

RAMBLING RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD
GLASGOW.

The judges on circuit, we are told, took up their abode in the Star and Black Bull Inns alternately, and walked in procession therefrom, always on foot, with a guard of infantry, to the court house. Our readers may perhaps recollect a very amusing sketch of Lord Pitmilly in such a procession on a wet day, drawn by John Gibson Lockhart, and reproduced in Lord Cockburn's Journal. "In returning at night," Nestor says, "the cavalcade, attended by torch-bearers, attracted great crowds. On one occasion at the Saltmarket, at the time of what was called the Radical Rebellion, seditious cries were raised by the populace, when Lord Hermand, one of the judges, snatched a torch from the hands of one of the attendants and gave a defiant response. This was the last of the flambeau peageants." The whole proceedings must indeed have been very curious. The court house was behind the old jail at the foot of the High street, and entered from the Trongate by a stair abutting on the prison. The accommodation for the public was but scanty. "Whenever a person was seen to come from the court he was surrounded by the motley crowd, with the question, "Who is their lordships now sitting on?" In those days, of course, few circuits passed without a sentence of death being pronounced, and before 1826 the verdicts of the jury were always in writing. The envelope containing the verdict was sealed with black wax if the prisoner had been found guilty, with red wax if otherwise; so the culprit and audience thus learned the result before the seal was broken. In the early part of the century the magistrates attended executions wearing white gloves and carrying white peeled rods or wands. The jury always stood during the judge's charge, and it was not until Lord Cockburn's day that this uncomfortable custom was abolished. Some good stories are given of juries; on one occasion a juror left the sheet of paper which had been supplied to him for the purpose of taking notes, behind him, and on examination it was found written in large text from top to bottom, with one uniform line, "John struck James first." There is another story of Lord Hermand which we may quote: There had been a riot in the Trongate between some soldiers and citizens; a young officer in endeavoring to lead his men

back to barracks, drew his sword, which was immediately wrested from him by a painter, who was brought up at the bar to be tried for the offence. In charging the jury, Lord Hermand was very angry. "Gentlemen," he bawled, "the sword was given to this officer by his Majesty, and none dared to take it from him but he who gave it. Had it been I that had that sword, and the painter had sought to deprive me of that weapon, I would—I would—I do not know what the consequences might have been." His lordship at this stage almost lost the power of speech, and his colleague (Lord Justice Clerk Boyle) brought him a tumbler of water from the closet behind. The man was acquitted and the audience applauded, on which the judge ordered the court to be cleared, which was done by a party of soldiery with fixed bayonets! In transportation cases their lordships used to indulge at great length on the rigid nature of the law in the penal colonies. In one of these long addresses a young girl got tired and interrupted his lordship with the exclamation: "Never mind, my lord, I'll get a black man there." His lordship, nowise disconcerted, merely interjected, "Then, deeply sympathizing, as I certainly do, with the black man, I was going on to say, before you interrupted me, that if you are ever again found swerving from the paths of honesty, you will find a severer law in that region than you have found in this."

We have not space to do more than briefly to notice the amusing description of the sheriff and other courts, and of the way in which business was conducted therein. One figure, however, deserves to be alluded to before we conclude. This was a bailie who often astonished the audience in the police court by his use or abuse of the English language. All persons whose cases required more attention he ordered to be "reprimanded" (remanded) until next day or some further day. It was the same worthy magistrate who occasionally addressed abandoned offenders, solemnly telling them that henceforth they must be careful of their conduct, as "the eye of the Almighty and the Glasgow police would be on them." Remembering the formality he had witnessed at a Circuit Court recently held, the same functionary, in sentencing a man to sixty days' imprisonment, put on his cocked hat, and solemnly uncovering his head, implored a blessing on the culprit's soul.

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