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THE BOOK OF THE  
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NINETEENTH VOLUME

THE BOOK OF THE  
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OLD EDINBURGH  
CLUB

NINETEENTH VOLUME



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## THE HAMMERMEN OF THE CANONGATE :

PART I<sup>1</sup>

THE craft of the Hammermen, comprising as it did several different 'arts,' could never fail to be one of the most influential in any Scottish burgh. It was so in Edinburgh, even after the goldsmiths became separated from it, and the same was the case in the Canongate, where the goldsmiths, not very numerous, did not seek a separate existence. It may be safely assumed that most crafts were practically contemporaneous with the burgh of which they were a part, although, through various causes, principally the fortunes of war, the original seals of cause, if such existed, are not recorded. The Canongate was no exception to this rule, but while the *Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis* mentions, under date 1554, seals of cause granted to the shoemakers and tailors, it records none granted to the Hammermen. Yet it must be that, if such crafts existed, the Hammermen, no less necessary to the life of any community, had equal recognition.

The earliest book of the craft records dates no earlier than 1613, but itself bears witness to the greater antiquity of the Hammermen. On 4th May of that year, being Beltane

<sup>1</sup> The basis of this paper has been the Book of the Proceedings of the Hammermen of the Canongate, kindly lent for the purpose by Mr. Thomas Yule, W.S. It is a well-preserved volume, dating from 1613 to 1687, worthy, indeed, of more detailed quotation than it has been possible to make in a limited space. The records of the Canongate in the City Chambers, chartularies, Bailie Court Books and Council records have been consulted, as also the Minutes of the Town Council of Edinburgh, as well as other records printed and unprinted, noted in the text. Still the history of this one craft, and even more the history of the burgh of the Canongate, is far from being exhausted.

and the day of the annual election of office-bearers, the deacon, masters and 'hail remanent brethreine' decided for the better preservation of their 'locked book' that the acts of the craft should be copied out, in order that the said book need only be used for the recording of the booking of freemen and prentices. The meeting was held at the Kirk of Holyroodhouse and, in token of their approval, the act was signed by, or on behalf of those present, the deacon and twenty-three members of the craft. With this sanction, the clerk to the craft inserted in the beginning of the new book acts to the number of seventy-three dealing with the administration of their affairs, the earliest of which is dated in 1537.

It does not seem a very early date in regard to the history of the burgh of the Canongate, but obviously is in no sense the record of the beginning of the craft. Indeed, it is disappointing that the laws of the Canongate Hammermen give only by implication the constitution upon which they worked. Because of this reticence, born of the fact that the existence of the craft was a mere commonplace to them, it may be as well to set the stage for the narration of their history, as told by themselves, by explaining, so far as possible, the nature and government of the craft or trade of the Hammermen. These, under the one generic name, comprised several 'arts,' to use their own apt word, which vary more or less, while retaining the principal ones, the goldsmiths, the blacksmiths, the gunsmiths or 'dagmakers,' the cutlers, the 'lorimers' or harnessmakers, the locksmiths, the saddlers and the pewterers. These are found in the earliest and latest records, but, in addition, were others, of lesser importance, such as the coppersmiths, the hookmakers, the sheathmakers, the braziers or whiteironmen, some of whom were practically synonymous. Another art, the armourers, became practically obsolete.

The governing body of the craft consisted of a deacon,

appointed annually at Beltane, who might and frequently did hold office for two or more years, a boxmaster or treasurer (an office which dated only from 1560), and a number of masters, usually at first twelve, but which in later years might be as many as sixteen or seventeen. These sat with the deacon to decide craft affairs, and had the further important duty of being responsible for the inspection of the work turned out by their different 'arts,' the larger arts, such as blacksmiths, gunsmiths, cutlers, saddlers and pewterers, having two masters in charge. In addition to these men, actual working members of the craft, were two other officials, the clerk and the officer. The latter, at first one of the recently admitted members of craft, obliged in terms of his admission to serve in that capacity for one year, gradually became a paid official, with the duty of carrying out the acts of the deacon and masters. The former, charged with recording the acts, was usually a notary public, though, for a few years of the craft's history, the brethren, moved either by motives of economy or of charity towards a less fortunate member, employed one of their own masters as a clerk. The clerkship of Robert Bruce is notorious for the peculiar vileness of his handwriting and his fantastic ideas of spelling, conspicuous even in a day when no one held himself bound by any strait conventions in this matter.

## I

Of the number of the craft there is never any satisfactory indication. One list in the hand of Robert Bruce, and undated, gives fifty-seven names; another in 1636 gives thirty-three names. An act of 1635 gives twenty-five prentices who were not eligible for their freedom, showing as much by omission as otherwise the size of the craft, while in 1641 forty-three masters contributed towards the purchase of new velvet morteloths, probably the majority, though not all of

the masters in the Canongate, otherwise it should not have been necessary to enter each name individually.

Each master in an art was a freeman of the craft, either by inheritance, by apprenticeship, by marriage or by purchase, the latter two being in the Canongate apparently the rarest, while in the adjacent burgh of Edinburgh they were frequent. He had also to be a burghess of Canongate, although in this respect there seems to have been a certain laxity. But, with regard to this, it should be noted that the jurisdiction of the Hammermen extended over the regality of Broughton, and included the village of North Leith as well as the burgh of the Canongate, and that a man might enter freeman of the craft in the regality or North Leith alone. In that case, not being allowed to work in the burgh, it was superfluous to become a burghess.

It was a long business to qualify as a master. In the first place, an apprenticeship had to be served, which an act of 1579 sets as no less than six years, with a seventh for 'meat and fee,' the purpose of the last year being apparently both for the benefit of apprentice and master. The next stage was service with a master within the burgh for two years. The period of apprenticeship under exceptional circumstances might be shorter but very frequently was longer, extending to eight, nine or even ten years, usually in cases when the apprenticeship was to one of the more highly skilled arts. No dispute seems to have arisen over the question of the two years as servant: it was short enough in which to save money for the inevitable expenses of entry as freeman and burghess. The Book of the Hammermen gives no indication as to the age when a boy might enter on his apprenticeship, but another Canongate incorporation, the Bakers, set the age at thirteen, and we shall not be far wrong if we assume that to have been the approximate age for the Hammermen's prentices.

It is doubtful how far reliance can be placed on the records

of the craft with regard to the admissions of prentices and freemen. The fact that there were two books, of which the older was supposed to be used for recording such admissions, and that they are inserted in the new book, is responsible for a certain amount of inaccuracy, since there is no proof that the existing entries were complete. If the book started in 1613 contains all the entries, it may be noted that in some years there are surprisingly few. For ten years from 1613 to 1624 there are never more than three prentices booked in one year, and, while in 1616 six freemen were admitted, the other years of that decade show an average of two freemen a year. The numbers increase slightly during the next twenty years, to drop abruptly during the plague of 1646, when only one prentice was admitted. But, once the plague ceased, the result of the mortality among the inhabitants of Canongate was a record number of admissions of masters and prentices, eleven of the former and thirteen of the latter.

At the close of the apprenticeship, a period of two years at least had to be spent as servant to a freeman of craft, working for 'meat and fee.' It was laid down that this time had to be spent in the burgh, not abroad, or in suburbs or other towns, under penalty of cancelling the benefit of the apprenticeship. A statute, about 1637, stipulated that no unmarried servant should be engaged, and that his service was to be for a year or for six months, while weekly engagements or pay was forbidden. The condition about marriage appears unusual: in Edinburgh it was the custom for the new burghess to marry and take a house, showing himself in that way to be a responsible citizen, prepared to take up his share of the town's burdens. But the reason behind this statute of the Canongate Hammermen may have been to give more security to the master for his servant, in so far as a man with a wife was less likely to want to change. Still, even marriage could not sober a servant, for they were apt to 'struggle or feight within their maisters buiths,' and the

craft found it necessary to threaten punishment for such affrays, with a grim and unusual allusion to higher powers: 'and in caice it sall come under the compas of a ryot the deacone for the tyme sall recommend them to the citie magistrats,' a course likely to produce imprisonment in the Tolbooth and appearance before the bailies in the Burgh Court.

At the close of the two years as servant it was possible for a man to apply for the freedom of the craft, a privilege not too easy of attainment even to a freeman's son. For, while strangers to the burgh had to pay heavy dues, the others had also payments to make, and both had to satisfy the craft as to their qualifications in their chosen art. The assay is one of the parts of the life of the craft which retained its formality undiminished throughout. The candidate presented to the deacon and masters for the year a 'bill' craving admission to an assay. Having considered the application, they set the assay, appointed the 'booth' in which it was to be made, and chose two men to be assay masters, whose duty it was to watch the candidate at work. Frequently also they set a time limit within which the assay was to be completed, but this appears to have been a mere formality, since in practically every case it was disregarded. In due course the assay was presented before the deacon and masters of the art to which the candidate belonged, and was examined and pronounced 'sufficient' for the service of the King's lieges. It may be noted, in passing, that there is no record of an assay ever having been refused. The candidate then was admitted freeman, after taking the oath of obedience to the craft and of loyalty to the King and government. He paid his dues, among which was the significant item of 'banquet silver,' and was thereafter qualified to set up his shop and to take an apprentice. The item of 'banquet silver' appears to have been one liable to abuse, for about the year 1579 the craft ordered 'for the weill of our brethrene that is

incumeris and for avoyding superfluous eating and drinking of the multitud,' no prentice in Canongate was to pay more than twenty merks for his two banquets. The fee for a man who had been neither prentice nor servant was left to the discretion of the deacon and masters.

The fee for the booking of an apprentice was, by an act of 1598, set at thirty shillings, but subsequently increased to three pounds Scots. Another act of the same year set the entrance fee of strangers at 30<sup>u</sup>. But the craft, like others, usually had difficulty with its finances, and the admission of freemen, insomuch as it was indispensable, was an easy way of raising money. Hence the fees tended to rise steadily. In 1593 it was statute that a prentice should pay 16<sup>u</sup> for his freedom, while one who had worked five years as servant, though not an apprentice, might have the right for 20<sup>u</sup>. No change was recorded till 1630, when the rate for strangers was increased to 100 merks, more than double the previous fee. Again, in 1649 the apprentice's fee was increased to 66<sup>u</sup> 6s. 8d., a sum including all dues but the officer's fee. At the same time the dues for freemen's sons were altered to 26<sup>u</sup> 13s. 4d. But the craft were soon to find that their anxiety to put their affairs on a satisfactory footing had worked otherwise than they expected. Only eight years later they were compelled to put on record that 'the exhorbitancie and greatnes of the soumes to be payit' were hindering the entries into the trade. 'For the better incuradgement of those that will admit thameselves friemen . . . in respect of the tymes' they reconsidered the dues and set them at 60 merks for apprentices, a decrease of more than 20<sup>u</sup>, and 22<sup>u</sup> 13s. 4d. for freemen's sons. This arrangement lasted till 1669, when the deacon and masters reconsidered the table of fees. They had some justification for doing so: the last act had been passed at the time of the military occupation of Oliver Cromwell, when the fortunes of the burgh were low and taxation heavy, while in 1669 the Restoration had

brought back a measure of prosperity with the return to the Canongate of such nobility and gentry as had government or private business in the burgh or the capital. At the same time they graded the fees for admission with regard to the privileges involved. A freeman's son entering freeman in both burgh and barony paid 42<sup>11</sup> 18s., an apprentice for similar freedom paid 89<sup>11</sup> 11s. 4d.; a freeman's son admitted for the barony alone paid 36<sup>11</sup> 4s. 8d., and an apprentice under the same conditions paid 46<sup>11</sup> 4s. 8d.

At the same time the fee for entrance to apprenticeship was raised to 6<sup>11</sup>, save in the case of the booking of a freeman's son in the barony, when the fee was only 3<sup>11</sup>, while the engagement of a servant necessitated a fee of 1<sup>11</sup> 6s. 8d. The dues for the entry of a stranger as freeman were left to the discretion of the deacon and masters, who, always jealous for their craft privileges, were unlikely to make admission too easy. In cases which concerned their prestige they could make concessions, as in the case of the goldsmiths, who had to be encouraged to take up residence in the Canongate.

Once admitted a master, the new Hammerman was confronted with a set of responsibilities and expenses. As noted before, the condition of freeman in the Canongate practically involved being a burghess also, though apparently not immediately, for there are instances of several months, if not of a year, elapsing before the burghess-ship was an accomplished fact. Yet, strangely, there are converse cases in which a burghess of the burgh applied to be admitted freeman of the craft. The burghess dues were not exorbitant, 6s. 8d. for any one who had the right by birth or marriage, 10<sup>11</sup> for an apprentice and 40 merks for an unfreeman. But that was not all. The new freeman set up a shop or booth, which he had to rent, married and acquired a house, engaged an apprentice and a servant, and, after he had had one apprentice for three years, might engage another. He had duties with regard to the burgh, watching and warding, he

had to pay his share of all taxation, to contribute towards the support of the ministers (one or more) of the burgh, and to pay his quarterly dues to the craft for the maintenance of its poor. Apart from payments, he would be called upon for other services. The appointment as master of his art for the year involved the supervision of the other members as to the quality of their work, their apprentices and their payments. It also required his attendance on the deacon to transact the craft business, ranging from care of their financial affairs to the admission of freemen and apprentices and the settlement of disputes between fellow-members. In addition, he might be called upon to sit as a member of the burgh council or upon an assize in criminal cases heard in the court of the regality and burgh. No wonder that the craft occasionally fined any one who convened the deacon and masters upon frivolous complaints.

## II

The foregoing paragraphs are an attempt to indicate the manner in which individuals became members of the craft, a procedure common to most if not all crafts, yet not generally known. What precedence held good among the Canongate crafts is neither stated definitely nor given consistently, but it is apparent that the Hammermen enjoyed a certain importance in spite of the nearness of the capital. The lists of apprentices show that lads from all parts of Scotland were sent to the Canongate to acquire the secrets of the craft, not always to enable them to become free of the burgh, but with the intention of returning home to practise what they had learned. It is remarkable that relatively few such apprentices became freemen unless there was some reason, such as kinship with a freeman resident in the 'gait.'

The blacksmiths, who usually stand first in the list of arts, were by far the most numerous, established in the

burgh, in North Leith and in St. Ninian's Row. The practice of the art descended frequently from father to son, showing that it was one of the healthiest of the trades. It rarely exceeded the usual number of years for apprenticeship, and had an assay which varied but rarely: a horse-shoe with six nails, the 'crook' and 'band' for a door-hinge, a spade and a shovel-iron. One apprentice in 1615 had to make a lance-head, a pair of 'saddle bands & lockhartis' with a 'chaip.' The assay presented no great difficulty to a trained smith, and usually was completed and presented within a couple of days. Even to the blacksmiths came apprentices from far afield, though they rarely became freemen. The art is, for the most part, happy in having no history. Yet in 1640 an account is given of the charge brought against one of their number of having supplied to a smith in Pleasance thirty sets of horse-shoes so poor in material and workmanship that they were useless. The purchaser complained that he had been obliged to take off the shoes he had put on six horses 'to his hurt and disgrace and therby hes lost ane number of his clyentes in respect of the evill report thair of.' The deacon and masters found the complaint proved, fined the maker of the shoes and ordered him to take back all the unused ones. The only other mention of difficulties in the art was in 1654, when the assistance of the baron bailie was called in to make a search for unfree blacksmiths in the regality, with the intention of making them become freemen.

## III

The goldsmiths and jewellers were always synonymous in the history of the art and, so far as the Book of the Hammermen can show, the watchmakers appear to have been attached to them. But the art of the goldsmiths seems to have had a precarious existence in the Canongate, according to the records. A possible explanation may be that the regular history of the

Hammermen starts only after the Union of the Crowns and the departure of the King to England. The Privy Council and occasional Parliaments still met in Edinburgh or the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and the Canongate continued to be the residence of many of the Scottish nobility, but their centre had changed to a large extent with the departure of the Court. Even before 1603 goldsmiths seem to have been few. The court book of the regality of Broughton and burgh of the Canongate gives only a few scattered names. These, however, cannot be taken as a complete list of the art, for only persons concerned in some litigation appear in the pages of the court book and, though the burgesses were much given to law, it cannot be assumed that all without exception were litigious.

The earliest mention of goldsmiths has been found in 1569 when three undoubted masters of that art are named: Jerome Hamilton, John Achesoun and James Gray. Incidentally, it shows the curiously close relationship between the adjacent and rival burghs that Hamilton rented his house in the Canongate from a burgess of Edinburgh. John Achesoun was hardly a regular goldsmith of the burgh, being for several years at least 'master cunyear' to the King, but his son, also John Achesoun, followed his father in the goldsmith art and is named as a burgess in 1574. In the same year another goldsmith is mentioned, Adam Haw or Hall, but merely as a member of an assize. A clockmaker, Abraham Wanweyneburgh, appears in the Bailie Court in 1592 on a summons to pay house rent of 16<sup>u</sup> Scots. John Kinloch, James Achesoun and James Gray were goldsmiths there about the same time.

With the beginning of the Hammermen's own records, the entries about the art, though still few, are more informative, while the Council of the Canongate, whose records begin in 1622 and continue, more or less, till 1731, show several entrances of their members as burgesses. It is, however, a grievous lack that the greater part of the chronicle of the

Hammermen neglects to give details in the lists of the annual election of masters as to the art which they represented. Because of that, unless information is forthcoming from other sources, it is impossible to distinguish between the representatives of the arts. There were two James Harts about 1613, one a goldsmith, the other a gunsmith. The latter served as deacon on several occasions, the former was master at least for a year. After that no goldsmith appears to have been elected a master for many years, even though the other arts were represented by one or more persons. This seems to have been due to the scarcity of goldsmiths, since during those years neither freemen nor apprentices were admitted.

Of the trade of clock- and watchmaker, treated apparently as allied to the goldsmiths, there is some mention. Such workmen were rare both in Edinburgh and the Canongate. Indeed, the former at one time possessed no one of sufficient skill to regulate the town clocks, and the Council were forced to employ an inhabitant of the Canongate. This man, William Smith, figures in a dispute before the deacon and masters of the Hammermen in 1615. He was accused of having reset another man's apprentice and of having insulted the deacon. The deacon was quick-tempered and the clock-maker obdurate, and Smith was excluded from the craft and forbidden the company of his fellows, an action which involved the craft in litigation with his brother James. It was not till three years later that William Smith was found willing to acknowledge his fault and to make amends.

From that date till 1622 neither goldsmith nor clock-maker figures in the annals of the craft. At Beltane 1622 Archibald Law, goldsmith, was elected one of the twelve masters. He held office for one year, and his place was not filled till 1624 when Robert Car was elected for a similar period. In 1627 occurs the first mention of the admission of a freeman, and it is significant that he was a foreigner. Cornelius Yettis, watchmaker, who applied for permission to

submit an assay, was an Englishman and evidently an incomer to the burgh. There was only one of his trade to act as assay master, and William Smith had to be assisted by a gunsmith. But the craft must have realised the expediency of possessing a second clockmaker, and admitted Yettis for the moderate fee of 50 merks.

For the next few years Smith and the two goldsmiths already named alternated in holding office as master, while for one year the former served as boxmaster to the craft. During that time there is no record of any admission of apprentices and one only of a freeman. This was Thomas Ramsdene or Ramsay, who had been in the service of Cornelius Yettis, probably before his arrival in the Canongate, since he was allowed to become free only three years after his master, a period too short for any apprenticeship in the burgh.

That goldsmiths remained few in the Canongate is shown by the fact that it was not judged necessary to appoint masters in the art. It is possible that Edinburgh, with its many goldsmiths, wealthy enough to serve as bankers as well, monopolised the trade, and it is perhaps worth noting that Archibald Law seems to have been a burghess of both burghs.

Foreigners, however, appear to have found the Canongate a congenial place, for in 1638 one Nicolas Vrensoune or Jorgensone applied to be made freeman. It is at this time that the goldsmith's assay is first mentioned, a gold ring and a silver needle. Jorgensone—to use the most probable form of his name—was made free for a payment of 100 merks. He found difficulty in paying the money, and in May 1639 the annual accounts of the craft showed that half of the sum was unpaid. He also entered burghess of the Canongate for 40 merks.

It was as well the goldsmiths had obtained a new recruit, for, while Smith was deacon of craft in 1641, Jorgensone was

apparently the only representative of the art. His name is the only goldsmith's in a list of contributors towards the purchase of a new mortcloth, for which he gave 3<sup>u</sup> Scots. But in 1643 Henry Cockie was admitted to his assay 'as a born burges bairne.' He was a member of the family of that name, well known as goldsmiths in sixteenth-century Edinburgh. One, James Cockie, had been with his brother-in-law, James Mosman, in the Castle during the siege which ended in 1573. Cockie and Mosman were executed, less for the crime of rebellion than because they had coined money for the Queen's Lords. Thereafter, though one or two of the family remained in the capital, others seem to have settled in the Canongate, and Henry or Harry Cockie must have been a son of one of them. He was set an assay, to be made in his own booth under the supervision of Jorgensone and Smith. At the time of his admission, another foreigner, Inglebert Otterbeg or Hecklebeck, joined the art and became a burges. He is described as a jeweller or goldsmith and was admitted for a fee of 200 merks, of which half had to be forthcoming within six months. For his burges-ship he paid a sum similar to Jorgensone's. In spite of their willingness to admit strangers, it appears that the craft had a prejudice in favour of their own people, for Cockie was elected a master in the very year of his admission, while Otterbeg did not attain that position till two years later. In 1650 Cockie was appointed specially to 'take notice of the goodness of work in the goldsmith trade.'

One of the rare allusions to contemporary history is found in the application for membership by John Roger, goldsmith, in February 1644, 'quha hes bene thir many yeiris in England now brocht to flie to his native country an agit man and knawin to be honest.' The craft showed their sympathy by receiving him as freeman for 30 merks, the privilege to apply only to himself, but, at his request and upon payment of 100 merks, it was extended to his 'successors.' Perhaps the

disturbed state of England was responsible for the arrival of another Englishman, Philip Bucknar, watchmaker, who was admitted to his assay in the same year and was made free some months later. In 1646, too, Robert Gaw or Gall, an Englishman, was admitted a freeman.

Across the comparative prosperity of the burgh broke the last great plague which the country was to know. Edinburgh, Canongate and Leith were smitten, adding the terrors of that almost fatal disease to another terror, the victorious campaign of the Marquis of Montrose in the North. True to their habits, the Hammermen allude directly to neither, but, while they carried through their annual elections at Beltane 1645, the entries in their book cease till January 1646. Then the only allusion to their trials was the significant phrase 'all the brethren remaining.' The renewal of the entries shows that the plague had abated and that there was a demand for admission as freemen and apprentices. The first of these was the goldsmith Gall, mentioned above, and it is significant that there was no member of the art present to act as assay master. Jorgensone, Otterbeg, Roger and Bucknar's names appear no more; and while Cockie figures subsequently in the craft's records, it may be conjectured that he, like all who could do so, had fled the stricken town.

It was easy, with a depleted population, for strangers to obtain admission to any craft, so that it is not surprising to find another goldsmith, Robert Shepherd, being made free for a payment of 40 merks. He settled down and took an apprentice, Robert Banks, son of an inhabitant of North Leith, the first apprentice to the art so far as the records tell. The indentures between them were cancelled six years later for some unexplained irregularity. Shepherd was elected master in 1647.

In the following year the goldsmiths were the centre of what might have proved a serious quarrel. The Englishman,

Gall, doubtless unaware of the acute rivalry between the Canongate and Edinburgh and possibly not well acquainted with the constitution of the craft, had declared that it had three deacons, one in Edinburgh and two in the Canongate, Thomas Whyte, elected at the last Beltane, and Harry Cockie. That alone was a grave offence, but he had done worse. He had appealed to the Duke of Hamilton to allow another foreigner, Conrad Ottingar, to work in the burgh, and even had brought a case against the craft for preventing this. It was a part of a freeman's oath to uphold the authority of the craft and the burgh. Hence to appeal beyond them to a nobleman who had no jurisdiction within their bounds, whatever he might have in the state, was a fault requiring punishment. This took the form of a heavy fine—20<sup>l</sup>, but in the end Gall got his way and was allowed to take Ottingar into his own service. Shortly after this episode he was permitted to book his two sons, Edmund and George, as apprentices for five years. This short apprenticeship was, it was stated, to form no precedent, being done solely because of his desire 'to keip his said children in subiectioun and to stay and hinder theme to pas from him and to serve straingers without his consent.' The precaution was vain, for neither lad ever became freeman of the craft. Another English boy, Gilbert, son of William Stansfield, sometime master of Edinburgh's Correction House at Paul's Work, became apprentice to Robert Shepherd, being that goldsmith's second apprentice.

Both of Shepherd's apprentices were duly admitted to their assay, Banks in spite of the alleged irregularity noted above. He was given for assay a silver tankard and a good 'woop' ring; Stansfield had to make a gold ring and a silver salt-cellar. Both paid dues as unfreemen and had to find caution of 500 merks to do good work 'answerable to all challenges,' a phrase not common to the conditions imposed on other entrants. That Stansfield, as well as Banks, was in a peculiar position is proved by the Council act recording

his entrance as burghess, where it is stated that he had served only two years out of the five of his apprenticeship with his deceased master and could find no other to serve within the bounds. These circumstances must account for his being compelled to find caution for doing good work.

Harry Cockie, despite the way he figured in Gall's complaint, continued a peaceful career in the burgh, figuring frequently as a master throughout the Commonwealth rule, and taking an apprentice, George, son of Alexander Hamilton in Balderstone, who, however, never entered freeman.

Another servant of Cockie, whose engagement was never noted, one Alexander Cross, entered freeman and burghess in 1654, the latter by marriage, showing that he probably was a stranger to the burgh. About the same time Robert Banks incurred two simultaneous fines, one of 30s. and another of 40s. for calling the boxmaster a knave and for saying, in presence of the craft, that he was not fit to be trusted with a 'plack.' It was hard on the boxmaster, whose difficulties in managing the financial affairs of the incorporation were enough. The incident may have been responsible for the fact that Banks did not figure among the masters for four years.

In the same year the Canongate Council were concerned with the appointment of some one to keep their clock in order. Their records give first the name of John Thomson, clock-maker, appointed at a yearly salary of 16<sup>l</sup>. He cannot have proved satisfactory, for in the same year John Lorimer was named for the same service. Neither of these is mentioned in the Hammermen's book, but it is fairly safe to assume that they were freemen of the craft.

The average length of life in those days was not long, so that it is hardly surprising to find that Harry Cockie, freeman only in 1643, was dead in 1659, in which year his daughter Janet, by the kindness of the trade, was apprenticed to the 'calling' of stocking-making for one year at a cost of 16<sup>l</sup>.

Into this entry may be read the certainty that the goldsmith had died poor, for it was not the custom for daughters of freemen to learn a trade, particularly a trade which was usually reserved for the unemployed poor and the orphan children of the burgh. The usual destiny of a freeman's daughter was to marry; her dowry, or a part of it, being the right she could confer on her husband of freedom with the craft and the burgh. That they did help their husbands in their work is known, also that, left widows, they might carry on the shop and trade and even train apprentices. It may be legitimate to assume even more in the case of Janet Cockie. She was obviously without any means of support, therefore she must have been the last of her family, otherwise she would have been engaged in helping her mother or a brother. But that is a digression, excusable only for the reason that it shows how much may lie behind an apparently simple entry.

From 1660 to 1677 the art seems to have been poorly represented. The entry of one foreigner, John Joannes, goldsmith and jeweller, is noted in 1664. He became master in 1665. Otherwise no one is mentioned. In March 1677 the trade, taking into their consideration the decay of the art and that they ought to encourage strangers to come and exercise the same, admitted Mr. Henry Aldorne, assay master to the Mint. It is doubtful whether he was ever a working goldsmith, but, from his position, he was doubtless of use to the craft. This admission was followed by two others. Paul Symonds, described as a 'hollacaste,' was given as assay a brass platter for sweetmeats, well chased, and a silver sugar-box. Three months later, both designation and assay were changed. Symonds, called a goldsmith, was invited to make a plain gold ring and a small chased silver dish. In the interval between his two assays, Dalston Ainslie, goldsmith, was admitted, after producing a little silver box and a gold ring jewelled and enamelled. Aldorne

and Ainslie were elected masters jointly at the following Beltane, and continued to hold office for several years.

A watchmaker, Christopher Ellis, was admitted freeman in 1678, after presenting the assay of a chain and spring for a watch, and another, Thomas Strachan, also described as a watchcase-maker, submitted for his assay a watchcase with shagreen flowers and silver studs and a watch-wheel and key. He entered freeman in 1683. In the same year Michael Zieglar, jeweller, entered the craft, having made for his assay a gold ring with a jewel, enamelled, and a silver dish 'with two lugs.' Though the records of the Hammermen have no further mention of him, his mark, both as goldsmith and as master, is to be found on an old silver communion cup at Flisk. Of another goldsmith, John Petersfield, there is no mention except that he was master with Symonds in 1782.

From that date, or nearly so, the records of the Hammermen cease, but the Council Book takes up the tale with the list of burgesses of the Canongate. No particulars are given beyond the bare entry, and the names are as follows: Louis Justie, jeweller and French Protestant, burgess in 1696; George Hepburn, goldsmith, burgess in 1696; David Dunlop, goldsmith, burgess in 1701; Robert Brown, watch- and clock-maker, burgess in 1703; James Aytoun, jeweller, burgess as prentice to Walter Grahame, burgess, in 1706; Henry Guilmont, watchmaker, burgess in 1712; Patrick Inglis, goldsmith, burgess in 1716; William Berrie, watchmaker, by right of his father in the year 1726-27, James Nicoll and Thomas Hall, watchmakers, burgesses, 1729-30. Even this list shows that all freemen goldsmiths' names were not recorded, since two, Walter Grahame and William Berrie's father, must have belonged to the craft.

With regard to the administration of the art very little is known, particularly as to the important point of the assaying of the precious metals used, and the part which the master for the year took in that work. The only allusion to

it, noted above, was the act commanding Henry Cockie to inspect the quality of work produced, and it does not indicate whether the powers conferred upon him were exceptional or not.<sup>1</sup> The statutes of the craft contain two acts respecting the goldsmiths. One, No. 57, was apparently directed against their acquiring and melting down stolen goods. It enacted that no silver-plate was to be received, sold or melted down without certain knowledge of the owners. Any one who bought silver, melted, defaced or otherwise suspicious, would be held as a receiver of stolen goods. This act was to apply particularly to workers in gold and silver wire or makers of gold and silver lace. The latter clause is an interesting reminder of the fact that, in the old days, gold and silver lace really were made with the precious metals, and that worn lace was worth unpicking for the gold and silver wire to be found in it. Another act, No. 59, was even more severe: it forbade the melting or selling of any silver till it had been examined. The fine for contravention of the act was the unusually high one of 50<sup>11</sup>.

## IV

Lorimers, though their art was not strong numerically, frequently follow the goldsmiths in the list of masters. They were concerned exclusively with the ironwork for horse harness, bits, stirrups and spurs. Simple in appearance, the account of the assays show that the art was in reality a skilled one. In 1630 John Lorymer petitioned to be made freeman of the craft and was set to make a French bit 'haifing ane cheik of the conytabill with ane peir secreit in the mouth,' a pair of stirrups 'barrit in the bottome,' and a pair of French spurs. In 1660 the prescribed assay was a chain-bit, a pair of long-necked spurs and a pair of stirrup-irons. The history of the art, as recounted in the records, is uneventful, destitute

<sup>1</sup> The goldsmiths of Edinburgh were granted power to inspect, try and regulate all gold and silver wares not only in the city, but in all parts of Scotland.

of any of the little quarrels which were so frequent among others, while one lorimer, Andrew Wilkie, appears to have been much respected, as he was deacon of the Hammermen repeatedly.

That saddlers should be included among the Hammermen seems inappropriate. In the days when complete armour was a necessity for knights and gentlemen, saddles also were made partially of steel, but in the days of our chronicle such times had passed. Still, the saddlers' art was included with those of the other smiths. The descriptions given in the assays do little to show the material of which the saddles were made. In 1621 George Swentoun had to make a man's saddle and a French saddle 'both perfytlie utred and covered.' In 1631 the affair of William Sergeand, Englishman, casts a little light on the problem. Sergeand was admitted freeman for life, 'for dressing and trimming chairs, stools and such without prejudice to the saddler craft.' Such was the division of labour in those days that it is probable that the Englishman's work was confined to the finishing and trimming with brass-headed nails, characteristic of the period. But the line of demarcation was a narrow one, and Sergeand ungratefully deserted the Hammermen for the Wrights after a lawsuit which put the craft to considerable expense. An entry of 1632 gives the assay as a man's and a woman's saddle. In 1647, after the plague, during which the art lost many members, one saddler was admitted after producing only a man's saddle, with the careful stipulation that this should form no precedent. A complaint was made in 1651, probably still a consequence of the scarcity of masters in the art, that one saddler had been buying saddles from unfreemen and not paying a proper price. He was fined and ordered to give back all as yet unsold or to make 'a compleit bargane for buyeing of them.' One exception from the usual assay is found in 1680 when David Denoon, younger, was ordered to make a 'breasted pad saddle.'

By the seventeenth century, whatever the earlier connotation of the name, an armourer was either a maker of swords or one who cleaned and repaired them. It is interesting to note how this art flourished at a time when swords were largely imported from abroad, and the possession of an 'Andrea Ferrara' or other such blade seems to have become almost a commonplace. Still, a sword remained part of the ordinary equipment of a burgher, and it is probable that not all could afford or had opportunity to procure a foreign one. So the armourers of the Canongate had work to do, though it may be significant that their art had no masters after the year 1680.

The first assay noted, in 1616, is described as a mounted sword. An entry of eight years later required a 'perfyttie finished' sword. In 1642 a broadsword is specified. A few years later the assay sword had to have a 'Highland' guard or an open guard. But apprentices to the craft became few and gradually disappeared entirely, and it is to be presumed that the practice of that art died out in the Canongate.

The trade of sword-slipper, mentioned in the Burgh Court Book in 1574, may well have been allied to the armourer craft, for members dealt in the buying and selling of swords, and the steel bonnet-makers, noted in the same book in 1573, must also have been an old branch of the art.

At what time the use of firearms became usual in Scotland cannot be stated definitely, but the mention of them becomes more frequent in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Towards its close 'dags' or pistols had become an amusement to the young men of Edinburgh, who practised shooting on the streets, once at least with fatal consequences. In 1569 the Burgh Court Book of the Canongate records a case brought against one Thomas Murdoch by David Strang, presumably a gunsmith, for repairs to a 'culverin.' A 'dagmaker' is mentioned in 1575, and again in 1576 one John Kello is so named. His descendants represented the art in the burgh.

Another, Henry Warno, or Vernour, brought a case before the bailies for the restoration of a pair of pistols or their price, which was 6<sup>l</sup> 10s. John Castellaw, again the name of a family which recurs, sat on an assize in 1577.

It was a modern art, and therefore it is not surprising that the gunsmiths were strong in numbers, particularly since the musket began to replace the Jeddart stave and spear in the equipment of a burgher for his duty of watching as well as that of a soldier. And the seventeenth century, though hostilities never affected Edinburgh and the Canongate so directly as in the preceding hundred years, yet made military equipment a necessity, for the fact that recruits were sought for the Thirty Years' War, the Bishops' Wars, Montrose's campaign and the Civil War in England caused all inhabitants to have a measure of preparedness for defence, if not for attack. Hence the gunsmiths flourished, and their masters were frequently elected deacons.

The assay is called usually a 'dag' or pistol, but occasionally is described more minutely. In 1627 the 'scarmish' work of a hagbut was ordered. In 1629 the pistol is described as an 'iron' one, and a year later as a plain iron pistol with a plain timber stock, showing that the weapon had to be complete, in spite of the fact that the making of the stock did not belong to the art. In 1638 the pistol had to be provided with an iron 'ratche.'

As a new part of the craft, the gunsmiths met with difficulties which frequently degenerated into quarrels. In 1626 the gunsmiths lodged a complaint before the deacon against a man who persisted in buying and taking work which was their right, and (a most serious matter) refusing to enter freeman. The matter was judged so important that it was remitted to the bailies, and the man imprisoned in the Tolbooth till he should find caution to cease from the trade, while the brethren of the art were bound over neither to work for him, nor to give him work, nor to allow him to

work till he was made free. Indeed, he was described as an 'infamous person.' Another complaint of the same year probably was due to a shortage of workmen, for James Naismith was accused by the other gunsmiths of taking two unfreemen to work in his booth. Naismith first acknowledged his fault, but proved refractory and refused to pay his fine or 'come in will' of the craft. Wherefore they promised 'of ane consent not to keip society with the said James Naismyth in drinking borowing or lenning with him till his incumming to the craft.' But it was a serious matter to defy all the brethren, and ten days of isolation brought the man to his senses. A third complaint is noteworthy. David Fender, dagmaker, invited to enter freeman, refused and was forbidden to work. He was summoned again a month later and retorted with another refusal, accompanied with 'shamefull and unreverend speiches.' Whereupon the craft took steps to shut his booth. Four months later Fender is found submitting an assay and being admitted freeman. It sounds an ordinary quarrel, but the Council Book supplies the reason, an exceptional one, for the man's apparent obstinacy. In August 1626, two months before the complaint was brought against him, Fender had been admitted a burgess of the Canongate at the request of the Earl of Wintoun, and evidently had assumed that his patron and his burgess-ship were enough to absolve him from the expense and responsibilities of belonging to the Hammermen. But the craft always won in the end.

The art was spreading, however, and not only in the Canongate, for in 1634 the deacon, masters and brethren of the gunsmiths forbade any dagmaker in the Calton working in their liberties. And in 1651 it was enacted that no gunsmith might work with any wright or gunstock-maker till the matter had been considered further. It was evidently the usual difficulty of the monopoly of certain types of work. A gunsmith might not work in wood, even though it was of great consequence to him how the stock of his pistol or

musket was made. Unfortunately, the settlement of the affair is not recorded, strangely enough so far as the Hammermen's records are concerned, for they were unusually good in following to a conclusion all matters brought before them. From the Council Book it appears that the gunstocker became a specialist craftsman, sometimes uniting his work with the almost obsolete trade of bowyer. Further notices of the art are too numerous to give in detail, though one instance may be given of the way foreigners were adopted in the burgh, for James Gacoin, Frenchman gunsmith, was received burgess in 1695, as recommended by the ministers. He was probably a Huguenot refugee like a goldsmith of the same period.

## V

At a time when every one carried about with him a 'whinger,' it is little wonder that the cutler's art flourished. Indeed, from the terms of many of the assays, it seems probable that most people carried both a whinger and a 'pair of knives.' The former figures only too frequently in the records of the Canongate, whose inhabitants were apt to finish a quarrel, begun with insults 'not worthie to be rehearsed,' by betaking themselves to their whingers, with results sometimes fatal and invariably unpleasant to one, if not both, of the parties involved. As an art so necessary and so undeniably old, references are found to it often from the earliest available date.

The assay varied considerably. In 1613 William Whyte, later repeatedly a deacon and boxmaster, made a two-edged whinger which was duly approved. Three years later, the assay given was a 'furnesit cornellit quhinger,' and in 1617 a furnished four-edged whinger was set to be made by another cutler, described two years later as 'four-swairit.' A description given in 1623 is suggestive: John Kello was ordered to make an edged blade 'squared at the point.'

## D

The insistence on the squared point may have been to make the long knife less dangerous as a weapon in the quarrels noted above. In 1633 the assay was extended to include a four-edged whinger with 'knyves with irne heftis,' and a few years later the description is yet more precise, a four-cornered whinger 'hard rigging edged,' a pair of iron-hafted knives and a bodkin. Possibly because cutlers were plentiful the assays became more exacting, and in 1646 the candidate for admission was invited to make, besides the whinger, a pair of iron-hafted knives with pear heads and pillar hafts. The applicant was not an inhabitant of the Canongate, and the severity of the test may have been merely because he was a stranger. In 1647, the year after the plague, the assay was made less rigorous, the candidate being ordered to make only a 'four-cornellit whinger with hard "rig" and edge.' An assay of 1682 was more exacting, being a complete mounted whinger with steel 'wirrells,' two knives and a fork.

The history of the cutlers is, on the whole, uneventful. The Burgh Court Book notes in 1575 an action brought against Andrew Lamb, cutler, for payment to Helene Ra and Constant Brakanrig, her husband, of 40s. and a pair of knives, in complete payment of the sum of 4<sup>11</sup> and the said knives, promised by Lamb for instruction by Helene Ra in the gilding of whingers and knives—an interesting episode in so far as it shows that women took a share in the work of the art. In 1577 two cutlers appear in a case of assault, 'blood & mutilation,' but the matter was postponed upon the plea of the defender that the dittay was incorrect and that he had not been warned legally to make his defence. The fellow-craftsmen were allowed a fortnight to try to reach an agreement: it is probable that they did so, as the case does not recur. In 1620 the masters of the cutlers brought a complaint before the deacon that one of the armourers was 'dressing' whingers and doing other things belonging to their calling. The complaint was found to be proved and the armourer

fined. Three years later a complaint, the substance of which was to be repeated, was brought against a member of the art. He had sold 'insufficient' knives and had not put his mark on them. The matter of marking appears to have been one in which the craftsmen were remiss, and, being a protection against bad workmanship, was of importance. There is, unfortunately, no indication as to the nature of the mark.

An art which is named separately must, however, have been closely allied to that of the cutlers, the sheath- or case-makers. These made the sheaths for knives which, in that day, were not folding. References to them are few, though one occurs in 1570. Allusion is made to the assay in 1616 when Charles Strudgeon, casemaker, was ordered to make a whinger sheath and a 'penner' sheath or pen-case.

The art of the locksmith is another proof of the minute divisions in the Hammermen's craft. The locksmiths were a fairly numerous body, for applications for freedom and apprenticeships are on the whole frequent. The assay is described as a plain lock, a lock and key, a chest lock and key. The art suffered considerably during the plague, and at least one stranger was admitted for payment because 'that trade is weak in the liberty.' In 1651 the index to some statutes not recorded at length alludes to an act for terminating the 'long contraversie betwixt the airt of Blak-smiths and the other airt and trade of loksmiths.' It is a matter for regret that the subject is pursued no further, since it would have furnished another illustration of the embarrassingly close connection between the different arts.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

The pewterers enjoyed a certain importance in a day when china, pottery and glass were to a great extent the

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier controversy in Edinburgh, see the protocol book of Gilbert Grote (Scottish Record Society, No. 287).

monopoly of the wealthy, and when most household utensils and measures were made of pewter. Most inventories of possessions or heirship goods give pewter plates and trenchers, quart, pint and mutchkin stoups of the same, as well as salt-cellars, dishes and basins. The assay, therefore, ran along these lines: a pint stoup, a plate, a basin, varied by a basin, a laver, a stoup and a plate, with, occasionally, other articles too domestic to be named.

It was an art which required constant supervision. The magistrates of Edinburgh had trouble with their pewterers for adulterating their metal and making inferior articles, and the same offence appears in the Canongate, with the difference that the Hammermen of that burgh were competent to deal with the abuse unaided. One case, brought before the craft in 1666, is notable in respect of the severity of the penalty. At a time when 40s. Scots was a usual fine for most offences, George Borthwick, pewterer, was fined 10 merks for selling insufficient work, and threatened, should he offend again, with a fine of 20<sup>u</sup> Scots. But the case proved no deterrent to others, as is evidenced by statute 72, dated 1676. It rehearsed the harm done to purchasers, not only by the 'insufficiency' of workmanship, but also by the adulterated metal, and attempted to meet the difficulty by the appointment of two special assay masters, with power to confiscate imperfect work and to fine up to 10 merks for each conviction.

The coppersmiths or braziers are noted surprisingly seldom in a day when copper or brass was used for pots and pans and larger household utensils, such as the brewing cauldrons, found in almost every inventory of plenishings. In some way, never precisely defined, they seem to have been associated with the whiteironmen, judging by the assay given to a coppersmith in 1616 of a lantern of white-iron and a cast buckle of brass. But another assay in the same year is even more perplexing, a brass buckle and an arrow-head. Further difficulty in defining the scope of the art is met

with in a complaint by Thomas Forster, coppersmith, against a tinker of Pleasance. Sentence was given against the latter that he must enter as a freeman of the craft or remove from the liberties of the burgh. In 1676 the assay for a coppersmith and brazier was a copper kettle, holding six pints, and a hanging brass chandelier 'of the best form.' Another man was invited to make a 'stoving pan' of copper and a brass standing candlestick, while, still in the same year, Robert Rankein, whiteironman, had to make a lantern and a sugar-box, the metal of which was not specified.

There were other subdivisions of the craft, but they were few in number and probably attached to the art to which they had the closest resemblance. The harnessmaker for coaches and litters, admitted in 1628 to an assay of 'tua poale peaces,' promised to do nothing to hurt the saddlers, and so probably counted as one of their number. But shortly after his admission the saddlers complained that he was working at their trade, contrary to his act of admission. The same man in 1643 was the first to complain that another coach-harnessmaker, an Englishman, was plying his trade in the burgh and, anxious to retain his monopoly of work (for which there cannot yet have been a great demand), promised 20<sup>u</sup> Scots towards the expenses of prosecuting the intruder. A beltmaker is noted in 1672, whose assay was 'a sufficient and complete belt for a man and a harness for a horse'—another instance of the baffling interconnection of crafts and arts.

In 1635 David Law petitioned to be received freeman as the only ship and boat worker in the regality. His assay was a door hook and band, a bolt and a ring for a ship. But it is apparent that his work was included with the blacksmiths, for two years later one member of a family of North Leith blacksmiths had a similar assay. Another family in North Leith were hookmakers. James Mure was admitted in 1626, paying unfreemen's dues. In 1655 Matthew

Mure was admitted to his assay, a pair of each sort of clasps and eyes for men and women, and a set of six fish-hooks, large and small. Eleven years later, his apprentice submitted an assay of six fish-hooks and a pair of clasps and eyes for women. There is no mention of others engaged in that work, and Matthew Mure, for many years one of the craft masters, must have had light duties as regarded the inspection of work.

Another isolated trade was that of engraver. Francis Vanheggin, evidently a foreigner, was admitted freeman in 1669, after submitting a sundial, a sealing 'stap' and a pair of book-clasps. But his son entered another branch of the craft after his father's death by becoming apprentice to a gunsmith, showing that the demand for such work was small. Vanheggin is described in the Council Book as a printer-graver on the occasion of his being made burgess by right of his wife, a woman of the burgh. Another trade, doubtless allied to this, is noted in the same book in 1701, when Louis Quensay (probably Quesney), stamper, was received burgess.

Lastly comes the plumber, the exact nature of whose work is not noted, though it may be assumed as far from possessing the modern connotation. The trade is not mentioned in the Book of the Hammermen, and it is only in the acts of the Council that Alexander Isset and William Lindsey, plumbers, are noted as entering burgesses in 1676 and 1725 respectively.

MARGUERITE WOOD.

#### SOCIAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE history of public assemblies in Scotland for the purposes of dancing and other forms of entertainment has been partially dealt with in various books on social life in general, but there does not appear to exist any work of a comprehensive nature. The present article makes no claim to fill the blank, its purpose being simply to give some account of public social gatherings of polite society in Edinburgh in the eighteenth century, with special reference to what was known as 'the Assembly.'

##### I

In the period referred to, entertainments common to the *beau monde* throughout Britain took various forms and were known by such names as 'the ball,' 'the assembly,' 'the masquerade,' 'the ridotto,' and 'the rout.' While most of these had elements in common, they differed from each other in certain details. The ball, so well known even in our time as a party met together for dancing, needs no comment. On the other hand, the assembly, the masquerade, and the ridotto included more or less what was known as a ball, although they had other features as well.

The word 'assembly,' as is well known, is used in various connections. In Scotland it is chiefly familiar in its reference to the supreme court of the Church of Scotland, but in France it is used in a variety of senses, the best known to us probably being the National Assembly. The sense, however, in which