

I.

STATEMENT RELATIVE TO THE REMOVAL OF ST MARGARET'S
WELL. By DAVID LAING, Esq., V.P.S.A. Scot.

It will be in remembrance that a Committee of the Society suggested the expediency of removing St Margaret's Well, near Restalrig, and re-constructing it at the eastern end of St Anthony's Loch, in the Queen's

Park. At a subsequent meeting (on the 9th of March 1857, see Proceedings, vol. ii. p. 379), Mr Stuart, Secretary, having read some correspondence on this subject, it was resolved—

“That the Society having obtained from the Directors of the North British Railway full permission for the removal of the Well, so as to allow of its being reconstructed in the immediate vicinity, within the Queen’s Park, under the direction of the Right Hon. the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Works and Public Buildings, it would be altogether beyond the province of the Society to undertake the responsibility and expense of removing the Well; . . . but the Society would willingly approve of any private arrangements by which this object might be accomplished.”

I do not think it necessary to enter upon any statement regarding the subsequent negotiations with the Railway Company and other parties. But having given the guarantee required towards the expense of taking down the interior portion of the Well, in terms of the condition imposed by the Chief Commissioner for Public Works, this matter has at length been accomplished, under the direction of Robert Matheson, Esq., of H.M. Office of Works, to whom the best thanks of the Society are due. The interior of the Well was removed stone by stone; and this removal, owing to the unventilated state of the damp enclosure since the railway buildings were erected over it, was found not to have been done one day sooner than was required. It may further serve to lessen any regret that might be felt at such a removal, to learn, that the water which supplied the Well so copiously in its original state has for several months disappeared, and found for itself another channel.

The site first proposed at the east end of the Loch was found to be altogether unsuitable, not only as the spring of water did not rise to a sufficient height, but the rebuilding would have required a raised terrace to be constructed, at no small expense. The present site on the north slope of Salisbury Crags, towards the south side of the Palace, was considered equally eligible; and the stones having been numbered, the interior of the Well, as stated, is now rebuilt, in the same form and model, close to a spring formerly called *St DAVID’S WELL*. Its exposed condition, indeed, has rendered the addition of an iron grating or door indispensable, as the idle crowds who frequent that locality might other-

wise destroy the interior of the Well. The Well, indeed, cannot, I am sorry to say, at present boast of its original fresh and cheerful appearance ; still I entertain the hope that Mr Matheson will ultimately adopt some plan to give its exterior a more ornamental character.

It is also desirable that means be provided for visitors taking a draught of the spring, which gushes forth as freshly as it did eight centuries ago, when we may suppose it first obtained its name from the Royal founder of the adjoining Abbey of Holyrood.