

Holiday Papers.

A VISIT TO EDINBURGH.

To any one who has a few days to spare I would recommend a visit to the beautiful city of Edinburgh, with its historic and romantic associations, and from which the lovely country, with which one is already familiar through the novels and poems of Sir Walter Scott, is easily visited.

If one decides on the Great Northern route, the line passes through three cathedral cities—Peterborough, York (with its far-famed Minster), and Durham (of whose stately pile one gets an excellent view as the train speeds on its way north)—and one registers a resolution to break the journey on the next occasion, so that one may see their beauties.

Arrived at Edinburgh one loses not a moment of precious time, but in the gathering twilight makes acquaintance with Princes Street, one of the most unique streets in Europe. On one side are handsome shops and hotels; on the other public gardens, beautifully laid out, slope down to the Rock, which rises abruptly, crowned with the far-famed castle and fortress, the natural advantages of which are such that in olden days they were almost impregnable. At one end of Princes Street is the Calton Hill, from which one obtains a beautiful view of the city, and right away over the Forth.

THE CASTLE.

One's first visit next morning is to the Castle. Perhaps one of the most interesting sights, in a place teeming with interesting associations, is the little wainscotted room in which James VI. of Scotland and I. of England was born. Poor Queen Mary, best beloved, and most bitterly hated, of women in our own and, indeed, probably in any age. Her personality still pervades the modest chamber, and we are gripped by a sense of the emotions which must have swayed her as she gazed on the face of her first born in whom were centred the hopes of the turbulent people over whom she ruled. When she pathetically prayed for the preservation of her heir, and added:—

“And grant O Lord whatever of Her proceed
Be to Thy Glory Honour and Praise so be it.”
she must surely have hoped in every fibre of her being that her infant son did not inherit the nature of his despicable father, Henry Darnley.

Do you remember the story of the tragedy which preceded the birth of James?

Queen Mary had a confidential secretary, David Rizzio, whose good offices Darnley had not hesitated to utilise to secure the union

to which he aspired with the fair Queen of Scots; but, his end attained, he became jealous of the favourite, insulted his wife as to her relations with Rizzio, and not only planned his murder, but, with inconceivable savagery, arranged that it should take place in the presence of the youthful Queen, who should at that time, if at no other, have been encompassed by her husband with tenderness and love; for she was shortly expecting the birth of her child. With every circumstance or brutality the hideous murder was carried out as arranged.

Conceive the interview which took place between Queen Mary and her dastardly husband, recorded in Lord Herries's Memoirs:—

“The young prince was ushered into the world between nine and ten in the morning; Darnley came at two in the afternoon to see his royal spouse and child. ‘My lord,’ said Mary, ‘God has given us a son.’ Partially uncovering the infant's face, she added a protest that it was his and no other man's son. Then, turning to an English gentleman present, she said: ‘This is the son who I hope shall first unite the two kingdoms of Scotland and England.’ Sir William Stanley said: ‘Why, madam, shall he succeed before your Majesty and his father?’ ‘Alas!’ answered Mary; ‘his father has broken to me,’ alluding to his joining the murderous conspiracy against Rizzio. ‘Sweet madam,’ said Darnley, ‘is this the promise that you made, that you would forget and forgive all?’ ‘I have forgiven all,’ said the Queen, ‘but I will never forget. What if Fawdonside's (one of the conspirators) pistol had shot? (she had felt the cold steel on her bosom). What would have become of him (her baby) and me both?’ ‘Madam,’ said Darnley, ‘these things are past.’ ‘Then,’ said the Queen, ‘let them go!’”

Poor Queen Mary had not only the brutality of her husband, but the jealousy of her cousin Elizabeth of England to encounter. When the news of the birth of the Scottish Prince was communicated to her, she passionately exclaimed to her ladies: “Do you not hear how the Queen of Scots is mother of a fair son, while I am but a barren stock?” That the son of her rival should be the heir to the English throne must indeed have been bitter to Elizabeth, but nothing can excuse her treatment of his mother which is a blot on a reign in most respects glorious. Queen Mary of Scots was neither the saint which some held her to be, not a woman of careless life as others would have us believe, but a beautiful, loving, generous-minded and religious woman, whom a

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