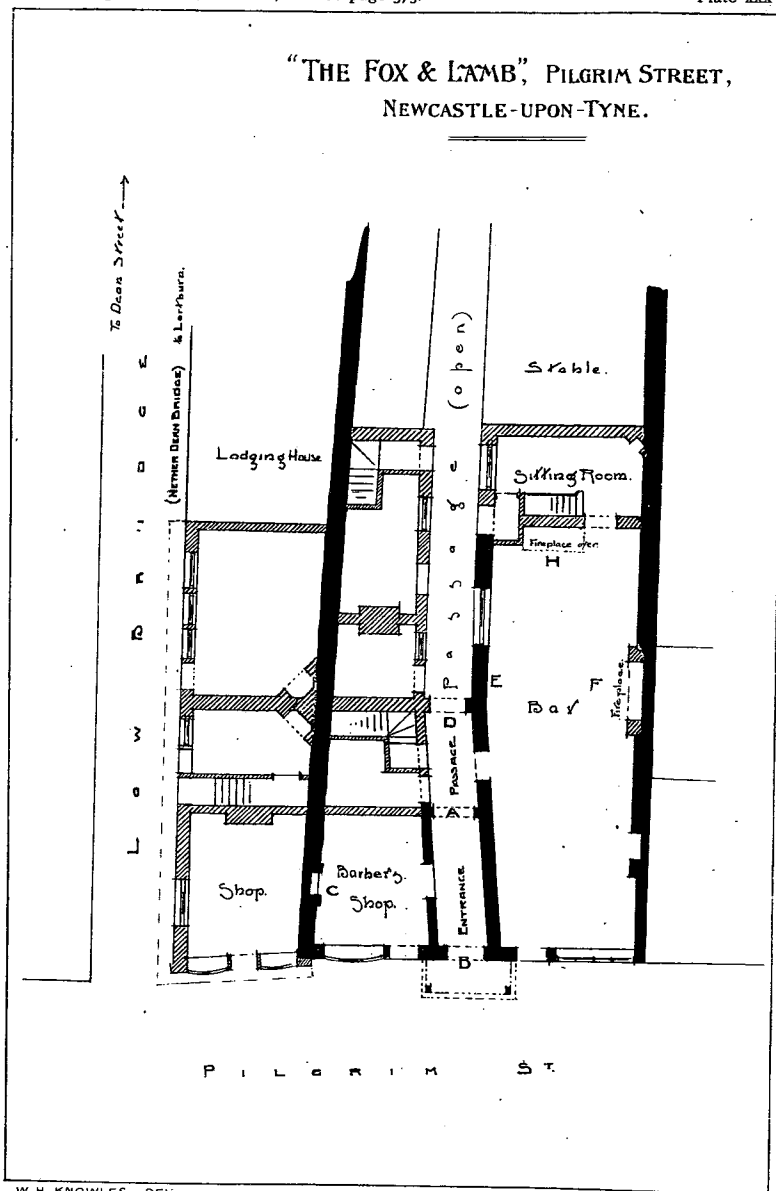


"THE FOX & LAMB", PILGRIM STREET,  
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.



XXIII.—THE OLD 'FOX AND LAMB' PUBLIC HOUSE,  
PILGRIM STREET, NEWCASTLE.

BY W. H. KNOWLES, F.R.I.B.A.

[Read on the 20th December, 1893.]

OF the building known as the 'Fox and Lamb,' now removed to provide premises for the National Telephone Company, unfortunately we have no records or even mention in any of our local histories, whilst search in other channels has yielded but meagre results.

Who erected or who resided within the ancient building previous to its bearing the sign of the 'Fox and Lamb,' or when this title was first used, we know not, excepting that in 1730<sup>1</sup> it is so called.

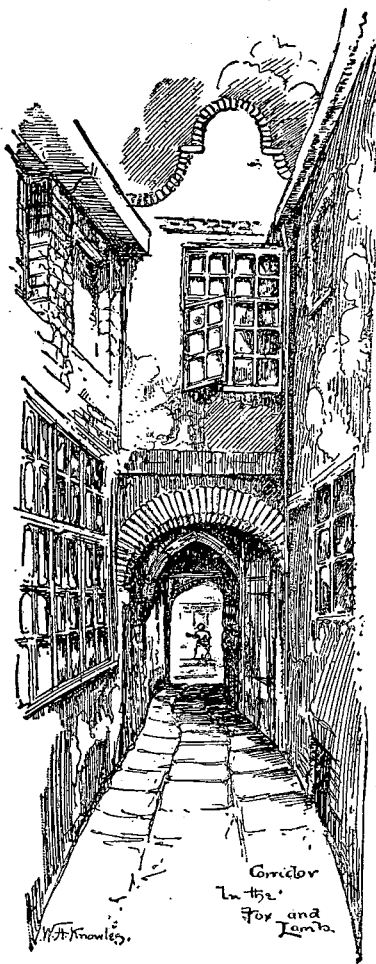
It would be difficult, and indeed unwise, to attempt to conjecture what the original structure was like, as the building just removed had at various times been much added to, altered, and mutilated.

In 1739 it is described as a messuage burgage or tenement and garden, including maltings, cornlofts, brewhouse, and mill to the same premises belonging, bounded on the north and south by other messuages, on the east by the king's highway called or known by the name of Pilgrim Street, and on the west by the Painters Heugh Dean, apparently the ravine through which the Lortburn ran, was at this point so called.

All that was really of an ancient character is shown in the accompanying drawings. Some portions were of the latter part of the fifteenth century, and were incorporated with those of the seventeenth century with which we are familiar. On the plan the parts attributed to the earlier date are shown coloured black, and comprise the gables on the north and south, walls in continuation thereof carried westward in the direction of Dean street (site of the Lortburn), and the lower portions of the front and passage walls. A pointed arch chamfered on both sides existed at the point A; and another arch, possibly of later date, much flatter chamfered on the outside and rebated within, at the point B. In the room over the barber's shop (C), there existed an arched stone recess, bearing no

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Ael.* vol. iv. (N.S.) p. 248.

mouldings, but rebated on inside. The remainder of the old work was of the seventeenth century. (See the elevation and the portions hatched on plan.)



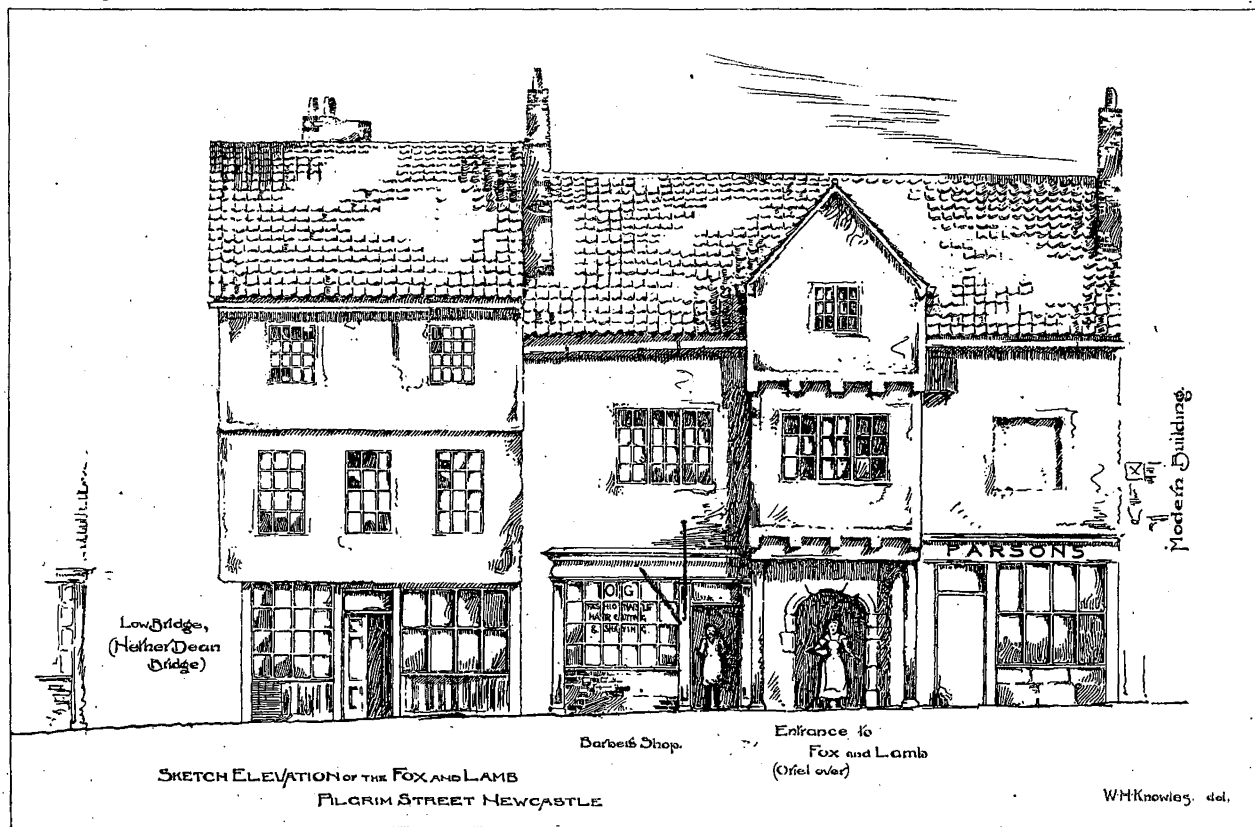
The square projecting oriel (of which now one other example only remains in Newcastle, that of Cosyns' house on the Quayside) was supported by stout uprights and cross-beam, the oaken floor joists resting on the latter, extended from the west wall above the arch A. An old-fashioned fireplace of ample dimensions existed in the bar. The roofs were all covered with pantiles. All the windows were fitted with solid wooden frames and casement sashes. The walls towards Pilgrim street were covered with a rough coat of plaster. The arch (D) and the gable surmounting it were of brick (see sketch).

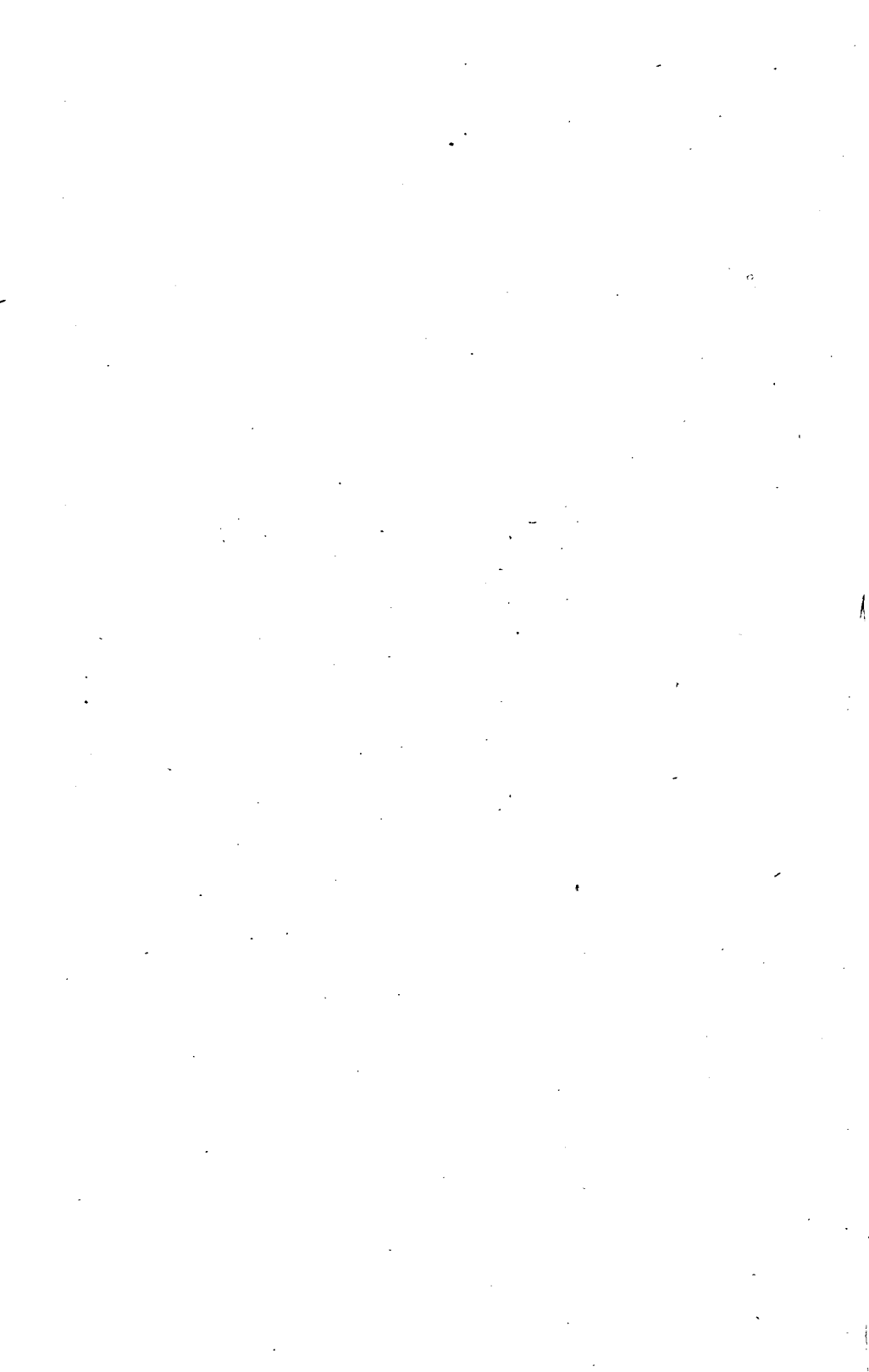
On the first floor over the point E were the remains of chamfered stone window heads, sills, and mullions. In a room on the first floor (above H), over a fireplace, were two plaster panels, one of which bore the date 1651, with a rose and crown between two *fleurs-de-lis*,

whilst on the other panel a winged monster was represented.<sup>2</sup>

The staircase was of the simplest description, and with one slight exception, and that of very poor character, there existed no paneling of wood or plaster.

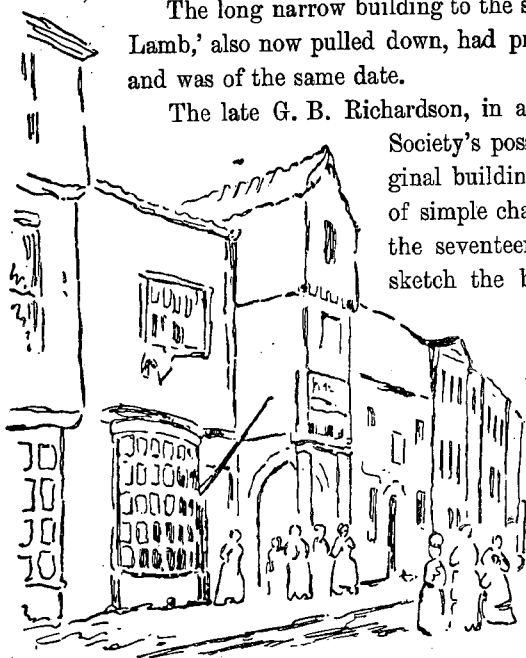
<sup>2</sup> It is the intention of the National Telephone Company to place these panels in the new building. They are depicted at page 132 of *Vestiges of Old Newcastle and Gateshead*.





The long narrow building to the south of the 'Fox and Lamb,' also now pulled down, had projecting upper stories and was of the same date.

The late G. B. Richardson, in a rough sketch in the Society's possession, shows the original building to the north. It is of simple character, and later than the seventeenth century. In this sketch the barber's shop with projecting pole is shown.



Rough sketch by G.B. Richardson  
drawn in facsimile by W.H.K.

From the deeds of the property we learn that, in 1727, it was owned by John Donkin, innkeeper;<sup>3</sup> and in 1739 occupied by his eldest son John Donkin, baker and brewer. In 1754 the occupants were: John Ramsey, innholder, and John Hays,<sup>4</sup> barber.

In 1764 it was sold by John Donkin to John Huntley, upholsterer, and was then in the occupation of Richard Joblin and John Hays.

In a will dated 4th December, 1792, Richard Huntley<sup>5</sup> leaves to his daughter Sarah (who afterwards married John Hodgson of Elswick house) all that, etc., 'known by the sign of the 'Fox and Lamb,' and in the occupation of Burdon<sup>6</sup> and Rayne.

<sup>3</sup> John Donkin had three sons, John, Ralph, and Bryan. In the poll books of the election of 1741, John and Ralph Donkin voted for Matthew Ridley, the candidates being Walter Blackett, Nicholas Fenwick, Matthew Ridley, and William Carre.

<sup>4</sup> In the election of 1774, Bryan and John Donkin and John Hays voted for the successful candidates, sir W. Blackett and sir M. W. Ridley—Phipps and Delaval being the defeated ones.

<sup>5</sup> In the election of 1780, Richard Huntley, barber surgeon, Hollin hill, and Bryan Donkin, baker and brewer, Walker, recorded their votes, the former for Bowes and the latter for Bowes and Delaval. The other candidate was sir M. W. Ridley.

<sup>6</sup> Father of Thomas Burdon, brewer and knight, an enthusiastic volunteer officer, who also filled the chief municipal offices. Thomas Burdon married

In a will dated 2nd October, 1818, John Hodgson<sup>7</sup> of Elswick house gave his property to his first son who should attain twenty-one years.

In 1828 it was purchased from John Hodgson<sup>8</sup> (afterwards John Hodgson-Hinde) by James Harding, whose surviving trustee, John Dove, in 1862, sold it to John Johnson. The trustees of John Johnson (Francis Johnson and others), in 1883, disposed of it to Walter Scott, from whom, in 1892, it was obtained by the National Telephone Company.

Of further occupants, the following occur in the various directories :—In the year 1778, Rich. Jopling ; 1787–9, Rich. Jopling ; 1790, Thos. Wood ; 1811, Ralph Lowes ; 1824, Ralph Lowes ; 1827, Ralph Lowes ; 1839, William Elliott ; 1847, Jane Waters ; 1850, Jane Waters ; 1855, George West.

The 'Fox and Lamb' does not appear to have been used for coaching or posting purposes. Many carriers are, however, recorded as leaving it for neighbouring towns to the north and west of Newcastle. Amongst them one notices that Wm. Graham continues to make the journey to Alnwick, between the years 1778 and 1847 (probably being father and son), and that another, J. Forster, in 1839 'goes to Blaydon and Redheugh four to six times each day.'

In his *Roderick Random*, Dr. Smollett describes a meeting of that hero with his old schoolfellow Hugh Strap,<sup>9</sup> then filling the position

Jane, sister of William and John Scott, who afterwards became respectively lord Stowell and the earl of Eldon. Richard, son of sir Thomas Burdon, married the daughter and heir of sir James Sanderson, bart., and assumed the name of Richard Burdon Sanderson. He erected Jesmond towers, now occupied by Mr. Charles Mitchell, LL.D.—See R. Welford's *Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed*.

<sup>7</sup> Pulled down the old and erected the present Elswick house (Elswick park), his grandfather, John Hodgson, esq., linen draper, having purchased, about the year 1720, the lordship of Elswick from the last of the Jennisons.

<sup>8</sup> John Hodgson-Hinde, magistrate, deputy-lieutenant, and high sheriff of Northumberland, seventeen years member of parliament for Newcastle, assumed the name of Hinde in 1836, was a vice-president of our Society, and well versed in all antiquarian matters, contributed largely to our transactions ; the following being also by him :—*The Pipe Rolls for Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Durham, Fountains of British History Explored*, and the volume of the *History of Northumberland* 'which was intended to fill the place of the never-written first part of Hodgson's *History*.'—See biographical notice, *Arch. Ael.* vol. vii. p. 229.

<sup>9</sup> Of the prototype of Hugh Strap we learn in an obituary notice in the *Newcastle Courant* of April 11, 1839, that on 'Sunday sen'night, in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London (died) Hugh Hewson, aged 85. He was the identical Hugh Strap whom Dr. Smollett has immortalized in *Roderick Random*,

of barber's assistant in Newcastle. Tradition has associated the shop under the roof of the 'Fox and Lamb' with the story. In this connection I may recall the fact that in 1754 John Hays, barber, occupied a portion of the premises, and that the daughter of the late H. P. Parker now possesses a chair given to her by her father, and obtained by him from an occupant of the shop, who alleged that it had been used by Smollett whilst staying at the 'Fox and Lamb.'

During the early part of this century the 'Fox and Lamb' seems to have been the rendezvous of local celebrities. It was here that H. P. Parker found material for his picture of the 'Eccentric Characters of Newcastle.' We also learn from the memoirs of Dr. Robert Blakey,<sup>10</sup> a native of Morpeth, who appears to have been much in Newcastle during the early part of this century, whilst speaking of Bewick, that 'he [Bewick] was then an interesting-looking old man, of portly size, and of a good-humoured and social temperament. He frequented, on certain evenings, a sort of club-room at the "Fox and Lamb" at the foot of Pilgrim street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and many happy and pleasant hours he spent with a few select, intelligent, and jocular friends, who congregated here chiefly with a view to enjoy his company and conversation. He was fond of porter, and I have known him sit from seven o'clock in the evening till eleven, sipping his favourite beverage to the tune of five or six pints. It did not seem to produce any muddling or stupefying effect upon him whatever. He was always clear, collected, humorous, and pleasant. Custom, I have no doubt, had rendered this indulgence quite innocuous and harmless both to his body and mind.'

Dr. Robert Blakey contributed articles at this time to the *Newcastle Magazine*, *Durham Chronicle*, etc., and was intimate with Charles Larkin, Thomas Doubleday, and others. It may, I think, be fairly assumed 'that the sort of club' included these free lances of radicalism, doubtless the artist Parker, and others of a bohemian disposition, and that the sitting room at the end of the bar with

and had for many years kept a hairdresser's shop in the above parish. His shop was hung with latin quotations, and he would frequently point out to his customers and acquaintances the several scenes in *Roderick Random* pertaining to himself, which had their foundation, not in the Doctor's inventive faculty, but in truth and reality.'

<sup>10</sup> *Memoirs of Dr. Robert Blakey, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, Queen's College, Belfast*, p. 35 Trübner & Co., London, 1879.



separate entrance from the passage was the room in which the 'select, intelligent, and jocular friends' met.

Let us now glance at the surroundings of the Fox and Lamb, the lane called the Low Bridge on the south (see plan) is, of course, the 'Nether Dean Bridge' of Bourne's time (1732). Proceeding down this lane, you would pass over the bridge spanning the Lort-burn, and so reach St. Nicholas's church. This was also the line of the Roman Wall.

Looking northward from the oriel over the porch we view, according to Bourne,<sup>11</sup> 'the most beautiful Part of the Street, the Houses on each Side of it being most of them very pretty, neat, and regular; such are the Houses of Mr. Edward Harl, Mr. Thos. Biggs, John Rogers, Esq., Thos. Clennell, Esq., Nicholas Fenwick, Esq., Nathaniel Clayton, Esq., Edward Collingwood, Esq., Mr. Perith, Mr. John White, John Ogle, Esq., Mr. Thos. Waters, Matthew White, Esq., &c. . . . On that Side of it, next the Town-Wall is a very agreeable Walk, generally frequented on a Summer's Evening by the Gentry of this part of the Town; The Prospect of the gardens, some of which are exceeding Curious, affording a good deal of Pleasure.'<sup>12</sup>

Mackenzie, speaking in 1827 of Bourne's reference, says, 'At present, scarcely any of the families above mentioned, retain their residences here; the greater part of the street having, of late years, been converted into offices, shops, and inns.'<sup>13</sup>

A century ago the scene hereabouts would frequently be a busy one, the arrival and departure of the many carriers to and from the numerous inns would cause much stir among the townsfolk, whilst the wheat market,<sup>14</sup> held on stated days of the week, would further add to the activity.

From Gray's time (1649), when Pilgrim street 'was the longest and fairest street in the town,' from Bourne's (1732), when many members of the aristocracy resided, from Mackenzie's (1827), when much commercial success was enjoyed, Low Pilgrim street has degenerated into an overcrowded district of miserable tenements.

<sup>11</sup> Bourne's *Newcastle*, p. 85.

<sup>12</sup> Bourne, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> Mackenzie's *History of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 178.

<sup>14</sup> Gray, in his *Chorographia, or a Survey of Newcastle upon Tyne*, printed in 1649, speaking of Pilgrim Street, says:—'In it is a Market for Wheat and Rye every Tuesday and Saturday.'

