

*XL. Memorial from Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, against the proposed Demolition of Trinity College Church, Edinburgh, presented to the Town Council, 12th November 1844.*

To the Right Honourable the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town-Council of the City of Edinburgh,

The PETITION of Members of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

That your Petitioners have learned with deep regret and surprise, that there is an intention to demolish the TRINITY COLLEGE CHURCH, erected in in the year 1462 by Queen Mary of Gueldres, widow of King James the Second.

In Edinburgh there are now only two churches entire of respectable antiquity—this and the Collegiate Church of St Giles—but the latter has unfortunately been renovated, within a few years, in a manner which has completely changed its original character as a specimen of Decorated Architecture; not to mention the extraordinary circumstance, that some of the public Monuments were removed, and no care has been taken to see them carefully replaced in some conspicuous part of the building. The College Church, with the exception of some slight alterations as to the tracery and mullions of the windows, remains nearly in its original state, and although never completed, exhibits an interesting specimen of our early Architecture; the Porch fronting the south being remarkably singular and picturesque, while the interior cannot fail to excite admiration.

Your Petitioners need scarcely remark, that whatever buildings in Edinburgh possess interest from their antiquity, and the historical facts attached to them, are daily decreasing, owing principally to what is termed convenience, and the beauty of modern architecture. The removal of this Church, however, we are assured, is not a matter of necessity, but merely to afford increased space for erecting warehouses near the Terminus of the Railway.

Your Petitioners would gladly entertain a hope that the Council will never sanction such a proceeding, and give reason to have it remarked, that, while our English neighbours are instituting Committees to protect the antiquities of their ancient Churches, we are permitting the Churches themselves to be pulled down; and thus to increase the regret that our Metropolis, with which a thousand interesting associations are connected, should possess so few public buildings of any early date to attract the notice of strangers, or to gratify the lovers of antiquity.

We sincerely trust, therefore, that your Lordship and the Members of Council, instead of consenting to the destruction of Trinity College Church, will avail yourselves of the changes about to be made in its neighbourhood to have some of the paltry buildings cleared away which at present hide and disfigure the Church; and not only take care that this venerable edifice is properly inclosed and secured, but will direct some inconsiderable portions of the interior to be cleared out, in the view of discovering the Tomb of the Royal Foundress. Should a different course be adopted, it will, your Petitioners presume to think, afford a very striking contrast to the public spirit and good taste manifested by the Magistrates and Citizens of Glasgow, who are now carrying through the restoration of their Cathedral Church and its ancient Monuments in a manner which is beyond all praise.

Your Petitioners will only further call the attention of your Lordship and Council to the opinion of an eminent English Architect (Mr Rickman), who describes Trinity College Church, as now consisting of the Choir and Transept of a small but very beautiful Cross Church. "The interior (he says) is a very beautiful Decorated composition, with the capitals of the piers enriched with foliage, not exceeded in design or execution in any English Cathedral. The mouldings of these piers and arches are very good, and the church is groined, the aisles plain, the centre and transepts richly ornamented with very good bosses. The exterior has some very good mouldings and other details. The south door has an open porch, formed by a circular segmental arch between two bold buttresses with good groining. This porch is evidently the original from whence something of the same kind,

though much smaller, at Roslin Chapel, has been taken. This building is all of good Decorated character, and is deserving of minute examination and study."

(Signed)

DAVID LAING, *Treasurer.*

WM. WARING HAY.

J. T. GIBSON CRAIG.

JOHN W. MACKENZIE.

J. NAIRNE.

R. FRAZER.

A. MACDONALD, *Curator.*

WILLIAM F. SKENE.

WM. FERGUSON.

J. G. DALYELL, Knight and Bart.

J. A. CAMPBELL.

ROBERT NASMYTH.

W. ALEXANDER.

H. HOME DRUMMOND.

THOMAS THOMSON.

RICHARD HUIE, V.P.

DAVID MACLAGAN, V.P.

HENRY JARDINE.

J. S. MORE.

W. B. D. D. TURNBULL, *Secretary.*

ALEX. MACKAY.

WILL. H. LIZARS.

ALEX. SMELLIE, *Joint Secretary.*

CHARLES GRAY.

WM. A. LAURIE.

PAT. NEILL.

ROB. PITCAIRN.

JAMES BURN.

A. G. ELLIS.

T. HENDERSON.

ANDREW DUN.

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[Another Petition to the same effect, and signed by various Inhabitants of Edinburgh, was presented to the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council, at a subsequent meeting. A Memorial in the name of the Society was also addressed to the Right Honourable my Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, setting forth the interest of the Crown in preserving this Church, as a royal foundation, and as a place of royal sepulture, in the hope that Government might put a veto on the transaction. This was presented by the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry. But the Church was doomed. Without entering however on any further details regarding this unfortunate transaction, the preceding document may suffice to show, that the Society of Antiquaries was not indifferent to the preservation of the ancient and venerable edifice. I shall only take this opportunity of stating, that although the Church was founded in 1462 (the year before the Queen Dowager died), the work, probably from want of funds, appears to have proceeded slowly for upwards of sixty years, as in 1522 it was still in progress; and a contract with Robert Dennis, mason, "to remain and labour at the works of the College for his lyiff-tyme," dated 8th April 1532, is also recorded.—D. L.]