

Sources in Local History  
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THE DIARY OF LINDSAY MACKERSY,  
ACCOUNTANT, EDINBURGH,  
1827-1834

*Transcribed by*

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*with an introduction by*

Graeme Morton



THE EUROPEAN  
ETHNOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH CENTRE

*The Diary of Lindsay Mackersy,  
Accountant, Edinburgh, 1827-1834*

Transcribed by  
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Introduced by  
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Edited by  
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Sources in Local History  
General editor: Kenneth Veitch

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## EDITING

In preparing the diary for publication, the aim has been to create an edition that is both true to the original and accessible to a wide readership. To achieve this, the following editorial conventions have been adopted.

### *Spelling*

Capitalisation has been restricted to proper nouns, whereas in the original document nouns of all types are frequently capitalised. Otherwise, Mackersy's original spelling has been retained. It is of a generally high standard, although it displays some inconsistencies, including the use of both 'today' and 'to day', the latter an older form that was beginning to go out of fashion. Mackersy also occasionally used a single consonant in words that would now be spelled with two, such as 'aprised', and two where nowadays there would be one, such as 'devellopment'. To prevent the text from becoming cluttered with editorial insertions and corrections, words that have been misspelled but are readily recognisable have not been annotated. Missing letters have been inserted in [ ] only when the meaning of the word would otherwise be unclear. Sic has been used sparingly, mainly to indicate irregular spellings or mistakes that might otherwise be taken for transcribal or typographical errors. For misspelled words that are not immediately obvious, or that might be confused with another word, the correct form is provided in [*i.e.* ].

### *Abbreviations*

Mackersy often used an ampersand in place of 'and'. They have been silently expanded except when they form part of the title of a firm or a company. Abbreviated personal names have been similarly treated.

### *Punctuation*

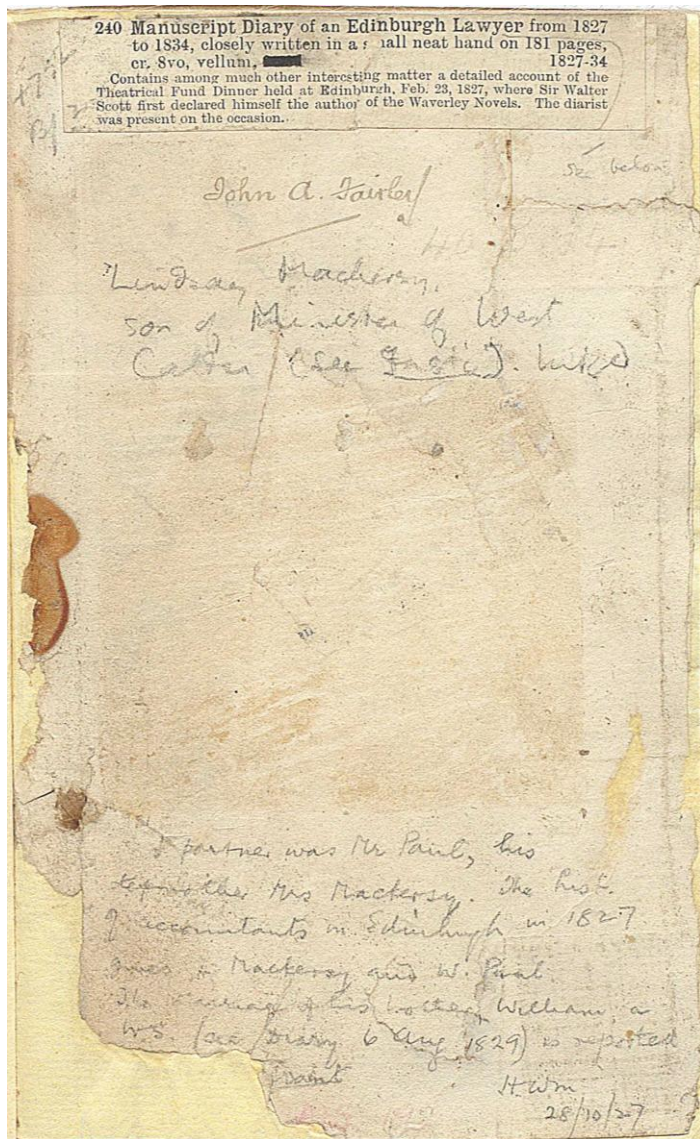
The original punctuation has been retained with the exception of the small dash that Mackersy sometimes added after a full stop. It should be noted that he often omitted the apostrophe from possessive nouns.

### *Layout*

At the top of each page, Mackersy wrote the date, month and year of the first entry on that page. Otherwise, he generally marked individual entries either with the date and name of the month or with the date alone. For ease of navigation, the year alone has been added to the header of each page and the date and name of the month to each entry. Each new year is started on a new page, whereas in the original the years run on.

## THE DIARY: A SHORT DESCRIPTION, WITH FACSIMILES

The book used by Mackersy for his diary comprised ninety-one duodecimo (*c.*18 cm x *c.*12 cm) blank folios bound in hard boards. It was originally fitted with a metal clasp for keeping the book closed, but only the front plate survives. This plate has stained the outside edges of the opening pages of the diary (see Fac. 2). The book has suffered water damage at some point, leaving a large stain on the back cover and smaller stains on the bottom outside corners of many of the pages. This episode possibly also led to some of the pages being torn (see Fac. 4). The front flyleaf has become detached from the main body of the book and is now glued to one of the support papers that were inserted when the book was being conserved (see Fac. 1).



Facsimile 1. The front flyleaf verso of the diary. The original accession label, which erroneously identified Mackersy as a lawyer, has been corrected by the note written in pencil at the bottom of the page. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

1827  
- 23<sup>rd</sup> February -

I was present today at the first dinner given in aid of the Theatrical Fund established for the benefit of decayed actors: Sir Walter Scott in the chair supported by The Earl of Egl. Lord Meadowbank & Patrick Robertson Esq. Sir Walter's demeanour is that of the greatest simplicity. He stands very erect and without gesture presenting as an ingenious frank unmasked to me, almost the appearance of a statue. His style of speaking is conversational and not fluent but full of that frankness and indescribable charm which impart ease and spirit to a company. His speeches like his writings abound in happy illustrations from history, poetry, fairy tales. Could I abstain he would be deemed to go to bed without his Cup of sack, or Macbeth be left with nothing to eat but bones as narrowly as those of Angus. Shakespear he could liken to no one but the hero in the Eastern tale who had the power of going out of himself and animating the bodies of others. But the most interesting circumstance of the evening was the announcement by Lord Meadowbank that the Author of Waverley now stood revealed, an acknowledgement by Sir Walter

Facsimile 2. The opening page of the diary. The stain on the outside edge of the page was caused by the clasp plate attached to the front cover.  
(Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

164 21 Decem 1833

The centenary of the secession was celebrated by a dinner on the at which honourable mention was of course made of my great Grand Father William of Perth, and the other three original seceders from the Church. - Their successors however have forgotten the principles of the Founder and have adopted the most violent sentiments against Establishments of any kind in Religion. Witness the speeches at the dinner which were of the most uncompromising description.

"

The subjects of public interest at present are, the War in Portugal between Don Miguel & Donna Maria his niece: the State of Spain where Don Carlos has not yet raised his standard against the Queen & Constitutional Party; - and at home the Trade Unions that threaten to be attended with consequences very hazardous to the peace of the Country. - As long as there is little despotism the danger is not so great; but a period of Magnation in Trade would be very trying. - The recent countenance given by the Whigs to confederacies of this kind would then be turned against themselves.

31

Parties this month - Mr. Chryslis, Mr. Paul, Mr. Horsburgh, Mr. Cook, & some (25<sup>th</sup>)

D

Facsimile 3. Page 164 of the diary. Mackersy has marked the end of 1833 with a flourish. Note the damp stain in the bottom left corner. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

180. 3 July 1834  
Mrs Mackery went over to Liff to day  
on a visit to her friends.

11  
Discovered that there was a serious obstacle  
in the way of my attaining an object on  
which I have long had my heart fixed: see  
21 May 1833.

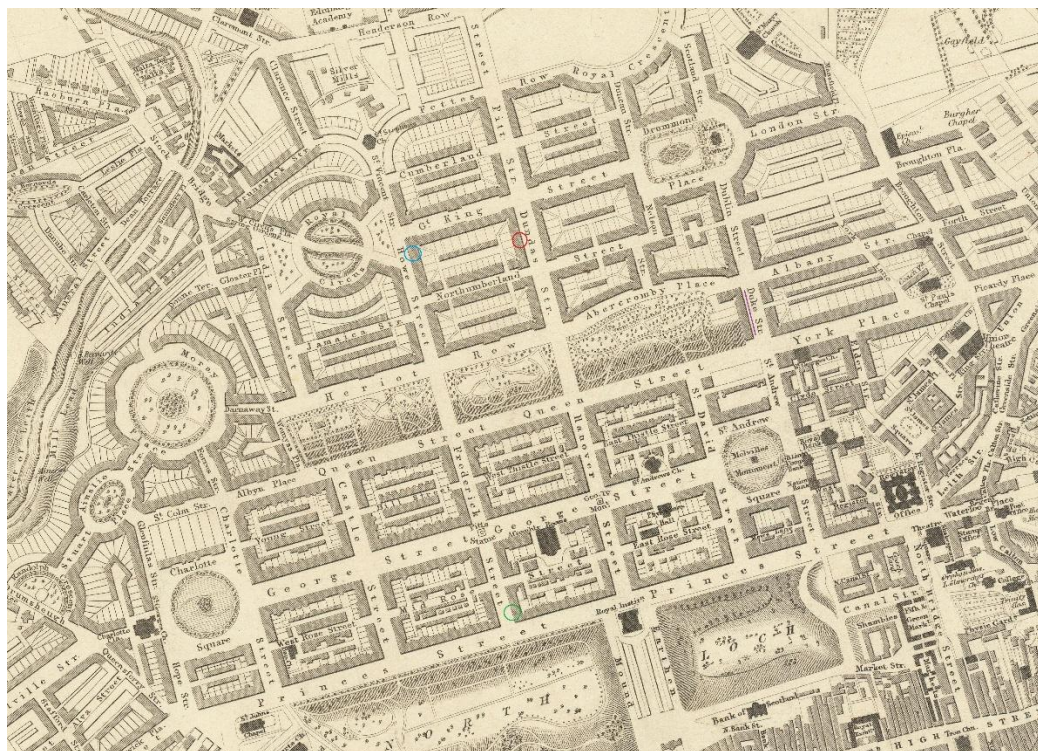
12.  
At the meeting for electing a new  
Trustee on Shanda estate, - Creditor to the  
sum of £10,000 voted for Mr Paul  
Mr Johnston appeared with claims  
of the Anderson family to the amount of  
£23,000. and voted for Mr Gibson & as  
before. Mr G. to the great surprise of  
all the meeting accepted, though he did  
not venture to appear. A new contest  
in the consequence.

13.  
Received a letter this morning which  
leaves me nothing to hope for.

23  
Messrs Kinnear Smiths to stopped pay-  
ment today. William is in with them  
to the extent of nearly £1000. but thinks  
he is speedily covered by Bill transactions.  
He says if they pay 10% the least dividend  
talked of - I am free from pecuniary  
trouble having no account there. - What  
circumstances of circumstances within a  
day! - London George dined with  
me yesterday and even to leave  
for the north.

Facsimile 4. Page 180, one of three torn pages towards the end of the diary. The damage possibly resulted from the book getting wet. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

## MAP



Map 1. A detail from Clarke's Map of Edinburgh (1834), showing the New Town. The location of Lindsay Mackersy's flat in Dundas Street has been circled in red. The location of Paul & Mackersy's office during the period of the diary, 17 Howe Street, has been circled in blue. The name of Duke Street, the location of their previous office, has been underlined in purple. It is now part of Dublin Street. The location of their first office, in Frederick Street, has been circled in green. The Assembly Rooms, St Andrew's church, St George's church, the Theatre Royal, the statues of William Pitt and George IV, and other sites mentioned in the diary can also be seen on the map. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

## INTRODUCTION

A member of the financial middle classes is perhaps not an obvious chronicler of national life and society in nineteenth-century Scotland. Lindsay Mackersy's name appeared frequently in the Scottish press, but almost exclusively this was confined to advertisements for his accountancy business. He had firm but not entrenched religious and political views, yet his words did not enter public discourse, and he declined the opportunity to stand for election to Edinburgh's town council. Mackersy was a spectator, found loitering in the wings, yet the nation developed around him in ways that were significant. He sat at a private dinner table with George Combe in February 1820 when the Edinburgh Phrenological Society was founded.<sup>1</sup> He was in the audience when Walter Scott revealed himself as the author of *Waverley* in February 1827 and in the backroom of the Conservative party's campaign to represent Scotland's capital at the first post-reform parliamentary (1832) and municipal (1833) elections. He was a monarchist and a staunch Presbyterian who was prepared to accept Catholic emancipation in 1829 despite believing that the 'whole system of Catholicism seems adverse to freedom' (8 March 1829). His professional skills were called upon to administer the Fife Banking Company, a casualty of the British-wide financial crisis of 1825/26. His rise in society saw him become a director of one of Edinburgh's leading financial companies and dine with fellow board members led by the duke of Buccleuch and the marquess of Lothian.<sup>2</sup> He attended the first great meeting to honour Scott upon the novelist's death in 1832. He witnessed the installation of statues to George IV and William Pitt in Edinburgh and admired sites of memory associated with Robert Burns. On the cusp of passenger railway expansion, he was an enthusiastic traveller by coach and ferry but remained ever willing to walk long distances irrespective of the weather. When away on business, he would find time to explore Scotland's history before returning to his Edinburgh home and a network of friends he joined for dinner or the theatre. He had a fulsome home life and, like a growing number of his neighbours and friends, a dispersed family life. Two of his brothers were amongst the first of Scotland's non-convict settlers in Van Diemen's Land, present-day Tasmania. Their struggle to settle was an emotional burden for him, one intensified by the logistical difficulty of keeping the chain of communication alive.

Mackersy's diary covers the years 1827 to 1834 but he intended to write more: volume one ends four months before his death. He also kept a journal where in-depth descriptions of his longer journeys to London and across mainland Europe were recorded, but this is no longer extant. He lived for at least fourteen years at 26 Dundas Street in Edinburgh.<sup>3</sup> His brother John was

staying at this address in 1820, eight years before he emigrated, and his stepmother moved in following the death of his father in 1831. The flat was put to the rental market on 8 February 1834 when Mackersy heeded the encouragement of friends to secure his own front door. Yet the Dundas Street address is where his death was recorded in December that year.<sup>4</sup> He was unmarried, and apparently happy so to be, but in his final months he dropped hints of a yearned-for love that was suddenly lost to him.

Lindsay Mackersy (1795-1834) was born to the Reverend John Muckersy<sup>5</sup> (1757-1831) and Katherine Wallace (1772-1817) and grew up in the shale-mining and farming town of West Calder in West Lothian.<sup>6</sup> When he responded to the *Statistical Account* the year after Lindsay was born, Reverend Muckersy calculated that the parish was home to 221 families and 968 individuals.<sup>7</sup> Two years after Katherine's death, he married Jean Cook (c.1773-1865), eldest daughter of the Reverend John Cook (1739-1815), Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St Andrews.<sup>8</sup> Lindsay's adult years were spent in Scotland's capital, where he was joined by his brother William (c.1795-1875), who in 1823 was admitted to the Society of Writers to His Majesty's Signet.<sup>9</sup> It is likely that Lindsay and William were twins, although this cannot be confirmed in the baptismal or West Calder newspaper records.<sup>10</sup> Their older brother James (b.1794) emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1823.<sup>11</sup> Lee tells us he died in 1828,<sup>12</sup> but James was alive and writing to Lindsay in 1834, advertised Clydesdale horses for sale in 1841,<sup>13</sup> and his death was certified in London in July 1864.<sup>14</sup> The eldest Mackersy brother, John (1789-1871), arrived in Macquarie River in 1828, and he and James would soon live close together. John had begun training as a lay preacher in his father's kirk before being ordained in quick time once chosen to become the second Presbyterian minister in Van Diemen's Land. Lindsay would enter heaven before seeing these two brothers again, but as the present diary shows, his mortal life was lived to the full.<sup>15</sup>

### *National Accounting*

The firm of Paul & Mackersy,<sup>16</sup> Accountants, was founded in 1817 when Lindsay Mackersy partnered with William Paul (1786-1848). How the partnership came about goes unrecorded, but it is known that Mackersy completed his apprenticeship with another of the forty-seven accountants active in Edinburgh at this time.<sup>17</sup> The firm had become sufficiently established by 1820 for the partners to take on a clerk and at least three apprentices. By the end of the decade, the staff had increased to three clerks and seven apprentices.<sup>18</sup> In his diary entry for 25 October 1829, Mackersy recalled the names of nine of the apprentices the firm had trained so far. Each received an annual salary of just over £20, the exact amount depending on their experience.

The firm was originally based in Frederick Street. It relocated to Duke Street c.1820 and then to Howe Street in 1824. Notices placed by the firm

began appearing in the local and national press from 1821 onwards, usually advertising the sale of shares, annuities, Edinburgh shops and houses, and modest country properties, but latterly also announcing the sale of substantial estates, such as Donald MacLeod's estate of Geanies in Easter Ross and the duke of Gordon's lands in Lochaber. A good deal of Paul's time was spent providing auditing and accounting services for the estates of the duke of Gordon, and this, along with the administration of estates such as Geanies, required both partners to undertake lengthy business trips to the north of Scotland. In 1828, for example, Mackersy travelled to Inverness in the company of Joseph Gordon, Writer to the Signet (W.S.), to conduct business relating to the Geanies Trust and Kindeace Trust. Mackersy and Gordon broke the journey in Perth before leaving at 5am the next morning to head north, not arriving in Inverness until 10pm. They completed the last two legs of their journey the next morning, to Bridge of Alness and then to Ardrross. In its entirety, the trip lasted one week and confirmed this Edinburgh accountant's view of Highland Scotland as full of 'colonels, majors and captains ... and all hospitable in the extreme' (November 1828). Upon his return via the Caledonian coach to Perth, and then to Edinburgh, he concluded 'Weather delightful, the highland road grand, romantic, wild and beautiful by turns'. If here he was being nostalgic, then he could also be prescient:

I may here mention the great perfection to which travelling has now been carried. I left Edinburgh yesterday morning at 6: arrived in Cupar at a quarter after 10; remained there six hours, and leaving it about 4 reached town again a quarter before 9: thus travelling more than 60 miles twice, crossing a ferry of ten miles twice, and having the best part of the day to attend to business. Can it be that a hundred years hence a future generation will smile at our boasted celerity and accomplish a journey like the above, with the same interval for business, in two thirds of the time? (19 June 1829).

Both Paul and Mackersy also held a series of court appointments for bankruptcies, estate trusts and trust audits. For this type of work, they would have provided their clients with both accounting and legal services, a reminder that accountancy had developed as an off-shoot of the legal profession.<sup>19</sup> The extent to which the two professions continued to be linked is highlighted in the diary,<sup>20</sup> which records Mackersy's multiple friendships and business relationships with Edinburgh's solicitors. The sale and disposal of property after bankruptcy or death was an often complicated task, further hamstrung by the absence of civil registration.<sup>21</sup> That Paul & Mackersy attracted such work suggests that they were seen as a reliable firm, not least because the transfer of capital and property during this period still required a good deal of trust.<sup>22</sup> The partners' good reputation in financial circles is further indicated by the

appointments they held in various financial companies. Mackersy became a director of the Standard Life Assurance Company and served as its auditor of accounts. He was also the general manager of the North Berwick Insurance Company.

The partners earned fees from a range of individuals, corporate bodies and, in particular, trusts. Management of the aforementioned Geanies Trust, for example, earned the firm £230 in fees.<sup>23</sup> Other examples include the Edinburgh Improvement Trust (£53 16s 1d) and the Anderson Trust (£185).<sup>24</sup> As an accountant, Mackersy also earned a significant commission from administering the winding up of the Fife Banking Company, which had failed during the financial crisis of 1825/26.<sup>25</sup> Formed in 1802, it was one of several provincial partnerships that contributed to the historic high of thirty-seven banks operating across Scotland in 1810, but which were undercapitalised, suffered from inexperienced management, and struggled under competition from the Bank of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland, and the British Linen Bank. While the crisis had little or no effect on individual savers, in 1825 the Stirling Banking Company, the Falkirk Banking Company, and the Caithness Banking Company joined the Fife Banking Company in failure.<sup>26</sup> Only fourteen of the Fife Banking Company's sixty partners retained solvency after losing their capital and £5,500 each.<sup>27</sup> The bank continued until 1829 (after the National Bank and the British Linen Bank had agreed to honour their banknotes), and it was 1850 before its affairs were finally concluded.<sup>28</sup> The Fife Banking Company's losses had been obfuscated by the bank's manager in the years immediately before its collapse, and Mackersy (who had been appointed joint cashier of the bank in 1826) reported on difficult management relations in the years that followed.<sup>29</sup> In February 1828, he travelled to a general meeting of the bank held at Cupar's Tontine Inn, although in his diary he chose to record his thoughts on phrenology and family life in Van Diemen's Land.<sup>30</sup>

Tontines were well-used but controversial investment vehicles in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and made up a significant part of Mackersy's business. In this form of investment, a subscriber purchased the opportunity to earn an annuity against the life of a nominee, usually a child (either their own or a well-known child, such as a royal) but sometimes an older person.<sup>31</sup> Each year a dividend was earned and over time this share increased as the other subscribers withdrew upon their nominee's death. The last survivor secured either the total investment or the final dividend with the capital paid to the state. The object of the subscription could be a set amount of money, a trust, an inheritance, or a building, such as the aforementioned Tontine Inn in Cupar. In one scheme, operated by the accountant Robert Cameron, Mackersy purchased a share in a tontine issued for the Union Club house at 15 Queen Street in Edinburgh. The house was worth £2,000, a share cost £25, and each nominated life had to have passed seventy-five years of age on or before 15 May 1823. Mackersy later bought a further share together with

William Paul's youngest daughter, naming their nominee as General Scott of Malleny, who was in his eighty-seventh year.<sup>32</sup> Tontines were used across Europe to boost state reserves, to fund buildings and commercial opportunities, and to support mutual aid.<sup>33</sup> In one example that demonstrates how a scheme might be promoted, a pair of brass candlesticks were inscribed with the name of the Independent Sons of St Andrew Tontine, a mutual aid society founded in Dublin on 13 May 1853.<sup>34</sup>

A successful tontine investment was dependent on the subscriber and nominee's good health, the ill health of other nominees, and confidence that the birth and death records were correct. Until civil registration was introduced in 1855, such assurance was placed upon the inconsistent registration data contained in parish records.<sup>35</sup> The longevity of an individual likely figured in Mackersy's phrenological interest in heredity, and his diary records his comments on the health of various nominees. Such schemes also created an incentive for criminal activity, either to hasten the demise of others in the scheme or to pass off a newborn child as a nominee who had died young.<sup>36</sup>

In one high-stakes scheme from 1832, Paul & Mackersy set up and promoted a tontine for £76,000: 'We have circulated the prospectus in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, Ross shire, Haddington, Dunbar, Cupar, Fife, Annan etc. and extensively here [Edinburgh] though we have not yet advertised it' (17 April 1832). By April, around £5,000 was subscribed, with another £3,450 coming in the next week. They then travelled to Greenock, Kilmarnock and Glasgow to drum up further subscribers and by May the pair had secured 442 shareholders amounting to £11,050 with the whole beyond £20,000. There was doubt over the efficacy of the scheme and legal opinion was sought from the Lord Advocate, Sir Francis Jeffrey, and the Solicitor General for England, Sir William Horne. They both gave it their approval, but it remained a precarious activity for all concerned.

In another example, Mackersy promoted a tontine centred around the aforementioned Geanies estate of Donald Macleod by sending circulars to two hundred clergy with the object of securing one hundred subscribers in return. This scheme was later abandoned, with Mackersy blaming 'The state of the times' (22 November 1832), in particular the agitation caused by political reform and the return of cholera. He also regretted 'the change from the original plan of allowing nominees of all ages, in other words making it an annuity in place of a gambling speculation'.

Despite such setbacks, the firm remained profitable. For reasons that are unclear, however, Paul began the process of ending the partnership in Martinmas 1834. This was one month before Mackersy's sudden death, and the complexities of their long-term investments and trust management ensured the proceeds of the business were still in dispute a decade later.<sup>37</sup> Whereas Mackersy left a substantial estate at his death in 1834, Paul's demise in 1848 left his creditors seeking compensation through the sequestration of his assets.<sup>38</sup>

### *A Tory in Liberal Edinburgh*

Lindsay Mackersy was a Conservative and a royalist. He was saddened by the death of George IV but breathless for the accession of William IV when waiting in vain on the Royal Mile for the official confirmation to make its way from London (29 June 1830). He recalled with pride that the old king had visited Ireland (1821) and Scotland (1822) to reinforce the united Kingdom and help counter revolutionary discontent (27 June 1830).<sup>39</sup> He took the time to witness Edinburgh's statue honouring George IV being raised to its plinth on 25 November 1832 and recorded his appreciation when a statue of the former Prime Minister William Pitt the younger (1759-1806) was erected in the city's George Street on 20 September the next year. These and other entries show this accountant expressing loyalism along with admiration for the institutions of the state as they operated within the Union.<sup>40</sup>

It was during the 1820s and 1830s that Mackersy, his friends, family and colleagues, became self-aware that economically, socially and culturally, as well as politically, they were of the 'middle classes'.<sup>41</sup> Even within a city not characterised by its industrial base, there were seventy different trades amongst the 15,000 people who processed on 10 August 1832 to celebrate middle-class enfranchisement and express hope for further democratic expansion. Drawn from the local economy, Edinburgh's reform procession included marble cutters and fleshers, plumbers, slaters and saddlers. The city's shops were shut; the surrounding streets were deserted. Reaching a size not seen since George IV visited ten years previously, an estimated 100,000 people gathered on Bruntsfield Links, grateful for fine weather (with just a couple of showers), to watch the celebrations.<sup>42</sup> Amid the hubbub, the first sounds they heard were patriotic refrains: 'Rule Britannia', the King's anthem and 'Scots Wha Hae'.<sup>43</sup> There were many slogans and symbols on display, and the goldsmiths persuaded a 'beautiful young lady' to dress up as Britannia.<sup>44</sup> The formal part of the day ended with fireworks launched from the earthen mound at 9.30pm, but the celebrations continued with the release of 'crackers, squibs, wheels, pluffs, etc' until late in the night.<sup>45</sup> Mackersy was opposed to reform (5 and 17 March 1831; 28 November 1831), but admired the spectacle (4 August 1832). For those in favour, the event was a credit to the working classes for their sober behaviour because 'politics, perhaps, was like drinking, innocent enough when moderately indulged in, but ruinous when they become a habit'.<sup>46</sup> A pamphlet listing the banners, mottoes and verse was quickly sold out.<sup>47</sup>

With the qualification restricted to men who owned or rented property to the value of £10, Edinburgh returned two members to Parliament, and those on the electoral roll had the privilege of casting two votes.<sup>48</sup> Showing his property tax receipt as evidence, Mackersy was number 840 of the 6,042 registered electors on election day, securing his qualification as a tenant at 26 Dundas Street. An annotated copy of the electoral roll confirms his claim to have used only one vote to plump for the Conservative candidate Forbes

Hunter Blair.<sup>49</sup> His vote was in vain, though, as the election was won by the Liberal architects of Scotland's electoral legislation, Francis Jeffrey (4,035 votes) and James Abercromby (3,850 votes), to begin a long run of Liberal success in the city.<sup>50</sup> Having joined others to watch the result being delivered, Mackersy left dismayed as Blair trailed badly in third (1,519 votes) to confirm 'a great miscalculation on the conservative side' (19 December 1832).<sup>51</sup>

William Paul secured his qualification to vote as tenant and occupant of 37 Northumberland Street, meaning that like Mackersy he was a resident of the city's northern New Town. In contrast to his business partner, Paul delivered his two votes to Abercromby and Jeffrey.<sup>52</sup> But many of those whom Mackersy named in his diary as friends were Tories. Walter Cook, W.S. and brother of Mackersy's stepmother, who qualified as the sole proprietor of 25 Drummond Place, plumped for the Conservative candidate in 1832 and for the Conservative John Learmonth at the by-election of 1834 (required by Jeffrey becoming attorney-general). With Lord Ramsay and Learmonth the two Conservative candidates on the slate at the 1835 general election, Cook chose to deliver them both his votes. Cook's commitment to the Conservative cause continued as he and his son John, still residing at 25 Drummond Place, both voted for the Conservative Thomas C. Bruce at the 1852 general election.<sup>53</sup> Another of Mackersy's friends, James Rose, W.S., whose wedding he attended, mirrored Cook's voting choices in 1832, 1834, 1835 and again in 1852, when he joined the majority of Conservatives in bestowing a second vote on the Free Churchman Charles Cowan.<sup>54</sup> Entrenched voting was a feature of these early post-reform elections. It is further evidenced from eighteen out of the thirty people named on Mackersy's membership list of the dining and card-playing Oyster Club who could be linked to the voting record for 1832, 1834 and 1835. In 1832, nine of the players voted Tory, six voted Liberal and three did not vote. In 1835, ten voted Tory and six voted Liberal with two non-voters (the late Mackersy amongst them). In 1835, ten voted Tory, six voted Liberal and Mackersy was one of the two still registered to vote who did not. Across the three elections, there was only one case of split voting when the accountant James Brown voted for Blair and Abercromby in 1832. The Oyster Club members were otherwise consistent in their party-political allegiance across the three elections, and Brown was a Tory plumper in 1834 and 1835.<sup>55</sup>

Holding the role of party leader of the Scottish Conservatives, the duke of Buccleuch, with the support of the Dundas family, was the main aristocratic influence over the politics of the city.<sup>56</sup> The Scottish Conservative Party gained its new moniker in 1832 and retained independence of action from its English counterpart, but its risible electoral fortunes in the burghs came as a backlash to its opposition to electoral reform.<sup>57</sup> Failure in 1832 was repeated in 1834 and 1835, disheartening the party from putting up a candidate to contest Scotland's capital city until 1847 when Peter Blackburn fought and lost with less than 1,000 votes to his name and 1852 when Bruce fared little better.<sup>58</sup> From 1832

until 1852 the Conservatives won no more than two burgh seats in Scotland, and between 1857 and 1865 their failure to secure any burgh representation was absolute. Instead, the Scottish Conservative Party secured its support in the counties, where they won twenty seats in 1841 and returned nineteen MPs in 1837, 1847 and 1852, and exerted political influence through their dominance of the clubs, societies and associations of civil society.<sup>59</sup>

There had been growing pre-reform tension across the city and internal splits amongst the Conservative supporters of Robert Dundas, the final MP elected under the old system. The line from *Much Ado About Nothing*, ‘Mark me down an Ass’, along with an image of the eponymous donkey, furnished a repost to Dundas for ‘his recent habble [quarrel]’ with his followers.<sup>60</sup> Mackersy had observed discontent across the city: ‘Much rioting in the streets, kept in check by dragoons of yeamony [sic] and constables high and special’. He went to Dundas’s house to hear him speak but was left unimpressed with a speech ‘as short as himself’ (9 May 1831). Yet despite this disappointment, Mackersy remained true to the values of Conservatism and showed enough concern with Radical gains within the first reform parliament to hope his party would set ideology to one side and support any Whig member willing to defend the institutions of the state (8 February 1833). Having attended a meeting of the Scottish Conservatives in July 1832, Mackersy was then invited to visit Hunter Blair’s committee room where he was asked to coordinate the party’s canvassing of Dundas Street and Pitt Street using the following proforma:

Name	Possession	Proprietor	House	Blair	Jeffrey	Abercromby	Aytoun	Remarks
		or	or					
		Tenant	Shop					

Though tasked with simply collating the results, he concluded it would demand days of his time and ‘It is not for an accountant, by profession an arbiter and neutral man, to mix himself up with party politics’ (21 July 1832). He found the process unedifying, believing if franchise reform was needed, and he remained unconvinced, there was perhaps a middle ground between the old and new systems.

Edinburgh became a much bigger place during Mackersy’s lifetime. Standing at 138 acres in 1767, the ancient royalty of the city was enlarged to 598 acres in 1814 before a more extensive expansion in 1832 enveloped a further 3,703 acres to leave a footprint of 4,301 acres.<sup>61</sup> Boundary expansion and inward migration did more than demographic growth to bloat the city’s population from 111,235 (1821) to 136,294 (1831) then to 166,450 in 1841. The addition of 25,000 people in consecutive decades brought consequent pressure upon the city’s social, environmental and medical provisions. The town council met the challenge with a sense of ambition and no little optimism when urban improvement plans were laid before parliament in 1827, but still

there were others who warned of the financial costs involved.<sup>62</sup> The plans came on top of significant expenditure already committed to the construction of three New Town churches (in 1818, 1824 and 1828), totalling £80,000, that shone light upon the city magistrates' worsening grip on its accounting.<sup>63</sup>

In 1831, there were 10,607 houses valued at £10 or upwards in Edinburgh's parliamentary returns, of which 9,383 returned inhabited house duty, and the assessed taxes for the city stood at £68,547 8s 7d.<sup>64</sup> It was insufficient to meet the city's obligations, which had risen to £425,000, with £246,000 of that tied to the development of Leith Docks.<sup>65</sup> Mounting debts fuelled long-standing concerns of democratic deficit. The council was a closed corporation of around 166 freeholders, the councillors re-elected in near perpetuity until choosing their own successors.<sup>66</sup> When the end came, it came swiftly. The day after burgh legislation was passed in 1833, Parliament appointed a group of trustees to place the city in insolvency.<sup>67</sup> As a 'staunch Tory', Mackersy was put forward for election to the reformed council under the £10 franchise but eventually withdrew his name before the list of nominations was published (31 October 1833). The first town council election was contested by forty-nine men vying for thirty positions. Twenty-four different occupations were represented amongst those who were elected, with greatest success achieved by merchants (eight), booksellers (five), the legal profession (four) and builders (three). The £10 ratepayers numbered around 7,500 with three of the city's five wards located in the New Town, where the middle-class powerbrokers now lived.<sup>68</sup> With the reformed town council in place, the challenge was to rebuild the city's financial reserves. Property investment and property transfer, the work of Paul & Mackersy, Accountants, was going to be needed.

### *Culture*

There is no reason for surprise that a Tory-voting accountant specialising in bankruptcy and tontine investments should be our guide to the theatrical and other cultural entertainments of Edinburgh in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Lindsay Mackersy had attempted to write two novels, and a comedy play, but had 'mostly quite forgotten' about them after the manuscripts were – like Scott's *Waverley* – kept in a locked drawer for fifteen years (28 June 1833). Mackersy travelled frequently for business and used the opportunity to visit historical sites. He enjoyed spectacle and music and recalled how the King Crispin processions of the 1820s could be likened to the Lord's Mayor's show in London.

The theatre business in the early nineteenth century was controlled by the government's patent system, which limited the performance of spoken word to Theatres Royal, with music and dancing the preserve of the minor houses. The programme of activity in Edinburgh was ever changing, though, and

Mackersy had access to as many as forty different performance pieces over a season.<sup>69</sup> An actress who caused a stir in the city during the 1830s was Fanny Kemble (1809-1893). She was the daughter of the singer Marie Thérèse De Camp and Charles Kemble, renowned Shakespearean actor and brother of the even more highly renowned John Philip Kemble, manager of the patented Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, in London. With her reputation on the rise, Kemble appeared before an Edinburgh audience only a few months into her acting career. She may have experienced some of her 'coldest audiences' on this tour but was later warmed by words of mutual admiration over breakfast with Walter Scott.<sup>70</sup> On 17 June 1830, Scott praised her performance as Isabella in *Fatal Marriage*, suggesting it matched the genius of her aunt, Mrs Cecilia Siddons.<sup>71</sup> Mackersy delighted in her beauty, but not her acting. He described her performance as Eufrasia in *The Grecian Daughter* as 'strangely over valued' (26 June 1830). He found she lacked emotion and was an unconvincing speaker:

Another thing, which one would not expect, is very remarkable in Miss Kemble: she pronounces ill. The e and o receive from her a sound quite unusual in an English mouth and truly not defensible on any principle or authority. Appraach, Gaad, caan, rejeact etc. These are the sounds which constantly offend ones ear (26 June 1830).

Mackersy had a direct personal link to Fanny Kemble through the phrenologists George Combe and Andrew Combe (see below). The brothers were regular visitors to the house of Cecilia Siddons, whom George married in 1833. Fanny was a consistent correspondent with the Combes, took the opportunity to listen to the brothers discuss politics, and by accounts retained an affection for Andrew.<sup>72</sup> Of wider historical importance, Fanny Kemble gained renown for her own journal, securing a reputation as an abolitionist from descriptions of living with her American husband on a plantation on the Altamaha Islands off the coast of Georgia during 1838 and 1839.<sup>73</sup>

Mackersy was spoiled for choice amongst the cultural amusements of the city. In his diary entry for 30 December 1827, he noted that the winter had been 'unusually gay' due to the range of public entertainments on offer, which included an Italian opera singer at the Caledonian Theatre, a troupe of performing horsemen at a theatre in Nicolson Street, a company of Italian singers at the Theatre Royal, and a diorama depicting the ruins of Chartres. He admired James Thom's statues of Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny, two of the best known of Burns' characters, which toured Edinburgh in 1829. He retained a fondness for Burns. While on business in Ayrshire, he visited sites made famous by the poet as well as the cottage in which he was born. He later contributed a guinea towards a statue in the poet's honour.

The diary reveals Mackersy to be a man habitually attending five or six dinner parties each month in the company of friends. They included James Rose, W.S., a founding member and later president of the Edinburgh Chess Club (1822), of which Mackersy's brother was an enthusiastic member; James Auchinleck Cheyne, W.S., an accountant, manager of the Life Insurance Company of Scotland, manager and fellow auditor of the Standard Life Assurance Company, fellow administrator of the Fife Banking Company, founding director of the National Bank of Scotland, and later notorious for clearing the tenants off his estate on Lismore; and the advocate Charles Neaves, who was to rise to become a judge of the Court of Session, vice-president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and rector of the University of St Andrews. Neaves also wrote poetry, an early example of which Mackersy preserved in his diary entry for 24 January 1829.

In 1826 Mackersy and Paul established the 'Paul and Mackersy Club' for the purpose of annual dinners and social intercourse, with membership restricted to the company's clerks and apprentices.<sup>74</sup> Dinner might be followed by card games. This was Mackersy's passion, and in January 1833 he displayed evident delight at being proposed by Walter Cook for admittance to the Oyster Club at the city's Royal Hotel, where games of whist were contested, mainly by Writers to the Signet.

Mackersy's playfulness extended to practical jokes, and he had an eye for political squibs. Perhaps surprisingly given the political divide between them, he was willing to describe the radical reformer William Cobbett's lectures as 'very amusing both from the matter and the manner', and to characterise him as an 'admirable actor, laughing very comically with his eyes, and imitating the various personages or classes of persons to who he had occasion to refer' (13 October 1832).

### *Walter Scott*

Politics, culture and memorials were never too distant from the milieu of Walter Scott. The novelist had died in September 1832 and Mackersy was amongst many who wore mourning dress to mark his funeral (27 September 1832). After claiming the title the previous year aged twenty-five, the 5<sup>th</sup> duke of Buccleuch, Walter Montagu Douglas Scott, made his first public appearance before a daunting 1,200 people, including Mackersy, who had crammed into the city's Great Assembly Room to decide how best to commemorate Scott's life.<sup>75</sup> A list of those who formed the subcommittee charged with enacting their plans for the design and location of the monument was published in various newspapers.<sup>76</sup> Mackersy was inspired by the cause but left unimpressed with Buccleuch: 'A slight looking man with an indifferent head and little expression' (5 October 1832). Yet he will have approved the subscription of £300 from King William as well as the pension he provided for Scott's sister.<sup>77</sup> Inspired by

the grand meeting, Forbes Hunter Blair donated £20 and William Mackersy a guinea to the memorial being planned.<sup>78</sup>

It is possible the present diary is preserved because it begins with Mackersy amongst an audience of three hundred who by good fortune witnessed Sir Walter reveal himself to be the ‘Great Unknown’, the author of the *Waverley* novels. The gathering had been organised to raise money for the Theatrical Fund’s support for decayed actors, a charitable purpose close to Mackersy’s heart. Yet we know from his own diary that Sir Walter had doubts about the quality of any dinner for such a number. On 22 February 1827, the night before the event, he expressed fears that it would be an ‘uncomfortable’ occasion and another example of where ‘a bad dinner throws cold water on the charity’. But when persuaded to honour his commitment, he dreamed-up a three-point plan to make it successful: ‘hurry the bottle round five or six rounds without prosing yourself or permitting others to prose’; keep up the momentum of the evening and deploy not the best jokes and stories but those best suited to the audience; and thirdly, drink enough to show you are good fellow but remember ‘Nothing is so ridiculous as a drunked preses’.<sup>79</sup>

When asked the next day by Lord Meadowbank if he could reveal the author’s secret, ‘Sir Walter smiled, and said, “Do just as you like – only don’t say much about so old a story”’.<sup>80</sup> In the end, Scott left the event at 10.30 pm blaming his rheumatism for an early departure.<sup>81</sup> Scott also claimed in his diary that he was no orator, and through Mackersy we get to learn something of his speech patterns – pronouncing the ‘s’ in certain words as a ‘z’. As he left the chair, the celebrated author ‘made a false step and fell’ (23 February 1827). Was this a consequence of the claimed rheumatism, or had Scott imbibed too much and failed to follow his three-point plan? Either way, Mackersy thought that the guinea he spent on a ticket was well invested, noting in his diary that the evening ‘will be ever remembered and boasted of by all who had the good fortune to be present’ (23 February 1827).

### *Phrenology*

Walter Scott had been elected president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1820 and knew something of phrenology.<sup>82</sup> As he had commented on Scott’s pronunciation and demeanour, Lindsay Mackersy also evaluated the English proficiency of the German phrenologist Dr Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, the man whose influential lecture tour in 1810 first popularised phrenology across Britain. Identified as an accountant in the minutes of 22 February 1820, Mackersy was one of the six founding members of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society, with George Combe, then a lawyer, his brother and medic Andrew Combe, the Reverend David Welsh, Professor of Church History at the University of Edinburgh, plus advocate James Brownlee and William Waddell, W.S. It was ‘a meeting of gentlemen, favourers of the Phrenological System of Drs Gall and Spurzheim’.<sup>83</sup> The Society began with fortnightly meetings in the

founders' homes, with each taking turns to chair and present a paper.<sup>84</sup> Mackersy did not attend the next three meetings and did not chair a meeting. Nor are there any extant letters from Mackersy to the Society or to George Combe throughout 1820-21.<sup>85</sup> Listed as an ordinary member of the Society in November 1820, Mackersy was elevated to its council in November, and by December 1822 was described as a senior member.<sup>86</sup> In January 1822, he delivered a paper to the Society titled, 'Difficulty of Ascertaining the Character from Development'. By this time, the number of people attending the Society's meetings was such that they were held at a hall in Clyde Street. In 1828, Mackersy was still of sufficient renown to be named by Spurzheim at a public dinner to honour the German's recently concluded course of lectures. And while not consistently part of the Society's leadership, his re-election as an office bearer on 29 November 1834, one month before his death, indicates the strength of his connection.<sup>87</sup>

The Society had gone public in November 1821 and within five years its membership stood at eighty-six, of whom six were fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.<sup>88</sup> The influence of the Society, and Combe's ideas, would grow rapidly after the publication of *The Constitution of Man* in 1828.<sup>89</sup> Boosted by Edinburgh publisher Robert Chambers' cheap edition of 1835, Combe's treatise is estimated to have sold 100,000 copies in Britain and double that number in America, making it Britain's fourth best-selling book of the period through to 1860.<sup>90</sup>

Mackersy features little in the published correspondence and writings of George Combe, nor did he contribute to the *Phrenological Journal*. Politically, the two men were on different sides. While Combe did not vote in 1832, he supported the Liberals in 1834 and 1835.<sup>91</sup> But there are several plausible pathways to explain how Mackersy found himself at the start of the fashion for phrenology and why he maintained an interest in its scientific claims. He and George Combe will have known, or at least knew of, each other in 1820. Before he devoted himself full time to the promotion of phrenology, George Combe was for twenty years a W.S. whose income, like Mackersy's, was derived at least in part from administering the sale of property after death and sequestration.<sup>92</sup> As mentioned, accountancy was closely aligned with the work of solicitors and advocates, and in 1823 Lindsay's connections with the legal profession were deepened when his brother William was appointed a W.S. There were also social and intellectual links between the legal and phrenological communities. It was a lawyer who invited George Combe to observe Spurzheim dissect a brain, the event which Martineau claims sparked his fascination with the discipline;<sup>93</sup> and the Library of the Society of the Writers to His Majesty's Signet satisfied its members' interest in the topic by amassing twenty-one volumes of phrenological publications by 1837.<sup>94</sup>

There were also links between the two men through the close-knit world of the Presbyterian community. George Combe had known of William Paul's

father, the Reverend William Paul of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, and talked of his 'large brain, in which the organs of the propensities and intellect were largely developed relatively to those of the moral sentiments'.<sup>95</sup> Mackersy's family was well known across the Church of Scotland's leadership. His father and brother were both Presbyterian ministers, his uncle was the Reverend James Mackenzie of Alloa, his grandfather the Reverend John Muckersy was the minister of the Antiburgher congregation of Kinkell, and his great grandfather, the Reverend William Wilson, was one of the original Secessionists in 1733 who broke from the Church of Scotland to form the Associate Presbytery. It was the aforementioned Reverend Dr David Welsh who brought the founding members of the Phrenological Society together.<sup>96</sup> While Welsh would leave the Society after failing to convince George Combe to foreground religious arguments, cordial relations were retained. Combe wrote in 1842 commending Welsh's bravery for saving Scotland from 'a spiritual tyranny worse than the catholic' in leading the Free Church's split from the Church of Scotland in 1843.<sup>97</sup> The evangelical link with phrenology was further continued through the (sometimes sceptical) involvement of the churchman and meteorologist the Reverend Dr Robert Gordon and the nation's foremost scientist Sir David Brewster, co-editor of the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, co-founder of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and elder in the Free Church.<sup>98</sup> Brewster signed the Act of Protest that preceded the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission upon which the Free Church was formed.<sup>99</sup>

The third link between Combe and Mackersy was the latter's business and personal fascination with matters of heredity and physical health. He was in the audience to hear George and Andrew Combe deliver their reply to Sir William Hamilton's on-going criticism of phrenology in 1827. The event attracted a crowd of between five and six hundred to the Assembly Rooms, raising £66 for distressed operatives in the process (27 April 1827).<sup>100</sup> Mackersy could make no scientific contribution to the debate, but like many he was captivated by its potential for social and moral explanation. The Edinburgh Philosophical Association and the Society for the Diffusion of Moral and Economic Knowledge each secured large working-class audiences for lectures on phrenology.<sup>101</sup> George Combe's claim that phrenological ideas should be applied to improve moral sentiments and private human welfare was aligned with popular narratives of self-help.<sup>102</sup> To make their case, phrenologists undertook high profile examinations. William Scott studied the phrenological features of Robert Bruce from his bones dug up in 1819 (in front of Walter Scott), and Burke and Hare were subjected to similar analysis in 1827.<sup>103</sup> With his fascination piqued, Mackersy made strenuous efforts to gain access to William Burke's home that allowed him to comment on its state of disarray and the decision of the Lord Advocate to allow William Hare and his wife to give King's evidence; doubting also that there could be no signs of violence on

the bodies sold to Dr Robert Knox. Then, having arrived too late to join the estimated 20,000 people who witnessed the public display of Burke's body, he managed to secure a private viewing where the murderer's remains were manipulated under direction (1 February 1829).<sup>104</sup>

In the 1820s and 1830s there was deepening actuarial focus on improving the accuracy of life tables, and phrenologists offered new approaches to understanding longevity and human behaviour.<sup>105</sup> Mackersy was at the Edinburgh Phrenological Society meeting of June 1821 when a ten-year-old boy, John Gibson, was presented as 'a prodigy of dishonesty and cunning' yet someone who possessed 'a high intellect'.<sup>106</sup> In his diary, Mackersy lauded Spurzheim's phrenological skills which allowed him to identify those who were unruly or had 'nicer shades of character' within the city's lunatic asylum and charity school. Studying the heads of the school's pupils showed to Mackersy 'their great inferiority in development as compared with a like number of children of a higher class' (23 February 1828). The work of Spurzheim and Gall was later re-framed within the Belgian statistician Adolphe Quetelet's concept of the 'normal man' (1835) against which he devised laws of probability associated with human characteristics.<sup>107</sup> Spurzheim's views on heredity and selective breeding were of material interest to Mackersy's evaluation of shareholder nominees for tontine investments.<sup>108</sup>

### *Van Diemen's Land*

Mackersy was introduced to ideas about the development of race across the world from skull casts collected by the museum of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society, yet it was the physical and mental development of his own family in Australia that figured most deeply in his life.<sup>109</sup> The first convict settlers sent from Britain to New South Wales arrived in 1788. The number of Scots amongst them was small, at around 3 per cent in 1820, and grew only modestly to 8,200 out of 155,000 convicts by 1863.<sup>110</sup> Van Diemen's Land became a British penal settlement in 1803, a free colony separated from New South Wales in 1825, and renamed Tasmania in 1855.<sup>111</sup> The wage rates offered in Australia in the 1820s were high, but the opportunity came at the cost of a long journey, a challenge to health from an insalubrious climate, and an unappealing penal society. Consequently, the territories of Australia were slow to share in the estimated 36,000 people who left Scottish ports between 1825 and 1832.<sup>112</sup> In an argument made too late for the brothers, the case for subsidised passage came strongest in Edward Gibbon Wakefield's *Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australasia* (1829) and *A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia* (1829). Released also as newspaper articles, the pamphlets promoted a scheme based upon a rental tax of 10 per cent which would bolster an Emigrant Fund to subsidise the cost of passage. To then incentivise the improvement of land otherwise left to waste, sales were to be kept above a minimum price of at least £2 per acre.<sup>113</sup> The version of the scheme adopted

by the Colonial Office halved the cost of travel to £18 and offered shipmasters £12 for every migrant they delivered.<sup>114</sup>

The thirty-four ships which left Scottish ports between 1820 and 1832 for Van Diemen's Land carried around 760 migrants in total.<sup>115</sup> James Mackersy arrived in 1823 and welcomed a new child in February 1826.<sup>116</sup> Two years later, his father wrote to Lord Hesketh at the Colonial Office to request land be granted for John Mackersy to establish a Presbyterian parish near to his brother. The government response was positive, although John was disappointed that new rules meant that the Colonial Office would only offer as much land as the migrant could afford to bring into cultivation (18 February 1828). Despite being amongst a disproportionately high number of Scots who applied for land grants in the 1820s, many of whom arrived with substantial capital like him (£1,220), John nursed this grudge throughout his first year of settlement and immediately sought ways to increase his income.<sup>117</sup>

With his investment of £1,000, James Mackersy bought 1,200 acres of land for his own use and later assumed the role of pound-keeper to manage the livestock of others.<sup>118</sup> He appeared in the classified pages of local newspapers, oftentimes to seek the return of lost sheep for a \$20 reward, and he warned against trespassing by persons or stock on land to which he had assigned the patriotic name of his mother's family: 'Wallace'.<sup>119</sup> In 1830 James sold this farm for £550 to fulfil his plans of owning a larger property closer to his brother's manse, but in the process gained 'troublesome Natives' as neighbours (28 February; 17 March 1830; 4 June 1831).<sup>120</sup> Both brothers shared Lindsay Mackersy's alacrity for property deals.

We learn of John Mackersy's experience from his letters as summarised by Lindsay. As well as the vagaries of settlement, emigrants' letters and diaries record the anguish of leaving, the boredom of travel, simmering on-board tensions, and a tendency for each national group to remain separate when eating or socialising.<sup>121</sup> The journey was one of endurance against poor ventilation, unfulfilled provisions from unscrupulous captains, the segregation of men and women that kept families apart, cramped accommodation made worse by the installation of temporary decks, and the ever present threat of disease, tuberculosis especially. John had first gone to London to secure his free passage on the convict ship *Rosslyn Castle*, set to sail from Leith on 29 August 1828, but chose instead a different convict ship, *City of Edinburgh*, which left on 16 August. This earlier departure and the days lost securing his passage meant John 'missed obtaining a sleeping place in the cabin' (16 August 1828). We do not know how John's domestic arrangements were resolved, but despite these ordeals, and the reality of twenty-four weeks at sea, he wrote with cheer that it had been a 'prosperous voyage'. John arrived on 30 January 1829 and immediately set off to reunite with James and family at Wallace.

It was not unusual that the plea to implant Presbyterianism in a new corner of the Empire came directly from the settler community. Having first contacted

the Colonial Office with their proposal, the Macquarie settlers authorised a group of elders in Scotland to choose them a minister. John's selection led him to be quickly ordained and then honoured with a farewell dinner attended by fifty heads of household and farmers from West Calder parish, who presented him with a silver plate as a mark of their esteem.<sup>122</sup> John's stipend was £100 a year along with a house and a glebe of 100 acres. In time, with the addition of eight boarders at his manse, each paying 40 shillings per month, plus income from his teaching and land, John's earnings rose to more than £500 p.a. (9 August 1830). On arriving, he was the island's second minister and by 1835 the presbytery stood at four, with their first minister, the Reverend Archibald Macarthur, standing separate.<sup>123</sup> Having been long associated with the influential Reverend Dr John Dunmore Lang, John Mackersy's final act of significance took place between 1861 and 1865 when he helped bring into unity the doctrinal strands of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales.<sup>124</sup>

The Mackersy family letters offer insights into chain migration before assisted migration. John followed the familial chain, and Lindsay kept up their relationship through letters and parcels. Following the Reverend Dr John Muckersy's death in June 1831, his pulpit gown and papers were sent to John and his watch to James while the family waited for his estate to be liquidated (3 December 1831). To maintain the family link required patience. Lindsay and his stepmother still had no reply from James or John to the news of their father's death after one year. A letter received by a family friend, Taylor Bathgate, reported that James knew of his passing, but had received no letter from Lindsay (7 July 1832). On 28 January 1833 their stepmother finally received a letter from James, dated six months earlier. But still neither brother had received the death notification, nor had they received the box of mementoes and gifts but knew of its arrival (12 February 1833, 21 May 1833).

The long periods of silence exacerbated concern over the fate of John's son Johny: 'unable from its delicate state of health to encounter so long a voyage', he was left behind to be looked after by the family in West Calder (16 August 1828). But it had become Lindsay's view that Johny would soon fail to form a 'natural attachment to his parents' – if he remained in Scotland any longer (10 November 1832). The bachelor accountant also lived in fear of having the responsibility of a child too old to manage. It was the loss of a baby son that motivated John – after five years – to send for his first-born. On the recommendation of an agent for the vessel *Isabella*, Mackersy met with a servant going out for employment who proposed his sister as someone willing to travel if her passage were paid (22 September 1833). But this arrangement fell through, as the girl's mother objected to her emigration (12 October 1833). The ship broker in Leith then drew Mackersy's attention to a servant who planned to settle in Van Diemen's land as a governess (28 October 1833). Under Mackersy's eye, the women did not impress, and the decision was taken to delay Johny's transfer until the spring. Instead of John Mackersy meeting the

*Isabella* to welcome his son, he would receive a letter explaining why the child had not travelled (13 December 1833). It was perhaps a wise decision, as the *Isabella* lost its anchor before getting beyond Deal. In October 1833 John expressed how anxious he was for Johny to join him, explaining this in a letter Lindsay did not receive until June 1834. This exchange more than any other demonstrates the pain and anxiety, not least for the child, of asynchronous communication and now six years of separation. On 26 August 1834, Mackersy recorded in his diary that he had heard of a family called Thomson who were sailing to Tasmania on board the *Lochiel*, and although the page is badly damaged, it appears as if they were willing to place Johny under the care of a servant they were taking out with them; and four days later, in what is the last entry in the diary, he recounted his negotiations with the captain (apparently of the *Lochiel*) about which berth Johny would be assigned and the payment of the £50 due for his passage and that of the servant. That these negotiations were conducted successfully is evinced by Tasmanian shipping records, which show that Johny set sail from Leith as a cabin passenger on board the *Lochiel* on 6 November and arrived at Hobart on 1 April 1835, accompanied by Archibald Thomson, his wife and two daughters.<sup>125</sup>

#### *Here the Manuscript Breaks Off*

As the final arrangements were being made for Johny's journey to a new life amongst the Scottish diaspora, Lindsay Mackersy's diary ends. We are left with nothing but speculation at the cause of his death. Mackersy referred little to matters of his own health other than his propensity to avoid the illnesses experienced by others, and no fatal accident can be linked to him through the local newspapers. He entered his fortieth year in 1832 and claimed to 'enjoy uninterrupted health' and to retain some hair beneath his wig. He was proud to boast 'my well wishers say that all I want is a wife' (4 August 1832). Perhaps revealing why he remained a bachelor, on the day his stepmother left the house to travel to Fife, he 'discovered that there was a serious obstacle in the way of my attaining an object on which I had long had my heart find' (3 July 1834). Ten days later he: 'received a letter this morning which leaves me nothing to hope for'.

Mackersy did not attend the meeting of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society held on 11 December 1834, the eve of his death, but with the Society not then reconvening until September the next year, no eulogy to him is recorded in its minutes, just a single word against his name: 'dead'.<sup>126</sup> The suggestion that his demise was unexpected is strengthened by this fastidious accountant dying intestate, leaving his brother William to administer an estate valued at over £5,000.<sup>127</sup> His estate's claim against Ramsay & Co. amounting to £100 plus interest for a bill issued in Calcutta required the House of Lords to intervene. Their Lordships established that a principal financial institution was responsible for the actions of its subsidiary agents, even in cases of

international financial exchange.<sup>128</sup> Work and money were always paramount with Mackersey and his family. While hints of a lost love might suggest tragic sorrow, greater weight goes to William's observation that his brother's habit of being 'always disposed to take the chief labour upon himself' was exacerbated by an unequal partnership with Paul: 'There is every reason to believe that his health was destroyed and his life shortened by his great anxiety and exertions in promoting the prosperity of the concern'.<sup>129</sup>

Lindsay Mackersey led an unobtrusive life that repeatedly edged itself into the centre of the national tale. He left us eyewitness accounts of the celebrity and commemoration of Walter Scott, the case for and against electoral reform and Catholic emancipation, the pseudo-science of phrenology, Edinburgh's theatrical and cultural scene, the financial crisis of 1825/6 and its aftermath, the attraction and risks of tontine investments, and the hope and hurt of family separation. Born into their West Calder manse, four sons were delivered to the Reverend and Mrs Muckersey: two emigrated to Van Diemen's Land, two migrated to Edinburgh. They were all Scots of their time.<sup>130</sup>

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> George Combe (1788-1858) and the Edinburgh Phrenological Society (1820-1870) led the study and popularisation of phrenology across the United Kingdom and North America.
- <sup>2</sup> *The Scotsman*, 26 March 1834.
- <sup>3</sup> *Gray's Annual Directory, Edinburgh, Leith and Suburbs, 1832-33*, Edinburgh, 1832, 47.
- <sup>4</sup> The following notice of his death appeared in *The Scotsman* on 24 December 1834: 'At 26, Dundas Street, on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. Lindsay Mackersey, Esq. accountant'.
- <sup>5</sup> Lindsay and his brother William were listed under 'Muckersy' in the *Post-Office Annual Directory* for Edinburgh until the edition for 1824-1825, when both men appeared for the first time under 'Mackersey'. Why they decided to change the spelling of their surname is not known. Perhaps they considered a surname containing 'muck' unbecoming for two New Town professionals. Interestingly, their brother John was using 'Mackersey' by October 1820, when he advertised for boarders (*The Scotsman*, 28 October 1820), although in the *Edinburgh Directory* for 1822-1823, he was still being listed as 'Muckersy'. So, perhaps Lindsay and William were also using 'Mackersey' earlier than the *Directory* suggests. Their father John remained a Muckersy all his life; and Lindsay Mackersey continued to style his stepmother Mrs 'Muckersy' or 'Muckeresy' throughout the course of the diary, except in one instance (21 January 1831). To avoid confusion, 'Mackersey' will be used in the introduction for Lindsay's generation.
- <sup>6</sup> Old Parish Registers [OPR] Deaths, 685/ St Cuthbert's, 260: burial of Lindsay Mackersey 12 December 1834; OPR Marriages, 685/1 Edinburgh, 365: John McKersy and Katherine Wallace 20 July 1787.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, XVIII (1796): West Calder, Edinburghshire, 190-98, at 194. He was styled Rev. Mr Muckersie.
- <sup>8</sup> OPR Deaths, 701/ West Calder, 450: Mrs Muckersy 30 July 1817; OPR Marriages, 437/ Kilmany, 462: William Muckersy and Jean Cook 11 April 1819. See also Scott, H. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ, vol. 1: Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale*, Edinburgh, 1915, 180.
- <sup>9</sup> *A History of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet*, Edinburgh, 1890, 134.
- <sup>10</sup> Lindsay Mackersey confirms that William was himself the father of twins, the eldest of whom died following head trauma during the birth. See the diary entry for 21 May 1832.
- <sup>11</sup> Finlay, L. 'Mackersey, John (1789-1871)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, volume 2*, Melbourne, 1967.
- <sup>12</sup> Lee, T. Paul and Mackersey, accountants, 1818-34: public accountancy in the early nineteenth century, *Accounting History Review*, 21.3 (2011), 285-307, at 289.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Cornwall Chronicle*, 3 April 1841.
- <sup>14</sup> General Register Office, Registration District: Islington, September Quarter 1865, vol. 01b, 194 [registered as James Mackeacey].

- <sup>15</sup> Scottish emigrants often sought comfort from the belief they would meet loved ones again in heaven. See Hinson, A and Morton, G. Observations of a Scottish moralist: indigenous peoples and the nationalities of Canada. In Morton, G and Wilson, D A, eds. *Irish and Scottish Encounters with Indigenous Peoples: Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand*, Montreal & Kingston, 2013, 223.
- <sup>16</sup> In newspaper notices published between 1820 and 1823, the partners appeared either as ‘William Paul and Lindsay Muckersy’ or ‘William Paul and Lindsay Mackersy’. After July 1823, only the latter form appears in print. For convenience, ‘Paul & Mackersy’ has been used for the partnership throughout the Introduction. The history of the firm is given in Lee, 2011.
- <sup>17</sup> National Records of Scotland [NRS], CS232/M/86/1: Mackersy v Paul (1843–45), First Division, Outer House.
- <sup>18</sup> Walker, S P. *The Society of Accountants in Edinburgh, 1854–1914*, London, 1988, 118–57.
- <sup>19</sup> Briston, R J and Kedslie, M J M. Professional formation: the case of Scottish accountants – some corrections and some further thoughts, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 37.1 (1986), 122–30, at 123.
- <sup>20</sup> See also the *Edinburgh Almanac* for 1818, which lists accountants as a subset of the legal profession.
- <sup>21</sup> Cameron, A. The establishment of civil registration in Scotland, *The Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), 377–95; Morton, G. The climatic roots of Scotland’s vital statistics, *Scottish Historical Review*, 104.2 (2025), 174–200, at 175.
- <sup>22</sup> Morris, R J. *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870. A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Class*, Cambridge, 2005, 14–19, 142, 347–66.
- <sup>23</sup> NRS, CS232/M/86/1: Mackersy v Paul, Advance Account for Geanies Trust from 1829 to 1834 (1843), copied from the late Mr L. Mackersy’s Ledger; Mackersy v Paul, State of Accounts between William Paul and Lindsay Mackersy, from 31 December 1830 to 31 December 1831.
- <sup>24</sup> NRS, CS32/M/86/1: Mackersy v Paul, State of Accounts between William Paul and Lindsay Mackersy, from 31 December 1830 to 31 December 1831.
- <sup>25</sup> An important fallout from the crisis was legislation passed in March 1826 to limit the issue and reissue of notes under £5 in England and Wales, and the intention to spread this restriction to Scotland. The limits that this would impose on the Scottish people roused Walter Scott to agitate (successfully) for the preservation of the Scottish £1 note in three anonymous but increasingly strident letters to the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. Scott used the name Malachi Malagrowth for his letters to the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. The proposal was dropped in May 1826. See Saville, R. *Bank of Scotland. A History 1695–1995*, Edinburgh, 1996, 297–8.
- <sup>26</sup> Checkland, S G. *Scottish Banking: a History, 1695–1973*, Glasgow, 1974, 314, 409.
- <sup>27</sup> Checkland, 1974, 175–6, 314; Munro, N. *The History of the Royal Bank of Scotland, 1727–1927*, Edinburgh, 1928, 192.
- <sup>28</sup> *The Scotsman*, 10 June 1826.

- <sup>29</sup> Checkland, 1974, 314.
- <sup>30</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28 February 1828. The hotel was the product of a tontine investment. See Tracy, M. *An Innkeeper of Cupar: the Life of John Buist (1816-1893)*, London, 2018, 15-16; Green, D R. Tontines, annuities and civic improvements in Georgian Britain, *Urban History*, 46.4 (2019), 649-94, at 687.
- <sup>31</sup> McDiarmid, A. 'Dying to invest: Scotland and the tontine', [blog](#), The Centre for Scottish Culture, University of Dundee, 2020.
- <sup>32</sup> He outlived Mackersy, dying in 1842. Carlyle, E I. 'Scott, Thomas (1745-1842), army officer', rev. A. Harfield, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [ODNB]*, Oxford, 2004.
- <sup>33</sup> McDiarmid, A. The development of mutual aid tontines in nineteenth-century Ireland, *Irish Economic and Social History*, 51.1 (2024), 32-47, at 32-3; Green, 2019, 658.
- <sup>34</sup> Angela Stellmacher, personal communication (8 March 2022); McDiarmid, 2024, 39.
- <sup>35</sup> Cameron, 2007, 378; Morton, 2025, 175-6.
- <sup>36</sup> The nefarious consequences of tontine investments were used as plot devices in Stevenson, R L and Osbourne, L. *The Wrong Box*, London, 1889, and Christie, A. *4:50 from Paddington*, London, 1957.
- <sup>37</sup> NRS, CS232/M/86/1: Mackersy v Paul (1843-5).
- <sup>38</sup> NRS, CS232/M/86/1: Mackersy v Paul (1843-5); *The Scotsman*, 26 February 1848; *Scottish Guardian*, 29 February 1848. Lee's research shows that while the actual cause is unclear, the bankruptcy was actioned by landowner William Stothert for a debt of £1,105 (Lee, 2011, 297).
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- <sup>40</sup> Morton, G. *Unionist Nationalism: governing urban Scotland, 1830-1860*, East Linton, 1999, 155-188.
- <sup>41</sup> Morris, 2005, 20-1.
- <sup>42</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 August 1832; *Morning Chronicle*, 14 August 1832.
- <sup>43</sup> Morton, G and Morris, R J. Civil society, governance and nation: 1832-1914. In Houston, R A and Knox, W W J, eds. *The New Penguin History of Scotland: from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, London, 2002, 355-416.
- <sup>44</sup> *Albion and the Star*, 14 August 1832.
- <sup>45</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 August 1832.
- <sup>46</sup> Anon. Reform Jubilee – procession, *The Ten Pounder*, 3 (1832), 17-20, at 19.
- <sup>47</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 September 1832.
- <sup>48</sup> This continued until 1885 when Edinburgh was divided into four wards, each ward returning one MP. See Gulland, J W. *How Edinburgh is Governed. A Handbook for Citizens*, Edinburgh, 1891, 11, 72-3.
- <sup>49</sup> *Register of the Voters Qualified for the City of Edinburgh, 1832*, Edinburgh, 1832. The annotator of the copy in the Edinburgh City Library is unknown.

- <sup>50</sup> Hutchison, G D. ‘The origins of the Scottish Conservative Party, 1832–1868’, PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2017; Hutchison, I G C. *A Political History of Scotland 1832–1924: Parties, Elections, Issues*, Edinburgh, 1986; Dyer, M. *Men of Property and Intelligence: the Scottish Electoral System prior to 1884*, Aberdeen, 1996, 4, 51–9, 89–93.
- <sup>51</sup> Dod, C R. *Electoral facts from 1832–1853, Impartially Stated, Constituting a Complete Political Gazetteer* (1853), Brighton, 1972, 104–5; Williams, J C. ‘Edinburgh politics: 1832–1852’, PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1972, 95; Brash, J I. *Scottish Electoral Politics, 1832–1854*, Edinburgh, 1974, 56n.
- <sup>52</sup> *Register of the Voters Qualified for the City of Edinburgh, 1832*, Edinburgh, 1832, 91, 107.
- <sup>53</sup> *Register of the Voters Qualified for the City of Edinburgh, 1832*, Edinburgh, 1832, 27; *List of the Electors of the City of Edinburgh. Arranged according to their residence, corrected after appeal court, 1854, shewing their voting at the General Election, July 1852*, Edinburgh, 1854, 2; Morton, G. The Conservative hold over Scottish civil society: evidence from the 1854 Edinburgh Pollbook, *Parliamentary History*, forthcoming.
- <sup>54</sup> *Register of the Voters Qualified for the City of Edinburgh, 1832*, Edinburgh, 1832, 113; Morton, forthcoming, tables 4 and 5.
- <sup>55</sup> The lack of split voting in favour of the Conservative candidate was replicated in the 1852 general election. See Morton, forthcoming, tables 4 and 5.
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- <sup>57</sup> Hutchison, 2017, 2, 80, 95.
- <sup>58</sup> Hutchison, 2020, 335–6; Hutchison, G D. “Party Principles” in Scottish political culture: Roxburghshire, 1832–1847, *Scottish Historical Review*, 98.2 (2019), 390–409.
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- <sup>64</sup> PP, 1832, Papers, 42: *Reports upon the boundaries of the several cities, burghs, and towns in Scotland, in respect to the election of members to serve in Parliament: ‘Edinburgh’*, 9.
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- <sup>68</sup> Marwick, W H. Municipal politics in Victorian Edinburgh, *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 33 (1969-72), 31-41, at 32.
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THE DIARY OF LINDSAY MACKERSY,  
ACCOUNTANT, EDINBURGH,  
1827-1834

1827

### 23 February

I was present today at the first dinner given in aid of the Theatrical Fund established for the benefit of decayed actors.<sup>[1]</sup> Sir Walter Scott in the chair supported by the Earl of Fife, Lord Meadowbank etc. Patrick Robertson croupier. Sir Walters demeanour is that of the greatest simplicity. He stands very erect and without gesture presenting, as an ingenious friend remarked to me, almost the appearance of a statue. His style of speaking is conversational and not fluent but full of that frankness and indescribable charm which impart ease and spirit to a company. His speeches like his writing abound in happy illustrations from history, poetry, fairy tales. Could Falstaff he said be doomed to go to bed without his cup of sack, or Macbeth be left with nothing to eat but bones as marrowless as those of Banquo. Shakespear he could liken to no one but the person in the Eastern tale who had the power of going out of himself and animating the bodies of others. But the most interesting of circumstance of the evening was the announcement by Lord Medowbank [*sic*] that the author [*page torn*] Waverley now stood revealed an [*page torn*] acknowledged by Sir Walter [*page torn*] was the sole author of the novels having deserved no assistance but from his own reading. The secret he said had been wonderfully well kept considering that about twenty had known it. It was unnecessary to state his reasons for having concealed himself at all: caprice had a considerable share in it. He concluded by begging leave to propose the health of an actor who had given great life and reality to the representation of many of the characters in the novels – Baillie Nicol Jarvie,<sup>[2]</sup> and he trusted that when the author of Waverley and Rob Roy drank to the health of Nicol Jarvie the applause would be what he was accustomed to etc. – pro-digi-ous. In using this last word Sir Walter, I observed, placed the accent chiefly on the last syllable which is different from Mckay's and from the common pronunciation. And, by the way, Sir Walter pronounces several other words differently from the mode in common use: thus "aspect" and "assume" he gave as if spelt with a z. The avowal above mentioned was made with perfect manliness and [*page torn*], without any affectation of [*page torn*] his labours cheap. On the [*page torn*] he was afraid to look on what he had done; "do it again. I dare not." Mr McKay returned thanks in the character of the Baillie very happily "My conscience! Little could me Father the deacon have believed that his son would ever ha' got siccan an honour "From the Great Unknown"<sup>[3]</sup> etc. On leaving the chair on one occasion Sir Walter made a false step and fell, but without any bad consequence. He took leave early pleading that he was not what he had been etc. Altogether the evening went off in the pleasantest and most enthusiastic manner, and will be ever remembered and boasted of by all who had the good fortune to be present. Such a one cannot be looked for more than once in a lifetime. Ticket £1.1.

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<sup>1</sup> The Theatrical Fund dinner was held in the Assembly Rooms, George Street.

<sup>2</sup> The actor whose health was being proposed was Charles Mackay, who was noted for his portrayal of Bailie Nicol Jarvie in dramatisations of Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*.

<sup>3</sup> Until Walter Scott revealed his authorship, the author of the Waverley novels was popularly called 'the Great Unknown'.

### 11 March

I returned today from Fife where I have been very frequently during the last twelvemonth on the business of the Fife Bank.<sup>[4]</sup> On this visit I have been detained for ten days by one of the severest snow storms we have had for many years. I went over to Dundee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the coach party was kept on this side of the Tay all night the weather being too boisterous for crossing. We got over on Saturday morning and shortly after the snow began to fall and continued during all that day, the succeeding night, and part of Saturday, when it lay to a great depth. I heard a sermon from Bishop Horsley's son<sup>[5]</sup> and having met one of my fellow travellers of Friday [*sic*] he insisted on carrying me to dine at the house of an intimate friend where he was himself engaged. On returning to the inn I met with several very intelligent men with whom there ensued a long conversation on the favourite subject of ghosts, dreams etc. With reference to the subject of the accuracy of such narratives we were told a wonderful incident of a barber still said to be residing in Dundee. When a boy he went with a companion to the top of the highest steeple in the town, and having observed a bird's nest a little down on the outside which they in vain attempted to reach, he made the other boy hold his bonnet over the edge and he grasping the opposite rim with one hand swung himself over and hanging in the air reached the nest with his other hand. And in this situation he threatened to give his companion none of the eggs if he let go his hold. I wished to question the said barber on the truth of this story for the purpose of comparing the real facts with the current one but had not time. On Monday morning I walked from Dundee to Cupar through dreadful roads and was detained there by a second fall of snow till Saturday on which day I go on to Kirkcaldy [*sic*] in the company with a clergyman whom I had met thirteen years before at West Calder, and an Austrian trader in precious stones and furs. To two things in this country the latter had particular objection, the strict observance of the Sunday and our fireplaces and fires. Such are the effects of custom. On arriving here today I found an intimation of the death of my uncle, the Revd James Mackenzie of Alloa. He died after a very short illness in his 67<sup>th</sup> year.

### 24 April

Yesterday and today have been distinguished by a very severe fall of snow after the spring had been considerably advanced. It lay for some inches deep but disappeared as rapidly as it came on.

### 27 April

Mr Combe lectured today in the assembly rooms to an audience of between 5 and 600 in defence of Phrenology, and in reply to Sir William Hamilton who had lectured against the system a few days before in the College. Audience, which was most

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<sup>4</sup> The Fife Banking Company had got into difficulties during the financial crisis of 1825/26. See the Introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Heneage Horsley (1776-1847) was the dean of the Episcopal diocese of Brechin from 1819 to 1847.

respectable and even fashionable to a certain extent, seemed much interested in Mr Combe's demonstration. Tickets 2/8 each – proceeds to distressed operatives £66.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 28 April

In the Scotsman of today there appeared the following squib which may be taken as an expression of the general popular feeling on the subject of the recent change of administration. Whether it is right is a different thing.

### Resignation

The Ministers, all in a row,  
Resign in every station;  
The People also wisely shew  
A perfect resignation.

E\_\_n resigns because he deems  
They'll make a fuss about him;  
And P\_\_l because he fondly dreams  
They cannot do without him.

And M\_\_lle he resigns his post;  
And B\_\_g his intention;  
And Subs and Secs resign, a host  
Too great, by far, to mention.

And M\_\_d because he knows  
They'd not let him remain;  
And every soul when out he goes  
Thinks he'll get in again.

But he who bore the loftiest sway  
May very shortly feel,  
That he can now be cast away  
Just like \_\_ to Orange Peel.

And mighty M\_\_lle soon may be  
A very little thing;  
while wondering Europe smiles to see  
The Scotch desert their King.<sup>[7]</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> George Combes (1788-1858) was a lawyer and co-founder of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society. His lecture at the Assembly Rooms, 'On the evidences of phrenology', lasted almost three hours. Sir William Hamilton (1788-1856), philosopher and professor of history at Edinburgh University, was a vocal opponent of phrenology. His lecture had been held at the university on 18 April.

<sup>7</sup> 'Original Poetry', *The Scotsman*, 28 April 1827.



Figure 1. The Diorama, Lothian Road, Edinburgh, 1834. One of the public amusements mentioned by Mackersy in his diary entry for 30 December 1827. (*Post-Office Annual Directory*)

### 14 July

I had a pleasant excursion to Roslin<sup>[8]</sup> with the Donaldsons: the day delightful though somewhat of the warmest. Dined in a bower below the castle by the rivers side on stores brought out in the carriages. Then wandered down the beautiful banks till near sunset when we returned to strawberries and cream the staple of the place.

### 7 September

Returned today from a tour to London Paris Brussels etc. for an account of which see Journal.<sup>[9]</sup>

### 29 September

Received a letter from my Father informing me of John's marriage,<sup>[10]</sup> a circumstance which give us all the greatest concern.

<sup>8</sup> Roslin is a village around seven miles south of Edinburgh. Its medieval chapel, partially ruined castle, and wooded glen made it a popular destination for day trips from the capital.

<sup>9</sup> Mackersy's travel journals do not appear to have survived.

<sup>10</sup> John Mackersy (1789-1871) was Lindsay Mackersy's brother. See the Introduction.

## 26 December

At West Calder as usual to spend my christmas. The party my Father and Mrs Mackenzie, John and William, Mr and Mrs and John Fleming, Dr Dick, Tom Bell the only remaining boarder and myself. Social and pleasant like other christmas parties.

## 30 December

Edinburgh unusually gay this winter in as far as regards public amusements. The campaign commenced with Madam Pasta<sup>[11]</sup> and two or three associates in the Caledonian Theatre.<sup>[12]</sup> Ducrow<sup>[13]</sup> took the field with his cavalry an unrivalled horseman performing the most wonderful feats with the most marvellous ease and throwing into his performance the additional grace of fine acting and striking representations of the passions. In his death of the Moor, his vicissitudes of a sailors life, [and] his Courier of Peterburgh [*i.e.* St Petersburg], he gives fine pantomime sketches of their various emotions which may be supposed to agitate them in the different situations incidental to the characters, sometimes on one, sometimes on two, three, four and even five horses at their various speeds. This theatre in Nicholson Street has been fashionably attended and crowded almost every night.

Murray<sup>[14]</sup> and the Theatre Royal suffered in consequence, and has now brought down a company of Italians to try the magic of sound against the graces of motion. De Begnis the famous Buffo singer, Torri the prime tenor of the King's Theatre but above all, though Italian only in the opera, Miss Fanny Ayton, prima donna of the same.<sup>[15]</sup> They have been well attended upon the whole.

Then we had a diorama – the ruins of Chartres – a new exhibition here,<sup>[16]</sup> the Infant Lyra; and shows and promenades [*sic*] without number.

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<sup>11</sup> Giuditta Angiola Maria Costanza Pasta (1797-1865), otherwise known as Madame Pasta, was an Italian opera singer.

<sup>12</sup> The Caledonian Theatre was located at the now demolished southern end of Broughton Street.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Ducrow (1793-1842) was a celebrated circus performer, specialising in equestrianism. To mark this his first appearance in Edinburgh, he had included in his repertoire a performance based on Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Scott himself was among the audience on the opening night.

<sup>14</sup> The actor William Murray (1790-1852), who ran the Theatre Royal alongside his sister Harriet Siddons (1783-1844).

<sup>15</sup> The performers mentioned by Mackersy were: Giuseppe de Begnis (1793-1849), an Italian bass singer and at this time the director of Italian opera in Edinburgh; [Benedetto] Torri, an Italian tenor about whom little is now known; Fanny Ayton (1806-1891), an English soprano.

<sup>16</sup> A diorama was a huge translucent canvas that had been painted on both sides with a different picture. Light was shone first from the front and then from behind, to reveal the second pictures, and at different angles in order to create different effects. A theatre for displaying them had newly opened on Lothian Road. Louis Daguerre had pioneered the artform, with the cathedral of Chartres being one of his most famous scenes. Tickets cost 2 shillings for the front gallery and 1 shilling for the back.

## 1828

### 6 January

Engaged for part of last week with Mr Alan Reid, Liverpool and Mr Alex Macdougall, London in settling Clelands accounts with his Mother and Inglis & Weir.<sup>[17]</sup> We have now succeeded in bringing the matter to a conclusion.

### 25 January

Today the Phrenological Society gave a dinner to Dr Spurzheim who has been delivering a course of lectures here this winter.<sup>[18]</sup> About 50 members were present, Mr Combe in the chair supported by Dr Spurzheim, Mr D. Gordon Halyburton and Sir George Mackenzie: Mr Simpson Croupier. In proposing the health of the day Mr Combe dwelt upon the important consequences likely to result from the discovery of phrenology, stated that he considered Dr Gall to be the greatest man the world had ever seen etc. etc. With every desire to consider this new science as founded in truth, and as of the utmost importance to the proper study of mind, it may be doubted whether such sweeping assertions are either true in themselves, or in good taste in the present situation of the science, when a great degree of uncertainty exists as to the details of the discovery and as to the practical appreciation to human affairs. Dr Spurzheim in reply said very little and did not impress himself strongly on the minds of the company: his deficiency in the language was against him. He gave the founders of the Society, among whom I was one, pronouncing my name with tolerable accuracy.

### 18 February

My Father having some weeks ago addressed a letter to Mr Huskisson, Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the subject of obtaining for my brother John a grant of land on his going out to Van Diemens Land in the character of a clergyman, he has now received the following answer from the Under Secretary. "I am directed by Mr Secretary Huskisson to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 11<sup>th</sup> of December last, in reply to which I beg to acquaint you, that the Secretary of State will be happy to facilitate, as far as lies in his power, the object to which it relates. At the same time he is sorry that he can only authorise a grant of land to be made to Mr Mackersey to such an intent as his pecuniary means may enable him to bring into cultivation, it being the principle of the new Regulations (of which I enclose you a copy), that no settler shall receive a greater number of Acres than may be consistent with his capital. Should the Presbytery of Scotland therefore be induced to admit Mr Mackersey to ordination for the purpose of affording religious instruction to such of the settlers as may belong to that Church, I am directed to add that Mr Huskisson will be happy to give him an especial letter of recommendation to the Lieutenant-

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<sup>17</sup> Inglis & Weir were Writers to the Signet based in Queen Street, Edinburgh.

<sup>18</sup> Johann Spurzheim (1776-1832) was a German physician who became one of the chief proponents of phrenology. Mackersey was one of the founders in 1820 of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society. See the Introduction.

Governor of Van Diemens Land although from the correspondence which accompanied your communication there appears to exist on the part of Colonel Arthur every disposition to extend his favour and protection to persons arriving in the Colony under similar circumstances.

I am etc. (signed) R. W. Hay.”<sup>[19]</sup>

### 23 February

Last night Dr Spurzheim delivered in the Phrenological Society a series of observations pointing out the situation of the three lobes of the brain, and on the forehead. Each member was allowed for that evening to introduce a lady and there was consequently a full meeting. Dr Spurzheims observations regarding the forehead were principally directed to show that mere perpendicularity was not all that was to be attended to in predicating of a good development [*sic*]: the mass point being the quantity of brain extending before the organ of constructiveness; and that thus many apparently retreating foreheads were in reality better than others at a more imposing angle. The business of the evening it should be noticed, was begun by a statement from Mr Lyon<sup>[20]</sup> giving an account of a visit made by Dr S. himself, and others, to the Lunatic Asylum and charity school for children, in which the observations were wonderfully consistent with phrenological science. In the Lunatic Asylum an outrageous maniac being found to be provided with large organs of combativeness and destructiveness; a gloomy lunatic with great caution and small hope etc., and at the school a half dozen of children consisting equally of unruly and easily managed subjects being readily discriminated by the doctor, and the nicer shades of character in the three of gentle disposition being also pointed out, to the no small surprise of the mistress. Dr S. had also pointed out on a general view of the heads of the whole school their great inferiority in development as compared with a like number of children of a higher class.

### May

A body of Scotch settlers on McQuarry River, van Dieman’s Land having authorised Drs Baird, Thomson, Gordon and Muir and Mr Gray to make choice of a minister for them my brother applied to the committee and after preaching before them he was appointed to the situation of this date. The settlers give £100 a year, a house and a glebe of 100 acres,<sup>[21]</sup> and Government give an additional £100 a year with a free passage. The necessary documents have been furnished and laid before the Presbytery of Linlithgow who have appointed the 22 of June for receiving Johns discourses.

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<sup>19</sup> Robert W. Hay (1786-1861) was the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1825 to 1836.

<sup>20</sup> George Lyon W.S. (1786-1866) was the secretary of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society.

<sup>21</sup> A glebe was the portion of land assigned to a parish minister in addition to his stipend.



Figure 2. Reverend Edward Irving, 1820. Mackersy attended one of the lectures Irving delivered in Edinburgh in May 1828. (National Galleries of Scotland)

The celebrated Edward Irvine<sup>[22]</sup> from London has been delivering a course of lectures here for a fortnight past, on the prophesies. In these he endeavours to shew that almost every event under the Old Testament Dispensation is typical of some event which has been already fulfilled or remains still to be fulfilled: that in particular the Millenium is near at hand and that under it our Saviour is himself to reign on earth after having reinstated the Jews in the Holy Land and conquered and destroyed the Infidel nations.

I heard him yesterday on the subject of Jonah in the whales belly which according to him was typical of the Jews remaining for three days, ie three thousand years or rather time running into the third thousand, in a state of alienation from the true faith, till they were again to be restored, as Jonah was thrown out of the fishs belly upon the land. The time of this restoration he seemed to consider near at hand, though he did not specify it very particularly. Opinions of this description seem to be founded upon a very slender and uncertain basis. It is easy to find correspondences of the kind pointed out by Mr Irvine and a very small waste of ingenuity can render them sufficiently plausible; but there does not appear any substantial reason for believing in the view adopted by this Reverend Gentleman, who to say the truth seems possessed of an imagination as nearly allied to insanity as to genius.

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<sup>22</sup> Edward Irving (1792-1834). He was ordained as a Church of Scotland minister in 1815 and called in 1822 to the Caledonian chapel in London. He delivered twelve lectures in Edinburgh during his visit of 1828, starting on 22 May in St Andrew's church.

**30 May**

A letter received from my brother James dated in December last announces the birth of his third child, a daughter who has been named after his mother and stepmother "Catharine Jane". His eldest child is Mary, and his son, John. My brother John had also a son lately called by the same name.

**30 June**

John was ordained to the ministry a few days ago, and today a dinner was given to him by about 50 of the farmers and respectable parishioners of West Calder. Mr John Gay in the chair. After dinner the chairman in name of the company presented him with a silver-gilt snuff box bearing a suitable inscription, as a mark of their regard.

**3 July**

I was at Kirkcaldy today and visited the church, the scene of the recent dreadful catastrophe to the crowded audience assembled to hear Mr Irvine.<sup>[23]</sup> The church remains near in the same situation as it was immediately after the accident. The beams of the gallery rest upon the wall and upon the seats below at the point to which the ends falling down reached. I had always imagined that the mass had fallen more horizontally and had all come down upon the seats; and had been the more surprised at the limited number of the casualties in that quarter. The windows of the church have almost all the lower sash boarded up, them having been broken by the crowd. In the church yard are many recent graves among others that where the three sisters and their cousin sleep together in death. The narrative of the feelings and actions of the various individuals who were present would be very interesting. Mr C\_\_\_ a friend of mine had been overpersuaded to allow his daughter a fine child of 7 or 8 years to accompany a young lady her aunt, to hear Mr Irvine. They were seated under the beam of the gallery which fell and the fall of the sloping joists forced forwards the back of the seat in which they sat. Miss B. impelled by the blind instinct of self preservation rushed out through the session house which was near, leaving her little niece behind her. The moment she found herself safe however the situation of the child flashed across her and with an almost supernatural energy she again forced her way back into the church, but by this time the little girl had been rescued from her perilous situation. In the meantime Mr C. had gone to call upon a friend and in the midst of a quiet conversation the servant rushed in to the room exclaiming that the church had fallen and killed all the people. He flew with agitated and despairing steps to the spot, and found himself at the church door without having been conscious of any intervening object. He was then quickly satisfied of the safety of his daughter and sister in law: but as the latter had in the moment of confusion thought it better to carry the child to another house than to her home, he found on going thither Mrs C. in a state bordering on frenzy and which was not effectually relieved till her daughter

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<sup>23</sup> The north gallery of the Old Kirk, Kirkcaldy, had collapsed on 15 June during a service being conducted by the aforementioned Edward Irving. Twenty-eight people were killed.

was restored to her arms. This narration I give merely as an instance among the great variety which might be adduced of the terrible fear and joyful revulsions [*sic*] of feeling which must have checkered the more real and heartrending calamities of that disastrous evening.

## 2 August

My brother John returned today from London whither he had gone a few days before in consequence of an intimation from the Secretary for the Colonies that he had been appointed a passage in the Roslin Castle a convict ship which was to sail on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. After a great deal of trouble in the different offices he succeeded in obtaining an order for a sum, £100, for the purpose of him taking his own passage from Leith.

## 16 August

John sailed today for Van Dieman's Land in the City of Edinburgh, McKellar.<sup>[24]</sup> His wife accompanies him, but his child is left behind as unable from its delicate state of health to encounter so long a voyage. He is to go to West Calder. The vessel is crowded with passengers, so much so that my brother from his absences in London has missed obtaining a sleeping place in the cabin.

One reigning topic here for some time past has been a controversy between Dr Andrew Thomson of St Georges and Mr Henry Grey of St Mary's regarding the Apocrypha question with the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>[25]</sup> Dr Thomson had carried on an unsparing warfare against that Society and all its supporters in the pages of the Christian Instructor of which he is the editor. Among these supporters is Mr Grey; and at length there was traced to his house the proof sheets of a pamphlet of a very clever and very artful description holding up the doctor as a firebrand and every thing that is bad. He is not a man to bear such attacks tamely. Accordingly in the following number of the Instructor came forth an attack which out-billingsgated Billingsgate,<sup>[26]</sup> and charging Mr Grey, Mrs Grey and her brother as the author of Anglicanus Letters – the obnoxious pamphlet. In reference to this charge Mr Grey published sundry very shuffling letters in the newspapers denying his responsibility in one way or other for the letters. It afterwards turned out, however, that they were the compositions of his lady and the public were naturally scandalised at the evasive statement made by him. The presbytery have now taken up the [?broom], the opinion of the public having been unequivocally given, that both parties were much to blame;

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<sup>24</sup> The *City of Edinburgh* was owned by The Australian Company of Edinburgh and Leith, which provided a regular shipping service between Britain and Australia. Its captain was Duncan Mackellar, who later wrote *An Emigrant's Guide to Australia*.

<sup>25</sup> There had been a debate for a number of years whether or not the Apocrypha should be included in the Bibles produced by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

<sup>26</sup> The workers at Billingsgate fish market in London were notorious for their vituperative language. Such language in turn came to be known as 'billingsgate'.

the one in acting a deceitful, the other a violent part. What the reverend body will in their wisdom do remains to be seen.

### 14 September

Returned today from a tour to London, Paris, etc, for an account of which see Journal.

### November

On the 24<sup>th</sup> ultimo I left town in company with Mr Joseph Gordon W.S. for Ross-shire on the business of the Geanies and Kindeace trusts.<sup>[27]</sup> We remained the first night at Perth and having started next morning at 5 we reached Inverness about 10 p.m. and slept there. Started next morning by the mail and reached the Bridge of Alness about 9 where we found Mr Begrie ready with his gig and a pony to carry us to Ardross a purchase of Mr Gordon and others on which he is factor. After perambulating the grounds there, I left Messrs G. & B. to their own deliberations and proceeded in the gig of the latter to Kindeace where I dined and spent the night. Capt Robertson drove me down next morning to Milltoun where we met Mr Gordon from Ardross, and found Geanies carriage ready to convey us to Geanies House. There we spent that day, Tuesday Wednesday and part of Thursday being carried to Tain in the carriage in time for dinner. We spent the evening with Mr W. Murray and next day had our meeting of Kindeaces creditors. After that was over, we drove out to dine and remain[ed] all night at Ardmore with Provost Murray, Mr Begrie being also there. Pretty daughter and music for filling up the space between dinner and bed time. On the morrow early the gigs again in requisition. Gordon and Begrie in one, the provost, his little grandsons and I in another and so to Invercharron, near Bonar Bridge, where we breakfasted with Captain McKay. Then Messrs G and B in their gig and I in the mail to Orpisdale, Major Gilchrists; nothing but colonels, majors and captains in the north, and all hospitable in the extreme. We spent a jovial night gither,<sup>[28]</sup> and next morning I took my seat in the mail and returned by Bonar Bridge, Tain, Dingwall and to Inverness where I slept. Next day, Monday, the Caledonian coach<sup>[29]</sup> carried me to Perth; and from thence I proceeded on the day following to Edinburgh. Weather delightful, the highland road grand, romantic, wild and beautiful by turns. Ross a fine country, the crops there this year better than with us.

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<sup>27</sup> After getting into financial difficulties, Donald Macleod of Geanies (1769-1833) had executed a trust-conveyance of his whole property to the firm of Paul & Mackersy so that they could manage it to the benefit of his creditors. The estate of Kindeace, Ross-shire, was also in financial difficulties and was being managed by Paul & Mackersy on behalf of William Robertson (1817-1867).

<sup>28</sup> *i.e.* together.

<sup>29</sup> The Caledonian coach offered a regular service between Inverness and Perth. Recent improvements to the road between the two towns meant that a journey that had previously taken three days could now be completed in one.

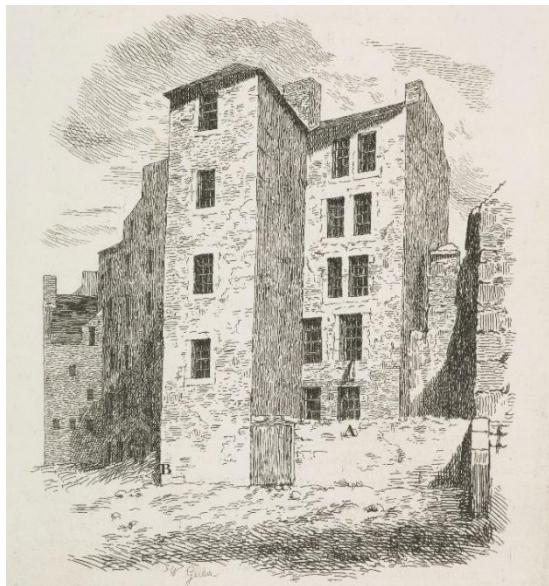


Figure 3. William Burke's house, 1829. Mackersy visited the house on 31 December 1828, gaining access to the back court by the door shown here. (National Galleries of Scotland)

### 28 December

Mr Ebenezer Anderson formerly one of the joint cashiers of the Fife Bank, having after much opposition been sequestrated I was on the 26 appointed trustee upon his estate.

### 31 December

Visited the house of the murderer Burke<sup>[30]</sup> who was condemned to death a few days ago for the murder of Mrs Campbell or Docherty: It is a squalid room down a stair about half way between the Grass market and Main Point on the north side of the street. We were not admitted into the house; but a person there had the key to the door in a wall or palisade round the window behind and we got forward to the window itself which was open. The room was nearly in the same state as on the night of the murder. The stool over which the unfortunate victim stumbled and fell when the fiend pounced upon her: the chair on which Hare says that he sat witnessing the murder: the bed with the straw under which the body was concealed; the very [illegible] that were brought from beneath the bed by Mr Gray the witness who first discovered the body, were all there. The house of Hare is a little further to the west down Tanners' Close and a little beyond the back of the houses in the street of which Burke's forms part. Never has any trial excited greater interest from the peculiar nature of the temptation which led to the murders – the price of the bodies got from the surgeon, the number of them – supposed to be at least a dozen; and the length of time during which they have been carried on, more than a twelve month.

<sup>30</sup> William Burke (1792–1829), who had murdered at least sixteen people in order to sell their bodies for dissection. His accomplice was William Hare (dates unknown).

The topics of discussion at present are 1<sup>st</sup> Whether the Lord Advocate did well in admitting Burke<sup>[31]</sup> and his wife as Kings Evidence: on which point I am inclined to think he was right, for without them it was doubtful whether sufficient evidence could have been brought for conviction: and at all events, without them the system pursued could not have been sufficiently developed and exposed. 2<sup>ly</sup> Whether Hare could now be fairly tried on murders forming part of the series of those committed for the purpose of disposing of the bodies, but different from the three in the indictment. This I am afraid would not be just or expedient. Hare and his wife have spoken out in the faith of safety: their evidence has led to the conviction of Burke; information has been got in this way which connects Hare with other murders; and were he now to be tried, he would be convicted by the means, so far, of the very information obtained through his own evidence. 3<sup>dly</sup> Whether a more full investigation in regard to the share which the surgeons have had in this foul affair be not indefensibly necessary – This I think is justly, as it is loudly, called for. It is said that the bodies have all or nearly all been sold to one lecturer; and can anyone believe that in a number of the kind mentioned, none should have borne marks of violence, or rather that any of them should have been without such marks? Yet no inquiry was made, no information given: no reluctance expressed to continue the deadly traffic [*sic*]. The precognitions, it is known, are going on and I trust that the wellfounded wish of the public for having the matter probed to the bottom will not be disappointed.

It was apprehended that some riot might have taken place on the last night of the year: but every precaution was taken and it passed quietly over. I walked round by the Mound, High Street and North Bridge between 12 and 1: and besides the usual shouts of merriment and joviality there was nothing, save a few curses on Dr K<sup>[32]</sup> to mark the difference between this and any other New Year's morning.

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<sup>31</sup> A slip by Mackersy: it was Hare and his wife who had turned king's evidence.

<sup>32</sup> The anatomist Dr Robert Knox (1791-1862). It was to his school of anatomy that Burke and Hare had sold the bodies of their murder victims.

**1 January**

A fatal typhus fever prevailing here at present. One of our clerks among others has fallen a victim to it.

**10 January**

Besides the Burke murders another ruling topic at present is the absconding of Mr Stephenson a London banker, with nearly all the assets and depositions of the House of Remington Stephenson & Co. The pursuit after him is hot, though it is feared he may have got on shipboard for America.<sup>[33]</sup>

Another leading subject is the resignation or recal [*sic*] of the Marquis of Anglesea from the Irish Government.<sup>[34]</sup>

Another – the probability of Mr O’Connell taking or attempting to take his seat in the House of Commons as Member for Clare, and the consequences thereof.<sup>[35]</sup>

**11 January**

At the Cardinal last night Rose played off a pleasant hoax on Brodie and Neaves,<sup>[36]</sup> I being in the secret. Neaves having been up the Rhine last autumn ordered a pipe, or half pipe, of hock, of which he allowed some of his friends to have a dozen each. Among others Rose. The wine had been sent home in bottles with a label on which was inscribed the name of the hock, and that of the house which exported it from Germany and the date. From one of his bottles Rose took neatly off the label\*,<sup>[37]</sup> got it stained in such a manner as to give it the genuine appearance of antiquity had it put upon one of Mr Yorke’s bottles of common hock after altering the year from 180 [*sic*] to 1737, and while at dinner, announced it as a specimen of a parcel of particular old hock which he had stumbled upon. Brodie tasted it first and declared it the right thing. Neaves directed his attention to the outside of the bottle, after having remarked that it bore the date of the American War, having believed the year to be 73 in place of 37. He next noticed that the house was the same as the one which had supplied him: and having at last proceeded to taste the wine, he smacked his lips and swore it had the genuine flavour. Rose and I could contain ourselves no longer, but amidst shouts of laughter, in which Mr Yorke joined in a covert manner behind our backs, announced the full success of the joke.

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<sup>33</sup> Rowland Stephenson MP (1782–1856) had absconded on 27 December 1828 after embezzling thousands of pounds from Remington, Stephenson & Co., of which he was a partner. The rumours that he had fled to America were true, and there he remained for the rest of his life.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Paget (1768–1854), 1<sup>st</sup> marquess of Anglesey, had been recalled from his post as lord lieutenant of Ireland after he had expressed support for Catholic emancipation.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel O’Connell (1775–1847) was standing as a candidate in the Clare by-election. There was speculation about what would happen if he won, as under the Oath of Supremacy Catholics were not permitted to sit in the House of Commons.

<sup>36</sup> See the Introduction for James Rose (1797–1864) and Charles Neaves (1800–1876).

<sup>37</sup> Mackersy wrote at the bottom of the page: “I am wrong here, he got printed a new label’.



Figures 4. (a) *Tam o' Shanter* (left) and (b) *Souter Johnnie* by James Thom, 1828. Mackersy viewed the statues on 17 January 1829 when they were on show in Edinburgh. (National Trust for Scotland)

### 17 January

There are at present exhibiting here two statues representing Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnny, the work of a common stone mason from Ayr there of the name of Thom.<sup>[38]</sup> They are remarkable for their great accuracy and spirit. The Souter is in the midst of a humorous story with a sly comic expression of countenance. Tam 'o [*sic*] Shanter is enjoying the joke with open mouthed hilarity. The former is the very character; full of quaint drollery, the pint stoup in his hand his apron half folded up, his leg pushed forward with the toe turned in. Tam again is much more old and meagre than one could suppose the prototype to have been. He, too, is evidently drawn, or rather chiselled, from life, but the artist has selected a somewhat inappropriate representative of the, may be a little henpecked, but jovial farmer.

<sup>38</sup> James Thom (1802-1850). His statues of Souter Johnnie and Tam o' Shanter were bought for the Burns Monument in Alloway but first went on tour to Ayr, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

**24 January**

Neaves has rhymed the hoax anent the hock as follows.

Tired of the court house plonks, to change the scene,  
 Fill up his cheeks and dissipate his spleen,  
 The pope last summer set himself to roam  
 To Paris, Switzerland, the Rhine and home.  
 Six weeks in all upon his tour he spent,  
 But came back, sure much wiser than he went.  
 Chief where the mighty Rhine rolls on his way,  
 By ruined castles and by vineyards gay,  
 The pope had wandered with delight supreme  
 And now returned, the Rhine was all his theme  
 Of vintages, of growth he d[e]arly spoke  
 And seemed a proper connoisseur of hock.  
 In body, flavour bouquet, he could tell,  
 And scorned the boasted glories of Moselle  
 His favourite wines he numbered by the dozen  
 Johannesberg, Hockheimer, Assmanshausen:  
 Neersten and Marcibrunner, Hattenheiner  
 And other break-jaw names would bother the best rhymer  
 But most of Liebfraumilch his praise on high,  
 Soft Sweetheartsmilk, the Lovers cordial joy.

His language knowing and his aspect grave  
 Attention and respect his hearers gave,  
 And glibly o'er these subjects as he ran,  
 They bowed in reverence to the travelled man.  
 But now the time was come when, well-a-day  
 These honors all were doomed to fade away.  
 Often at Sorleys where they met to dine  
 The Pope and Brodie had decried the wine.  
 "Now then", said Rose to Mackersy so sly,  
 "The taste of these fastidious youths we'll try.  
 Off to the printers let us hasten straight  
 And frame a label of an ancient date."

The label got they run to Gardeners Shop  
 And vilest compounds on the inscription drop.  
 With turpentine the whole they smirch and smear  
 Till scarce the letters legible appear,  
 It seems by favour of the druggists shelf  
 As if Old Faust had printed it himself.

The paper then on Sorley's wine they batter  
The bottle looks most german to the matter.

They dine, they call for wine as they were used,  
This modern made antique is straight produced;  
The Gudgeons bite – the Pope and Brodie too  
The precious flask with veneration view;  
With eager eyes the label they devour,  
And in loud cries their admiration pour.  
Ah! Liebfraumilch – the best wine of the whole  
So old – it must be good upon my soul.  
17-73 that was I swear  
Before the Americans had gone to War.  
No 17-33 it is – bless me!  
Where were we all in 1733?  
What – Mappes in Mayesur, brothers, – there again  
How singular! I know the very men.  
Meantime the authors of this barbarous wit  
With matchless gravity of aspect sit.  
“That's the right stuff” at last now Brodie cried  
And smacked his lips as when he kissed his bride.  
Here Lindsay gan to fidget on his hips  
To check the chuckle rising to his lips.  
But when the Pope as dreaming of the Rhine  
“Delicious” cries “the bouquet is divine”,  
Out bursts the loud guffaw they cough, they choke,  
They roar as if expiring at the joke.

The Pope and Brodie in amazement stare  
But soon the waiters see behind their chair,  
Into their mouths their towels cram, to veil  
The grin and titter they but ill conceal.  
E'en snidest Sorley as he steps about  
Cannot refrain from laughing just right out.

The truth is seen; the hoax is clear as day,  
They hang their heads in pitiful dismay:  
“Bouquet” says Rose, “If any bouquet's there  
It's that of turpentine I do declare”.

That night at which the Pope lost all his coin,  
But grudged it less than Rose's turpentine:  
Brodie a great deal won; but all he got  
Had gladly given to save so hard a trot.

### 1 February

The body of Burke was exposed to the view of the public on Friday, and it has been calculated that upwards of 20,000 wished to see it. The[y] merely passed through the anatomical theatre, and had thus but a very cursory glance. I had not heard of the exhibition, and on Saturday when I went over to the College I found that the body was no longer exposed to the curiosity of the many headed monster: and thousands had thus to go away disappointed.<sup>[39]</sup> There among others I met Mr Andrew Clason W.S. who with every exertion fared no better than the rest. We gave up the thing therefore as hopeless. In returning I looked in upon Dr Knox so much mixed up with those matters in the mind of the public, and found him examining his class very zealously, and of course, exactly as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

About two o'clock I again stumbled accidentally on Clason in Queen Street and found that he had got Mr Liston to secure the attendance of McKenzie, Dr Munro's assistant, for the purpose of letting him have a view of the great felon. On reaching the College a considerable number of persons were still there: among them we found McKenzie, and after various manoeuvres we succeeded in reaching the door with but few at our back and then got in without difficulty. Burkes' body was lying stretched out on a table in a large sort of lumber or dissecting room, quite naked. The upper part of the skull had been sawed off and the brain extracted, but in other respects he was untouched; except indeed, that the hair had all been shaven off his body. He was a little man of about 5 feet 5 inches in height, well proportioned, firmly knit; his limbs neatly and, for his size, strongly formed; and his chest tolerably broad and open. His face was still very little altered and as the eyes were open, it looked yet life like, tho' the teeth were a little set. His face is one of those common place faces which are not easily described, broad at the upper part and tapering to the chin, with an ordinary nose rather small than otherwise and small eyes. We had the skull put on again and the skin drawn over it which gave a better view of his appearance. The mark of the rope was distinctly seen. Mr Liston made an incision in his thigh and laid open the femoral artery. The wound in the scrotum from which Burke suffered so much was disgustingly visible and several holes had already been made by the disease. We were assured that it was scrofula and not cancer; and that it is a common enough malady and by no means dangerous.

### 8 March

The great topic of interest just now is the Catholic question which is at length to be brought forward with a view to a settlement under the auspices of Government united

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<sup>39</sup> William Burke's body had been dissected on 1 February in front of a ticketed audience. That Mackersy did not know about the subsequent exhibition of his body is perhaps not surprising, as it had only been arranged after ticketless students had protested on being denied access to the dissection itself.

in the purpose of carrying it.<sup>[40]</sup> On this great question the country is much divided, but it seems manifest that the great majority of the intelligent and able men are in favour of emancipation: many on principle and many on grounds of expediency. If there were not great evils arising from the keeping open of the question, and much danger, I should hesitate greatly before wishing success to the contemplated measure. The whole system of Catholicism seems adverse to freedom, and its tendency is to accommodate itself to circumstances without losing sight for one moment of its grand aim, to subject the minds of men to a system of forms and observances; to the authority of exclusive dogmas; but above all to the influence of the priesthood. Still it is doubtful whether such a religion with all the engines of insinuation and power will be at all formidable in the face of reason and fair discussion. It lives by opposition: and may decline rather than gain force by concession. But above all any state, almost, is better than the present, where sheer military force is necessary to preserve order in Ireland and where there is a determination to “agitate” till emancipation be attained. It is on this ground solely that Mr Peel rests his acquiescence in the measure, and though he has lost Oxford by his change of opinion, or rather of conduct, he has kept the ministry together, and is backed by the most influential part of the public press, as well as the ablest men in Parliament. This night's post has brought the details of the measure as submitted by him to the House of Commons.

### 15 March

I yesterday attended a meeting called for the purpose of proposing a petition to Parliament on the subject of Catholic Emancipation and in its favour.<sup>[41]</sup> A great crowd assembled early and the great room in the George Street Assembly Rooms was speedily filled. Sir William Arbuthnot was in the chair and the speeches of Sir James Moncreiff, Dr Chalmers, Mr Jeffrey and others were eloquent and effective. After Sir James had moved the first resolution a tumult arose which was occasioned by the audience at the farther extremity of the room being prevented from seeing or fully hearing the speakers on the platform at the other end. The call was “to the Gallery”; but this being filled with ladies, principally, and the speakers not being disposed to make such an exhibition of themselves the call was not obeyed and the uproar continued drowning entirely the voice of Dr McLagan who rose to move the second resolution. Mr John Archibald Murray tried with his stentorian voice to calm the tumult but in vain. The Solicitor General appealed to the gallantry of the audience, “Would they wish the ladies to be driven from their places?”. Gallantry was in abeyance, and Jeffrey mounted on the form and shook his head and hand as if in shame at conduct so indecorous: and essayed to elevate his clear but weak voice; but

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<sup>40</sup> *i.e.* Catholic emancipation, the process of removing or reducing the restrictions imposed on Catholics by the Act of Uniformity, the Test Acts and the penal laws.

<sup>41</sup> The meeting had been called at short notice when it was discovered that a petition by opponents of Catholic emancipation was being proposed. Doors opened at 11.30 am for a midday start and entrance cost 1 shilling.

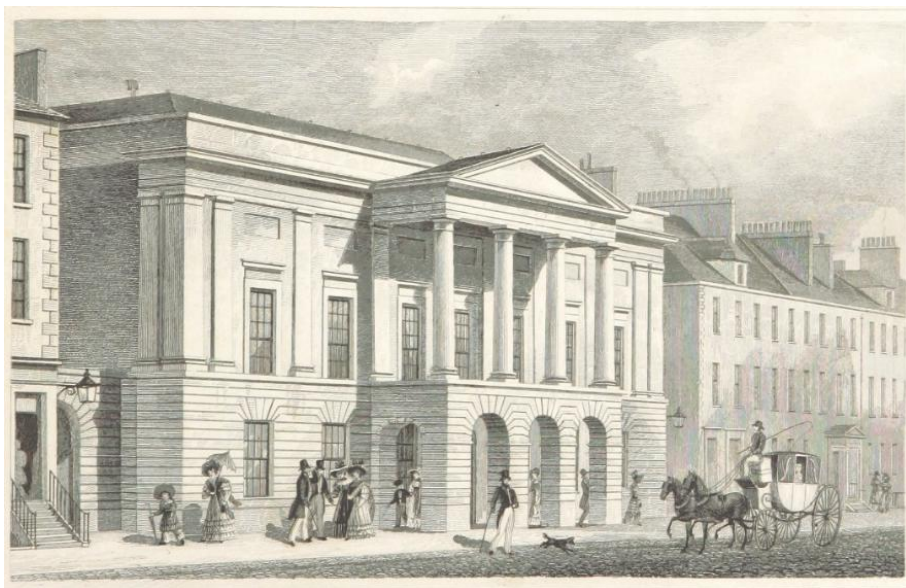


Figure 5. The Assembly Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh, 1829.  
Mackersy attended a meeting held here on 15 March 1829 to propose  
a petition to Parliament in favour of Catholic emancipation.  
(*Modern Athens*)

he was not listened to or heard. Even Chalmers though he loudly proclaimed that the speakers would make all in the room hear “at the deafest side of their heads” preached to the winds. At length Johnny Cockburn mounted the form and his tack quickly charmed the multitude into silence. With a manner made up of plain sense and decision, he assured them that to the gallery the speakers would not go, so there was no more to be said on that head; that it would gratify the enemies of the cause if the meeting were to break up; but that it would not be their making for they would instantly dissolve and call another with regulations which would prevent all such irregularities. And he therefore moved that if order were not restored in three minutes, the preses<sup>[42]</sup> should leave the chair. This succeeded and no commotion afterwards took place.

Jeffrey spoke in a tone of fine taste and fine feeling: one could not help liking the man as well as admiring the speaker. Chalmers carried every thing before him with his fervid eloquence and never did I see such enthusiasm in an audience. They simultaneous [*sic*] rose up and cheered him to the echo. He spoke with a staff in his hand and was frequently near throwing himself off the platform, his action extending to his feet as well as to his hands. The whole concluded with a very foolish address from Captain Basil Hall: touching [on] his travels in America, the evils of universal

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<sup>42</sup> Scots for the person who presides at a meeting, the chairman.

suffrage, and the importance of an established Church: but chiefly, some thought, a notice of his intended publication of the travels aforesaid.<sup>[43]</sup> The petition was numerously signed, by myself and others on the grounds formerly alluded to.

### April

I heard today a lecture of Mr Wilderspin the promoter of Infant Schools, the general object of which is to provide a place of safety and improvement for the children of the poor when they themselves are compelled, by their avocations, to leave them through part of the day.<sup>[44]</sup> There were exhibited six or eight children brought from the infant school established in Glasgow, for the purpose of explaining more palpably the modes of instruction. One leading feature is to amuse the children at the same time that they are instructed. Thus there are many lessons in rhyme [*sic*] which are sung by the children together; and produce a pleasing effect. Notation and the simpler parts of arithmetic are taught by the black and white balls which slide on moveable lines in the grooves of a frame made for the purpose. Movements are made to the sound of a whistle. Pictures of birds, beasts etc. and representations of scripture histories are resorted to to keep up the attention. And to the schools themselves when established there is usually attached a garden with a variety of plants. This is the age of education, and the passion seems to be at its height. It is really surprising to observe the precocity of our young people, the variety of information which they possess, and their eagerness to acquire it. Time will shew whether the present generation surpass those which preceded it in real strength of intellect, power of application and excellence each in his peculiar calling.

It is to be feared that while in times past education was made too much an irksome task, at present it is rendered more than it ought to be an amusement. What is learned is no doubt of some consequences, but it is of more to acquire habits of overcoming difficulties of attention and of laborious application. That these should be applied to useful subjects of learning is true, but it is doubtful whether a variety of miscellaneous knowledge acquired amid the excitement and amusement of the modern system of teaching be of the importance of which it is at present thought to be. The tendency besides is to force the young mind into premature forwardness, and this must always be attended with a proportional weakening of its ultimate powers. Gymnastics are too much the rage at present both in the bodily and mental training.

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<sup>43</sup> Basil Hall (1788-1844) was a naval officer and traveller. His book *Travels in America in the years 1827 and 1828* was published later this year.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Wilderspin (1791-1866) had been invited to Glasgow by David Stow to help establish Drygate school and organise it in accordance with Wilderspin's views on infant schooling. Pupils from the school subsequently accompanied Wilderspin on his visits to other Scottish towns to promote his methods.



Figure 6. The Theatre Royal, Princes Street, Edinburgh, 1829.  
Mackersy attended a performance of *The Beggar's Opera* here on 14 June 1829.  
(*Modern Athens*)

### 14 June

At the Theatre last night to see Madame Caradori Allan act the part of Polly in the Beggars Opera,<sup>[45]</sup> which she did delightfully. The singing of course excellent, but what was more surprising she spoke with very little of the foreign accent and with much neatness and grace. Altogether with too little of the artless tenderness of the character, there was more of the exquisite ease and finish than I recollect to have seen in any other Polly. Her appeal to Macheath when taunted by Lucy at being exposed by him to the scoffs of such “a Gypsy”, was given with a fine mixture of upbraiding pathos and scorn. Murray amused us afterwards with Mr Tomkins in which he hits off the humours of drunkenness in capital style.

The Caledonian Theatre commences [*sic*] last night under the auspices of Mr Bass manager of the Dundee and Perth Theatres,<sup>[46]</sup> with what prospect of success I know not. Edinburgh cannot yet support two theatres.

<sup>45</sup> *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), a ballad opera by John Gay. Maria Caterina Rosalbina Caradori-Allan (1800–1865) was a French operatic soprano.

<sup>46</sup> After being acquired by the actor-manager Charles Bass, the Caledonian Theatre was refurbished and partly rebuilt. The programme on its re-opening night included a drama inspired by Walter Scott's *The Chronicles of the Canongate*, a display of dancing, and the pantomime *Don Juan*. Prices ranged from 3 shillings for a box to 6d for a place in the gallery.

**19 June**

We have been busily engaged for some time past by a dispute among the partners of the Fife Banking Co which, after an obstinate resistance for four months past, has ended in a change of management. Mr Drummond agent for the Commercial Bank of Cupar having been appointed cashier in place of Mr Cheyne<sup>[47]</sup> and me. The contest has been occasioned by the intrigues of a party.

I had resolved to resign the trusteeship of E. Andersons estate; but having received a letter from my correspondent in New York informing me that he had under the powers which I sent him got possession of Andersons books which had been detained till after the arrival of my letter on account of the vessel by which they had been shipped receiving damages, I have resolved to remain some time longer in the office of trustee. My correspondent Mr Joseph Pitcairn requires a guarantee against the consequences of his having secured the books, illegally. I think it right to do what I can for his safety, as he has been prompted solely by zeal for the good of the creditors. Besides it is of importance that the books in question should come into my hands, that the interest of the creditors may be attended to by one unfettered by the local connections of the new management of the Fife Banks affairs. Accordingly I called a meeting of the creditors at Cupar yesterday for the purpose of submitting to them the correspondence with Mr Pitcairn: but consideration of the matter was delayed for a week that the bank committee might be consulted. An extract of a letter from Anderson was produced from which it appeared that his brother, in the course of whose examination the disclosure as to the books was made, had written to him that day after that examination, and also to the person to whom the box was addressed at New York. But the latter had been induced by Mr Pitcairn to allow him to get possession of the box.

I may here mention the great perfection to which travelling has now been carried. I left Edinburgh yesterday morning at 6: arrived in Cupar at a quarter after 10; remained there six hours, and leaving it about 4 reached town again a quarter before 9: thus travelling more than 60 miles twice, crossing a ferry of ten miles twice, and having the best part of the day to attend to business. Can it be that a hundred years hence a future generation will smile at our boasted celerity and accomplish a journey like the above, with the same interval for business, in two thirds of the time?

**20 June**

My Father and Mrs Muckersy in town for the purpose of being introduced to William's intended,<sup>[48]</sup> Miss Walker daughter of the late Mr Walker of Sunnybank in Fife. The marriage is fixed to take place early in August. I shall then be left the only bachelor of the family. N'importe!<sup>[49]</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> James Auchinleck Cheyne W.S. (1795-1853). See the Introduction.

<sup>48</sup> William (1795-1875) was one of Muckersy's brothers. See the Introduction.

<sup>49</sup> 'No matter'.

**7 July**

The Court (First Division) this day decided in my favour the competition for the trusteeship on the sequestrated estate of Henry Stephens of Balmadies<sup>[50]</sup> which has been depending for nearly two years altogether, and for about a year in as far as regarded me. Mr Stephens was sequestrated in October 1827 by Mr Christopher Kerr of Dundee, for the purpose of defeating a private trust in favour of Mr Alexander Robertson W.S. who had been bid to come under very serious obligations for the bankrupt. At the meeting for electing a trustee two were chosen, Mr Cheyne, my colleague in the Fife Bank management, by Mr Robertsons party, and Mr Guthrie younger of Craigie by Mr Stephens himself. After an obstinate contest before the Lord Ordinary and the Court it was found that Mr Cheyne was liable to a personal objection, he having purchased a debt immediately before his election and voted upon it; but it was at the same time found that he had a decided majority of votes and a new election was appointed to take place. At the new election I was chosen by Mr Robertson and Mr Cheynes influence, and Mr Guthrie by the opposite party as before. A new contest arose which went against me before the Lord Ordinary, but the Court rejected one of the votes sustained by him in favour of my opponent and remitted back the case to him. He again found that I was still in the minority, though now by a very small sum, and on going back to the Court they rejected another vote for Mr Guthrie and confirmed my election. The expenses became at last a very serious matter amounting to not less than £250. The major items were

At first against me ----- £ [blank]  
 Secondly against me -----  
 Thirdly in my favour-----

The context in respect of length and nearness at last upon votes to the extent of £[blank] is almost unprecedented.

**6 August**

My brother William was married on the 4<sup>th</sup> to Miss Walker. The ceremony was performed in her mothers house at Inverkeithing by the Reverend Ebenezer Brown of the United Secession Church, the family not being on terms with the parish minister. Miss Trotter, a daughter of the late General Trotter acted as brides maid and I as best man. The new married couple went off on a jaunt to Crieff, Loch Earn, Callender [*sic*] and Stirling: and we had a very agreeable party at dinner.

We lately received letters from John who arrived in Van Diemens Land on the 30 of January last after a prosperous voyage. James met him at Hobart Town, and as it happened to be the time of the Sacrament there John had an opportunity of at once giving his active assistance. He dined with Colonel Arthur, the lieutenant governor,

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<sup>50</sup> Balmadies was a large estate in Forfarshire.

who gave him a very gracious reception and has written home to Principal Baird that he will do all he can to promote his views. After proceeding to Wallace where he found James's family well and happy, and remaining some days to recruit, he went to his place of settlement and met with and preached to his people, the latter in the open air. His manse is already begun and is to be of considerable size for the purpose of enabling him to keep boarders. It was proposed to make it one story [*i.e.* storey] only with attics but John induced them to make it two complete stories [*sic*] and subscribed £15 towards the expence [*sic*]. His prospects in the way of boarding are very flattering. The glebe is 100 acres or thereby, and is pleasantly situated on the banks of a river.

### 29 August

On Saturday the 29 I proceeded to Dundee to attend a meeting of Mr Stephens' creditors for appointing commissioners etc. Arrived at 1, an hour too late, but the meeting was delayed till I came, Mr Bennett agent in the sequestration having gone over the night before. Mr C. Kerr attended with, he said, all his former votes (those which had been rejected now rectified) with the exception of Mr Kirkaldys [*sic*] for £2000, and he was stated to be in town and ready to give a mandate. He therefore meant to propose three Dundee creditors as commissioners but would agree to Mr Cheyne being one provided no opposition were made to the other two. Mr Bennett, on the other hand, wished to have the majority of commissioners in Edinburgh, and was anxious that the mandates should be entered on the minutes to shew his constituents that if he had yielded it was to a majority. The truth then came out. Mr Kirkaldy was not to be found, and it was admitted that he might not appear at all that day. Mr Kerr now spoke boldly out. He was prepared to go on as he stood and would take a personal objection to Mr Cheyne. Seeing this and believing that Mr Cheyne was liable to such an objection and further considering the evil consequences of new dissensions, and that there would be many checks against improper interference on the part of any commissioners chosen, I recommended to Mr Bennett to yield the point which he did and Messrs Cheyne, Miln, and Symes were elected.

Next morning, Sunday, we hired a gig and proceeded up the Carse of Gowrie to Perth. The crops have suffered much by the uncommonly wet and ungenial season. In many places it was as if it had been rolled. We observed aliv[e] trees torn up by the root, evidences that the storm which had so desolated the northern parts of Scotland, south of the Moray Firth, had been likewise felt here. Shearing is in the Carse frequently done by contracts the present rate 12/- an acre. Dined at Perth and had a spirited phrenological discussion with a gentleman whose combative propensities were out of all proportion to his reasoning powers. In the evening to Scone. Next morning started in the coach at 9 and left it at the Crossgates proceeding on foot to Dunfermline where I was engaged to dine with Mr MacDonald writer there. In the evening to Inverkeithing and next morning home.

## 7 September

I attended Mr Buckingham's lecture on the renewal of the East India Company's charter this evening. He was here some weeks ago when he delivered a course of lectures on the subject, since which he had been on a crusade to Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth, Glasgow, Carlisle etc.; and he now has returned to give this finishing blow to the Company's interests here.<sup>[51]</sup> He is a stout good looking man some what like Alexander Robertson, or James Ballantyne or James Wright or a melange of the features of all the three. He lectures with amazing ease and fluency rising occasionally though rarely into a more energetic and impassioned tone. His descriptions are very graphic and led me to regret that I had not heard his sketches of the countries of the East. The purpose of the present lecture was to shew what he would have substituted in room of the Company's [*sic*] management of India to which he was so inveterate an enemy. The principal suggestions were

A poll tax in lieu of all burdens, say £1 per head which he calculated would raise 60 millions Sterling. This, I am afraid, keeping in view the poverty of the lower classes, the difference in the value of money etc. was sufficiently absurd.

A uniform Code of Laws.

The adoption of the English language in all political judicial and other public proceedings.

The selection of proper persons for sending out to India from the most distinguished at certain of our public schools and the subsequent education of those chosen.

The destination of the young men elected to one particular branch, civil, military, diplomatic, judicial and then education for that alone.

The regulation that they should all proceed to India by land and spend at least three years on the journey visiting various countries and familiarising themselves to eastern manners.

And finally, for he wished to carry the fair sex along with him, a provision for securing English wives for the elected by establishing a register of their attachments here before they set out; and having the lady sent out at the expense of Government provided absence did not shake her, nor that and the three years rambling among the beauties of the East, him.

These and other topics, illustrated with arguments and details of fact and enlivened by anecdotes, descriptions, jokes and jabber, formed a pleasant enough entertainment for the 2½ hours lecture. It must be owned, however, that there was a savour of quackery throughout. The alter[n]atives were to be administered in formidable dozes and the effects were to be pro-di-gi-ous.

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<sup>51</sup> The charter of the East India Company was not due to be renewed until 1833, but its opponents had already begun to campaign for its privileges and power to be reduced, reformed, or removed entirely. Buckingham's lecture, 'What is to be done with India?', was held in the Waterloo Room, Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, with tickets costing 3 shillings 6d.

**13 September**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> I set out for Balmadies to collect the rents and arrange as to management of the farm in Mr Stephens occupation. The day very unfavourable and as a I had only taken an inside seat to Dundee and wished to go on to Arbroath, I was well pleased, the coach being full, to join another gentleman in a post chaise. At Arbroath all night; visited the ruins which have been recently repaired but are a mere wreck; also the harbour. In the morning by the coach to Balmadies which is on the road to Forfar. The property is a very excellent one and admirably laid out. The house exceedingly well planned with an admirable garden and convenient set of offices. Spent the 9<sup>th</sup> and part of the 10<sup>th</sup> there; and then drove to Forfar in Mr T's gig and got a seat in the *Defiance*<sup>[52]</sup> for Edinburgh. It goes down Strathmore by Glammiss [*sic*], Meigle, Coupar Angus etc to Perth and from thence by the Bridge of Earn and Queensferry to town. The day till we reached the bridge delightful and the country through Strathmore very fine. Harvest was advanced, but the wheat we were told had suffered considerably from the fly and the rains. Left Forfar at 12 arrived in Edinburgh at 9. Fare outside 14/.

**26 September**

Saw Kean in the ~~two~~ last two acts of *Shylock*.<sup>[53]</sup> He played with all his wonted vigour. Mrs Wm West was Portia, but did not make up for the absence of Mrs Henry Siddons<sup>[54]</sup> whom indisposition has forced to withdraw, for a time at least, from the stage.

**18 October**

At Cupar last week to complete the examinations in E. Andersons sequestration. From thence to Dundee to meet with the commissioners in H. Stephens' estate for the purpose of fixing the upset price. Mr Miln being from home I saw Mr Symes alone with whom I arranged for having the business done; and as I met with a gentleman in the Commercial Room who had been to the Perth races it occurred to me that I might next morning go round that way and have a glance at them in passing. We started at ½ after 9 and reached Perth ⅓ h. after 12. The race began at 1 so we were in good time. The day was delightful and the scenery of the course, enlivened by the company, equipages and all the gaiety and excitement of the occasion not to be surpassed. I had time to see the first two races which were decided at once, and the first heat of the last, before the arrival of the coach through Strathmore by which I had taken out my seat for Edinburgh. Arrived at home a little after 9.

My Father who has been complaining for three months past of a very sore ulcer on his ancle [*sic*] has now got nearly quite better.

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<sup>52</sup> The *Defiance* stagecoach ran between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Forfar was a stop on the route.

<sup>53</sup> Edmund Kean (1787-1833) was a distinguished Shakespearean actor. His sensitive portrayal of *Shylock* had established his reputation and remained popular with audiences throughout his career.

<sup>54</sup> The aforementioned actress and theatre manageress Harriet Siddons.

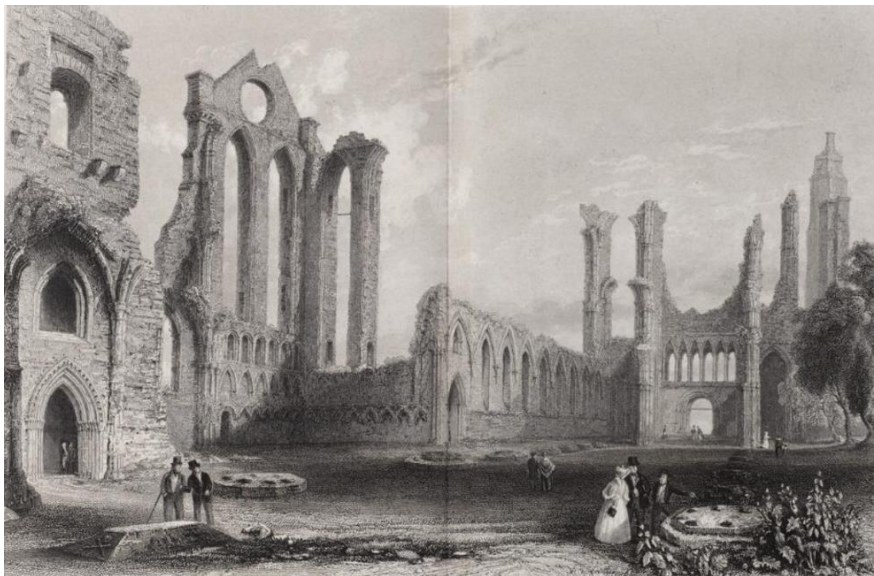


Figure 7. Arbroath Abbey, c.1836. Mackersy visited the ruins during his overnight stop in the town on 13 September 1829. (Historic Environment Scotland)

## 25 October

Mr Paul and I have now been connected in business for upwards of 12 years having commenced at Whitsunday 1817. Our apprentices have been the following

Robert Horsburgh, from Selkirkshire.

Gilbert Marjoribanks – son of Mr M. of M.

William Dickson – son of Mr Dickson of Culter and Hartree.

William Spens – son of Dr Spens.

Andrew Paterson – son of the late Mr Paterson merchant Leith.

George T. Chiene – son of Capt. Chiene.

Peter Ewart son of [blank]

James J. Dickson son of the Revd Dr Dickson of St Cuthberths [sic].

William Thomas Thomson son of Mr Thomson miniature painter.

I saw Braham last night in the opera of the Castle of Andalusia<sup>[55]</sup> and the afterpiece of the Waterman. Though now nearly 70\*<sup>[56]</sup> I believe, at all events above 60, he sang with all his wonted spirit and taste. In the Bay of Biscay his last song he was twice encored. The house was crowded in every part indeed overflowing it being Braham's

<sup>55</sup> *The Castle of Andalusia* (1782) by Samuel Arnold and John O'Keeffe.

<sup>56</sup> Mackersy wrote at the end of the entry: '\*This is not correct'. The tenor John Braham (c.1774–1856) would have been around fifty-five years old.

benefit night and the last of the season. Murray made his usual speech in which he deplored the unfavourable results of last season arising from a general decay of taste for theatrical entertainments, as exemplified in London and elsewhere as well as here. He promised every exertion for next season which he said might probably be his last alluding I presume to the expiry of the patent.<sup>[57]</sup> Among other attractions he promised us Luton, Matthews, Miss Paton, Miss Jarman, Cook, Macredie, Vanderhoff and the new star, Miss Fanny Kemble. This last is a daughter of Charles Kemble, who has come out with the most triumphant success at Covent Garden at the very time when that establishment seemed on the verge of ruin.

### 5 November

By a letter from James received last week we learn that John has now left him having taken a temporary house on Elizabeth River, till his manse on the McQuarrie is finished. This he has been induced to do from the numerous applications from persons desirous of placing their sons with him as boarders. James states the price of wheat to be 5/6 per bushel and that of cattle averaging 300lb, £2.10/- per head.

### 13 December

In 1828 I purchased from Mr Robert Cameron, accountant, a share of the Union Clubhouse Tontine<sup>[58]</sup> for £25. The subject of the tontine is the house No 15 Queen Street Edinburgh under burden of £800 in a bond over it. At first it was let to the Union Club for £90 per annum and they were to occupy it during the subsistence of the tontine and to have a right of purchasing the house at £2000; but the Club broke up some years ago and we are now relieved from that burden. The number of shares is 84 and for each four a life is named which life must have been 75 years complete on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1823. The original price of the share was £25. The free rent of the house to be divided annually and the interest in the tontine of those shareholders whose lives should fail to accrease<sup>[59]</sup> and belong to the shareholders where nominees survive. The house to go to the shareholders of the nominees who shall survive all the rest under the burden before mentioned. The members of the tontine are Andrew Skene, advocate, James Swan W.S., R. M. Niven W.S., Henry M. Low W.S. and myself. The tontine nominees are

- |    |   |                       |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | General T. Scott of Malleny                     |                       |
| 2. | Miss Elizabeth Gray, No. [blank] Hanover Street |                       |
| 3. | Rev. Henry Innes, ordinarily Aberdeenshire      | <u>Dead Nov. 1833</u> |
| 4. | James Clark, Dumfries                           | <u>Dead</u>           |
| 5. | John Louthean, Airly                            |                       |

<sup>57</sup> The lease for the Theatre Royal, which was held by William Murray's sister Harriet Siddons, was due to expire in 1830. In the event, Siddons bought the property outright and then leased it to Murray.

<sup>58</sup> See the Introduction for a discussion on tontines.

<sup>59</sup> In Scots law, to accreue.

6. Walter Nichol, tenant, Porterburn, Langholm
7. Rebecca Thomson or Symons, Dundee
8. Flora McKennon, Corry Parish, Strathsky
9. Janet Hunter, daughter of Revd Cha. Hunter
10. George Dunlop of McNairston Ayrshire Dead
11. Robert Low of Clatts Dead
12. Kath. McNab or McGibbon, Dochart, Killin
13. James McKenzie, jeweller, Edinburgh
14. John Henderson, late provost of Kirkcudbright
15. Baillie Meiklejohn of Culross
16. Janet Coldstream in Crail
17. William Carlisle, provost of Paisley Dead
18. Thomas Grindlay of Leith Dead
19. Margaret Kidd, Brechin Dead [*illegible date*]
20. Dr John Gillies, historiographer of Scot.
21. Grace Lawrie, 16 Queens Street

Of these nominees there have only died since Whitsunday 1823 four, viz

4. James Clark, Dumfries
10. George Dunlop of McNairston
11. Robert Low of Clatts
17. William Carlisle, Paisley

which, keeping in mind that they were on an average [*blank*] years of age at that term seems sufficiently to demonstrate the care with which they have been selected. Owing to certain extraordinary expences [*sic*] of management at the outset the dividend paid hitherto have only been two in 1827 £1.5/-

1829      13/6

Now we may expect larger, and more rapidly increasing returns. My nominee is no. 16 Janet Coldstream, Crail. [*illegible date*]

### 27 December

William, his wife, and I went out to West Calder to spend Christmas as usual. The party there consisted merely of the family. My Father, Mrs Muckersy, my aunts Barbara and Isabella, who have been residing for some months there, and my brother John's little boy. At dinner we had Mr and Mrs Fleming and two of their sons with Dr Dick. The doctor proposes going to Paris for a few months for improvement in surgery, and I have arranged to meet him there if possible in June and visit Switzerland and the Rhine. Whether we make out the tour remains to be seen. A thousand circumstances may occur to prevent it.

## 1830

### 31 January

On Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> the actors had their triennial dinner which I was prevented by indisposition from attending. The Lord Provost (Allan) was in the chair and the Dean of faculty (Jeffrey) Patrick Robertson and Andrew Skene acted as croupiers. Everything seems to have been conducted with spirit and decorum though there was wanting the circumstance which gave such eclat to the meeting of 1827 – the avowal of the authorship of the Waverley Novels.

### 28 February

In a letter received from James, dated Hobart Town 13 September 1829 he writes that he has sold his farm of Wallace to a neighbouring proprietor Mr Anstey and purchased the estate of Greenhill consisting of 2500 acres which formerly belonged to Mr Reid from Edinburgh. This new purchase lies within six miles of John. Besides this inducement James mentions that another strong motive was his fear that he might not ultimately have been able to have got Blyths grant, a place lying in to Wallace and of which he had the charge for some years: and that if he had not his own original grant would have been from its limited extent of little value. The difference he pays for Greenhill is only £700 – £350 in two years and £350 in four years, the interest however being £15 per cent. But in return, he has 700 acres more than he had, with many improvements viz 800 acres fenced in, of which 166 are under the plough; with house, barn, stables, huts, yards and all complete. The place was sold in consequence of Mr Reid's bankruptcy. He says: "The Natives are still a little troublesome but active measures are now resorted to. They are put under military law and parties are in all directions after them. One party fell in with a mob of them last week and killed 16 and took a woman and child alive".<sup>[60]</sup>

A curious model of Paris is being exhibited here at present. It represents all the streets squares etc. of that city with the very individual houses in small figures of wood or pasteboard about an inch in height. The distinctness and accuracy of the representation is very remarkable, though the whole has of course very much the appearance of a toy. The space occupied is I should imagine about the size of an ordinary dining room. There accompanies this model another of Père la Chaise on a larger scale in point of extent.<sup>[61]</sup>

### 17 March

My Father has received from Bathgate an extract of a letter written by Dr Pearson, Van Diemens Land to his friends there of which following is part. "The Revd J MacKersy has rented a house just by us, across the river, till such time as his manse is finished.

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<sup>60</sup> Ongoing and escalating violent conflict between Aboriginals and European settlers had led the lieutenant-governor of Van Diemen's Land to declare martial law.

<sup>61</sup> The models were on display at 60 Princes Street. The exhibition also included a display of French prints and engravings. Admission cost 1 shilling.



Figure 8. John Liston as Paul Pry, 1825. Mackersy saw Liston perform this role at the Theatre Royal on 17 March 1830. (Victoria & Albert Museum)

He has this moment called. He has six boarders at present and will have more when his house is finished. His brother James has sold his original farm called Wallace, and purchased a larger one in the neighbourhood, 800 acres of which are enclosed, four miles from his brothers glebe and twelve from this. He has done and is still continuing to do very well.”

Mr Pearson mentions that he pays for a prisoner servant who holds a ticket of leave from Government,<sup>[62]</sup> a carpenter, £50 yearly and his board, butcher meat three times a day, rum, tobacco etc. He states the current prices at the time, 10 Sept 1829, as follows

Sheep 10/- to 20/- each	Oats 5/6 per bushel
Cattle £4 to £10	Hay £7 per ton
Horses £30 to £100	Eggs 2/6 per doz
Wheat 9/- per bushel	Butter and Cheese 2/6 per lb
Barley 5/6	Poultry 5/- per pair

<sup>62</sup> A form of parole, a ticket of leave allowed a convict to find work for himself before the end of his sentence provided that he remained in a specified area in the colony, reported regularly to local authorities and attended divine worship every Sunday, if possible.

I saw Liston the celebrated comedian take his final leave of the Edinburgh audience this evening. He appeared as Paul Pry, and Sappy.<sup>[63]</sup> In the former he is inimitable: imbued with the very essence of curiosity, meddling impertinence and absurdity, he seems to act without the consciousness of doing aught that is not quite natural and of course every look and act and word is merely the outbreking of the irresistible propensity and where he has nothing to say or has been fairly set down by his provoked neighbours, his jaws still go mumbling on, and every part of him from his brow to his back--de are still redolent of activity and impertinence. His mock dignity when his efforts to do good natured things are repulsed with contumely, his measured stride when ordered out of the house, his eager attempts to catch every thing where more than one denouement is going on at once were all given in the truest comic vein. He made a speech at the end which being a mixture of the burlesque of the actor with the serious business of a farewell was not very successful. An audience is on such occasions prepared to be somewhat sad, and are disappointed if the hero of the night be not somewhat serious.

### 21 April

Today I sold the estate of Balmadies to the late Sir David Auchterlony's trustees for £36000 an excellent sale.

### 24 April

A controversy has been going on in St Georges church between the protestants and catholics on the subject of the merits of their respective faiths. Captain Gordon of the Royal Navy is the champion of the former and Mr Smith S.S.C.<sup>[64]</sup> the champion of the latter.<sup>[65]</sup> They have already had two nights of it, each combatant being allowed three quarters of an hour at a time for his attack. On Monday they are to have another spell at it and whether the controversy may end even then remains to be seen. I heard about three hours of the harangues on each of the past nights, but on both the debate was kept up for more than four hours. The thing has originated in the formation of a society for opposing the progress of Catholicism which it seems is rather on the increase here. Mr Smith himself is a convert from the reformed faith but of long standing.

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<sup>63</sup> Characters from farces written by John Poole: *Paul Pry* (1828) and *Deaf as a Post* (1823). John Liston (c.1776-1846) was one of the leading comic actors of his day.

<sup>64</sup> Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland.

<sup>65</sup> James Edward Gordon (1789-1864) was the honorary secretary of the Reformation Society, a Scottish branch of which had been established in Edinburgh earlier in the month. The Society had invited members of the Catholic Church to attend a meeting at St George's where the Catholic and Protestant rules of faith would be compared. Only William Smith appeared to state the Catholic position.



Figure 9. St George's Church, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 1829.  
Mackersy attended debates held here in April 1830 between  
advocates of the Catholic and Protestant faiths.  
(*Modern Athens*)

### 27 April

The following case having occurred at whist I took a bet in favour of the first alternative, and, as we found the best players here to differ in opinion on the subject, we agreed to refer it to "Bells Life in London" who give weekly responses to queries from all quarters of the land.<sup>[66]</sup> In Sundays paper the question put, with the answer thereto, appeared as follows.

"Can a card played out of suit and resumed to save a revoke, be called once and again till played out; or, if once unsuccessfully called, is the penalty thereby exhausted, so that the adversary shall have no farther right to call the card?"

"The card may be called till played."

I accordingly gained the bet though I must confess the great weight of the Edinburgh authorities was against me.

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<sup>66</sup> *Bell's Life of London, and Sporting Chronicle* was a weekly sporting paper published between 1822 and 1886.

## 8 June

There was yesterday tried in the Jury Court an action of damages at the instance of David Paterson, accountant in Edinburgh, against Lieut Shaw, wine merchant in Leith, founded on an exposure made by the defender of the pursuer's having cheated at cards. Shaw had in August 1828 lost in Patersons house on one evening about £200; but having in January thereafter heard a report that Paterson was in the practice of cheating, he made inquiries which satisfied him of the fact, and then made a demand, through Paterson's brother, that the whole sums lost by him in Paterson's company, in all £300 should be repaid, or that he would instantly call a meeting of gentlemen and lay his proofs before them. The first alternative was taken, and the money repaid on a promise of secrecy. But too many had already heard of the business. The story began to circulate, till Paterson found it necessary to do something in vindication of his character. A meeting was called which, upon the evidence laid before it, approved of all that Shaw had done. Paterson then appealed to the Archers and Yeomanry,<sup>[67]</sup> of both which bodies he was a member, but they also decided against him, and he was expelled from the former and allowed to withdraw from the latter. They had however also charged Shaw with having circulated the report, (contrary to a promise made), between the first meeting with Paterson's brother and the payment of the money. Shaw printed a long statement in his defence and resorted to other measures some of them violent enough, such as challenging some of the leading Archers. The story got into the mouths of the public and Paterson was universally shunned and his business ruined. In order to make a last stand, or, as some say, to expose his old friends who had continued to associate with him after they knew or strongly suspected his false play, he raised the present action. The jury however, on an excellent charge from Lord Gillies, found for the defender.

The business altogether is certainly by no means creditable to a considerable number of our Edinburgh gentlemen moving in a highly respectable circle. Shrewd suspicions had long existed of Patersons fraudulent practices, so much so that some of his friends offered bets occasionally on his ante hand, (at brag), where he was dealer, against two or three bragging hands. Many of them also declined playing where he made one, or invariably threw up their hands where he dealt the cards. Yet they continued to associate with him and to visit him in his own house, they being frequently witnesses of his success against unsuspecting opponents. I had myself heard reports of his false play some months before Shaw discovered that they were in circulation, and having had occasion to go to Cupar with Henry Low, who was Shaws first adviser, he asked me, as if incidentally, whether I had heard of any thing concerning a brother in trust. I answered in the negative at first, but on his asking again, I run back in my hand to the vague report above alluded to and then stated, that I certainly had heard something but to which at the time given no credit. By little and little, and talking about and about it we found we were on the same scent, and he stated that the whole details would be public in a few days. This was immediately after the money had been

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<sup>67</sup> The Royal Company of Archers, and the Edinburgh Troop of Yeomanry.

reepaid [*sic*] and about the time of the first meeting which took place at Donald Hornes. Lord Gillies was very severe on Shaw for making the bargain of secrecy [*sic*] which he said was in his mind as bad as breaking the promise, if he did break it, which he had made.

### 16 June

I was today present, as second fiddle, at the marriage of my friend James Rose W.S. with Miss Susan Wight daughter of the late Lieut. Colonel Wight.

### 26 June

Miss Fanny Kemble, daughter of Charles Kemble, is here at present and took her benefit tonight as Eufrosia in the Grecian daughter.<sup>[68]</sup> Besides seeing her on that character I also witnessed her representation of Juliet; and I cannot help thinking she has been strangely over valued. Her gestures and attitudes are beautiful and often dignified: but she seems to me to be destitute of strong feeling or passion and to be also defective in the power of expressing what she feels. Her features want dignity of expression, and her efforts at strong effect almost lead to distortion. I think her finest touches are those where she delivers herself impressively, in as far as concerns intonation and gesture, without attempting the varying shades of wild emotion. Another thing, which one would not expect, is very remarkable in Miss Kemble: she pronounces ill. The e and o receive from her a sound quite unusual in an English mouth and truly not defensible on any principle or authority. Appraach, Gaad, caan, rejeact etc. These are the sounds which constantly offend ones ear.

At the end of the play tonight Mr Kemble was loudly called for. He made the speech usual on the last night of the season, which this was, in room of Mr Murray for whose absence for some time he apologised. Bad health, and a necessity of a total change of habit and relaxation from business, were, he said, the cause of that absence. But he was now convalescent and was employing his first returning energies in preparing for renewal exertions under the new patent. It thus appears that there is now a certainty of Murray remaining here.

### 27 June

By an express of the Sun newspaper from London, we, early this forenoon, had intelligence of the death of George IV,<sup>[69]</sup> our excellent King who has been for two or three months past beyond all hope of recovery. One feeling only exists in the country, of grief for the loss of so patriotic a King mingled with some little apprehension that his loss may not be fully supplied. Ever since the death of Queen Caroline, who was a stumbling block between the people and their sovereign, George IV has had an uninterrupted flow of popularity. His dignified and courteous bearing,

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<sup>68</sup> *The Grecian Daughter* (1772), a tragedy by Arthur Murphy.

<sup>69</sup> George IV, king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and king of Hanover, had died at Windsor Castle on 26 June.



Figure 10. King George IV being proclaimed in Edinburgh, 3 February 1820.  
 The scene would have been similar for the proclamation of William, when  
 Mackersy was among the crowd on the balustrade atop the arcade.  
 (Capital Collections)

his ready sympathy with the distresses of his subjects, his steadiness in adhering to men and measures in whom the nation had confidence, his visits to Ireland and Scotland, and finally his yielding to the pressing call for Catholic emancipation, these and many other excellent qualities and measures rendered him deservedly beloved. Even where the prudence of the measures was denied, the party opposed to them separated between the King and his Ministers, giving to him the good intention and to them the bad advice. How different was the feeling towards him in London on two different occasions when I happened to be there. The first was in 1814 immediately after the peace when I actually was a witness to the Regent being hissed on his way to prorogue Parliament. The other was at the time of the coronation, and then though the splendour and excitement of the scene tended to keep the people quiet, there were abundant marks of the Kings unpopularity. I saw the Queen in the English Opera, and the deafening shouts of applause with which she was greeted, were unequivocal expressions of displeasure at the treatment which she had experienced on her trial, and which was to be continued by her inclusion [*i.e.* exclusion] from the coronation.

## 29 June

King William IV was proclaimed with the usual ceremonies. I got upon the bartisan of the Royal Exchange – where there was a good view of the crowd. The day was fine, and the multitudes of people who crowded the street and filled every window formed the most interesting part of the sight. By some stupid oversight in London the official announcement did not arrive here till last night in place of the night before, and great fears were entertained that it might not have arrived even then.

**4 July**

My brother William's lady was this day safely delivered of twin sons. She was confined at the house of her mother in Inverkeithing.

**5 July**

The Theatre Royal is shut at present but we have the Caledonian Theatre under the management of Bass with an excellent Operatic Company. Last Saturday I saw the Beggars Opera, and tonight Artaxerxes,<sup>[70]</sup> the parts of Polly and Mander excellently supported by Miss Byfield and then of Macheath and Arbaces by G. Horncastle.

**9 August**

After a long interval we have letters from van Diemens Land the last dated 28 February. John is doing great things: has already eight boarders at 40 guineas per annum making his income inclusive of his stipend more than £500 a year. His house is advancing, amidst many difficulties arising from want of funds in the people but is not yet completed. He has got a grant of only 640 acres which he considered so inadequate that he petitioned the Governor on the subject. His Excellency however adhered to the grant given. There has also been a communication between John and Mr McArthur the clergyman at Hobart Town and the Governor with regard to the right of marrying; but the business is not yet settled. James is liking his new purchase well has reaped the first crop and proposes to lay up his wheat in expectation of a rise in the price which has uniformly taken place every third year. Unfortunately he has lost his barn and potatoe [*sic*] and hen houses by an accidental fire together with the clip of wool which was in one of the houses.

**20 August**

Today I attended a meeting of the inhabitants for the purposing of entering into resolutions approbative of the spirit and moderation of the late proceedings in Paris by which Charles X has been sent about his business and the Duke of Orleans declared King under the constitutional charter.<sup>[71]</sup> The Lord Provost was in the chair. Mr Jeffrey opened the business in a long excellent though somewhat wordy speech; and was followed by Messrs Allan, Cockburn, Nairne, McIntosh, Bell, McLagan, Simpson Murray and Ritchie. As the last mentioned rose to second the vote of thanks to the chairman, there was a loud call for Mr Hume who was present. This he obeyed after a pause and gave us a small touch of his peculiar notions,<sup>[72]</sup> keeping however to Reform in the general, which went very well down as every one could interpret the

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<sup>70</sup> *Artaxerxes* (1762), an opera composed by Thomas Arne.

<sup>71</sup> The meeting was held in Mr Steventon's Room, Edinburgh. Around a thousand people were estimated to have attended. See 'Public meeting: valour, moderation, and the heroism of the French', *The Scotsman*, 21 August 1830, for a lengthy report on the proceedings.

<sup>72</sup> Joseph Hume (1777-1855) was a Radical MP who supported male suffrage and the secret ballot, which probably accounts for Mackersy's comments about his 'peculiar notions'.

word in his own way. Some little difference of opinion exists as to the propriety of such meetings, the revolution being too recently over to give any security for lasting benefit therefrom, our knowledge of the secret causes which produced it and the state of parties in France being too imperfect to enable us to judge of the real motives on account of which it was brought about, and there having been moreover some irregularity in excluding the direct heirs and resorting to a collateral branch of the Bourbons. But the meeting did not assemble to give any opinion of future measures which may be good or bad as time alone can shew. It met to express satisfaction at the determination with which the Parisiens in the face of the army resisted decreets notoriously contrary to the charter and hostile to liberty; at the moderation with which they made use of their victory; at their prudence in resorting to the forms of a regulated monarchy under one of the ancient family instead of trying experiments formerly so ruinous in their consequences. If this firmness moderation and prudence be subsequently laid aside for worse depositions the meeting do not thereby stultify themselves. And surely if the opinion of the English Nation is to have any weight in regulating that of the French, it must do good to shew that our eyes are on them, and that it is in their proceedings we most admire. Besides, it is well to shew to the Continental powers that there is no likelihood of Great Britain giving any countenance to their interference with the affairs of France. And this cannot be more surely done than by exhibiting a universality of feeling in the people of this country which our own Government even, were they so disposed, could not resist.

### **31 August**

My old friend George Callender died on the 26<sup>th</sup> and was buried today in the West Church Yard. He had been long in very bad health but had rallied considerably in spring and his last illness was more rapid than was at all apprehended.

### **30 September**

I returned today from a tour to Paris and home through South Wales and by Dublin, for an account of which see Journal.

### **October**

Accounts have appeared in the newspapers of the sudden death of my old friend Thomas Kinnear,<sup>[73]</sup> whom I saw a few weeks ago in London, crossed with to Dieppe and met with several times in Paris. He was found dead in his bed to which he had gone in good health and the rumours at first were of the most afflicting kind, attributing his death to his own hand and assigning as the cause the recently great and rapid depression in stocks in which, it was said, he had been speculating largely. The first day of the coroners inquest did not go to set at rest these surmises, as it appeared

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas Kinnear (1796-1830) was a director of the private bank T. Kinnear and Sons, Edinburgh, although by this time he had established himself as a merchant in London, where he died on 20 October at his house in Cornwall Terrace.

from the evidence of his servant that Mr Kinnear had requested not to be called at the usual hour in the morning though he retired early to his room, that he had been heard walking overhead about 12, and had been found by the servant in the dining room the window of which he had previously had let down. These circumstances were suspicious and a medical man, examined, gave it as his opinion that the body must be opened in order to ascertain the cause of death. This was strenuously opposed by a solicitor employed by Mr K's friends, but was insisted on by the jury and authorised by the coroner. The report of five medical men as subsequently given in stating that the principal appearance was a quantity of blood both in the lungs and stomach, mixed in the latter with food, and that death had been caused by a rupture of a blood vessel. One of them also stated verbally that no poisonous ingredient had been detected in the stomach; and that Mr K. had in fact died of the same disease with his late Majesty King George IV. There was a kind of run on the house here, but as it was soon understood that it had no connection with the house recently established in London, and that the latter, besides, was completely solvent the alarm seems to have been allayed. Sir Wm Forbes & Co,<sup>[74]</sup> it is said, have come forward to assist the company here, if necessary, to a very large amount.

### 13 November

I have been all this week at Balmadies in Forfar-shire, at a roup of the stock and furniture belonging to Mr Stephens the bankrupt (see 7 July 1829). The scene was a curious one, for the first time. The country had turned out far and near, as the stock and implements of husbandry were of the finest description, and on the first day when they were sold, between 400 and 500 were dined at the expence [*sic*] of the exposer. This is the invariable practice there and accordingly I had employed a vintner in Brechin to provide the necessary entertainment. Tables were set out in the granary: and in its court fires were kindled on which were placed large tin vessels as well filled, if not so savoury, as those at the wedding of Carnach. Party after party filled the granary in succession, and the carousing the greater part of which, *i.e.* the liquor, was at the expence of the parties, was carried late into the night. The sale itself lasted till after dark, and the horses were sold without any light to discover there [*sic*] points and defects. They were well sold too, one cart horse bringing £45 and another the larger price of £57. Next day was for the furniture, but it proved very rainy and the crowd was not so great. As all was confusion within doors we breakfasted in a tent: and we afterwards found that in the course of the evening the wind increased to a gale the whole awning was actually carried off by it to the amusement of the inmates. The sale like the former was also continued till night and by next day at 2 o'clock very little furniture of any description remained in the house. It was melancholy to witness the total dispersion of so comfortable and in some respects elegant an establishment, preliminary to the whole of the fine estate going into the hands of a stranger. The proprietor, and indeed almost the creator of the property as then improved, present all

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<sup>74</sup> A private bank, the full title of which was Sir William Forbes, J. Hunter & Co.

the while actively assisting in the dismemberment and dilapidation. We were alarmed with direful reports of a fresh commotion in London, the city on fire, postponement of the Kings visit to the city, fall of stocks [*interlined*: 3 per cent] to 74 etc. most of which proved on our return to Dundee to have been very much exaggerated.

### 25 November

The new Ministry under the premiership of Earl Grey now fairly installed: Brougham Lord Chancellor. A total overturn here also: the Lord Advocate (Rae) and Solicitor General (Hope) to be succeeded it is said by Jeffrey and Cockburn. At the commencement of the session the Lord President had a good humoured joke on seeing the Dean leaping over the bar from the court side. He trusted he said that his learned friend would soon leap over the bar in another direction meaning of course that he would be raised to the bench. Little did he dream that he and Cockburn would indeed take the leap but that it would be over the head and into the place of his own son, for whom also a small leap, but in the wrong direction, would be necessary. It is said however that Jeffrey will resign the office of Dean of Faculty with a view to its being filled by Mr Hope. This would be doing the handsome thing, and no more than might be expected as the latter waived his claim to the office lost in favour of Sir James Moncrieff and Mr Jeffrey. I have today at Mr Mansons table, taken a bet with James Rose of two pounds to one that the present Ministry will be in power for one year after the date of their late accession. I give the odds that they will continue so long.

### 26 November

I was present at the opening of the Theatre under the new patent on the [*blank*].<sup>[75]</sup> It has been entirely re-modelled, the pit enlarged; the boxes diminished in size but heightened in the roof and the second row carried quite round the house; the two shilling gallery removed altogether and the one shilling gallery brought forward and lowered. The prices are also altered. Lower boxes 4/- upper 3/- pit 2/6 gallery 1/- : half price 2/6 respectively. Many new performers. The performances, The Honeymoon etc.

### 23 December

William's youngest child, Robert Walker, died this morning cut off by a sudden fit of croup or a disease like croup.

A letter has arrived from John which brings favourable intelligence of both him and James. He has made a bargain with his people by which he lays out £150 at present in the manse to be repaid in ten years otherwise the house to become his own: and in the meantime he gets 10 percent for his advance. This is rendered necessary by the circumstances of the people which are far from being flourishing. He is also to be allowed for meliorations. At present he continues to reside at Gaddesden where he

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<sup>75</sup> The Theatre Royal had re-opened on 17 November.

has nine boarders at forty guineas. He is constantly employed and authorises us to procure a tutor for him. James is well pleased with his new purchases and if John and he are spared will find no difficulty in paying off the instalments of the price.

**27 December**

At West Calder on Christmas day as usual but William was not there in consequence of his child's death. My aunts are at there this winter. The party consisted of Mr and Mrs Fleming and two young ladies Dr Dick and Mr Laing my Father's assistant.

## 21 January

About a month ago I received a letter from Mr Martin, minister of Kirkcaldy, informing me that a friend of Mr Johnston, formerly tutor with my Father, had acquired right to the patronage of West Calder by purchasing an adjudication thereof at the instance of one of the creditors of Grindlay the present patron, and that he was disposed to give a presentation in favour of Mr J provided my Father would consent that he should be his assistant and successor. I went out to West Calder accordingly, and put Mr Martin's letter into my Father's hand in presence of Mrs Mackersy, mentioning generally the purport of it. He read it carefully and at once said that he thought the plan would do very well. Mrs M. also expressed her approbation of it though not without a softening at heart so natural in such circumstances. I wrote immediately to Mr Martin of my Father's consent; and Mr Drysdale the purchaser of the adjudication waited upon me shortly after to inform me that a crown charter was in the course of being expedited<sup>[76]</sup> which he was advised would give him a complete right to present to the charge exactly as the patron himself could have done. After the charter was obtained Mr Drysdale and his agent went out to West Calder, when he was infeft in the patronage, and having carried with them a presentation in favour of Mr Johnston, and having learned from my Father that a meeting of Presbytery was to be held next day, they went round by Ecclesmachan and left the papers with Mr Liston the Presbytery Clerk. The Presbytery at their meeting next day resolved by a majority to delay proceeding for a short time, and appointed a pro re nata meeting<sup>[77]</sup> to consider the matter. In the interval they consulted the Procurator for the church who advised them that the right in Mr Drysdale was undoubted; but, somewhat inconsistently, recommended notice to be given to the (former) patron Mr Grindlay and to the Adjudging Creditor. The Presbytery did not follow out the suggestion, but they agreed, by a majority, to delay the consideration of the matter till next meeting, it being the understanding that if a bond for £50 in favour of Mr Johnson were then laid on the table they would proceed to sustain the presentation and appoint trials. The only difficulty now relates to the bond. My Father cannot afford to give more than £20 a year from his limited income and it is very doubtful if the heritors and people will come forward to make up the difference. A meeting of heritors is called for Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> February to consider inter alia of this business at which I shall probably attend. The patronage was purchased by Mr Grindlay some years ago, from Lord Lauderdale for £1500 for the purpose of presenting a relative to the charge, a man of very indifferent character and who is now actually before the Presbytery on serious charges of immoral conduct. The debt paid up by Mr Drysdale is about £300 only, so that he will do a great favour to Mr Johnston at a very cheap rate, as the right of patronage even after this exercise of it on behalf of a so young man, is still worth more than the purchase money.

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<sup>76</sup> In Scots law, to issue a document officially.

<sup>77</sup> A meeting that has been arranged between regular meetings in order to address a particular piece of business that has arisen unexpectedly.

### 23 February

My brother attended the Presbytery of Linlithgow yesterday, on behalf of Mr Drysdale and Mr Johnston. He presented a bond for £50 subscribed by my Father and Mr D.; but Mr Grindlay, the patron, appeared and objected to the presentation. Parties were accordingly heard, after which it was moved by Mr Fleming that the Presbytery should sustain the presentation and proceed to carry it into effect. This was met by a counter motion of Mr Lister for delay; but on a vote there were seven to four in favour of the first whereon Mr Grindlay protested, and appealed to the Synod. There the matter rests for the present.

The way in which the bond was arranged was this. At the meeting of heritors called to consider of a provision for Mr Johnston, Mr Mowbray appeared with proxies from some of the leading heritors and carried every thing his own way, of course, against the wishes of my Father and any subscription. The matter, however, was then taken up by the people and a considerable sum [*illegible*] by them to be given. My Father put down his name for £20. William and I for £5 between us and Mrs Mary Smellie Mr J's sister in law for £5. There was then no danger of the subscription falling much short of the £50 and Mr Drysdale, who it must be stated was equally ready to have subscribed when there was no movement by the people, was as anxious as my Father that the bond should be signed.

### 5 March

We are now all agitation in consequence of the discussion of the ministerial plan of Reform introduced into the House of Commons on Tuesday by Lord John Russell. Already has the discussion lasted three days and it has been again adjourned. By the measure proposed a most complete change is made both in the representation and the represented. Among other things, 60 English burghs are to be disfranchised, 47 deprived of one member each, and new members given to places without representatives, to certain of the large counties and to London. In Scotland we get 5 new members in all, after various alterations; and Ireland gets 3 new members. But upon the whole the new House of Commons is intended to have fewer members than the last by 62. The changes on the right of voting is if anything still more tampered with. In short the plan has gone beyond the hopes of the most sanguine reformers, and the fears of the firmest advocates for the things that be; or perhaps their hopes too for in the very excess of the measure they see the best chance of defeating it. Altogether the scheme seems not a reforming but a revolutionary one. Such a House of Commons could not work for many years along with the House of Lords and the Kingly Branch of the Constitution. It is introduced at a time when on all hands it is admitted that the popular voice is more powerful than it ever was, in controlling abuses, exposing secret influence, checking inordinate expenditure, and in one word supporting the democratic part of our mixed Government. It is based upon a sweeping destruction of existing rights and interests without giving any

compensation. It would be destructive of that wholesome influence which the Executive must have in the House of Commons, and of that interweaving of the interests and feelings of the two Houses of Parliament which can alone prevent perpetual clashing and discord. It would make too close and quick a sympathy between the electors and the elected, destructive of calm and useful legislation. It would diffuse still wider the corruption and excesses already too much experienced in election controls. And above all it would by no means satisfy the great body of the people who the nearer the right of suffrage came to themselves would be but the more displeased that it was not made to reach them. The measure would thus merely form a stepping stone to universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments and all the evils attendant thereon. But I cannot think the measure can properly pass even the House of Commons. The Opposition are making a powerful stand and the speeches of Mr Barons Wall, Sir Charles Wetherall, Mr Baron and Sir Robert Peel must tell upon the thinking part of the community. One thing is strange however, while the Reformers are stirring Heaven and Earth for support to their views the other Party are totally supine: hardly a single petition having been presented to Parliament in support of the Constitution now so rudely assailed. In England the rage for reform seems to be stronger than here. By tonight's paper I observe that the Common Council of London have declared unanimously in favour of the Government measure.

### **17 March**

The Anti-reformers are beginning to stir. A meeting which has been designated a "hole and corner one" was got up a few days ago and a petition approved of by them lies at present for signature. I put my name to it today.

### **19 March**

A meeting of the Grand Lodge was held to day for the election of a secretary in the room of the late Mr Laurie.<sup>[78]</sup> There were three candidates Brothers Laurie, son of the deceased, Birrell and Miller. And after a stormy discussion the first mentioned Brother was elected by a great majority. I supported Birrell speech and vote – having been canvassed in his favour by a particular friend.

### **5 April**

We were alarmed by a letter from Mrs Muckersy mentioned that my Father had been complaining a good deal, that his speech had been a little affected and that Dr Dick had thought it necessary to take some blood from him. William and I went out yesterday but were glad to find him nearly in his usual state of health.

I took the opportunity of carrying with me for my aunts' perusal the heads of an agreement for the final settlement of the "family affairs" viz. the division of the rents

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<sup>78</sup> The Grand Lodge of Freemasons was located in what had been, and is now again, St Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street.

of Kinkel etc. taken in connection with the fact of their long residence there, and a multitude of other circumstances. Andrew Ferrier,<sup>[79]</sup> John MacKersy and I had a meeting on the subject last week, and in half an hours conversation came to a sort of general understanding which I afterwards threw into writing. The good ladies demur to one point in it, but I have no doubt will come in.

### 10 April

I yesterday saw Young take leave of the Edinburgh audience.<sup>[80]</sup> He played Hamlet to an overflowing house with even more than his wonted spirit. At the close of the tragedy he came in front of the curtain and made his farewell speech, in terms exhibiting at once perfect frankness, a due sense of what was due to his own character and fame and withal real modesty. He alluded to the early encouragement he had received from the Edinburgh public 31 years ago and in explaining the reason for his leaving the stage while yet in the full enjoyment of his faculties, he mentioned that by care and prudence he had reached a moderate competence, and thought it better to quit the scene at 54 when he might still devote himself to some other pursuit, than at 64, when it would be too late to do so.

### 30 April

An active canvas is going on at present for the Office of Procurator for the Church [left] vacant by the sudden death of Sir John Connell. There are ten candidates Messrs Bell, Connell, Dunlop, Dickson, Grant, More, Pyper, Tawse and Whigham [*sic*].<sup>[81]</sup> My Father is a member of Assembly but would have resigned in favour of one of his brethren who would pledge himself to vote for Mr Tawse. This, however, he communicated into palpable a manner on the eve of the day of election, and the gentleman who wished to be returned refused to give the pledge.

### 9 May

On Thursday morning (the 5<sup>th</sup>) I went to Cupar to attend a meeting of Ebenezer Anderson's creditors and proceeded thence to Arbroath where I had business in H. Stephen's sequestration. On Friday morning I visited the remarkable coast north from Arbroath, the scene of the *Antiquary*.<sup>[82]</sup> With a little exaggeration and embellishment it is a fitting representation of the fine description in the novel. The day was fine but intensely cold the ice being of considerable thickness.

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<sup>79</sup> Probably Mackersy's cousin the Reverend Andrew Ferrier (c.1796-1867).

<sup>80</sup> The celebrated English actor Charles Mayne Young (1777-1856). His final performance came a year later, at Covent Garden, London, on 30 May 1832, when he also played Hamlet.

<sup>81</sup> The Procurator to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is the principal legal advisor to the General Assembly. Robert Bell was the successful candidate in 1830.

<sup>82</sup> Walter Scott had based the setting for his novel *The Antiquary* (1816) on Arbroath and its environs.

In the evening I proceeded to Perth where all were on tiptoe in expectation of the visit from Lord Advocate Jeffrey in the morrow. At the theatre in the evening where some tolerable singing engrafted on very sorry representations of Guy Mannering and Charles II, killed a couple of hours better than yawning at the inn or stravaiging<sup>[83]</sup> along the streets.

Next morning per coach to Abbey-Ruthven and across the country to Kinkel calling on Mr Morison in passing. Kinkel is greatly improved since I saw it in every thing but the inhabitants – a very little parson and his wife in place of my aunts the natural denizens. After visiting the burying place of my Grand-father and Grand-mother I walked across the country to Blackford where I dined and in the evening to Dunblane. Next day was Sunday and a very bright though cold one. Before breakfast to the well a pleasant walk along to the banks of “Allan Water”:<sup>[84]</sup> The place itself bleak and rude, a wooden house without ornament or comfort of any kind, and no one there to open the fountain to the invalid. However when about to seek some neighbouring house for information I espied a youth cross the common who proved to be the guardian of the spring. To quicken the genius of the fountain I poured into the sparkling glass an offering which I had purchased from an apothecaries fair daughter at Dumblane [*sic*]. The offering was accepted of and the prayer answered long before I could reach the temple of a certain goddess, the tutelar deity of the Nymph of Dumblane Waters. A substantial breakfast followed and while lounging over Blackwoods Magazine, too late for church, a fellow traveller at Perth came in.

Walked to Stirling in the evening where I dined, the said traveller being also there. A walk round the castle and half an hour of an orator begging for the intension of religious education in the Highlands and Islands closed the day. On Monday to Edinburgh by the mail through various groups congregated around handbills bearing at top the word “Reform”; Wednesday being the day of the county election where the contest runs close between Admiral Fleming and Ramsay of Barnton.<sup>[85]</sup>

How many antiquities are scattered up and down our country! In the course of this little tour, for example, besides some of lesser note we have the abbey at Aberbrothock, the numerous remains at Perth and Stirling, the Roman camp at Ardoch, the cathedral at Dumblane, the fields at Bannockburn, and Falkirk, and Shireff-Muir and the palace of Linlithgow.

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<sup>83</sup> Scots for roaming or wandering idly about in an aimless casual manner.

<sup>84</sup> The Allan Water was the subject of a number of songs, and Mackersy might be referring here to the traditional ballad that was printed in the *Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803), to Robert Burns’ version, ‘By Allan stream I chanc’d to rove’ (1793), or to the song ‘On the banks of Allan Water’ by G. M. Lewis (1775–1818).

<sup>85</sup> William Ramsay of Barnton (1809–1850), the Tory candidate, was victorious and served as MP for Stirlingshire from May 1831 to December 1832.



Figure 11. Dunblane Cathedral, 1821.  
Mackersy visited here during a business trip in May 1831.  
(National Galleries of Scotland)

The case of Mr Johnston proposed as assistant and successor to my Father came in before the Synod on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Solicitor General Cockburn appeared for the patron, Mr Grindlay; my friend Charles Neaves, for the presentee and Mr Drysdale the purchaser of the adjudication. The simple ground taken by the solicitor was, that the case was not one of which a Church court could judge being entirely a question of law; that Mr Grindlay had accordingly prepared a summons which would forthwith be called in court, and that all he asked was delay for a short period. On the other side it was contended that the presentation was good proceeding upon a right bearing *en facie* to be undoubted, and not yet questioned in any manner though abundant opportunity had been afforded. The Synod on the motion of Dr Inglis unanimously agreed to reverse the sentence of the Presbytery and ordain them to give reasonable intimation to Mr Grindlay before proceeding further, that he might carry the case into a civil court if so advised. This sentence was principally founded on the disregard which the Presbytery had shewn of the procurators recommendation that due notice should be given to Grindlay.

On our way home from the Synod much rioting in the streets, kept in check by dragoons yeomanry and constables high and special, the first fruits of reform. It was the election day of a member for the city when Lord Advocate Jeffrey was pitted against Mr R. Dundas a scion of the Melville Family.<sup>[86]</sup> The latter was returned by a

<sup>86</sup> Francis Jeffrey (1773-1850), Lord Advocate, and Robert Adam Dundas (1804-1877). Dundas, the Tory, anti-Reform candidate, was victorious. See 'Scenes at the election', *The Scotsman*, 4 May 1831, for a full report of the day's events.

small majority the mob at the Cross<sup>[87]</sup> uproarious. The little lord had however to be drawn home by the bipeds which proved a diversion in more senses than one. He looked wondrously grave as he came up the little mound along with Gibson Craig on his chaise and four-score. When he reached home the crowd in front of his house, among whom I made one, was numerous and respectable and he gave us a speech as short as himself from the balcony, recommending quietness and home.<sup>[88]</sup> The scene shortly after changed to the North Bridge and Leith Street along which the Chief Magistrate<sup>[89]</sup> was seen manfully threading his way on foot through the rabble. They tried, it is said, to throw him over the Bridge; but, at all events when he got past the Terrace they compelled him to take refuge in a shop and were only dispersed by a fierce attack of the police aided by the coolness of the dragoons. At night there were many broken heads and bruises but no lives lost.

#### 4 June

We have received very pleasant letters from James, the latest of date 2 January last. In his letter of 15 August 1830 to my Father he states his circumstances when he left Wallace as follows

Price of Wallace from Mr Anstey	£550
cash on hand	50
Sheep	800
Cattle, head of	150
Horses - viz Mare 2 fillies and Colt	4
Pigs	12
Wheat, bundles of	80

He is much pleased with Greenhill, the climate and situation of which is vastly superior to Wallace. As an example of this he mentions that last winter, while snow lay on the ground at the latter for days, they had at the former nothing more than a slight frost through the night. When he went there he got two practical farmers to value his improvements at Wallace, and applied a second time for a grant. He was again called before the Land Board and (Government having refused his first application for an additional grant in respect of these) and applied a second time for a grant. He was again called before the Land Board and some time after had intimation given him that he had been allowed 1000 acres.

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<sup>87</sup> *i.e.* at the site of the old mercat cross in the High Street, where proclamations were traditionally made.

<sup>88</sup> The town residence of Francis Jeffrey was in Moray Place. The speech he gave from the balcony was printed in the aforementioned report in *The Scotsman*.

<sup>89</sup> The Lord Provost, William Allan (1788-1868). As Mackersy suggests, he found himself the focus of the mob's anger and was indeed threatened with being thrown off North Bridge.

He mentions that John had had a daughter some months before August 1830 and in his last letter he says that John has now got into his new house about 6 miles from them; and that he had taken his wife and three little ones to church the preceding Sunday, dining with John and returning in the evening.

### **21 June**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> I received a letter from Mrs Muckersy mentioning that my Father had been taken seriously ill on the preceding day. William and I immediately went out and found him confined to bed, the inflammation in the bowels, which was the complaint, relieved by copious bleedings, but in a state of great weakness. There was also an obstruction in the bowels which the medicines administered were unable to remove. He languished without much pain till Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 3 o'clock when he closed his active and useful life in his 74<sup>th</sup> year. He was conscious almost to the last and died very peacefully. From the time I went out he was too weak for much conversation. But during his former illness when seriously apprehensive of the result he told me that his mind was perfectly made up on the subject, and that he placed the fullest reliances on the great promises of the Gospel. His funeral took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> when the principal mourners besides William and myself were Andrew Ferrier, John Mackersy, John Tawse, John Bonar, Andrew Tawse, Walter Cook, William Wallace and Henry Hill. Mr Robertson of Livingston and Mr Fleming of West Calder gave suitable prayers. And on the Sunday following Mr Mitchell of Whitburn and Mr Laing my Father's assistant preached. I had previously applied to Dr Simmers and Mr Martin to preach the funeral sermon, but as particular engagements prevented them I left the appointment to the Presbytery.

My Father has appointed Mr Walter Cook and me his executors. I have asked Mrs Muckersey to reside with me and she is to consult her relatives and give me an answer. I was glad to find that she herself seemed highly pleased with the prospect. My Father has owed to her increasing tenderness and attention much of the comfort of his declining years.

My Father was born on the 25 day of August 1757 and was settled as minister of West Calder [*blank*] 1794.

### **13 September**

Returned home from a tour to London, through Holland, up the Rhine to Frankfurt, and back by Belgium to London – for the particulars of which see Journal.

### **16 September**

Went out to West Calder and brought in Mrs Muckersy who goes to St Andrews for a month and then comes to reside with me.

**28 September**

The sale of the furniture at West Calder takes place today.

**2 November**

Mrs Muckersey who came over from Fife some days ago took up her residence with me today. And my brother John's little boy is to be with us.

**22 November**

The Cholera Mortus has within these few weeks almost superseded the question of reform in point of interest; having appeared in rather an unequivocal form at Sunderland. The doctors differ as usual some, indeed a majority of the Sunderland faculty, alleging that it is not the Oriental cholera but a modification of the European. The people, however, died in the meantime either of the cholera or the doctors; Government has taken the alarm. Boards of health are established in all the considerable towns: The French have interdicted all vessels coming from the [?west] of a certain line on the English Coast and in short we acted and are acted against as if the real disease were amongst us. A very short time will probably show.

**24 November**

Today letters addressed to my Father and Mrs Muckersey have arrived from James. He informs us of the continued prosperity of John and himself. The former got an addition to his family on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June last in the person of a boy whom he names Lindsay. He has ten boarders and has got his house in tolerably good order; but his church still remains unbuilt, and he preaches in his parlour. James still talks of paying us a visit but probably when he hears of my Father's death his intention may change.

**25 November**

I observed the statue of King George the IV being hoisted up today to be placed on its plain but handsome pedestal. It is still covered; and it may be the additional size thus given which seems in looking at it from North Hanover Street to make the pedestal appear somewhat narrow for the weight.<sup>[90]</sup>

**28 November**

Today I attended a meeting of the Anti-reformers called on the requisition of nearly three hundred inhabitants of Edinburgh of whom I was one. An intention having been formed by some of the lower grade of Reformers to pack the meeting arrangements were made to prevent those unhandsome proceedings. And by giving tickets to the requisitionists and allowing them to bring their friends along with them to the back entrance into the Assembly rooms, the scheme was easily defeated. A few of the

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<sup>90</sup> Two large beams, set triangle-wise and standing higher than the surrounding buildings, had been erected over the plinth in order to hoist the statue into place. It was unveiled on 26 November.

opponents got in and attempted some interruption but their number was too insignificant. The greater mass of their friends assembled in the outside and were addressed by Mr Aytoun, advocate, who proposed counter resolutions to those within. The Anti Reform meeting was crowded, respectable and enthusiastic. The principal speakers were Professor Wilson, Sir George Clark, Mr McNeil, Mr Adam Anderson, Mr David Milne, Mr Cheape and Mr R. Dundas the City Member. The business commenced at 1 o'clock and lasted till near 5.<sup>[91]</sup>

### 3 December

We despatched a box to my brothers in Van Diemens Land, containing my Father's pulpit gown and some of his other things in particular his manuscripts for John: his watch to James: newspapers, letters etc. They go by the Ann Jameson from Leith, which sails the beginning of the week.<sup>[92]</sup>

### 10 December

William's wife presented him this morning with a son. They were to have been with us in the evening, but this event broke up the party though William himself came.

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<sup>91</sup> The anti-Reform meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms. The original notice for the meeting, to which Mackersy put his name, was printed in *The Scotsman*, 26 November 1831. A selection of hostile reports from various newspapers was printed in *The Scotsman*, 3 December 1831. For the pro-Reform counter meeting, which was held on the street outside the Assembly Rooms, see 'Edinburgh Public Meeting', *The Scotsman*, 30 November 1831.

<sup>92</sup> Mackersy added the following note to the entry: 'N. sailed the 7<sup>th</sup>'.

## 1832

### 8 January

x x x x x x

### 17 January

Received a letter from John addressed to my Father. His little boy my namesake died a few weeks after his birth of dysentery [*sic*]. In other respects James' family and his own are well and prosperous. James has more than 1200 acres enclosed and more land actually under the plough than there was of arable land in Wallace. His last crop yielded him between 4000 and 5000 bushels of grain which he is keeping for a rise of the market. Meanwhile he is paying the interest of the money borrowed to purchase Greenhill with great ease and has every prospect of being able without difficulty to discharge the principal when due. John again narrates the bargain with the people about the manse. He took the house as it stood, the people giving him security over the church land for the farther sum estimated as necessary to finish it in their way, but to be advanced by him, being £150, with interest at 10 percent. And they farther bound themselves to pay him for all improvements at the end of 10 years, in addition to the dwelling house, at the estimated value of these at the time. The people however reserved 10 acres free of mortgage on which to build the church and burying ground. This agreement was made at the end of 1829, and operations soon after commenced, but such is the difficulty of obtaining efficient workmen in the colony and of making them stick to their work that it was the beginning of November 1830 before John got into the manse, and even then there was no plaster on the walls, no ceiling to the rooms and the floors of loose boards. Since then they have been adding to the accommodations with the prospect of soon possessing a house excellently adapted for his purposes and surpassed by few in the colony as a comfortable, substantial and even elegant dwelling. He adds that since beginning this letter he has built a kitchen and washing house outside but attached to the house, also a schoolroom and got his principal garden ready for being enclosed.

### 18 January

I have today had a letter from Mr Hope the tutor sent out to John dated at the Cape and enclosing the copy of a protest taken by him and four other passengers against the captain of the *Brenda*,<sup>[93]</sup> in which they have refused to travel further. They complain of the badness of the provisions, and the scantiness of water on which they were limited to five pints a day during the greater part of the voyage and to four pints for the last three or four weeks. That they first just had one glass and one cup each, but shortly after they were obliged to make use of old tin pots. That the steward was often intoxicated and unfit for duty. The passengers have taken out their passage in the

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<sup>93</sup> Built in 1827, the brig *Brenda* sailed between Britain and Van Diemen's Land. Mr Hope's low opinion of the captain appears to have been shared by the crew, who on the next voyage arrived at Launceston in a near-mutinuous state. The *Brenda* subsequently ran aground off Swan Island. It was rumoured that the captain was drunk and the crew insubordinate at the time.

barque Leda Capt. Robb, Hope paying £40 for his passage. I have intimated to Mr Walkinshaw that I shall not be liable for the bill drawn by me or the letter of guarantee given for the additional passage money.

### 19 January

William's little boy christened today and named for me; a very great compliment as its own father and uncle who have the same name are thus passed over. It is a very fine child.

### 20 January

Attended the first meeting of the Ministers' Sons' Club. Mr Nairne in the chair: Sir George Balingall and Mr Paul croupiers. The object to promote good fellowship and be of service to their younger brethren.

### 27 January

The cholera which advanced from Sunderland to Newcastle some weeks ago and afterwards made a leap from the latter town to Haddington, without touching any intermediate place, has been more gradually advancing to Edinburgh. It appeared in Tranent about a fortnight ago and shortly after in Musselburgh where it has been very fatal carrying off fifty persons in a very few days. Today there have been two cases in Edinburgh and great alarm prevails. Every precaution has however been taken by means of cleaning the houses of the poor and areas and cellars of the other classes, by establishing hospitals for the sick, by organising the medical men into detachments ready to bear down on any district that may be attacked, by appointing laboratories as depots for the proper medicines, by having soup kitchens for the supply of the poor, and by various other arrangements for meeting the calamity when it shall come upon us in a severe form. This has been done under the superintendence of a board of health under whose charge was placed funds to the extent of about £1500 raised by a general collection. These however have been nearly exhausted and it is given out that £6000 or £7000 more will still be required to be raised by voluntary contribution fully to meet the emergency. The alarm is now less than could have been expected though not less than there is ground for when it is recollected that in other places the ravages have been confined almost entirely to the very indigent and dissipated classes.

### 9 February

This was a fast day appointed by the Presbytery to be held within their bounds.<sup>[94]</sup> The Moderate party wished to postpone it in consequence of an intimation from Government that a general fast was to take place the recommendation of the Lord

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<sup>94</sup> A fast had been called by the presbytery of Edinburgh in response to the cholera outbreak. Fast days had been a feature of the Protestant Churches in Britain since the sixteenth century and were called either to appease divine anger during times of crisis or to give thanks to God after a crisis had passed. Work was suspended so that the day could be spent in prayer, spiritual reflection, and worship.



Figure 12. St Giles', High Steet, Edinburgh, 1828. Mackersy attended a fast day sermon at St Giles' on 9 February 1832.  
(*Modern Athens*)

President, Solicitor General and Lord Provost: but the Orthodox party joined by some of the others carried their point. In the forenoon I heard Dr Gordon in the High Church<sup>[95]</sup> and in the afternoon Dr Ritchie in St Andrews: both sermons applicable to the occasion.

### 10 February

I had a call from Captain Scott of Musselburgh who has brought his whole family into town on account of the cholera. His description has given me a more vivid notion of the situation of the place than I had previously from the routine account in the newspapers. The rumbling of the cart carrying away the dead at night for interment was, he says, very appalling: and this carries back the mind to the time of the great London Plague.

### 11 February

I had an offer today for the Peacock Inn<sup>[96]</sup> for the purpose of having it converted into a cholera hospital; but we have declined it in the ground of its being in the immediate neighbourhood of our other property let to a number of families and the probability of such an appropriation of the inn injuring the property and interfering with the sale. The offer came from the Board of Health for that district.

<sup>95</sup> At this time, St Giles' was divided so it could be used by a number of congregations. The easternmost division was known as the High Kirk or Church.

<sup>96</sup> The Peacock Inn was located in the fishing village of Newhaven, three or so miles north of Edinburgh.

**23 February**

Received a letter from Mr Cleland enclosing a draft for £100 to be applied for the use of his mother.

**3 March**

Received accounts of my Aunt Barbara's death which took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. I have written to Andrew Ferrier proposing that he should receive into his family my Aunt Isabella the only surviving member of a family of fifteen.

**10 March**

At Kinkell on the 8<sup>th</sup> to attend my Aunt's funeral. She was carried from Smiddy haugh to the church in which my Grandfather and Grandmother are interred and where their monument with the inscription written by Mr Ferrier is. I went and returned by Perth.

**11 March**

Wrote to Mrs Clelland today as more particularly mentioned in Letter Book.

**15 March**

On juries today in the Sheriff Court the cases of a very trumpery description, relating the first, to the taking of two or three bank notes from an Irish corporal in a tipling [*sic*] house by a Girl of the Town,<sup>[97]</sup> the second to the stealing of a water pail. In the last where I was chancellor, there was a difference of opinion on a case so clear as to afford a good specimen of the acumen of ordinary jurymen. The pail had been seen at 9 at night by an inmate in the house and next morning at 8 it was sold by the pannel<sup>[98]</sup> to a broker to whom she stated that it was part of her furniture parted with on account of her being about to go to her son at Aberdeen. The pail was discovered at the brokers door at about 10 and the pannel was shortly after seen to pass and was after apprehended. In her declaration she mentioned that she had purchased the pail from a person in the Canongate on the night before about 9. She farther stated that her husband had deserted her and gone to Aberdeen: and made many other assertions at variance with those made to the broker. Those of the jury were, however, of opinion that though her stories were inconsistent it might have been that she had really purchased the pail and re-sold it and that the libel was therefore not proven.

**22 March**

The King's Fast day on account of the cholera. Heard Mr Master of St Georges in the forenoon – so-so – and Dr Chalmers in the same place in the afternoon, a splendid sermon on the efficacy of prayer. It was an amplification of one idea, that though prayer might not alter the established course of nature as open to our observation and

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<sup>97</sup> *i.e.* a prostitute.

<sup>98</sup> Scots for a prisoner at the bar of the court, an accused person in a criminal action from the time of his or her appearance in court.



Figure 13. The Royal Exchange, Edinburgh, 1829. It was here on 27 March 1831 that Mackersy was elected interim factor on the estate of James Swan W.S. (*Modern Athens*)

experience, it might induce an influence on those invisible causes whereon the known and seen laws of nature depend. The machinery behind the scenes might be altered and a different though not [*illegible*] action produced before the chain might be touched at the higher extremity, and the vibration extend through its whole length. It is said this is Dr Chalmers last appearance in the pulpit as the loss of teeth renders his vehement utterance difficult.

### 27 March

I was sent for today in great haste when I was with Mr Paul in Melville Street and found that Mr Norman Lockhart wishes me to be interim factor on the estate of Mr James Swan W.S.<sup>[99]</sup> On going over to the Royal Exchange I found my opponent, Mr Ivory, in a room where I was to watch the result of the election. We accordingly had much talk on this and other subjects till I was called in and informed that I was the successful candidate.

### 2 April

Attended for the first time at the board of the Life Insurance Company of Scotland as interim director, till the general meeting in September.

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<sup>99</sup> James Swan, a Writer to the Signet who also operated a dairying business in Meadowbank on the outskirts of Edinburgh, had been declared bankrupt.

**7 April**

Mr Paul and I are setting a tontine agoing for the disposal of the estate of Swans. The price or sum raised, to be £8000 – in 3200 shares of £25. The lives not under 55. Whether it will succeed is very problematical as the times are unfavourable for speculation.

**8 April**

Mrs Muckersy wrote to day to John and James, to go by a friend of Mrs Bonar to van Diemens Land.

**9 April**

Dr Macarthur married today to Miss Margaret Carmichael. My brother his wife and I were present. The doctor has been recently appointed to a post of some consequence connected with the new Government plan for education in Ireland.

**12 April**

We have fairly issued our circulars for the tontine, making the price £76000 and the age not under 75.

I was today appointed by a great apparent majority – 18000 to 11000 – trustee on Mr Swan's estate. My opponent is as before Mr Ivory. I hardly think he will venture on a competition.

**13 April**

Received an excellent letter from my friend Cleland, giving me directions for the education of Robert Walker: in particular with regard to land surveying which he says may be very advantageous for him in India.

**17 April**

The tontine gets on steadily though as yet slowly. Mr Paul clear that it will not succeed, I clear that it will. We have circulated the prospectus in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, Ross shire, Haddington, Dunbar, Cupar, Fife, Annan etc. and extensively here though we have not yet advertised it.

**21 April**

Mr Ivory has petitioned as well as I and Lord Fullerton has pronounced the usual interlocutor appointing objections: and a condescendum on my opponent's part of the personal objection to me on the alleged ground of arrangement for having Mr Hunter partner of Mr Lockhart as my agent. We think ourselves certain of success, the principal votes for Ivory being we imagine quite untenable.

The tontine still progresses and our advices from the north are flattering. Mr Paul still desponding but less so than before. About £5000 already subscribed with promises of half as much more. Some threatenings of a rival tontine on a small scale and of a general tontine association for the originating of such establishments.



Figure 14. The Great Reform Meeting, King's Park, Edinburgh, 24 April 1832.  
Mackersy first viewed the meeting from the slopes of Salisbury Crags.  
(National Galleries Scotland)

### 24 April

A great Whig and Radical meeting in the Kings Park today.<sup>[100]</sup> I walked up the hillside at Salisbury Crags which was thickly sprinkled with spectators and the view from which of the crowd round the hustings was certainly imposing. On descending I got forward to within a short distance of the speakers and caught a few words of Mr Aytoun. In the evening a procession of the Trades with banners and music paraded through the streets and everything passed over quietly.

### 27 April

The cholera on the increase; the deaths here still averaging about 8 to 10 in a day. In Paris its ravages have been frightful 9 or 10 thousand having been recorded as victims and many thousands more having it is said fallen.

### 28 April

The tontine going on well we have recorded about 138 shares or £3450 this week and have heard of nearly as many more. Mr Paul still thinks however that it will not succeed. Mr Gordon has submitted a memorial to the Lord Advocate and Solicitor General of England as to its legality in order to satisfy the doubts of an intending subscriber for 40 shares. We are against publishing this opinion which he was proposed to do.

### 8 May

Returned this afternoon from a short tour on the business of the tontine. I left Edinburgh on the 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4 o'clock and arrived in Glasgow at 9. On the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> after seeing and arranging matters with Mr Henry Paul I proceeded to Paisley and got from Dr Ferrier an introduction to his agent Mr A. H. Simpson. The latter

<sup>100</sup> An estimated 60,000 people attended the meeting in King's Park. For a description, see 'The Edinburgh Grand Reform Meeting', *The Scotsman*, 25 April 1832.

doubtful of success at Paisley from the poverty of the town and the great demands upon the purses of the inhabitants in consequence of the cholera etc. but is to do what he can. Dined with Dr F and went down the Cart afterwards to the Clyde where we met the steam-boat for Greenock. I called there on Mr Currie to whom I had an introduction from Mr Clason. He was just going to a meeting but promised to call in the evening. He never came, however, and I left early next morning so did nothing in Greenock. In the course of the forenoon Mr Paul and I made various calls and got £3000 put down by Carrick Brown and Co. Mr Rowan and a Mr Miller. In Glasgow the run of the principal men of business is within a more moderate compass than in Edinburgh and there is none of these steep streets which are so fatiguing. Every thing promises well for the tontine there.

Proceeded in the evening to Ayr by Kilmarnock etc. and arrived at 9. The old and new bridges rendered immortal by Burns are amongst the first objects which arrest the attention.<sup>[101]</sup> Off in the morning for Maybole calling by the way at the cottage where Burns was born. The room or rather kitchen where he first drew breath is still much in the way it was only the furniture is different. A little beyond the cottage is Alloway Kirk, the Doon and the brig. Near the north end of the latter is erected a handsome monument consisting of a temple on a rustic base supported by nine corinthian columns and on the top three swans supporting. The scenery around is pleasing and not unworthy of having first inspired so gifted a Child of Song. The country becomes wilder and more open after crossing the Doon. At Maybole I saw Mr Brown, writer, who agreed to take charge of the subscription there. On returning to Ayr I waited on Mr Cowan to whom I had a letter of introduction from Mr Cheyne. He seemed much taken with the scheme and he and his connexions Messrs Stevenson and Pollock are to push it.

To Kilmarnock, Saturday morning. Mr Paterson Commercial Bank agent dining with the Duke of Portlands factor Mr Hamilton to whom he introduced me. Thinks the tontine won't do. Would have recommended one share on each of the last ten to have been the fortunate shareholders. Mr P gave me an introduction to Messrs Douglas and Hamilton, writers, but I did not find them at home, and therefore left copies for them with him.

Spent Sunday at Kilmarnock: The day busy but I nevertheless went to the top of the neighbouring hills from which is an extensive view.

On Monday morning to Glasgow: On going into the coffee room of the Bucks Head found a gentleman sitting who turned out to be my partner Mr Paul. Neither of us expected to see the other. He was called thither on sudden business. Saw Mr H Paul,

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<sup>101</sup> Robert Burns' 'The Brigs of Ayr' (1786) imagined a dialogue between the Auld Brig and its replacement, which was currently under construction.



Figure 15. The High Street and Cheapside, Kilmarnock, 1830s.  
Mackersy spent two days in the town during a business trip in May 1832.  
(National Galleries Scotland)

Mr Wyld, the Circuit Court etc., and then proceeded to Hamilton where I interested Mr Henderson, British Linen Co. agent, in the business. The Dukes palace nearby finished externally and very handsome.<sup>[102]</sup>

On Tuesday morning took a gig to the Mid Calder road and the mail being full, on to the Bathgate road at Airdrie, where I got a seat for Edinburgh; and arrived at home at 5.

### 11 May

Wrote to John and James by Mr Davidson who sails for van Diemens Land by the Minerva which is expected to leave next week.

Lord Greys ministry out on a division in the House of Lords by which it was agreed to postpone the disfranchising clause till after consideration of that for enfranchising – by a majority of 35 – Lord Grey’s object seems to have been to go out on a preliminary question before he had been brought to yield any point by which his popularity would at once been shipwrecked. The King for having refused to create peers is now branded by the radicals with every term of reproach and exposed to the revilings of the mob. In the meantime the country is in a very excited state, and there

<sup>102</sup> Between 1824 and 1832, Hamilton Palace was extended and remodelled in the neoclassical style.

seems some risk that no ministry of conservative principles will be able to be formed sufficient for carrying on the Government.

At a meeting to day with Mr Patrick Cockburn, arbiter in the Fife Bank submission, he fixed Mr Cheynes and my allowance at £4000.

### 19 May

The tontine advances steadily. Since the 28<sup>th</sup> ult. we have put down 442 shares ie £11,050. The whole sum subscribed is now upwards of £20,000. The opinion of the Lord Advocate (Jeffrey) and the Solicitor General of England (Sir William Horne) is decidedly in favour of the legality of the scheme.

### 20 May

The Duke of Wellington having failed to form a cabinet, Lord Grey was by his advice again sent for by the King; and the papers of to day announce, on the authority of his Lordship, and Lord Althorpes statements in Parliament on friday [*sic*] evening, that they have got from the King the necessary powers for carrying through the Reform Bill. In other words, I presume they can now swamp the House of Peers. The British Constitution may now, therefore, be considered as virtually at an end, and the evils of Revolution as commencing. Were I a Member of Parliament I should certainly say at once, that as the Whigs were determined to carry their revolutionary measure without alteration – they might do so on their own responsibility. I should therefore make my bow and leave them.

### 21 May

The eldest of William's twin sons died today. He had met with an injury in his head at his birth which affected him all along and from which he never could have entirely recovered. My brother having purchased a piece of ground in the new burying place of the West Church, the remains of Robert, the youngest of the twins had to be removed thither. This I saw done an hour before the funeral.

### 24 May

I was today confirmed trustee on the estate of Mr Swan; the other party having abandoned the contest after incurring considerable expense. The costs on my side alone for which they have been found responsible amount to between £60 and £70.

### 31 May

Put off fires about the 20<sup>th</sup> and bathed for the first time on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Till then the customary east winds had prevailed: but the winter and spring have on the whole been mild and steady and the country now looks beautiful.

**10 June**

The English Reform Bill has now received the royal assent in an almost unaltered form. And the Scotch and the Irish Bills are in the course of being pushed through. They talk of a great national jubilee on the occasion. I hope there may be as much rejoicing this day two years.

Mrs Muckersey left me yesterday on a visit to Kilmany, St Andrews etc. for two or three months. Little Jack remains with me.

**7 July**

Mr Taylor Bathgate has shewn me a letter from James dated in February last; all well and prospering greatly. They had heard of my Father's death but not by our letters. Bayley has got more money from his father and an additional grant therewith. He is also about to be married to a fine young woman.

We had a meeting of the tontine subscribers yesterday. Sir A. Maitland Gibson in the chair – himself a nominee – and another nominee as hale and hearty also present. It was agreed to recommend a prolongation of the time for filling up from 31 July to Martinmas and a raising of the age of the nominees from 75 to 80. This last I do not approve of. We have now about £30,000 subscribed.

**11 July**

Today I was compelled however reluctantly to report to the general meeting of Mr Swans creditors, that he had not satisfactorily accounted for a considerable sum received by him within a month of his sequestration. The creditors refused to grant him any allowance but did not direct any measures to be adopted against the bankrupt.

**21 July**

On Tuesday morning we had a meeting of the Conservative Party in the Hopeton Rooms<sup>[103]</sup> Sir John Forbes in the chair, when a requestion asking Mr Forbes Hunter Blair to allow himself to be put in nomination as one of the city members was agreed to. Mr Jeffrey and Mr Abercromby, the Lord Advocate and ex-Chief Baron have been for some time in the field as the Whig candidates and Mr Aytoun as the Radical interest.

I had a note to day asking me to attend at Mr Blair's committee room; and on going thither found my services wished for to act as convener of a committee for canvassing Pitt Street,<sup>[104]</sup> Dundas Street and Hanover Street. I demurred on the score of time but was told that my duty would rather be to set the machinery in motion and report the results, than to form part of the moving power. I accordingly got two books, one

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<sup>103</sup> The Hopetoun Rooms were in Queen Street, Edinburgh. The meeting was held on 17 July.

<sup>104</sup> Pitt Street was the name for what is now the northern section of Dundas Street.

containing a list from Grays Directory of all the inhabitants in the district, the other columns titled – as far as I recall –

Name	Possession	Proprietor or Tenant	House or Shop	Blair	Jeffrey	Abercromby	Aytoun	Remarks
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and set about securing co-adjutors [*sic*], but I soon found that it would be a very uphill and laborious undertaking. One gentleman was out of town; another would not accept office; a third would only canvass his own friends or tradesmen; a fourth was to give one vote to the other side; a fifth was a Reformer though sprung from a Conservative stock etc. etc. Finding, therefore, that the business would occupy days in place of hours to do it well, I resolved to decline altogether and so returned the books. It is not for an accountant, by profession an arbiter and neutral man, to mix himself up with party politics. But the glimpse I have got at electioneering does not add to my admiration of the Reform Bill. What a deal of heat and animosity, flattering of the rabble, misrepresentation, personality and all uncharitableness introduced into a quiet community. There was surely a mid line between the present scheme and the old constitution, if change there felt to be. Some excitement and fun does however mix themselves up on the canvass; excellent songs from time to time appear, the best from the Tory budget, much speechification takes place – and the Radical variety enlivens the contest between the ancient parties of Whig and Tory. Aytoun promised to withdraw provided Abercromby would give up his retired allowance of £2000 as ex-Chief Baron but this proposition was not palatable.<sup>[105]</sup>

### 28 July

In the tontine the age has been kept at 75 in accordance with the opinion of many of our subscribers. Sir David Milne, Mr Rankine, Mr Robertson, Mr Cook etc. The subscription has again taken a start and many new names have been added to our list. On the other hand a few have taken the opportunity of the alteration of the time for filling up to go off. The Kinnears and James Nairne have done so.

### 4 August

I gave in my claim as a voter for the city today, with my receipt for the assessed taxes as the evidence. My number is 840 which shews how many have already claimed. This is since the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. and the whole closes on the 20<sup>th</sup> current so that much remains to be done if there be as calculated 11000 voters qualified persons in the city. It is thought doubtful whether the town clerks will be able to get thro' the duty within the time.

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<sup>105</sup> James Abercromby (1776–1858) had been the Chief Baron of the Court of the Exchequer, which had jurisdiction in Scotland over customs and excise and matters of revenue, stamp duty and probate. When the position was abolished in 1832, he controversially received a pension of £2,000 per annum.



Figure 16. Thomas Hamilton's design for the Burns Monument, Calton Hill, Edinburgh. Mackersy subscribed a guinea towards the completion of the monument. (National Galleries Scotland)

Subscribed a guinea towards the finishing of Burns' monument.<sup>[106]</sup> It was taken by George Thomson his venerable correspondent, who would have been a greater man had he never offered the poet anything. The £5 will never be forgotten.<sup>[107]</sup>

Spent this evening with William and his wife, being the anniversary of their marriage. Miss Scott who was present at that event, also there. The only other person was one who could not so well have been present on the former occasion. He is now a very fine stout child. Bye the bye they honoured me by giving a party on the 18<sup>th</sup> July, when I am sorry to say I completed my fortieth year. And yet I have much reason to be thankful. I enjoy uninterrupted health with an equable flow of spirits. My wig is only a temporary one for the preservation of a very respectable remnant – no it cannot yet be called a remnant – of hair. My circumstances improve yearly and my well wishers say that all I want is a wife.

<sup>106</sup> *i.e.* the monument being erected to the memory of Robert Burns on the southern side of Calton Hill to house John Flaxman's statue of Burns. The foundation stone had been laid in 1831, but further funds were required in 1832 to complete it.

<sup>107</sup> George Thomson (1757-1851) was the editor of *Select Scottish Airs* (1793), to which Robert Burns contributed twenty-five songs. Burns did not want to be paid for his contributions and was indignant when Thomson sent him £5.

How uncertain the tenure of life. On Thursday I was present at the funeral of poor John Mitchell my young friend of 24 a powerful young man, who the last time I saw him was exulting in conscious strength. He died after a few weeks' illness but his lungs and parts adjacent were found on opening his body to be in a very uncommon state of disease.

Witnessed the great festival in honour of Reform: a very fine procession.<sup>[108]</sup>

### **21 September**

Returned from a visit to London and tour of the Isle of Wight for which I left Edinburgh on the 14<sup>th</sup> ult. The details contained in journal.

### **22 September**

The news of the death of Sir Walter Scott which took place yesterday have arrived; and, though expected, have excited universal regret.

### **27 September**

Mrs Muckersey returned from Fife today in good health. Yesterday being Sir Walter Scott's funeral many persons here were dressed in mourning: myself among them.

### **4 October**

Cholera on the increase here and in many other places. 44 cases yesterday in Edinburgh and 45 today with 16 deaths on each: some of the middle classes. Alexander Burns WS, Mrs Henderson wife of one of our directors in the Standard Assurance Co. etc.

### **5 October**

A great meeting held today on the subject of a monument to Sir Walter Scott. The great assembly room crowded. The Lord Provost in the chair, supported by the Duke of Buccleugh, the Earls of Dalhousie and Roseberry, the Lord Advocate, Lord Meadowbank, Sir George Clerk, Professor Wilson, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Sir James Gibson Craig, Sir John Forbes etc. After the Provost had opened the meeting the Duke of Buccleugh proposed the first resolution in a long and very poor speech. A slight looking man with an indifferent head and little expression. Lord Roseberry seconded his Grace in a more manly address. The Lord Advocate moved the second resolution in a very pretty speech though the tone was subdued and a want of enthusiasm. The professor followed with more of the latter quality but in a rather sing song and lugubrious key. Lord Meadowbank and Sir George Clerk proposed the committee. Sir John Forbes stated that the Edinburgh Bank to whom Sir Walter had

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<sup>108</sup> A jubilee and grand procession took place in Edinburgh on 10 August to celebrate the passing of the Reform Act. For a description of the procession, see 'Edinburgh Reform Jubilee – grand procession', *The Scotsman*, 11 August 1832.

been indebted had had a meeting at which they had resolved to subscribe £500 as a testimony of their sense of the highly honourable manner in which he had acted.<sup>[109]</sup> The meeting which went off [?more heavily] than could have been expected was relieved at the end by a speech from Dr Cantor, a German, very neatly said and ending with a proposal to have committees in the foreign, and particularly the German, capitals, “where the works of Sir Walter win in every hand and in every heart.”<sup>[110]</sup>

### 13 October

Mr Cobbett in Edinburgh for the first time.<sup>[111]</sup> I saw him on his first and last appearance. A tall well looking man, reminding me somewhat of the late Dr Gregory. His lectures very amusing both from the matter and manner. He is an admirable actor, laughing very comically with his eyes, and imitating the various personages or classes of persons to whom he had occasion to refer; Lord Althorp for example, their worships the Justices, and so on. But his reasonings and averments made little impression except among the illiterate. They were too bold to go down well with the thinking people of the Modern Athens, and stated, one was inclined to think, without that sincerity which is best fitted to carry conviction to the hearers. Great crowds attended his lectures, composed fully one half of Tories, for the Whigs hate Cobbett and he hates them. He is too much a caricature of Whig principles to be popular in that quarter. He must have carried off with him about £200 from Edinburgh.<sup>[112]</sup>

### 5 November

Had myself weighed today at Willis the tailors<sup>[113]</sup> and was not found wanting, being 10 st 10 lb which is about a stone more than I had imagined.

### 10 November

Mrs Muckersy and I wrote to John and James today by Mr Burns originally from St Andrews but who has been in the cabinet making line in London for some time, and who goes out in that way to Hobart Town. I mentioned our having written in July 1831, December of that year with the box of MSS etc. in spring 1832 by Mrs Bonars

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<sup>109</sup> The collapse in 1826 of James Ballantyne & Co. left Walter Scott with a personal debt of more than £125,000. Rather than declare himself bankrupt, and so visit financial hardship and ruin on others, he placed his house and income in a trust belonging to his creditors and set out to pay off his debts through his writing.

<sup>110</sup> For details about the meeting, see ‘Monument to Sir Walter Scott’, *The Scotsman*, 6 October 1832.

<sup>111</sup> William Cobbett (1763–1835) was a Radical journalist and politician. He was elected the MP for Oldham at the 1832 general election. The *Scotsman* of 10 October 1832 printed two reports on his lecture in the Adelphi Theatre the night before, ‘Cobbett’ and ‘Mr Cobbett’s Lectures’. Tickets cost 2 shillings 6d for a box, 1 shilling 6d for the pit and 1 shilling for the gallery.

<sup>112</sup> Mackersy added the following note: ‘£140 said to be the nett sum after paying all expences’.

<sup>113</sup> George Willis & Co. had their premises in South St David Street, Edinburgh.



Figure 17. William Cobbett, c.1831. Mackersy attended two of the lectures he delivered in Edinburgh in October 1832. (National Portrait Gallery)

friend and in May thereafter by Mr Davidson, and our surprise at not having had a single letter from them written after my Fathers death. Informed them of the division of the books and our intention to send their share by a vessel at present loading at Leith. Also hinted at the propriety of having Johny sent out before he was too old to form the natural attachment to his parents, and at my averseness to have the responsibility of the charge when he should come to an age more difficult to manage.

Mr Paul and I have called a meeting of the creditors of Geanies for the 22<sup>nd</sup> to consider whether the tontine should be abandoned and the estate exposed to sale in the ordinary way. The subscription amounts to upwards of £30,000. And would rise to much more from the promises we have, were good nominees easily to be found. To supply this want we have recently sent circulars to about 200 of the clergy, and have through them got a list of nearly 100 good lives already.

### 17 November

Having sold Mr Swan's villa at Portobello I have been a good deal bothered this week in getting his furniture then sold and his wine removed to Edinburgh. No less than twice at Musselburgh before I could get a permit, a personal appearance before the Supervisor of the District being necessary. Furniture sold well. The villa for £630.

**22 November**

At a meeting of the creditors of Geanies held today it was resolved to abandon the tontine scheme as the principal Glasgow subscribers had declared off at the expiry of the prolonged time, 21 curt, and as the expence of pushing the business farther would be considerable. The state of the times, from the agitation of the Reform Bill and the cholera has been much against us, otherwise the scheme was a good one and should have succeeded. I still regret, however, the change from the original plan of allowing nominees of all ages, in other words making it an annuity in place of a gambling speculation. By the bye my other tontine adventure (see before p. 58 [13 December 1829]) goes off slowly. Since May 1823 when the nominees were all 75, five only have fallen out of the 21. Our dividends since 1829 have been only the following:

In	1830	£- 12/	Third
	1831	£- 12/	Fourth

A few days ago I sold Mr Swans share on the life of James MacKenzie for £30 to Mr W. P. S. Paul, Mr Pauls eldest son. The price I consider beyond the intrinsic value as property has fallen greatly: at least as much as the increase of value from the fall of lives. Margaret Kidd the life fallen since 1829.

**2 December**

Mr Paul and I have purchased the share of the above tontine depending on the life of Baillie Meiklejohn of Culross and belonging to Mr John Lyall for £25. I made previous enquiry at a friend resident at Culross and got a favourable account of the old Baillie's health, who had completed his 87 year a few days before, and who promised, humanly speaking, to see some years still.

There was a meeting a few days ago of the Conservatives on the subject of the Dutch War.<sup>[114]</sup> I did not attend, nor have I signed the address deprecating the proceedings of Government. Though against the war I do not feel clear of the propriety of expressing so decided an opinion after our fleet has actually sailed, till full information as to the motives of Government and the circumstances of the case shall have been obtained. This cannot be till Parliament shall have met.

**9 December**

Engaged for three weeks past in the audit of the Standard Insurance Company's books at their office. This was formerly the Insurance Co of Scotland Fire and Life: but the life department was recently placed under the management of my friend, Cheyne, and Professor Wallace and I were appointed auditors, he of rates, I of accounts. The company promises to do well.

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<sup>114</sup> French forces had been besieging the citadel of Antwerp since 15 November after its Dutch garrison had bombarded the neighbouring town.

Attending the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Subscription Library<sup>[115]</sup> on the 6<sup>th</sup> when I was asked to move that Lieut-Col. Laing should be chairman. The motion I made last year that there should be a catalogue printed annually of the books purchased that year, had been taken up and approved of by the directors. They had also agreed to have a full catalogue of the whole library made out, to which the others would be supplements. This Mr Fairbairn bookseller<sup>[116]</sup> had undertaken to do for £15.

### 16 December

At Southfield near Dalkeith on a curious business. Some years ago Mr Paul and I were employed to report on a case between a Mr William Dickson and his uncle. From that time I had heard nothing of the former till a few days ago when I received a letter from him expressing his confidence and wishing me to accept of the management of his affairs under a trust. I answered that this would depend upon the situation of his affairs and the likelihood of a satisfactory management. His reply gave a general statement of his money matters, and a detail of his mental condition and of the various asylums in which he had been placed; and requested a meeting. I rode out to day and found him in bed apparently quite distinct, clear as to his worldly affairs, and furnishing me with a match of the proposed trust deed. He referred me to his medical attendants for satisfaction as to his present state of mind and agreed with me, or rather suggested himself the propriety of consulting counsel should any difficulty occur.

### 19 December

By the above absence from town I lost the opportunity of being present at the first nomination of candidates for the representation of the city from the hustings at the Cross. The shew of hands was of course in favour of the Lord Advocate (Jeffrey) and Mr Abercromby. Every thing passed off quietly. On Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> I took the opportunity of giving my plumper<sup>[117]</sup> for Mr Blair, half a dozen only at my table being before me – Robert Forsyth, R. Rollo W.S., [*blank*]<sup>[118]</sup> Whigham advocate, William Horne W.S. [*sic*]. At the close of the roll Blair had little more than 1500 against 4400 etc. so that there must have been great miscalculation on the conservative side. No tumult or disagreeable occurrence of any kind.

Today I was present at the nomination of the County Members being in the heart of the crowd and having my pocket picked of my handkerchief for my pains. Sir John Dalrymple the favourite: Sir George Clark interrupted by groans and hisses.

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<sup>115</sup> Founded in 1794, the Edinburgh Subscription Library had its premises in South Bridge.

<sup>116</sup> John Fairbairn, bookseller and stationer, George Street, Edinburgh.

<sup>117</sup> A vote cast at an election for a single candidate when the voter has the right to vote for two or more.

<sup>118</sup> Mackersy has left a space here, no doubt with the intention of entering the person's first name when it came to mind. He never did, but the name of the advocate was Robert Whigham.

**23 December**

Present at the chairing of the City Members on Friday and the County Member Sir John Dalrymple to day. The former a very good shew with music and banners and much speechifying. The latter varied by cavalry but the shew not so good. In both cases the members seated aloft on handsome chairs placed on a coach drawn by four horses.

In the returns the whips have got it all their own way: with one or two Radicals, Cobbett at their head, and one sporting character the celebrated Gully, boxer formerly now better.<sup>[119]</sup>

**28 December**

Antwerp which has been the topic of interest for some time past has fallen after a defence of three weeks and after being greatly shattered by the French balls – Chassé sent a flag of truce and gets the honours of war – the garrison however remaining prisoners till the surrender of Forts Lillo and Liefkenshoek.

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<sup>119</sup> John Gully (1783-1863), MP for Pontefract. A former prize-fighter, he had made his fortune first in horse racing and then in coal. For anti-Reformers such as Mackersy, he typified the sort of 'bad characters' who were elected to the first post-Reform House of Commons.

## 1833

### 12 January

I yesterday attended the great Conservative dinner given to Mr Forbes Hunter Blair. About 500 were present.<sup>[120]</sup> Tom Scott and I went together and were joined by James Robertson, securing a very good seat in the great room. The dinner good with us; but in the smaller room said to be execrable. Principal speakers – Sir F. Walker Drummond, chairman, Mr Blair, Patrick Robertson, Sir George Clerk, Duncan McNeil, Dundas of Arniston, Allan of Glen, Sir John Oswald, Col. Lindsay etc. Much spirit and enthusiasm, and the entertainment prolonged to a late hour.

Had a meeting with Robert Jameson yesterday, the counsel consulted in the Dickson case. He thinks I would not be safe in accepting of the trust; and seems to point at a application to the court for a factoris loci tutoris<sup>[121]</sup> to be applied for by D. himself and his nearest relatives.

### 19 January

My old friend Dr Dick being about to be spliced,<sup>[122]</sup> he has asked me to be his second on that interesting occasion. On Wednesday I was introduced to the bride, Miss Calder, at her mothers house in Grove Street and on Tuesday I am to attend there again at ½ after 6.

### 23 January

Last night I was present at the marriage of Dr Dick, in my capacity as “best man” as we call it in Scotland. The ceremony was performed by Mr Fleming of West Calder, brother in law of the bridegroom, and at 8 o'clock the happy couple drove off to Dalkeith. Today they return to Mid Calder where a party is to assemble for welcoming them home. I have not time, however, to make one.

### 28 January

A few days ago I had an official intimation from Mr Robert Rutherford WS the secretary that I had been unanimously elected a member of the Oyster Club. This is a whist club which meets once a fortnight in the British Hotel.<sup>[123]</sup> I was proposed by my friend Mr Walter Cook.

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<sup>120</sup> The dinner was held in the Hopetoun Rooms. Forbes Hunter Blair was the Conservative candidate for Edinburgh. A full report of the evening can be found in ‘Public dinner to Mr Blair’, *The Scotsman*, 12 January 1833; and of its wider political resonance in ‘The late Conservative dinner in Edinburgh’, *Blackwood Magazine*, 33 (Jan.-Jun. 1833), 266–76.

<sup>121</sup> In Scots law, a person appointed by the courts to manage the finances, property and welfare of an adult considered unable to manage them himself.

<sup>122</sup> *i.e.* married.

<sup>123</sup> The British Hotel was in Queen Street, Edinburgh.

**31 January**

Our parties this month have been the following:

Mr Cooks on the 1<sup>st</sup>

Williams on the 3<sup>rd</sup>

At home on the 10<sup>th</sup>

Tom Scotts on the 15<sup>th</sup>

On the 26<sup>th</sup> we should have been at Mr Chrystals and I at Cheynes – but unwell.

**6 February**

At the Oyster Club last night for the first time. British Hotel. Party

John Jardine advocate	William Young Herries WS
Walter Cook, WS	William Cunningham WS
Patrick Irvine WS	Thomas Duncan MD
William Robertson WS	[ <i>blank</i> ] Buchanan merchant
John Forman WS	Thomas Addison <sup>[124]</sup> of Carcant
Henry Hill WS	[ <i>blank</i> ] Plomer
Thomas Patten WS	Thomas Mansfield accountant
Carlyle Bell WS	and
Robert Rutherford WS	myself. *

Meet at 8, play at whist till ¼ after 11: sup at that hour. Game shilling points half a crown on the rubber; rubber games: each person entering pays a shilling, each winner of a rubber 6d, to the funds: annual payment £2 and these together pay all expenses.

\* The other members are – 30 being the full number

Guthrie Wright WS	Douglas Watson WS	James Brown accountant
[ <i>blank</i> ] Sligo	Alexander Lamont WS	Major Robertson
[ <i>blank</i> ] Chiene	William Bell WS	[ <i>blank</i> ] Field
Henry Maxwell	John Kennedy WS	[ <i>blank</i> ] Gillespie surgeon
		William Keith accountant

**8 February**

Parliament having been opened a few days ago, a violent debate is going on regarding the address<sup>[125]</sup> moved by Lord Ormelie seconded by Mr Marshall of Leeds – the Radical party having got more able leaders and more representatives are now more formidable, and I for one and I dare say many more of the conservative party will be disposed to wish well to the Whigs if they now shew a desire to maintain existing institutions and discourage a restless spirit of change.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Kinnear (1796-1830) was a director of the private bank T. Kinnear and Sons, Edinburgh, although by this time he had established himself as a merchant in London, where he died on 20 October at his house in Cornwall Terrace.

<sup>125</sup> His surname was Adinston.

**12 February**

Mr Paul has been at Gordon Castle since the end of last month, and returned today coming by the way of Kinfauns. The Duke and Duchess most attentive: very jovial etc.

I have got a summons to go to London forthwith, in the case of Donaldson's Trustees v Findlay Bannatyne & Co: to be there on the forenoon of the 9<sup>th</sup>. This will detain me some weeks at a very inconvenient season but on the other hand I will see London at a better time than I ever saw it before.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of last month Mrs Muckersie received a letter from James, the first that was written by them after hearing accounts of my Fathers death. It is dated 23 July last. They never got my letter informing them of that event which went by post. All well. Little John is now at school with his uncle and they look forward to the time when he will be able to ride over in the morning and back in the evening. They propose sending Mary to a boarding school in a year or two. Jeany at her alphabet. John has had another son. He has been quite well and is getting on as usual. Mr Bayley late Jenkins's [*illegible interlined word*] had lent him £600 additional to be laid out under James' directions, and they have accordingly bought a farm with it. He is now doing for himself, has become very steady and has lately taken a wife a fine young lady daughter of a neighbouring settler. They had heard by chance of the arrival of our box, despatched December 1831 (see page 104) but had not yet received it.

**18 February**

Bought two sixteenths in the "Glasgow Lottery". Nos. 7,758 and 7,841 price 18/6 each. To be drawn April next. Prizes – 3 of £10,000. 1 of £1200. 3 of £1000 etc.

**22 February**

At the Court today to hear the case of Leslie v Shepherd in which I had made a report under a remit to Mr Paul from the Second Division. Skene won for the suspender Sir Charles; the Dean of Faculty, Hope, for the charger. The Justice Clerk in giving judgement for the latter, said he had in the first place to express what was, he was sure, the unanimous opinion of the Court, that the report was a most clear and business like paper, bringing out the facts of the case very distinctly and leaving the point of law to the Court. The other Judges, Glenlee and Meadowbank, bowed in acquiescence.

**23 February**

Today I purchased another share of the Union Club house tontine, to be held by me and Miss Eliza Earle Paul Mr Paul's eldest daughter, jointly. It depends [*sic*] on the life of General Scott of Malleny who is himself very hale, and descended from long lived ancestors. My correspondent writes "Genl S is now in his 87<sup>th</sup> year, entire and sound in every respect. His father and mother died when they were about 95, and there are five of his brothers and sisters now alive, whose ages stand as follows: 84, 82, 80, 78, 71". The price we paid to Mr Clason was £25 being par.

**3 March**

During the last week I have brought my books for the past year to a balance and found an addition to my stock of £2900. This large sum has arisen principally from the allowance for the Fife Bank business and a great part of that for the East Lothian Bank having been settled during the year. I am now beginning to think of a house with a street door a point of great importance in Edinburgh. There is in fact a scale in this matter nicely graduated, and people being estimated in the inverse ratio of the height from the mother earth at which they fix their domicile. Now as I have always had the greatest contempt for appearances not reared on a substantial foundation, I have hitherto vegetated up two pair of stairs.<sup>[126]</sup>

Parties last month

Mr Nairnes on the 2<sup>nd</sup>

Mr Cooks on the 7<sup>th</sup>

Williams on the 16<sup>th</sup>

Club on the 19<sup>th</sup>

Home on the 22

Mr Clasons on the 27<sup>th</sup>

**10 March**

In the case Donaldson v Findlay etc. we have followed out the attempt at extrajudicial settlement which I commenced in London, and given in to process an offer to accept of £4000 in full each party paying their own expenses. In the meantime, however, I am going on with my preparations to be ready for the worst; and Mr Donaldson and I will leave for London at the end of this week should the offer not then be accepted of.

A small slice of Geanies has been sold to the Duke of Sutherland, viz the lands and feu duties about Tain at the price of £6875. This is upward of £2000 beyond the proportion of price offering to them at last upset. The tontine scheme is beginning to exhibit its beneficial effects; for we thereby obtained delay without a depreciation of the property and a higher price now for this portion of the estate in consequence of the Reform Bill.

**19 March**

Wrote to John with a re-conveyance of his interest in the houses in Dundas Street purchased by our Father, the renunciation executed by him on his leaving this country not being the proper deed. I have got a loan of £600 over the houses nearly completed and the lender will in the meantime be satisfied with the title as it stands as the additional deed when executed will accresce thereto. Note the above sent by the "Lochiel".

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<sup>126</sup> Mackersy lived at 26 Dundas Street, Edinburgh.

**27 April**

Left Edinburgh for London on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of March on the business of Mr Donaldson and returned yesterday. For the particulars see Journal.

**2 May**

Inquired after my three tickets (16<sup>th</sup>) in the Glasgow Lottery, and found the result as follows.

No.		Cost	Prizes
7841	a blank	18.6	
7758	a £5 prize	18.6	6
9599 (bought in London)	a £20 prize	1. 1.6	1. 4
		<u>2.18.6</u>	<u>£1.10</u>
		1.10	
	Loss	<u>£1. 8.6</u>	

**8 May**

Influenza which was prevailing in London when we were there, also very general here, almost every family having it. Four of our clerks laid up – and so on.

**17 May**

Having lately become a member of the Society for the Sons of the Clergy,<sup>[127]</sup> I attended a general meeting for the first time this forenoon: Sir Patrick Murray in the chair. Mr Andrew Tawse read a statement of the affairs. Funds upwards of £16000 of which £4000 belong to the daughters fund. All applicants last year admitted – between 30 and 40 to whom between £300 and £400 paid. Of the daughters 6 received £10 each. An increase of fund since last year of 2 or £300.

In the evening there was a meeting of the Ministers Sons' Club – Sir George Ballingal in the chair, my partner Mr Paul, croupier. In the British Hotel, about 45 present: Dr Baird, Dr Hill, Dr Torrie, Dr Duncan of Ruthwell etc. etc. very agreeable.

**18 May**

We put out fires about 10 days ago and I bathed for the first time today though the machines<sup>[128]</sup> have been out for a fortnight. The whole month indeed has been remarkably warm, and vegetation which had been greatly retarded by the cold weather or rather the ungenial weather of March and April, has made a very rapid progress. We have had much thunder wether [*sic*] these ten days.

<sup>127</sup> The society had been established in 1790/1791 with the aim of helping the sons of the clergy of the Church of Scotland continue and further their education.

<sup>128</sup> *i.e.* bathing machines, roofed and walled wooden carts where sea-bathers could change in private and be wheeled into the shallow waters.



Figure 18. The Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh, 1829. Mackersy attended the meeting held here on 23 May 1833 to elect a new minister.  
(*Modern Athens*)

## 21 May

There is a particular object I have had in mind for several years past. Yesterday it was recalled or rather rivetted more forcibly by an accidental circumstance. I often wonder if I shall ever attain it. They say that by a steady earnest indefatigable pursuit almost any reasonable object may be accomplished. Time will show if this will be so in this particular case.

On Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> I received a letter from James, dated the 5 November last. He says my first letter written after my Father's death never reached them. The others he got only a few weeks before writing in the following order – first that of 11 May 1832 by the Minerva, then the box with our letters of 31 December 1831 and lastly our letters of 8 April 1832. Has read my Fathers will with the memorial and opinion of counsel and is happy I have acted as I did in keeping the business out of the hands of strangers. He assures me of the utmost assistance that lies in his power to fulfil Father's wishes in every thing. Expects to be able to send home a remittance shortly, but not able to rely decidedly on this, as this is his year for paying off the money borrowed in Greenhill. His first payment became due in August but as he was not fully prepared, he requested delay for half a year or longer. He has now, however, the prospect of being able to pay off the whole money he borrowed as it becomes due, which will relieve him of the 15 per cent interest and enable him to give his girls the best education the colony can afford. Johnny is with his uncle who is highly pleased with his progress. He comes home once a month on Friday and returns on the Monday. John has lost his little boy who had been named James – four months old.

**23 May**

I attended a meeting of the Magistrates, Deacons of the Crafts, Heritors and Kirk Session of the Canongate for the election of a Minister in place of the late Dr Buchanan who held the second charge.<sup>[129]</sup> There had been previous meetings for the purpose of adopting means for securing the nomination of popular and worthy candidates. But there had not many come forward, the stipend being a small one and the election came at length to be between the Revd Alexander Clark of Inverness and the Rev John Clark of the Canongate Chapel. An agent appeared on each side and everything was conducted with great order and regularity, though of course under protest which was taken generally, at the outset against all the votes for both candidates respectively. I acted for Mr Clark of Inverness after having satisfied myself by previous enquiries that he was the man most likely to be useful. The other had failed completely in making a congregation in the Chapel which is a presumption against him. I got a vote of approbation in favour of Mr Nairn who had been Dr Buchanan's assistant and at one time a candidate put upon the record. He was a zealous minister but not a popular preacher. The result of the voting was for

Mr Clark Inverness [*blank*]  
 for Mr Clark Canongate [*blank*]  
 Majority for the former.

But a scrutiny is of course to take place and another meeting is to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> I had a letter from Mrs Clelland advising me of her having arrived at Portsmouth from which she is to proceed immediately to London. She expresses a wish to settle in Scotland.

Little Jack has had the measles for a fortnight past, during all which time we have been prevented from seeing our friends who have children. He is now convalescent but weak and peevish in the extreme. Mrs Muckersy had a slight attack of influenza like almost everybody else, but I have escaped.

**4 June**

In the scrutiny of the Canongate voters it turned out that the property for which I appeared was not in the parish. However as there had been a breaking up of the scrutiny committee in consequence of Mr Clark of Inverness's friends having unknown to the other party set agoing the subscription of a presentation, I got a mandate and attended the meeting today. A long explanation was entered into by the respective agents but as it was plain that each party would now push through their separate presentations, I made a motion that Mr Clark of Inverness should be declared

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<sup>129</sup> In populous parishes, a second minister was appointed to perform additional services. The Reverend John Gilchrist held the 'first charge' at the Canongate from 1825 to 1849.

the successful candidate and his presentation forwarded to the Presbytery. This was entered in the name of another person on the minutes\*<sup>[130]</sup> and protested against by the other candidate: and the matter will now become the subject of a law-plea unless the parties agree as was proposed by our side to refer the matter to arbitration.<sup>[131]</sup>

### 13 June

William's wife had another son this evening (Thursday).

### 20 June

The proposed lender of the £600 on the Dundas Street houses is off, in consequence of some change in the funds of the estate (a trust), and I must therefore consider whether to look out for another or take the security to myself.

### 28 June

Having forced the lock of a drawer of which I had lost the key some fifteen years ago I was amused to find in it a comedy in five acts called "the Country Student" and two beginnings of novels which I had written before that time. But of the writing of the play and one of the novels I had lost all trace of recollection, except with regard to one or two of the incidents.

We sent Johnny to Musselburgh on Monday with Margaret the servant who left us at Whitsunday, and who returned to take charge of him for a few weeks.

### 28 June

Mr Cheyne has gone to London for the purpose of investing some money for various companies and individuals in the purchase of Government Annuities. I have authorised him to go for me to the extent of a £200, chiefly that I may ascertain from actual experience the operation of a selection of lives. They are all to be male lives from 76 to 80. My sum will be joined to the sum invested by other parties and divided among 10 or 15 lives.

### 5 July

I received a letter today from my brother John, (the first since my Father's death) dated to Hobart Town 26 January 1833. He had gone thither on an annual visit during the holidays which continue for about six weeks from 15 December. The loss of his little boy makes him, he says, doubly anxious to have Johnny sent out without delay; and he suggests that he should be sent under the charge of some respectable married couple going out as cabin passengers. He would gladly contribute towards the passage and outfit of a female servant who should wait upon all the children.

In regard to money matters he has again to repeat that whatever I think right on his part he will do in a shorter or longer time as God may prosper him: And he therefore

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<sup>130</sup> Mackersy added the following footnote: '\*My mandate being doubtful'.

<sup>131</sup> John Clark, minister of the New Street Chapel, Canongate, was the successful candidate.

requests a statement of everything due by him. The great expenses of settling in have hitherto prevented him from remitting money home but these are now in a good measure got over and he hopes and expects to be able soon to discharge all his pecuniary obligations to me. He complains of the sending out of Hope as a most unfortunate thing: the youth being indifferently qualified and full of the notion that it shewed genius and spirit to differ from his Old Father, as he called him, in his religious opinions. His sentiments on that important matter soon attracted the attention, not only of my brother, but other individuals in the neighbourhood and he was under the necessity of dismissing him. He cost my brother about £40, he says, but we cannot understand how he should have got off so easily, as the passage money alone, even supposing that John got off from the Liverpool claim and merely paid that from the Cape, amounted to the above sum.

### 8 July

Wrote to Mrs Cleland in answer to her letters of 13 May, 19 June and 1 current. The principal subject – her nephew Robert Walker, whom Cleland had resolved to educate at his own expense and forward in life. If he go on with his medical studies I have offered to advance £20 a year for paying the fees of his classes, provided his other expenses, which I estimate at £60 a year be made good. But I have, at the same time, stated the difficulties in the way – the expense of passing as surgeon and physician – the great competition in the medical profession supposing that attained etc. and I have mentioned Roberts own suggestion of getting a cadetship or other situation in India, with a hint at getting Mr Elphinstone interested in the business.

### 13 July

The West Calder case settled a few days ago, the court being unanimous in favour of the reverser and against Mr Johnston, who was presented by the adjudger.<sup>[132]</sup>

### 14 July

I have been in correspondence of late with London regarding the sum which lately opened to Mr Stephen's trust by the death of Mrs Stephens, the life rentrix, in India. The amount remitted home is £4880. Colvin's house require a general release which we are desirous to avoid giving, as we have claims against the executor for sums which are alleged to have been improperly taken credit for by him. At the same time the recent failure of Alexander, McIntosh and Fairlie's houses make us anxious to avoid all risk on the subject of the money actually remitted. I accordingly wrote to London proposing that I should go up and settle the business out and out: and have today received an answer recommending the settlement and approving of my going south but promising to send the draft of the discharge by Monday post. I shall of course, delay going till then as the matter may be satisfactorily arranged without the necessity of doing so at all.

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<sup>132</sup> A person in whose favour an adjudication of patronage is granted, in this case David Drysdale. Mackersy has added 'see pp 84, 86 and 95' [entries for 21 January, 23 February and 9 May 1831].

**20 August**

Returned from London by the Royal William steamboat<sup>[133]</sup> this afternoon, having been absent from home since Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. See Journal for particulars. Found some new business and a great accumulation of old waiting for me. Mr Paul goes south with his wife and sons in a few days.

**26 August**

Received today from Mr Cheyne a list of the individuals in whom my £200 is held being as follows, a proportion corresponding to investment.

	<i>Age</i>	<i>Annuity</i>	<i>Sum</i>
William McBurnie, mason, Kirkpartick	81	£239.18.6	£1000
Alexander Spence, late jeweller, Edinburgh	81	239.18.6	1000
William Gray, Edinburgh	80	239.18.6	1000
David Tinto, farmer, Craigend	81	1119.19	500
John Jamieson of Auchinleck, Ayrshire	78	103.10	500
William Thom, farmer. Forthar, Fife	80	119.19	500
John Wardrop, late merchant, Glasgow	80	119.19	500
Joseph Rudman, yeoman, Lancashire		119.19	500
Thomas Lewin, gentleman, Benley, Kent	80	119.19	500
Andrew Russel, late mariner, Stirling	81	119.19	500
John McKay, miller, Bute	78	96.10	500
Thomas Robertson, farmer, Corntoun	78	96.46.6	500
		<u>£1734.16</u>	<u>£7460</u>

N. Those marked x also in second investment p.160 [9 November 1833]  
 o also in third p.172 [8 March 1834]  
 s also in fourth p.178 [30 June 1834]

**7 September**

Mr Paul has been absent since the 27<sup>th</sup> ulto. having left by the steam boat for London. I wrote him on thursday [*sic*] after he left giving him an account of the meeting of the creditors of Mr Shand of the Burn<sup>[134]</sup> who had executed a trust deed in our favour some weeks ago. This had been submitted to a general meeting of the creditors who appointed a committee to report. They met and reported in favour of a judicial sale

<sup>133</sup> The *Royal William* was operated by the Leith and London Steam Ship Company. The journey took three days and fares cost £4 4 shillings for a first-class cabin and £2 10 shillings for a second-class cabin, provisions included.

<sup>134</sup> The merchant and trader William Shand of the Burn (also known as Arnhall), who had been declared bankrupt.



Figure 19. Leith harbour, 1829. Mackersy landed here on 20 August 1833 after a journey from London aboard the *Royal William* steamboat. (*Modern Athens*)

of the landed estate (Arnhall or the Burn) and of the trust continuing for the other property. Mr Paul and I were, on the other hand, in favour of a sequestration. At the meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> Mr Richard McKenna and Mr Dalziel the members of the committee supported the plan recommended by them: Other creditors preferred sequestration and the result was a unanimous resolution in favour of that mode of management. We saw Mr Shand afterwards who is to concur in the application. Since that time I have seen the agents of the principal creditors here and have little doubt of their supporting Mr Paul as candidate for the trusteeship. The creditors in the north are already mostly in our favour. The estate is a good one.

Arnhall being worth	£70,000
Balmakervan sold to my old friend Col. Fraser	24,500
Personal funds in this country	7,000
Value of Jamaica estates say	50,000

### 16 September

Had myself weighed today at Willis's and found my weight to be 11st. 2lbs being 6lbs more than on 5 November last. See p. 128.

### 18 September

Mr Paul returned from London today having been absent, along with Mrs Paul and his two sons since the 28<sup>th</sup> Ulto.

**20 September**

The meeting of Mr Shands creditors for electing the interim factor took place today. In the morning Mr Newton the agent discovered by accidentally meeting Archy Gibson, accountant, that he had started for the office on the strength of a claim for £100,000 and upwards made against Mr S. by the representatives of a person in the West Indies for whom he was executor. Mr N. and I went to Mr Pauls house to arrange measures for counteracting this opposition, which is rather shabby considering that Mr Paul has been already in the management, and that Gibson is a personal friend of us both. At the meeting Mr P was supported by all the creditors present with the exception of that above referred to which is a mere suppo[?] claim got up for the purpose. Each candidate protested that he was elected but we shall endeavour to get Gibson to withdraw till the election of the trustee.

Pitt's statue put up today in George Street, crossing of Frederick Street.<sup>[135]</sup>

**22 September**

We have been arranging for some time to send out little Johny to his Father in Van Diemens land. The surgeon (Mr Johnson) recommends this measure notwithstanding the state of his eyes etc. which has been very bad ever since he had the measles. The great desideratum is to get a proper person to attend him. We wrote to Margaret our late servant who expresses her willingness to go in spring but will not just now. In enquiring at Mr Broadfoot<sup>[136]</sup> the agent for the vessel he told me that he had many applications by persons wishing to go out and promised to refer any good applicant to me. Accordingly I had a call two days ago from a man who goes out as servant to Mr Fisher, factor for Mr Mercer of Dryden a considerable proprietor in Van Diemens Land. This man has a sister who is anxious to accompany him provided she could get her passage paid. After making inquiry regarding Mr Fisher, I rode out today and had a long conversation with him. He recommends the girl strongly and engages that he and his wife shall pay every attention to the child. I made him aware that I would only pay the passage out and some addition to the young woman for her services but would not pledge myself to get her a situation there or bring her back. This he said was all that could be asked, and seemed to hold out the certainty of his taking her into his own employment. At all event she would easily find a situation or a husband. We afterwards met Mr Mercer to whom I was introduced and with whom I had some conversation regarding the colony. His purchases there are intended, Mr Fisher told me, for his sons.

**28 September**

We have been engaged this week in mustering our strength for the contest in Mr Shand's case. Besides revising the affidavits already made and taking steps for getting forward

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<sup>135</sup> As with the aforementioned statue of George IV, the statue of William Pitt the Younger was the work of Francis Chantrey, who on both occasions supervised its erection.

<sup>136</sup> John Broadfoot was a ship broker based in Quality Street, Leith.

others, we have despatched one of our clerks, Mr John MacKenzie to Buxton to undermine the stronghold of the enemy. Almost every creditor with the exception of the single most doubtful claim evidently got up for the purpose of carrying the election.

### **29 September**

In tonight's papers I observe the failure of Colvin's house in Calcutta, with a notice, at the same time that their house of Crawford & Co of London are not connected in partnership with them. The failure has startled me not a little as I had arranged a settlement of the £4880 in the bill drawn by the former company on the latter which was to be carried through tomorrow. The discharge was signed by Mr Stephens and me on Tuesday last and forwarded to London and the money was to be paid on the 30<sup>th</sup>. This must surely be held as an equivalent to the acceptance of the bill; and if the house in London stands I should hope we are safe. At all events I cannot blame myself as every exertion has been made by me for an immediate settlement.

### **2 October**

I had advices on Monday from my solicitors that they had seen Colvin's agent on Saturday and had been apprised [*sic*] that the failure of the Calcutta house would not affect the house in London, or our settlement. And today I was informed by them that the money had been paid on Monday as promised and was remitted to me thro' Jones Lloyd etc. They state that Crawford Co's solicitor had informed them of their being large creditors of Colvin etc. and that it was fortunate for us we had got an obligation to pay otherwise they might not have accepted the bill. Thus my visit to London by conducing to this settlement has turned out a very fortunate one.

### **4 October**

The meeting of Mr Shands creditors took place today. Sir J. Gibson Gray was in the chair, and we were supported by Messrs McKenzie & Sharpe, Cook, McInnes, Shand, Ellis and all the other agents for creditors with the single exception of those parties claiming in the large Jamaica claim. They had not even a seconder. Mr Dalziel, Sir J. G. Grays partner proposed Mr Paul, myself and Mr Brown in succession. Mr Johnston proposed Messrs Gibson, Barstow and Turner and each party protested that there was a majority for their candidate. A very strong protest prepared by Robert Forsyth advocate was put in the minutes by Mr Dalziel and we thought they would not have gone further: But tonight I met Hector Mr Gibsons agent and he told me the bond had been already dispatched for the signature of his cautioner. We must therefore expect a contest.

### **12 October**

I had notice a few days ago that the young woman whom I expected to go out to Van Diemens Land with Johnny has been prevented by her mother from leaving this country. Mr Fisher to whom I wrote on the subject called on me on Wednesday (9<sup>th</sup>) and undertook that his wife should look out for another. We are therefore uncertain.

Mr Cheyne has again gone to London to invest in Government annuities for the Standard and different other public bodies. He is to purchase £200 worth in my name that I may have a quarterly return.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> we commenced having fires all day both in the office and at home.

The memorial for counsel in Mr Shands case prepared by Mr Newton 84 pages to which I added 20 more. Mr Paul has written to John Russel at present in Glasgow who wrote the papers for me both in Stephens and Swan's cases, inquiring if he is to be in town on Monday, as we are desirous that he should be employed in the present case also.

### 28 October

Russell's paper, an excellent one, was given in on the 20<sup>th</sup> and I betted a bottle of wine with Mr Newton that it would not be answered. But I reckoned without my host, it seems, for Gibson still seems resolute.

As a last attempt for getting John sent out by the *Isabella*,<sup>[137]</sup> I walked down to Leith on Saturday to inquire at Mr Broadfoot if he knew of no one going out who might take charge of him. He mentioned a young lady who proposes sailing by the *Isabella* with the view of settling in Van Diemen's Land as a governess – and is to make inquiry about her.

### 29 October

Mr Paul much engaged for some time past in procuring officers for the National Bank of England one of the newly projected establishments for deposit etc. under the allowance given by the Renewed Bank Charter.<sup>[138]</sup> The applications already given in amount to nearly 100, though the qualifications were expressly limited to great knowledge and experience.

### 31 October

Parties this month

Henry Hills on 5<sup>th</sup>

James Rosss on 8<sup>th</sup>

Mr Woodcock's on 25<sup>th</sup>

Mr Cowans on 29<sup>th</sup>

Williams [*blank*]

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<sup>137</sup> The *Isabella* was due to leave Leith for Van Diemen's Land on 23 November.

<sup>138</sup> The National Provincial Bank of England was founded in 1833 after the Bank of England Charter Renewal Act (1833) had removed any ambiguities about the creation of joint stock banks in England.

Much bustle and many meetings relative to our burgh election. I was on one list for our ward, but intimated to the gentlemen who informed me of it that I would not consent to be put in nomination. Whether this had been made known, or I had been objected to on other grounds, I know not; but I heard no more of it except from the convener of the Radical Committee incidentally at the meeting of the ward two days ago – I should not have thought there was much in it, had not Mr Paul told me that while calling on Sir J. Gibson Gray last week, Sir John Dalrymple the County Member came in, when Sir James followed Mr P. out of the room to inquire of what politics I was. The answer was “a staunch Tory”.

The names of the persons on whom my £200 last invested in Government annuities depend are the following – a proportion of the £2,600.

	B	Age	Annuity	Sum
os	John Callender, Farm Servant, Callender House	80	£71.13	£300
xos	John Jamieson, Yeoman, Auchinleck	78	41.4.6	200
	Robert Freeland, Farmer, Strathblane	77	38.9	200
xs	John Mackay, Miller, Kingarth	77	38.9	200
oss	James Fallon, Yeoman, Neilston	77	38.9	200
xs	William Gray, Keeper of Meadows, Eden	80	23.17.6	100
	John Ponton, Shoemaker, Kirkliston	79	22.3	100
	George Buchanan, Gentleman, Glasgow	78	20.12	100
xo	Thomas Robertson, Famer, Corntown	78	20.12	100
	Wiliam Saunders, Yeoman, Masterton	78	20.12	100
	Robert Thomson, Weaver, Kennoway	77	19.4.6	100
	James Ferguson, Yeoman, Campbelton	77	19.4.6	100
	Walter Ewing, Clothier, Glasgow	77	19.4.6	100
o	Neil McGill, Farmer, Kilcupanach	76	17.19.6	100
	Andrew McAlister, Baron Officer, Clockham	78	19.4.6	100
	John Easton, Yeoman, Pocklington	80	23.17.6	100
o	Benjamin Burchill, [ <i>blank</i> ], Brompton	80	23.17.6	100
	Richard Coulson, Yeoman, Durham	78	20.12	100
	Richard Tuly, Yeoman, Durham	79	22.3	100
	David Ferguson, Labourer, Dalvady	79	22.3	100
			<u>£543.11.6</u>	<u>£3600</u>

N. those marked x also in first investment p.151. [26 August 1823]  
 o also in third investment p. 172. [8 March 1834]  
 s also in fourth investment p. 179. [30 June 1834]

Miss Tailor, the “Unknown Lady”, as we have taught Johny to call her, waited upon us with her cousin who also goes out to Van Diemens Land; but she did not prepossess us greatly in her favour. She is herself sufficiently anxious to undertake the charge but we think it better to wait till spring.

### 11 November

The contract of copartnership between Mr Paul and me which has existed under successive modifications since 1817 expiring at Martinmas next, and it being provided that a renewal for 5 years on the same terms took place unless a years intimation were given by either party, I found on my table this evening a note from Mr Paul stating that he was desirous certain alterations should be made on it at March next to be then arranged. I assured him instantly that I accepted of the intimation as a regular and proper one, and that the contract must be held as binding on neither party beyond Martinmas 1834.

### 20 November

I dined at Mrs Kinnears, Cargillfield, yesterday, along with the other members of the Standard Assurance Co board.<sup>[139]</sup> This was a renewal of an acquaintanceship after a break of twenty years, and called up many half pleasing half mournful recollections. Mrs Nicolson, now a widow, was there: and the youngest daughter of the house, an infant when I last saw her, is grown up into a tall young lady. Occurrences like this mark very strikingly the lapse of time which otherwise is apt to pass by with little notice.

### 13 December

Mrs Muckersey wrote to John and James and I to John by the Isabella which sailed from Leith on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The chief subject of our letters was a detail of the reasons for not sending Johny by the present ship, and of our intention to despatch him in spring. I also wrote a few lines to James by Mr John Anderson a friend of Rose and the Callenders who has been unfortunate here and goes out in the expectation of obtaining a situation in Van Diemens Land.

### 14 December

A few days ago Mr Paul received under a blank cover, the following poetical effusion which seems to be a sort of quizzical abstract of the case relative to Mr Shands sequestration.

A Fragmentary Extravaganza founded upon nothing

Quoth Archy “our business has somehow fled,  
Whilst I am not getting younger.”

So he swore, – no he swears not at all, – but he said  
“I will sit on my a--e no longer.

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<sup>139</sup> Mackersy was a director and the auditor of rates for the Standard Life Assurance Co., Edinburgh.

More grist to the mill, be it good or bad,  
 I shall set about finding this minute”  
 Then he scratched his grizzled and foxy head,  
 As if there were something in it.

Now let every mortal from Archy be warned  
 To resist the first stirrings of sin;  
 For scarce had the hasty vow been formed,  
 When the D---l came crawling in

A little black creature, frowsy and fat,  
 with eyes smouldering red, like tinder,  
 And a scant scratch wig to cover his pate  
 Which was scabbed and scorched to a cinder.

At the very first glance of him Archy saw,  
 That straight out of Limbo he came;  
 But for this Archy cared not a single straw,  
 As himself, he had done the same.

x        x        x        x        x

So they cobbled the oaths of the parties there,  
 Where fact and form were derided;  
 And what though they could not write, they could swear,  
 As by statute made and provided.

And there were two notaries, Norlans<sup>[140]</sup> both,  
 Though the place was forgotten quite, and date;  
 But even the notaries choked on the oath,  
 And would only subscribe the mandate.

So the poor creatures swore that they firmly believed,  
 That Mary and Elspet were one:  
 And verily thought, as they hoped to be saved,  
 That their late Uncle Thomas was John.

And deponed, as they trusted in death to be safe,  
 That a slave young or old, small or bigger,  
 Could work out his price in a year and a half,  
 Your true economical nigger.

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<sup>140</sup> A person from the north of Scotland.

That a fortune was clear, on their oath they could say,  
 Though burdened with five times its sum:  
 And that ten ragged wretches with sixpence a day  
 Were worth little short of a plum.

x        x        x        x        x

“Tis all right” cries Archy, “but we should have more  
 And some good votes if we can find ‘em”:  
 So he scoured off the Hero of Troy before  
 And the Hero of H-ll behind him.

But they found to their cost that the whole of the set,  
 Were rather too rough and refractory;  
 And the d---l a vote poor Archie could get  
 But those from the D----l’s manufactory.

x        x        x        x        x

cetera desunt<sup>[141]</sup>

### 21 December

The centenary of the Secession was celebrated by a dinner on the [*blank*] at which honourable mention was of course made of my great Grand Father, Mr Wilson of Perth, and the other three original Seceders from the Church.<sup>[142]</sup> Their successors however have forgotten the principles of the founders and have adopted the most violent sentiments against Establishments of any kind in religion. Witness the speeches at the dinner which were of the most uncompromising description.

The subjects of public interest at present are, the war in Portugal between Don Miguel and Donna Maria his niece: the state of Spain where Don Carlos has not yet raised his standard against the Queens or Constitutional Party; and at home the trades unions that threaten to be attended with consequences very hazardous to the peace of the country. As long as there is little distress the danger is not so great; but a period of stagnation in trade would be very trying. The recent countenance given by the Whigs to confederacies of this kind would then be turned against themselves.

### 31 December

Parties this month – Mr Chrysties, Mr Paul, Mr R. Horsburgh, Mr Cook, Home (29<sup>th</sup>).

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<sup>141</sup> ‘the rest are missing’.

<sup>142</sup> In 1733, three ministers seceded from the Church of Scotland to form a new Church, the Associate Presbytery. Among them was the Reverend William Wilson (1690–1741), whose daughter Isabella married John Muckersy, Lindsay Mackersy’s grandfather. The centenary dinner was held at the Waterloo Hotel, Edinburgh, on 10 December. For a report of the proceedings, see ‘Public dinner – celebration of the centenary of the Secession’, *The Scotsman*, 11 December 1833.

## 1834

### 1 January

Mrs Muckersy and I spent the last night of the year at Williams where the only other visitors were Mrs Scott and her sister Miss Jane. We had a het pint,<sup>[143]</sup> in common form. Dr McArthur by the bye was also there at supper being just now on a visit from Ireland. The ushering in of the New Year was less uproarious than usual.

The Isabella, in which we were to have sent Johny, has I observe put in to Deal with the loss of an anchor and cable.

### 9 January

Today I accidentally heard the close of a case before the Jury Court which has made some noise, that against my old acquaintance Miss Eliza Dallas now Mrs Simpson. She married the colonel when he was above 70 and an invalid, and large settlements were made on her after the marriage which were now attempted to be reduced. The trial occupied yesterday and to day. When I went in at ½ past 3 Mr Richard MacKenzie was under examination, and after him came Mr Robert Rutherford, the framers of the deeds. Their evidence was so distinct as to the soundness of the colonels mind at the time, as was that of Mr John Bonar my friend the minister of his parish that the pursuers gave up the case immediately after it.

### 12 January

Today I heard Dr Brunton preach the funeral sermon of Dr Inglis the leader of the moderate party and a man universally respected.<sup>[144]</sup> The church was very crowded.

### 19 January

Lord Moncrieff has pronounced an interlocutor in Shands case completely in our favour. He says in a note to it referring the case to the court, that he considers the three first objections, those viz. 1<sup>st</sup> that the oath is not a proper oath in terms of the statute. 2<sup>nd</sup> that the sums sworn to are not those brought out in the relative account and 3<sup>rd</sup> that the claims made are inconsistent with the wills of the claimants constituents – to be insurmountable. But even if these were not held to be so, he thinks it is doubtful how far a single creditor claiming upon such vague accounts could be allowed to have the sole preponderance in a sequestration – and further that there is much deserving consideration in the special objections.

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<sup>143</sup> A drink made from hot spiced ale to which sugar, eggs and spirits may be added, served at New Year festivities.

<sup>144</sup> The Reverend Dr John Inglis (1762-1834) had been the minister of Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh. Funeral sermons were preached in the kirk on the Sunday following his burial. Muckersy's mention of Dr Brunton shows that he attended the morning service. It was reported in 'Funeral of Dr Inglis', *The Scotsman*, 15 January 1843.

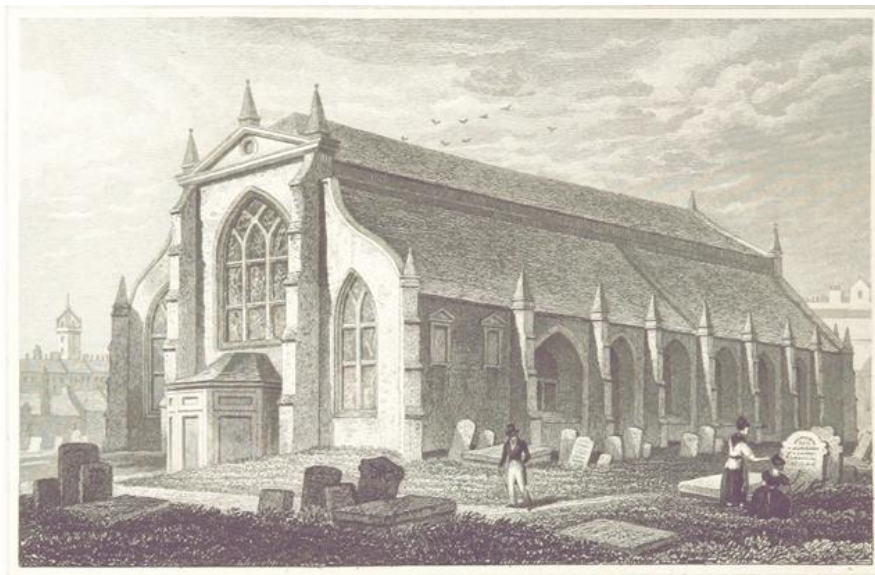


Figure 20. Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, 1829. Mackersy attended the funeral sermon for the Reverend Dr John Inglis here on 12 January 1834. (*Modern Athens*)

### 31 January

The above case was put out in the Inner House roll some days ago: but in consequence of the Dean of Faculty's absence, from his mother's illness, it was at our request put off. Today it again came on, the Dean being present but the Lord President not – since his lady's death. The judges had not read their papers but some remarks were thrown out by them upon the first general objection, rather against us on the part of Lords Grainger and Gillies – in our favour on the part of Lord Balgray. They had evidently trusted to a [*illegible*] from the bar and when the Dean, who by the by was not well prepared himself, said that Mr Jamieson and he had thought the matters so fully stated in the pleading as to render any thing more unnecessary they were taken quite aback and were well pleased to delay the case. This is unfortunately too much the common occurrence here: no preparation on the part of the judges and crude and ill-considered judgments.

Parties this month – Mr McCallum, William, William White, Mr Cooks Ball, Home (Mr and Mrs Cook, Capt and Mrs Christie, William and his wife, Mrs and Miss Wallace, and Mr Cook).

### 8 February

We have this week put out a ticket on our house "To be let" not without reluctance as I have lived now more than twelve years in it. But my friends tell me that is now absolutely necessary I should have what is called a front door.

**15 February**

Mr Shand's case came on Wednesday the 12 and was delayed till next day in consequence of want of preparation on the part of the Dean. On Thursday again called and was decided unanimously against us, a most extraordinary judgment in the face of the opinion and expectation of every practical man who had read the papers. We were however prepared for it by hints thrown out by Lords Gillies and Craigie as before mentioned. Lord Balgray went over to Lord Gillies' opinion and the President who is now somewhat failed, concurred. The Dean was unfortunately and most indefensibly ill prepared and the case had no justice done to it in the last part of the proceedings though most carefully and ably prepared in all the other stages. We have resolved to appeal it and on Friday [*sic*] gave instructions to that effect to our agents Messrs Lamont and Newton W.S. but on the afternoon the same day we were waited upon by these gentlemen who informed us that [*illegible word* - ?since] our former meeting they had had a call from Mr Gibson, our opponent, with a request that they would act as his agents in the sequestration. Their answer had been that while they appreciated the compliment they were afraid they could not consistently act as agents in the sequestration and as our agents in the event of our appealing. To this Mr Gibson had assented and the interview ended by their taking time to consider with us and what was best to be done. Mr Pauls first impression and mine was decidedly against Messrs Lamont and Newton accepting of the agency offered, and upon finding this they left us resolved to write Mr Gibson declining. A meeting of our friends among the creditors had in the mean time been called for Saturday (this day) and was attended by Richard Mackenzie, Mr Dalziel, Mr Shand, Messrs Lamont and Newton and ourselves. Mr Dalziel stated that he had learned of the proposal made by Mr Gibson: and the meeting thereupon were unanimously of opinion that it was for the interest of the creditors that the offer should be accepted by Lamont and Newton. Mr Lamont stated that he could do so only if Mr Paul was completely satisfied, and after some hesitation the latter assented. Altogether it is a serious position of affairs and places Lamont and Newton in a delicate situation. But on the other hand it must be recollected that they are agents for creditors, and for Mr Shand himself, and so called upon to do what in the whole circumstances they consider best. He instantly requested Gibson, Craigs and Dalziel to take charge of our appeal to which they of course at once agreed and very handsomely stated that they would charge nothing but outlay as against us. Moncrieff & Webster are our solicitors in London.

**23 February**

In the course of last week there promised to be a split between Gibson the recently confirmed trustee on Mr Shand's estate and Johnston the agent for the poor people who support him. Johnston was naturally enough displeased at the appointment of Lamont & Newton as agents, they being all along employed to resist the claim of his constituents. He threatened to call a meeting for the removal of the trustee; but as this would have been a fatal blow to Gibson the latter made I presume some arrangement, and the thing seems to have blown over for the present. The dependence of the appeal

keeps them in order in the meantime, but were that to be decided in Gibsons favour he would soon, no doubt, get rid of his present agents, or be forced to dismiss them.

Attended a meeting of the Caledonian Dairy Company, one of the bubble speculations of 1825,<sup>[145]</sup> on Wednesday, as representing Mr Swan's estate. This the most ruinous of all those concerns the less already ascertained amounting to the enormous sum of £40,000.

Subscribed the declaration in favour of the church establishment in Edinburgh, a few days ago: it has been got up principally among the elders of the church, and Mr Paul has taken a considerable lead in the business.

### 28 February

Parties this month, Mr Neaves; Mrs Walker; Mr Donaldson; Mr Cook; Mr Lamont; Mr Cheyne; William; Mrs Chrystie; Home (Messrs Paul, Clason, Rose, Neaves, Scott, Horsburgh, William, Hunter, 5 young ladies, 2 young gentlemen, Mrs William).

I intimated to Mr Paul today by letter that for the present uncertain situation of matters as to the renewal of our contract I was not to be held as liable for the expences [*sic*] of the appeal in Mr Shand's case, but that it was merely to be looked on as a matter which might be taken into account in our after arrangements. This I had mentioned to him before he had finally resolved on appealing.

### 8 March

Land beginning to sell somewhat better. We have sold great part of Lochaber to Lord Aboyne (£56,000) Mr Walker (£[*blank*]) Locheil and Sir Duncan Cameron (£[*blank*]). Two days ago also the estate of Durris the entailed property of the Duke of Gordon, put up at £100,000, sold after a keen competition at £110,000. Harris also has been sold at £60,000. Stocks are rising steadily [?bonds] being now at 91 3/8 and bets have been taken that they will reach 95 before June.

Some curious negotiations going on in Shands case. Johnson offended at the employment of Lamont & Newton called for their dismissal. This was smoothed over at first but on Tuesday he wrote to Gibson, requiring him to advertise a meeting for his removal. The latter answered that he had been about to send a notice to the London Gazette in consequence – intimating his intention to resign, but that a particular circumstance had induced him to delay, doing so for a day or two. In the meantime he appears again to have spoken Johnston over as the latter has not moved himself as threatened. We have got copies both of the requisition and answer.

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<sup>145</sup> A number of factors, including the opening up of newly independent Spanish colonies in South America to British trade, had led to a boom in investment and speculation in the early 1820s. The Caledonian Dairy Company was a joint-stock company formed in 1825 to supply Edinburgh with dairy produce. Its affairs had been wound up in 1830 after it got into financial difficulties.

Names of parties on whom my third investment in Government annuities shown –  
£200, proportionally.

	C	Age	Annuity	Sum
	Zephaniah Banks, Kendal Weston	81	23.19.6	£100
	James Ralph, Gardener, Forres	80	23.19.6	100
s	David Roberston, Shoemaker, Cupar, Fife	80	23.19.6	100
os	John Callender, Farm Servant, Callender	80	23.19.6	100
o	Benjamin Burchill of Brompton	80	23.19.6	100
o	John Easton, Yeoman, Pocklington, Yorkshire	80	23.19.6	100
below	Thomas Linton, Yeoman, Pocklington	81	23.19.6	100
s	John Unston, retired Pilot, Elie	-	23.19.-	100
	Alexander Stewart, Bonskeid, Perth	80	23.19.6	100
s	James Meller, Farmer, Libberton	79	22.4.-	100
s	James Fergusson, Mason, Callender	79	22.4.6	100
s	Thomas Matthew, Farmer, Errol, Perthshire	79	22.4.6	100
	Ar. McEwan, Yeoman, Water of Leith	79	22.4.6	100
s	Lord Craigie, Edinburgh	79	22.4.6	100
s	John Fielden, Yeoman, Antrivale, Lancashire	79	22.4.6	100
	Samuel Jackson, Yeoman, Trough, Lancashire	79	22.4.6	100
s	Sir A. C. M. Gibson Bart. of Cliftonhall	78	20.14.-	100
	Charles Downing, Paul, Cornwall, Yeoman	78	20.14.-	100
oss	James Fulton, Yeoman, Neilston, Renfrewshire	77	19.6.6	100
sxso	John Jameson, Auchenleck, Ayrshire	78	20.14.6	100
	Elizabeth Smith, now Hays, Seaton, Durham	77	16.6.6	100
o	Neill McGill of Kilcupanach, Farmer	76	18.-.6	100
s	John Yeatts, Weaver, Hamilton	76	18.-.6	100
	Duncan Stewart, Shoemaker, Callender	75	19.5.6	100
	John Hempseed, Yeoman, Blackford	80	23.19.-	100
above	Thomas Linton of Pocklington	81	23.19.-	100
			<u>£572.7.-</u>	<u>£2600</u>
	Thomas Robertson of Cornton, Stirlingshire	78	20.13.-	100
	John Dawson		20.13.-	100
	William Gedess, merchant, Leith	78	20.13.-	100
	Jonathan Elder, harbour attendant, Campbellton	78	20.13.-	100
			<u>£654.19.-</u>	<u>£3000</u>

N. those marked x also in first investment p.151. [26 August 1833]  
o also in second investment p. 160. [9 November 1833]  
s also in fourth investment p. 178. [30 June 1834]

**16 March**

The examination of Mr Shand took place at Stonehaven on Tuesday last. Mr Paul wished me to go to Aberdeen to arrange with Mr Lumsden for attending; but I thought it unnecessary and he therefore wrote. It was fortunate I did demur for it had been already arranged that Mr Milne of Aberdeen should attend on the part of the creditors. Nothing transpired of any consequence, Mr Gibson avoiding all questions as to the claim of the creditors. Our case has been revised by Mr Rutherford and is ready for the press. Mr Paul has asked me to go to London to attend the progress of the appeal. We understand that the agent in the sequestration is to be named by Mr Adam Anderson the counsel for the Andersons – a very significant arrangement.

**28 March**

Mr Paul left town today for Geanies where a great deal has to be done in the way of arranging with tenants etc. Mr Gordon joins him in a few days there.

I have written an abstract of the general objections in Mr Shands case, and we have sent it to London whither the case has been sent by the attorney general. I wrote along with it to our solicitor Mr Webster requesting him to inform me about what time the case may be expected to come on that I may regulate my movements accordingly. There are other matters which I have to attend to in London at the same time connected with Mr Donaldsons process. Mr Stephens sequestration etc.

**29 March**

Called on Miss Fullerton, widow of my young friend George, who is on her way to visit and remain some time with Mrs Cleland.

**6 April**

I had a letter from Webster informing me that he had sent the abstract etc. to the attorney general; that the case was due on the 17<sup>th</sup> and as the opposite solicitor had expressed a wish to concur in pushing it forward, he expected it might be heard between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the end of the month. He says the case he considers to be a very plain and simple one. By a second letter he requests a remittance of £100 to pay fees to counsel etc. which I accordingly sent him. I shall probably leave town i.e. Edinburgh on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mr Paul chosen elder from the presbytery of Edinburgh to the General Assembly, along with George Ross and Baillie Sawers, throwing out the Lord President who had for many years represented that reverend body. The anti-patronage party have been making great exertions to exclude all the moderate party.<sup>[146]</sup> Mr Cook has lost

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<sup>146</sup> The right of patronage, which enabled the patron of a parish church to install a minister of his own choice, had long been a point of contention in the Church of Scotland. The issue flared up in the 1830s and eventually led to the Disruption of 1843. The section of the Church known as the Moderate Party supported the status quo.

his burgh and many others. Meanwhile the committee of the House of Commons all going on with their examinations. Lord Moncrieff the procurator, many clergymen etc. have been already before them.

### 10 April

There was a meeting of Mr Shands creditors to day at which I attended as mandatory for Mr Anderson Fochabers etc. We brought out and had put on record the letters of Johnson and Gibson as to the threatened removal of the latter. Gibson shuffled and trembled much, and was greatly at a loss for a reason for the recal [*sic*] of the requisition. Johnson did not himself appear. Mr Lamont stated what had passed with Gibson on the day preceding or rather made Gibson state it, and declared he would no longer stand in his present position but must know positively whether he was to be agent or not. The creditors took the hint and declared that Lamont & Newton would be agents in the sequestration. They also refused to allow the sale even of the moveables pending the appeal, so that every thing is placed on a satisfactory footing. We have presented the letters in our appeal case.

### 12 April

Mr Webster has returned us the case revised by the attorney general who has also given an opinion that the judgment was wrong and that we ought to proceed. The cases must be lodged by the 17<sup>th</sup> and he still expects the appeal may be heard between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the end of the month. If so, I must leave for London next Saturday

### 17 April

Mr Paul returned from Geanies yesterday in good spirits. Has got the rents put upon a good footing and is in hopes of a purchase.

### 18 April

Received a letter from Mr Webster informing that it was uncertain when the case might be taken up and that it might be better I should not set out till I again heard.

On coming home tonight, found a note from Mr Paul "The advertisement from Gibson is in the Gazette. I borrowed it from the reading room but send it back at 8 tomorrow morning. Dalziel is in the country. I shall have to go out to him, but I shall be at the chambers in the morning."

### 19 April

To Mr Pauls and with him to Dalziel at Ratho (Gogar cottage). The advertisement is in consequence of a requisition from ~~Gibson~~ Johnson to call a meeting for removing all the trustees, and also bears to be for receiving a tender of Gibson's resignations. We agreed that I should immediately go to London for the purpose of pushing forward the case before the day of meeting – 27 May. I accordingly returned and made the necessary preparations for setting out.

**17 May**

Returned from London by the James Watt<sup>147</sup> this morning. (For particulars of my stay there – see Journal).

Weight today 11 stone.

**20 May**

Called on Mrs Kinnear and found Mrs Nicholson and her at home. Am to dine there tomorrow having declined an invitation for today as Mrs M. expects me at home.

**24 May**

Having received a letter from Mr Webster addressed to Gibson Craig W. & Dalziel stating that the appeal would probably be heard about the middle of next week am proposing to start again for London today. Mr Paul would fain have gone himself, but he must attend his duty in the Assembly to which he has been returned by the presbytery of Edinburgh.

**14 June**

Returned from London today by the James Watt – see Journal. Called on Mrs Kinnear. Shands appeal case lost.

**17 June**

Received a letter from Mr Mireson informing me of the death of my Aunt Isabella which took place yesterday. She was in her usual state of health eight days ago, but was then seized with indisposition and became gradually worse till the time of her death. Her funeral takes place on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup>. She is the last of a family of fifteen.

**20 June**

Returned from my aunts funeral which took place on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> at Kinkel church. Mr Ferrier, Mr Jamieson and John M. went there. I went and came by the Bridge of Earn.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> I received a letter from John dated 29 October last, acknowledging receipt of mine of 19 March sending deed for his signature, which he returns (but signed only on last page) expressing great anxiety to have Johny sent out and giving many directions about him; mentioning that they are all well; also that he is establishing a subscription library, and hopes when next at Hobart Town to send £50 or £60 with a list of books wanted.

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<sup>147</sup> *James Watt* was a wooden paddle-steamer operated by the London and Edinburgh Steam Ship Company on the Newhaven to London route. The journey took three days. Walter Scott had travelled home on this ship in July 1832, two months before he died.

## 30 June

Names of parties on whom my 4<sup>th</sup> investment in government annuities stands - £200 proportionally.<sup>[148]</sup>

	D	Age	Annuity	Sum
	William Meek, retired coachman, Hamilton	81	£120.2.6	£500
s	John Unston, retired pilot, Elie	80	120.2.6	500
	Andrew Mailer, mason, Pothill, Auchterless	80	120.2.6	500
	James Hanadence, tailor, Ware, Hertfordshire	81	120.2.6	500
	Peter Cone, Wilmot Street, Russell Square	80	120.2.6	500
	John Tasker, smith, Cupar Angus	80	111.7	500
oxs below	John Jameson, yeoman, Auchenleck	79	111.7	500
s	James Miller, farmer, near Libberton	79	111.7	500
os below	James Fulton, yeoman, Neilston	78	103[xx]	[xx]
xo	John McKay, miller, Bute	77	96[xx]	[xx]
s	John Yetts, weaver, Hamilton	76	90	[xx]
s	Sir A. C. M. Gibson Bart of Cliftonhall	78	103.12.-	[xx]
	John McNab, farmer, Comrie	75	85.10.-	[xx]
	Alpin McAlpine of Killen, Perthshire	75	85.10.-	[xx]
	John Oswald, farmer, Dunning	78	103.12.-	[xx]
	Robert McLorne, farmer, Denny	80	120.2.6	[xx]
s	James Ferguson, mason, Callender	79	111.7.-	[xx]
s	Thomas Matthews, farmer, Errol	80	120.2.6	[xx]
s	Robert Craigie, Lord of Session	79	111.7.-	[xx]
ox	William Gray, Keeper of Meadows,	80	118[xx]	[xx]
os	John Callender, farm servant, Callender	80	118[xx]	[xx]
	James McGill, farmer, Dailly, Ayrshire	78	[xx]	[xx]
	George Prentice, farmer, Kelty, Fife		[xx]	[xx]
s	David Robertson, shoemaker, Cupar	80	118[xx]	[xx]
os above	James Fulton, yeoman, Neilston	78	102.10.6	[xx]
xos above	John Jamieson, Auchenleck	79	110.4.-	[xx]
s	John Fielden, of Centrevale	79	110.4.-	[xx]
	James Adam, farmer, Denny	77	95[xx]	[xx]
	James Menzies	79	111[xx]	[xx]
	Duncan McKnock, weaver, Kinlochard, Perth	79	[xx]	[xx]
	John Sinclair, smith, Dalreoch Bridge, Perth	81	[xx]	[xx]
			[xx]	[xx]

N. those marked x also in first p.151.  
o also in second p. 160.  
s also in third [xx]

<sup>148</sup> The last two pages of the diary have large, ragged tears down their outside edges. To prevent unnecessary editorial clutter, the usual insertion 'page torn' has been replaced with '[xx]'.

**3 July**

Mrs Muckersy went over to Fife to day on visit to her friends.

Discovered that there was a serious obstacle in the way of my attaining an object on which I have long had my heart fixed: see 21 May 1833.

**12 July**

At the meeting for electing a new trustee on Shands estate, creditors to the amount of £11,000 voted for Mr Paul [xx] Mr Jackson appeared with claims from the Anderson family to the amount of [xx] 23,000 and voted for Mr Gibson and as before. Mr G to the great surprise of all the meeting accepted, though he did not venture to appear. A new contest is the consequence.

**13 July**

Received a letter this morning which leaves me nothing to hope for.

**23 July**

Messrs Kinnear Smith & Co. stopped payment today. William is in with them to the extent of nearly £1000 but thinks he is fully covered by bill transactions etc. if they pay 10/. the least dividend talked of. I am free from pecuniary [xx] having no account there. What a concurrence of circumstances within a [xx] few days! London George dined with [xx] Saturday and was to have [xx] for the north.

**9 August**

Mrs Muckersy returned from Fife to day. We are arranging for the sending out of little Johny to van Diemen's Land. A Mrs Mathieson has engaged to take charge of him thither on getting her passage money paid.

**26 August**

Mrs Mathieson came over from Elie and informed us that on further consideration and as a Mr Wood to whom she [xx] a recommendation was at present [xx] found in this country, she could not [xx] of going out to van Diemens Land as [xx] she were assured of being provided [xx] there, less she got into employment [xx] we were not authorised, and could [xx] venture to give any assurances of [xx] kind, the arrangement broke off. [xx] then I had heard of a Mr Thomson [xx] family who go out by the present [xx] the Lochiel; and on calling for [xx] to day they have recommended a [xx] person in whom they are interested [xx] take charge of Johny; and have [xx] superintend her. The ship is [xx] to sail in ten days or a fortnight.

**30 August**

At Leith to day arranging with [xx] Johnys passage. The arrangement of [xx] berths not finally made, but the captain pledges himself to give a good one. I [xx] draw on John for £50 the amount for his little boy and the servant, the latter messing with the steward, [xx] kept entirely separate from the [xx] passengers.

End of Vol. 1.

## FURTHER READING

The original document is held by the National Library of Scotland: Diary of Lindsay Makersy, an Edinburgh accountant, 1827–1834, MS.192.

A study of Makersy's business (and public accountancy in Scotland more widely) can be found in Lee, T. Paul and Makersy, accountants, 1818–34: public accountancy in the early nineteenth century, *Accounting History Review*, 21.3 (2011), 285–307. Further background information can be found in Brown, R. *A History of Accounting and Accountants*, Edinburgh, 1905, part 2, chapter 2, Scotland – before the charters, 181–202; and Perman, R. *The Rise and Fall of the City of Money: a Financial History of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, 2019.

W. C. Learmonth's *History of West Calder*, West Calder, 1885, provides an account of the village where Makersy spent his childhood. It also contains a good deal of information about his father, the Reverend John Muckersy. Biographical information about his brother John can be found in Finlay, L. 'Mackersey, John (1789–1871)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, volume 2*, Melbourne, 1967. *A History of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet*, Edinburgh, 1890, 134, offers a resume of the professional life of his brother William.

For contemporary depictions of Edinburgh, see: Stark, J. *Picture of Edinburgh: containing a description of the city and its environs*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, Edinburgh, 1825, which includes descriptions of the city's political and civil establishments, public amusements, and banks and insurance companies; Shepherd, T H. *Modern Athens. Displayed in a series of views; or Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century*, Edinburgh, 1829; and Pollock's *New Guide through Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, 1834, which is divided into a number of 'strolls' each taking in a particular part of the city. For a modern overview of the city during the period, see Cosh, M. *Edinburgh: the Golden Age*, Edinburgh, 2003.

Insights into two of Makersy's main interests can be found in Findlay, B. *A History of Scottish Theatre*, Edinburgh, 1998; Stevenson, R and Walker, G, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Scottish Theatre*, Oxford, 2025; and Kaufman, M H. *Edinburgh Phrenological Society: a History*, Edinburgh, 2005.

Other relevant works can be found in the notes to the Introduction.

## IMAGE CREDITS

### CAPITAL COLLECTIONS

<https://www.capitalcollections.org.uk/>

The image is © The City of Edinburgh Council.

Figure 10. James Skene, *Proclaiming King George IV, Feb 3rd 1820*, 1174.

### HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/>

The image is © Historic Environment Scotland.

Figure 7. *Arbroath Abbey*. HES DP 093951.

### NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND

<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/>

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Figure 2. Unknown artist, *Rev. Edward Irving, 1792-1834. Founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church*, 1820. NGS PG 820.

Figure 3. Walter Geikie, *William Burke's House*, 1829. NGS SPL 262.1 C.

Figure 11. David O. Hill, *Dunblane Cathedral*, 1821. NGS PGP EPS 510.4.

Figure 14. *View of the Great Reform Meeting at the King's Park, Edinburgh, April 24th 1832*, 1832. NGS UP ZZ 26.

Figure 15. Joseph Swan, *View of the High Street and Cheapside, Kilmarnock, c.1830s*. NGS SP V 611.1.

Figure 16. Thomas Hamilton, *Design for the Burns Monument, Calton Hill, Edinburgh*. NGS D 2533.

### NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

<https://www.npg.org.uk/>

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Figure 17. George Cooke, *William Cobbett, c.1831*. NPG 1549.

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND**

<https://www.nts.org.uk/>

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Figure 4.(a) James Thom, *Tam o' Shanter*, 1828. NTS 3.5024.

Figure 4.(b) James Thom, *Souter Johnnie*, 1828. NTS 3.5025.

**VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM**

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>

The image is © The Victoria & Albert Museum.

Figure 8. *Mr. Liston, as Paul Pry*, 1825. V&A S.243-1997.

**MODERN ATHENS. DISPLAYED IN A SERIES OF VIEWS : OR  
EDINBURGH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, Edinburgh, 1829.

Figure 5. *The Assembly Rooms*, 60.

Figure 6. *The Theatre Royal*, 72.

Figure 9. *St George's Church and Charlotte Square*, 42.

Figure 12. *St Giles' Church*, 32.

Figure 13. *The Royal Exchange, High Street*, 46.

Figure 18. *The Cannongate [sic] Church*, 32.

Figure 19. *Leith harbour, from the pier*, 19.

Figure 20. *Grey Friars Church*, 11.

**THE POST OFFICE ANNUAL DIRECTORY FOR 1833-1834**

Edinburgh, 1833.

Figure 1. Advert for the Diorama and Cosmorama, Lothian Road, 361.

# SOURCES IN LOCAL HISTORY

GENERAL EDITOR: KENNETH VEITCH

The *Sources in Local History* series was established by the EERC in 1994. Its aim is to provide edited transcriptions of diaries, letters and other personal documents that can be used to study everyday life in Scotland over the past three centuries. Six volumes were published between 1994 and 1997, making available a range of original sources, from the diary of an eighteenth-century Orkney farmer to that of a nineteenth-century Dundee millwright. The series was re-launched in 2015 as a free-to-access digital resource and forms part of the EERC's Regional Ethnology of Scotland Project.

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