

On the death of Duke Charles, Queensberry House came into the possession of his cousin, the 'earl of March, a singular-man-about-town in London, known as 'Old Q : he tripped it of all its ornaments, without and within, and sold it to the government for a barracks. It is now used as a House of Refuge. On its gate are the following notices : 'White-seam sewing neatly executed.' 'Applications for admission by the destitute any lawful day from 10 to 12.' 'Bread and soup supplied from 1 to 3, afternoon. Porridge supplied from 8 to 9, morning, 6 to 7, evening.' 'Night Refuge open at 7 P. M. No admission on Sundays.' 'No person allowed more than three nights' shelter in one month.' Such are the mottoes that now adorn the house which sheltered Prior's Kitty.

A striking object in the same vicinity is the Canongate Tolbooth, with pepper-box turrets and a clock projecting from the front on iron brackets, which have taken the place of the original curiously-carved oaken beams. Executions sometimes took place in front of this building, which led ways to find a grim joke in its motto : 'Sic. Itvr. Ad. Astra.' A more frequent place of execution was the Girth Cross, near the foot of the Canongate, which marked the limit of the right of sanctuary belonging to the abbey of Holyrood. At the Girth Cross, Lady Warriston was executed for the murder of her husband, which has been made the subject of many ballads :

My mother was an ill woman :
In fifteen years she married me.
I hadna wit to guide a man :
Alas ! ill counsel guided me.

O Warriston ! O Warriston !
I wish that ye may sink fire in :
I was but bare fifteen years auld
When first I entered your gates within.

I hadna been a month married,
Till my gude lord went to the sea :
I bare a bairn ere he came hame,
And set it on the nourice knee.

But it fell ance upon a day
That my gude lord return'd from sea :
Then I did dress in the best array,
As blythe as any bird on tree.

I took my young son in my arms,
Likewise my nourice me forebye,
And I went down to yon shore-side,
My gude lord's vessel I might spy.

My lord he stood upon the deck,
I wyte he hail'd me courteously :
'Ye are thrice welcome, my lady gay :
Wha'se aught that bairn on your knee ?'

She turn'd her right and roundabout,
Says, 'Why take ye sic dreads o' me ?'
Alas ! I was too young married
To love another man but thee.'

"Now hold your tongue, my lady gay ;
Nae mair falsehoods ye'll tell to me ;
This bonny bairn is not mine ;
You've loved another while I was on the sea."

In discontent then hame she went,
And aye the tear did blin' her e'e ;
Says, 'Of this wretch I'll be revenged
For these harsh words he said to me.'

She's counsel'd wi' her father's steward,
What way she cou'd revenged be ;
Bad was the counsel then he gave :
It was to gar her gude lord dee.

The nourice took the deed in hand ;
I wat she was well paid her fee ;
She keist the knot, and the loop she ran
Which soon did gar this young lord dee

Another version has :

The nourice she knet the knot,
And oh, she knet it sicker :
The ladie did gie it a twig,
Till it began to wicker.

The murder was committed on the 2nd of July, 1600, and with the speedy justice of that time the punishment followed on the 5th. The lady was sentenced to be 'wooried at the stake and brint,' but her relatives had influence enough to secure a modification of the sentence, so that she was beheaded by the 'maiden,' a form of guillotine introduced by the Regent Morton. The original sentence was executed upon the nurse, who had no powerful relatives.

Directly opposite the Canongate Tolbooth is a very antiquated dwelling, with three gables to the street, which converses with the passer-by on envy and backbiting. It begins : 'Hodie. Mihi. Cras. Tibi. Cur. Igitur. Curas' ('To-day, mine ; to-morrow, thine ; why then care ?'). As if premising an unsatisfactory answer, it continues : 'Ut Tu Linguae Tue, Sic Ego Mear. Aurium, Dominus Sum.' ('As thou of thy tongue, so I of my ears, am lord'), and