

II.

JOHN KNOX AND HIS MANSE. By PETER MILLER, F.S.A. Scot.

Among the many curious and interesting traditions of Old Edinburgh that exist, none has obtained a firmer hold on the public mind than that which affirms that the quaint and venerable old mansion situated at the lower end of the High Street is the identical lodging in which George Durie, Abbot of Dunfermline, resided; and which, subsequent to his disgrace, was occupied as the residence of John Knox while he was minister of St Giles Church—from 1560 till his death in 1572. According to the best authority, prior to the present year the only evidence that existed respecting the accuracy of the tradition was popular belief, and this is so expressed in the following sentence from Wilson's *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*.—"No evidence now appears in the title-deeds of the property to afford a clue to this or any of its earlier proprietors, but the tradition has been long universally received

which assigned it as the residence of the Reformer." When and by what authority the tradition was first established, it may now serve no useful purpose to inquire, but judging from what is known with certainty respecting it, the legend is not a very old one, and cannot be traced to an earlier date than the beginning of the present century. Neither Maitland nor Arnot, in their histories of Edinburgh, nor *The Traveller's Companion through the City of Edinburgh*, 1794, make any allusion to the story, and probably the statement made in Stark's *Guide to Edinburgh*, published in 1806, is the first notification of the tradition, but he gives no authority for the assertion.

That section of Old Edinburgh bounded by Halkerston's Wynd on the west and Leith Wynd on the east, and by the King's High Street on the south, and the Old Physic Gardens on the north, has a very interesting history if it could be traced back to the 12th century. But the paucity of authentic documents illustrative of the progress of the city from the time of David the First to the 14th century affords the chronicler no reliable data on which correct statements can be made respecting the extension of the town in that quarter. From some time previous to the foundation of the Trinity College Church by Mary of Gueldres in 1462, however, the case is different; for, from that time onwards to the present, there is fortunately a mass of documentary evidence of charters and other historical records that furnish the chronicler with facts from which most important and reliable information can be obtained, not only as regards the topographical features of the district, but also regarding the character and condition in life of the inhabitants. All that evidence goes to show that the district in question in these early times formed something like a new town of Edinburgh, and was inhabited by the upper, the aristocratic, and educated citizens. It seems to have been the chosen place of abode of many of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Scotland up to the time of the Reformation.

However, it is no part of this paper to go into any details, further than those having a bearing upon the question of the locality of John Knox's house. The Register of Sasines, in the form of Protocol Books in the custody of the Town-Clerk, from which our evidence is mostly taken, goes no further back than to A. D. 1500; but for dates prior to that time the

Chartulary of St Giles, collected and arranged by the late David Laing, supplies us with a mass of the best of all authentic history—charter history, which carries us back to the 13th century. Although we search in vain in the modern title-deeds of the reputed house in which John Knox is said to have lived for evidence of the tradition, the old deeds prior to and during his lifetime are equally destitute of any information on which to base the legend. On the contrary, they afford ample evidence, sufficient of itself to prove that John Knox could not have occupied this house during his incumbency as minister of St Giles Church from 1559 till near the time of his death. That fine old mansion, perhaps one of the oldest houses in Edinburgh, has a history of its own, altogether apart from John Knox, to make it memorable and worthy of being known and preserved at the public expense as the oldest house in Edinburgh. The various sasines in the Town Council Records, and the charters respecting this house in the *Register of the Great Seal*, give instructive details respecting it, as to who possessed it before Knox's time, who built it, and to whom it belonged until its owner, James Mosman, goldsmith, a burghess of the city of Edinburgh, was executed, along with Kirkcaldy of Grange and others, at the Cross of Edinburgh, 3rd August 1573.

The first notice of the house in question is contained in a sasine in the Protocol Book of Vincent Strathauchin, dated 22nd December 1525, by which "Christina Reidpeth, daughter of the late Walter Reidpeth, with the consent and assent of her husband, John Arres, conveys in fee that land or tenement of her father, Walter Reidpeth, situated in the Burgh of Edinburgh, on the north side of the King's High Street, between the land of the late William Lökkart on the west part, and the land of the late William Reidpeth on the east, and the land of the said William Lökkart on the north part, and the King's public street on the south," to her son, John Arres, heir-apparent of the said Christina Reidpeth and John Arres, the life-rent of the property being reserved to his father and mother, or to the longest liver of the two during the period of their natural lives.

Thirty-one years after the date of this sasine, in 1556, another sasine is recorded in Alexander King's Protocol Book, vol. v. p. 101,

affecting the same property, but the owners and heirs-apparent are altogether different. It is Mariot Arres, daughter and heir of the late John Arres, and her husband, James Mosman, goldsmith, son and heir of John Mosman, goldsmith, burgess of Edinburgh, that are now dealing with "the tenement of John Arres, situated in the Burgh of Edinburgh, on the north side of the King's High Street, lying between the tenement on the north by the said William Lokkart, and on the west by the former William Lokkart, and formerly by the land of the late William Reidpeth, but now belonging to the heirs of Robert Fleming on the east, and the King's High Street on the south." There are several deeds affecting this tenement up to 1573. The property, however, remains in the possession of James Mosman until the second of May 1573, when it is granted by Royal Charter to John Carmichael, junior, it having been escheated to the King by reason of the forfeiture of James Mosman, goldsmith, and formerly burgess of Edinburgh. The property is described in the Royal Charter "as that tenement situated at the Nether-bow, between the land of James Hoppringall of Whitebank and Patrick Fleming" (*Register of the Great Seal*, 1573). There were other properties belonging to Mosman conveyed by this charter—a tenement in Forester's Wynd, another in Liberton's Wynd, described "as built and waste," besides the land of Wray, in the county of Linlithgow, the lands of Langhirdmanston, the mill and mill lands of Currie, in the county of Edinburgh.

During all the time that John Knox lived in Edinburgh as minister of St Giles Church, from 1560 till 1569, the Town Council paid his house rent, not only when he was in furnished lodgings, but also during all the time that he lived in Abbot Durie's lodging as well. None of that rent was paid to James Mosman, as proprietor of the house now called John Knox's Corner.

Where, then, did John Knox live while he was minister in Edinburgh? The evidence on this part of the question is positive, and is all obtained from contemporaneous historical documents that are still extant, and which are open to the inspection of the public.

John Knox was appointed Protestant minister of St Giles Kirk in 1559, more than a year before George Durie, Abbot of Dunfermline and

Archdeacon of St Andrews, left Scotland. The *Diurnal of Occurrents* tells us that "on the 29th day of January 1561 (New Style), the Earl of Eglinton and the Abbot of Dunfermline passed to France furth of Dunbar." The date of his departure is of some consequence in this narrative, as will appear from what follows. The new minister of St Giles appears to have lived in furnished lodgings for some short time after he came to Edinburgh with his family. The Town Council Records supply the following notices respecting John Knox and the place of his abode from a short time after he came to Edinburgh:—

8th May 1560.—"The provost, ballis, and counsall ordanis Alexander Park, Thesaurer, to deliver to Johne Carins the sum of £40 for furneaching of their minister, Johnne Knox, in his houshold, and becaus the said Johnne Knox has been furnished upon David Forrester's expensis sin his comin to this toun be the space of 15 days last bipast, ordanis the said Johne Carins to receive the said David's accounts, and mak him payment of the sowmes debursit be him on the first end of the sowme of £40 to be delivered to him."

26th June 1560.—The Treasurer ordained to "pay Johne Carins the sowme of three score pounds for furnesing of the minister."

16th August 1560.—The Treasurer ordained "to deliver to Johne Carins the sowme of £5 for furnessing of the minister."

Johnne Carins was reader and "lectour of the morning prayers" in St Giles. He had a salary of 100 merks yearly.

"On the 4th September 1560, the ballies and counsail having consideration for the eis of John Knox, minister, John Durie,¹ talyeour, removed him furth of the ludgeing occupyet by the Abbot of Drum-

¹ The question has been asked, Who was John Durie, who had possession of Abbot Durie's lodging when it was wanted for John Knox's manse? He must have had some real or fancied right to be the *locum tenens* during the Abbot's absence. The authorities do not appear to have had any further trouble with him after he received eight marks to quit the premises voluntarily. Perhaps the following entries from a catalogue of leases, feus, &c., given in the Appendix to the Chartulary of Dumfermline, granted during the incumbency of the Abbot Durie, may, in the opinion of some, throw a kind of side-light upon this question—"a lease in favour of Catherine Sibbald and her son John Durie of three-fourths of the tenement Pitcathie; a lease of Easter Baudrig to Catherine Sibbald; a free charter to Catherine Sibbald of Easter Pitcathie, with a precept of sasine."

fermeling to the effect the said minister mycht enter thairto, ordanis Alexander Park, Thesaurer, to content and pay to the said John Durie the sowme of 8 marks, and the samyn promittys that how soon thai may provide the said minister ane uther lodging, to enter the said John to the possession thereof."

This house provided for John Knox appears from the record to have been rented from its heritable owner, Robert Moubray, and the rent paid termly by the Town Council. The first payment of rent was made "on the 12th of February 1561, under a precept or order from the Council to the Dean of Guild, who was ordered to pay to John Knox, minister, the sume of fifty pounds for supporting of his charges; and the Treasurer to pay Robert Moubray, heritor of the house occupyet be 'Johne Knox,' 10 marks as the duty thereof to the preceding Martin-mass, and frae thence furth to pay him termli according to 50 merks in the year so lang as the samyn sall be occupyet be him."

On the 5th November 1561, the Dean of Guild is ordained with "all diligence to make ane warme studye of daills to the minister, Johne Knox, within his lugeing above the hall of the samyn, with lichtys and windokys thairto and all other necessaries."

On the 29th November 1564 the Treasurer is ordained to "mak gude and thankfull payment to Robert Moubray of Johnne Knoke's hous maill induring the time of his office, as other Treasurers hes done before."¹

For the year 19th November 1568, the rent of John Knox's house is paid to a new landlord. The Treasurer ordained "to caus mend and repair the necessaries of Johnne Knox dwelling hous, upon the expenses of Johnne Adamsoun and Bessie Otterbourne, his spous, conjunct fears thairof, and deduce the samyn of thair hous maill, becaus thai have been oftentimes requyrit to do the samyn and refusit."

On March 1569, "the bailies and counsall ordanis Andrew Stevinson, Thesaurer, to pay to John Adamson the sowme of 40 merks for the maill of his hous occupyt be Jonne Knox the yeir bipast, deduceand thairof the sowme of aucht pund debursit be the said Thesaurer in reparalyng of

¹ 25th Sept. 1566.—The Treasurer ordained to pay the rent due for Knox's house for 1565 to Robert Scott's spouse.

the said hous in default of the said Johne Adamson being requyrit to do the same, and als 12 shillings debursit mair be the same Thesaurer in repairing of the same house by the 8 pund above mentioned be the said Johnne.”

From those facts, supplied by the Town Council Records—records of transactions recorded from day to day by the officials who actually carried them through—it is evident that from the term of Martinmas 1560 until 4th March 1569 John Knox occupied the same house, the rent of which was paid by the Town Council during all that time to the owner, Robert Moubray, and his successor as owner, John Adamson and his wife Bessie Otterburn. Where was that house situated?

A sasine in favour of Robert Moubray and his spouse Jonet Cant, the legitimate daughter of Walter Cant of Leith, dated 8th April 1563, contained in Alexander Guthrie's (senior) Protocol Book, sufficiently answers the question. The deed appears to be a sasine or infeftment of certain properties that formerly belonged to Andrew Moubray, father of Robert Moubray, and other properties belonging to Robert Moubray, and both Robert Moubray and Jonet Cant get sasine of them. Jonet Cant is described as the future spouse of Robert Moubray. . . .
 “Deinde accessit idem ballivus ad tenementum terre quondam Joannis Brouni jacens ex boreali parte dicti burgi inter tenementum terre Davidis Fernalie ex orientali et tenementum terre Roberti Hopper ex occidentali. Et ibidem prefatus Robertus (Moubray) totam et integram magnam suam mansionem et edificium una cum horto et cauda ejusdem nunc inhabitatam per Joannem Knox ministrum cum suis pertinentiis jacens infra dictum tenementum inter borealem lacum dicti burgi ex boreali et anteriorem terram dicti tenementi ex australi.”¹

¹ The following is a translation of the sasine to Robert Moubray and Jonet Cant, his spouse :—

After having been seized in the forementioned properties, the same Bailie went to the tenement of land which formerly belonged to the late John Brown, lying on the north part of the same burgh, between the tenement of land belonging to David Farinlie on the east, and the tenement of land belonging to Robert Hopper on the west. And in a similar manner the said Robert (Moubray) got sasine of All and Whole his own great mansion and building, together with the garden and waste land of the same, now inhabited by John Knox, minister, with all its pertinents lying

So early as 1555 the first of these tenements belonged to Hugo Brown, son and heir of the quondam John Brown. It is described in Alexander King's Protocol, vol. iv. p. 229—"Ad tenementum terre Hugonis Broun filii et heredis quondam Johannis Broun jacens in predicto burgo ex parte boreali vici regii ejusdem inter tenementum terre heredum quondam Davidis Farinlie ex orientali et tenementum terre quondam Roberti Hoppar ex occidentali partibus."

Besides the sasine of 1563 in favour of Robert Moubray and Jonet Cant, his spouse, the identity and authenticity of this mansion is proved and more correctly described by subsequent deeds down to 1581. There is in 1565 a bond granted by Robert Moubray and his spouse Jonet Cant to Robert Scott and his spouse, in which the great mansion in which John Knox was residing and its belongings are more minutely described, as "all and whole the back lands of the said Robert Moubray, built and waste, under and above, with yard, tail waste, gate, close, and transe of the same, and free entry and ish on the fore part and the back, and all their pertinents, lying within the said tenement of the said late John Brown, between the foreland thereof on the south, and a certain piece of tail of the said lands belonging to the heirs of the late Thomas Chisholm lying near the North Loch on the north" (*Guthrie's Protocol*, 1562-1565, fol. 182, 28th March 1565).¹

between the North Loch of the said burgh, on the north side, and the fore land of the said tenement on the south. Robert Moubray inherited this property from his mother, Cathrine Hoppar, and not from his father, Andrew Moubray.

¹ "*Pro Roberto Scott et Sponsa.* Die vigesimo octavo mensis m'cii anno Dñi millesimo quingentesimo sexagesimo quinto. In mei notarii publici et testiū subscriptorum pñtis personaliter accessit honorabilis vir David Forestar vnus balliuorum burgi de Edinburt ad tenementum terre quondam ~~Roberti Hoppar~~ Johannis Broun dicti burgi burgen̄ jaceñ in eodem burgo ex parte boreali vici regii eiusdem inter tenementū terre quondam Davidis Fairlie ex orieñ tenementū terre quondam Roberti Hopper ex occideñ ptibus ab una et alia. Et ibidem providus vir Walterus Cant vnus balliuorum ville de Leith procurator et eo noñe Roberti Mowbray filii et heredis quond Andree Mowbray et nomine Jonete Cant sponse dicti Roberti ad negotium infrascriptum specialiter constitutū sicut mihi notario publico per frās procurationis manibus dicti Roberti et Jonete subscriptē et eorum sigillis sigillat̄ de data apud Leith vicesimo quarto die mensis m'cii anno Dñi millesimo quingentesimo sexagesimo quarto aperte constabat totas et integras terras posteriores dicti Roberti Mowbray edificatas et vastas subts et supra cum horto cauda vasta portu claussura et transitu earundem liberoꝝ in-

This description of Robert Moubray's great mansion and building, and what the fore tenement of Hugh Brown consisted of, and where situated, proves that it had no connection whatever with James Mosman's house at the Netherbow.

The exact site of Robert Moubray's mansion, occupied as the manse of John Knox during his incumbency of St Giles Church, is further indicated by other sasines, and specially by one contained in A. Guthrie's Protocol Book in November 1581, where the front tenement of Hugh Brown, that formed the south boundary of John Knox's manse, bounds on the west the property for which that sasine was granted. It is described as "the back land of James Guthrie, burges of the said burgh, formerly belonging to the late Patrick Barroun, lying within the tenement of the late David Farinlie, in the close called Turing's Close, on the west part of the transe thereof, between the foreland of the said late William Adamson, but now belonging to John Robertson, on the north, which tenement of the late David Farinlie lies in the said burgh, on the north side of the High Street between the fore land of the late William Johnstone on the east and the *fore land of Hugh Brown on the west parts.*" The sketch-plan shows the relative positions of several of the tenements referred to. The names of the closes are of great importance in understanding the points involved in the solution of this question. Some of those in the course of a few years were known by various names. The chief one, Turing's Close, was in existence at the close of the previous century, and within a period of fifteen years after 1560 it was known and described in sasines as the Old Provost's Close, and in 1568, when we know that John Knox actually lived there, as Knox's Close.¹ Thus the

troitu et exitu ex parte anteriore et posteriore ac omnibus suis p̄tineñ jaceñ infra dictum tenementū dicti quond̄ Johannis Broun inter terram anteriore eiusdem ex australi et quondam petiam caude hñoi terrarum pertineñ hereditibus quondam Thome Chisholme jaceñ prope lacum borealem ex boreali partibus ab una et alia terre et lapidis per deliberationem in manibus dicti balliui sursū reddidit et pure et simplr resignavit."—*Protocols, A. Guthrie, 1552-1565, fol. 182, 28th March 1565.*

¹ A tenement belonging to William Johnston is described as lying on the north side of the High Street, in the close called Leich's Close, on the west side of the transe of the same, between the waste land of the late James Jhoneston of Kelliebank on the north and the lands of Gilbert Leatheam on the south, the close called Knox's on the west, and the west lands pertaining to the late Henry Jousy on the east

PLAN OF THE NETHERBOW QUARTER, AFTER EDGAR'S PLAN OF THE CITY IN 1753.

The sites of the various tenements as described in the Sasines.

It is uncertain if the closes ran all the way down to the North Loch at an early date. Turing's Close existed from an early date before A.D. 1500. Most of the property appears to have belonged to him originally. The North Loch, prior to 1550, extended all the way down to the foot of Leith Wynd to the Water Yett, and is so depicted on a Plan published in 1572.

High Street.	Chalmers', previously Hopper's Close.						
	Alexander Napare.	Richard Thomson.			Robert Hopper.	Henderson.	
Fountain Well.	Menteith's, previously Fleming's Close.						
	Andrew Moubray.	Robert Fleming.		John Brown's Fore-land.	John Knox's Manse. D. Farlie.	Thomas Chisholm.	
Netherbow.	Turing's, Old Provost's, Knox's, and Trunk Close.						
	W. Lokkart.	Robert Fleming.	Gilbert Leatham.	Leich.		W. Johnston.	Patrick Barroun.
	Hope's Court, Leich's Close.						
	J. Mosman.	W. Lokkart.	Fleming.	Bassendyne.	Jousie.		
	Bassendyne's, Panmure's, Society Close.						
	Fleming.						

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North Loch.

direct road from the High Street to John Knox's house was down Trunk Close, opposite to the Fountain Well in the High Street. The well is called in the sasine of 1563 "Saint Michael's fountain." Those sasines afford ample evidence of the exact point on which Robert Moubray's mansion stood, east and west in Turing's Close. It is, however, impossible to fix the exact part in Turing's Close as between the North Loch and the High Street, but Robert Moubray's sasines tell us that there was only Thomas Chisholm's piece of waste land between the north boundary of John Knox's house and the North Loch, so that the house must have stood far down the close, and not at all near to John Knox's Corner. The distance between the line of the High Street and the Old Physic Gardens was over 500 feet. The upper end of the close still exists, although now closed by the City Improvement Act. The entrance is from the High Street, opposite the Fountain Well, and is the first close west from John Knox's Corner.

Mr Guthrie's hypothesis in support of this tradition altogether ignores the legal relations that existed between John Knox, the parish minister of St Giles Church, and his parishioners, as well as those of the Town Council. Knox was minister of the parish, and as such was entitled by the law to the fruits of his benefice. So long as he held the charge he was entitled to his stipend and a manse. There was no manse legally available at the time of his appointment.¹ It has already been stated how the proper authority provided a residence for him by securing Robert Mowbray's great mansion in Turing's Close, by leasing and furnishing it for their minister as his manse. John Knox was not the tenant of Robert Mowbray's house in the ordinary meaning of that term. The

part. Leich's Close was more recently named Hope's Close, and had its entrance from the High Street at Knox's Corner."—*Kirkwood's Plan*.

¹ James Chisholm was Provost of St Giles Church during John Knox's incumbency, and possessed the manse and glebe and their pertinents situated south of the church, down to the Cowgate. He granted a lease of the houses and their pertinents to David, Lord Drummond, and his second wife, Lilius Ruthven, at a rent of five marks per annum, in 1566, on condition that he and his vicar were to have the use of a bed in the manse when they were resident in the town. The buildings are described in the lease as being ruinous and dilapidated, and as having been broken down and burned by the English when they burned the city in 1544.—*St Giles' Chartulary*, p. 267.

house was for the occasion the manse, the official residence of the minister of the parish at the expense of the public ; and it formed part of the fruits of his benefice so long as he continued minister of the parish. He was in the same position as other parish ministers where there was an official residence. That constitutional relationship subsisted between the parties from his appointment as minister in 1559 until his death in November 1572. That this was the case is obvious from the enactments of the *First Book of Discipline*, that made legal provision for the government of the Reformed Church. It sets forth—"Providing that the Bishops, Abbots, Priors, and other Prelates, beneficed men, which have adjoined themselves to us, *brueick* the revenues of the benefices during their lifetime, they sustaining and upholding the ministry and ministers as herein specified, for the preaching of the Word and ministering of the Sacraments." This Act was subscribed by a large number of the nobility and Council. The *First Book of Discipline* was presented to the Scottish Parliament, and in the year 1560 the Act of the Secret Council approving of it was signed in 1561, John Knox being one of the subscribers. This was after his appointment as minister of St Giles Church. If there was one thing more than another for which John Knox was conspicuously persistent during the time of his ministry in Edinburgh, it was his watchful care over the temporalities of the Reformed Church. There was in the legal relations that existed between the parties a sort of fixity of tenure, implied in the occupation of the house in Turing's Close as the legal manse, and this is implied in the phraseology used in the orders for payment of the house rent:—"The treasurer was to mak gude and thankful payment to Robert Moubray of John Knox's maillin during the time of his office ;" and when the agreement between the parties was made in 1560 the record bears, "and fra thenceforth to pay him (Robert Moubray) termlic according to 50 merks in the year sa lang as the samyn sall be occupyd be him." The Treasurer of the City made thankful payment of the rent until March 1569. From that date, in consequence of the troubles of the times—the civil war that existed—there are no records of the Town Council from 1571 to 1573 ; and the Treasurer's Accounts are wanting from 1567 down to 1581, so that there are no special documents to

instruct us as to what took place relative to John Knox and his manse. But we have a good record from contemporary writers of what took place during these three years. During the first nine years of his occupation of the manse in Turing's Close, he had occasion to reside oftener than once for longer or shorter periods out of Edinburgh, but he always returned to his own house, the manse. Was there any reason for his acting otherwise when he left Edinburgh in 1571, and returned after sixteen months' absence in 1572? He did not leave his home of his own accord, he was very averse to do so; and it was only after the best professors in the town desired him, in the name of God, and to avoid the shedding of blood, that he consented to go to St Andrews, as his enemies were now in the ascendant in the city. Many of the reformers left the city at the same time for similar reasons. From this time there was a reign of terror in the city for about fourteen months, and then a change in the relation of parties took place. Wiser counsels prevailed, and at the end of July 1572 a truce was declared and a guarantee given whereby every citizen might return and dwell in their own houses in safety and peace. John Knox was wanted by his friends and supporters for the discharge of his ministerial functions in the city, and, acting under a sense of duty, he returned to Edinburgh in August 1572, with a large number of other citizens. James Melville, in his *Diary*, says he saw Mr Knox every other day in St Andrews. "The town of Edinburgh recovered again, and the guid and honestmen thereof returned to their houses, and Mr Knox with his family past hame to Edinburgh."

The time Knox resided in St Andrews was perhaps longer than any of his previous sojourns out of the city. It must be remembered, however, that when he was constrained to leave Edinburgh in May 1571 neither he nor any other person could predicate when the civil and national turmoils were likely to terminate; but there is nothing on which to base the assumption that during those fifteen months the Town Council, if it existed during that time, did anything to denude Knox of his official residence down Turing's Close. The truce authorised every citizen "to enter and dwell in their own houses." It is a gratuitous assertion to say that Knox came back to Edinburgh, found James Mosman's house at the Netherbow unoccupied in consequence of Mosman's being shut up in the Castle with Kirk-

caldy of Grange, and made it his home. This could not have happened, for the simple reason that Knox had returned to his kindred dust before James Mosman took refuge in the Castle, along with Kirkcaldy of Grange, early in 1573. While admitting the possibility of such a romantic termination to the eventful life of the great Reformer as his occupation of James Mosman's house at the Netherbow, the burden of proof rests with Mr Guthrie. No evidence, not a single fact, has been adduced in support of it, only a pious belief in a local tradition that only came into existence some eighty years ago. It must be proved by competent evidence, *first*, that John Knox did leave his manse in Turing's Close in 1567 or 1570; and *second*, evidence is necessary to prove that James Mosman and his family, from the time of his marriage with Mariot Arres in 1556 until his forfeiture in May 1573, ever left his family residence at the Netherbow unoccupied.

Is it likely—even on the assumption that such a remarkable occurrence took place, that Knox on his return to Edinburgh found a home in the family mansion of James Mosman, one of his mortal enemies—that such a remarkable event could have been passed unnoticed by all the friends of Knox, who were so particular in recording the most trivial events of his eventful life? The thing is incredible.

A short review of the information gathered from the sasines affecting James Mosman's house at the Netherbow, and the bearing of that information upon the tradition that the house in question was the house or manse of John Knox while he was minister of St Giles Church, will conclude my remarks.

The first sasine of 1556 gives us the information that James Mosman, goldsmith in Edinburgh, and Mariot Arres, the daughter and heiress of the late John Arres, were about to be married. They were both infest in this particular property, described as *the land or tenement belonging to the said Mariot Arres, daughter and heir of the late John Arres, lying in the said burgh, on the north side of the King's High Street, between the tenement on the north by the late William Lockhart, on the west by William Lockhart, and formerly by the land of the late William Redpeth, but now belonging to the heirs of Robert Fleming on the east, and the King's High Street on the south.*

Each of the contracting parties were to have a life-interest in the property, and the fee was vested in James Mosman, while the whole of this and the other properties appear to have belonged to Mariot Arres as inherited from her father.

It is not certain whether the house as it now stands was erected before or after the marriage. The presumption is that it was after marriage. At all events, the tablet with the arms of James Mosman and the initial letters of the names of James Mosman and Mariot Arres under the bow window on the west front of the house must have been inserted after that time. There were various other properties situated in other parts of the town belonging to Mariot Arres that were conveyed by this sasine. From some of the sasines afterwards of the other properties it is learned that they were occupied by tenants. In none of the sasines affecting this tenement at the Netherbow is there any reference made to its occupants, the presumption being, from the unique character of the building, its elaborate ornamentation, and having the arms of the owner emblazoned upon it, with the initials of James Mosman and Mariot Arres his spouse also displayed upon it, along with the special legal formalities taken before the marriage, and the subsequent legal proceedings taken in 1568 and 1571 were made to ensure unbroken possession and occupation of the house as the family mansion. None of the other properties belonging to Mariot Arres are disposed of and protected in any of the sasines in this special manner. In support of this presumption it must be remembered also that both James Mosman and Mariot Arres were possessed of considerable wealth, and had landed property in the counties of Linlithgow and Edinburgh, besides the house property in the city. The two sasines referred to, the first on 26th July 1560, and the next on 23rd February 1576, in Alexander Guthrie's Protocol Book appear to contain evidence that has an important bearing upon the question as to who were the occupants of the house of James Mosman at the Netherbow from 1568 until after John Knox's death in November 1572. By the first of these sasines James Mosman and Mariot Arres convey the fee of this house to John Mosman, goldsmith, their son, and his heirs, reserving however to themselves the liferent of the said tenement for all the days of their lives, with the condition that the

reversionary interest in the fee could only be reckoned during the lifetime of their son. John Mosman gets infeftment in the property, and becomes the lord of fee, the heritable owner. Within a period of two years after this transaction another sasine between the father, James Mosman, and his son, John Mosman, is registered affecting this property also. From it we learn that Mariot Arres, the spouse of James Mosman, has gone to her long home,¹ and that James Mosman is about to marry Janet King, daughter of Alexander King, advocate, as his second wife. Evidently with the view of providing and securing the family mansion at the Netherbow as a suitable abode for himself and his second wife and family, he pays back the redemption price of the fee simple, forty shillings, to his son John, and the fee of the property is transferred back to James Mosman. He obtains sasine of the fee simple, with the usual legal formalities, from his son, and immediately infefts himself and his future spouse Janet King in the family residence at the Netherbow. This transaction takes place only three months before John Knox is compelled to leave Edinburgh for St Andrews. Does the evidence disclosed in this last transaction as between James Mosman and his son John, and the conjoint infeftment of the house in favour of James Mosman and Janet King, give the slightest support to the hypothesis that John Knox could have occupied the house of Mosman at the Netherbow at the beginning of the year 1571? He lived in St Andrews for sixteen months after that time, and could not be occupier of the house for that time. This accounts satisfactorily for his non-occupation of James Mosman's house for about half the time that transpired from the date of the last payment of the house rent for the house of Robert Moubray in Turing's Close in March 1569. Is there any circumstance connected with the transaction recorded in the sasine of 1568, giving the fee of the tenement at the

¹ From the Register of the Great Seal it appears that Edward Hume, a burghess of Edinburgh, sold to James Mosman et Mariote Arres, his spouse, the lands of Laughhermanston and other subjects in the barony of Currie. The date of the Instrument is 30th September 1570. The date of the sasine by which Janet King, the second wife of James Mosman, obtains infeftment of the house at the Netherbow is the 23rd February 1571, so that Mariot Arres must have died sometime between these two dates, leaving only some four months between the death of Mariot Arres, James Mosman's first wife, and his marriage with Janet King, his second spouse.

Netherbow to John Mosman, and reserving the joint life-rent to his father and mother, that can be construed to give the slightest support to the idea that John Knox occupied this family mansion of James Mosman during the period from 1568 to 1571, and from 1571 till Knox's death? This covers the whole of the time that it was possible for John Knox ever to have occupied the house at the Netherbow now known as John Knox's House.