition on wines to Robt Walwood................................................. 933. 6. 8.
Jas Pringle for Bonnington Mills....................................................... 33. 6. 8.
John Paterson for S.Leith links & house........................................... 203. 6. 8.
Few duty of Leith per Clerk's roll.................................................... 238. 5.10.

£31,788. 5.10.

Rental of the houses and Chopes in Leith:

Widow Hallyburtoun (owes 3 yrs) payes yearly for her house & Chope........... 36. -- --.
Widow Waterstoune for her house....................................................... 48. -- --.
Alexr Finlay for his house and seller............................................... 60. -- --.
Rot. Cheislie for Weyhouse lofts...................................................... 66.13. 4.
Peter Petit his land............................................................................. 20. -- --.
Andw Johnstoun's aires ther land....................................................... 20. -- --.
Fleshmercat of Leith............................................................................ 27. -- --.
Sir Magnus Prince his loft not set....................................................... 40. -- --.
Rot. Traile his land............................................................................ 30. -- --.
Rot. Milne's land................................................................................. --. 3. 4.
The Lady Hope toune's new turnpkyke..................................................... --.13. 4.
Andw Eastoune drummer ane thack house......................................... 1. -- --.
Alexr Baine and litle thack house....................................................... 1. -- --.
Two sellers under the Tolbuith possesst be Walter Learmount Shoarmaster

£356. 3. 4.
The rentall of the Citidaile & Newhaven as followes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thos &amp; Alexr Deanes</td>
<td>for ropeworks at Newhaven</td>
<td>66.13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Hisbet.</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The aires of Jas Allane</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelius Neilson, long owand</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Stewart &amp; Mr Harie Alcorne</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.13.-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporall Potter ane house there</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.--6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rot. Montgomery ane litle house</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Rankine ane house</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.10.-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Dallas &amp; Thos Wilsone.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat. Watsone ane house there.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andw Walker ane house there.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.10.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat. Archibald</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

£123.13.6
APPENDIX B
THE MANSE OF SOUTH LEITH

The minister of the first charge of South Leith was in the unfortunate position of having no manse. The Act of 1609, erecting the church in the Kirkgate into the parish kirk, had stated plainly "That the Benefite of Restalrig, Parsonage thereof, Glebe and Manse pertaining thereto, shall be always disposed to the Minister serving the Cure at the said kirk of Leith in all time coming", but for some reason now obscure, the manse had been allowed to become ruinous and uninhabitable. After the establishment of Presbyterianism the kirk session began paying their minister in the first charge £100 Scots annually from the poor box. This could be used by the minister as house rent, but the practice was soon objected to as a "relief given to the Heritors at the Expence of the Poor". A new arrangement was made in 1723, whereby 700 merks per annum was taken from the duty of twopence on the pint of ale, and given to the two ministers of South Leith. 250 merks of this was specifically allocated to the minister of the first charge as augmentation of stipend, but this was denied by the Heritors, who maintained that this increase was given in lieu of a manse. The Rev. Thomas Scott brought the matter before the presbytery in 1773, and in June 1775 he submitted a Memorial of his case. The
presbytery approached the heritors with the request that they fulfil their obligation, and provide a manse, but they refused, and declared that nothing short of a decree of the Court of Session would make them change their minds. Accordingly a process was started by Mr Scott, with the backing of the presbytery. As Robertson points out however, another seventy years were to pass before the case was won, and it was only in 1846 that a manse was at last provided. (cf. Minutes of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, 1773-1776 passim. D. Robertson, South Leith Records, ii.219.)
APPENDIX C

The Constitution of the New Kirk
later St. John's Parish

The establishment of this congregation in 1773 was not the straightforward erection of a chapel-of-ease in South Leith. The letter addressed to the kirk session of South Leith in November of that year began significantly, "We have erected a house for Divine Service and resolve to adhere to the plan of Doctrine and Worship contained in the Confession of Faith and Standards of the Church of Scotland", and this was exactly what had happened. This was not a church within the Establishment; it was built without reference to kirk session, presbytery or General Assembly. The money was provided by subscription from interested people of various denominations, and the new church was administered by a body of trustees or managers.

The great practical difficulty was how to get a minister without becoming committed to a particular denomination, and the approach to the South Leith kirk session was apparently made with the intention of getting the session's support in applying to the presbytery for recognition. When they addressed the presbytery the representatives of the New Kirk assured the Fathers and Brethren that they would be responsible for the maintenance of their own poor. All they asked for was permission to approach ministers in the Establishment with a view to calling a suitable man. Surprisingly, the presbytery were complaisant, and on Sunday 12th December 1773 the
New Kirk opened for public worship, and the service was conducted by the Rev. Robert Walker - a member of Presbytery. Two years later, on 2nd November 1775, the Rev. William Burnside was ordained as minister of the New Kirk, and he was succeeded in March 1781 by the Rev. (later Dr) John Colquhoun.

Exactly what the status of the New Kirk was, at this time, is hard to say. There were no elders - all meetings and interviews between the congregation and the presbytery were conducted exclusively by the managers or trustees. On the other hand there is nothing in the presbytery minutes to indicate that the ordination either of William Burnside or John Colquhoun, was in any way irregular. Matters rested in this peculiar state until the death of Dr Colquhoun in 1827. When the managers then approached the presbytery for leave to call a new minister, they were asked to submit an account of the constitution of the New Kirk. There followed a series of meetings with a committee of the presbytery, and eventually, on 18th July 1828 the managers of the New Kirk agreed that their church should be "permanently attached to the Established Church". They were then permitted to go forward with the business of filling the vacancy.

The managers recognised this as a final defeat. The New Kirk had been an experiment in independency. From the beginning the managers had expressed their willingness to accept the discipline of the Established Church, provided they were allowed to call their ministers. But of course
they were only partially amenable, and without a kirk session they were certainly no part of the Church of Scotland. The New Kirk managers appear to have imagined that having built their own place of worship, and being willing to maintain it, to pay a minister, and to provide for their poor, they were in such a position of strength that they could talk as equals with the Establishment. They learned otherwise eventually, but this was an instructive experiment in church government. (cf. Minutes of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and EEC. 9.1.1869).
APPENDIX D

The End of the Forth Oyster Fishing.

The Society of Free Fishermen raised an action against the City of Edinburgh to clear up any doubts over their right to fish the city oyster scalps. The case came on in 1342, when George Clark had already gone away. After various legal delays it was 1845 before judgement was issued, when it was declared, as in the 1791 enquiry, that the Fishermen's Society indeed had fishing rights on the city scalps, although the area was certainly the property of Edinburgh Town Council.

Clark's dredgers had extensively damaged the scalps, but the Court of Session finding led to a new agreement between the City and the Free Fishermen, whereby for a £10 annual rent the fishermen would have free access to Edinburgh markets, subject to the magistrates' ruling on quality, quantity and price. With minor adjustments this arrangement lasted 23 years, until in 1868 the magistrates alleged that the fishermen had not been keeping their part of the bargain, and a fresh treaty was made. The rent was now £20, and a lordship of twopence per long hundred (i.e. 120) was demanded. Also, no oysters were to be taken which would pass through a 2½ inch ring.

No sooner was this pact signed than the magistrates raised a new action against the Society, to overthrow their
exclusive fishing rights, and this time legal opinion favoured the City. The lordship was then increased to 3d, and a daily inspection of the catch was instituted. But now the trade was declining. In the winter of 1869-70 the lordship paid amounted to £93.12.3½: twenty years later the lordship from February to May totalled 8s 4d. Since then oyster fishing in the Forth has been dead. (cf. Wilson, Society of Free Fishermen of Newhaven, 64ff).
### APPENDIX B

**List of Prices Quoted in the Minutes of the Burlaw Court of Leith**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scots</th>
<th>Sterling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>1 boll of barley bear</td>
<td>£8.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>1 tuise of bear straw</td>
<td></td>
<td>£6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728</td>
<td>1 boll bear</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>1 peck oats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>2 pecks wheat</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1734</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
<td>11.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1737</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>1 boll wheat</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1746</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>1 boll barley</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>&quot; oats</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>&quot; pease</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>1 threave bear straw</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>&quot; oat</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>&quot; pease</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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