

V.

ST NINIAN'S SUBURB, AND THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, FOUNDED AT EDINBURGH BY QUEEN MARY OF GUELDRES, THE WIDOW OF JAMES II., IN 1462. BY DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., HON. MEM. S.A. SCOT.<sup>1</sup>

Thirty-six years have now elapsed since the demolition of the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, founded at Edinburgh by Mary of Gueldres, the widowed Queen of James II., in 1462. On recently drawing the attention of a young Edinburgh architect, who was passing through Canada, to a sketch of the ancient church as an object of interest to him, I was startled by his replying, "Ah! that was before my time." It is even so. A new generation is fast taking the place of those who demolished, as well as of those who strove in vain to avert the destruction of the venerable structure. Of the zealous group of antiquaries, mostly old and valued personal friends, who assembled within its walls to take part in the search for the remains of the royal foundress, on the 22nd of May 1848, under the direction of H.M. Board of Works,—including David Laing, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Robert Chambers, W. B. D. D. Turnbull, Cosmo Innes, Joseph Robertson, George Harvey, John Hill Burton, James Drummond, James Y. Simpson, and John Goodsir,—I find myself now the sole survivor. Other and no less zealous antiquaries have assumed their duties, and are advancing archæological research in new fields of investigation, in full harmony with the disclosures of kindred sciences; but to most of the labourers in this

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at the meeting of the Society held March 12, 1883, but the printing has been delayed on account of the woodcuts.

good work the chronicles and chartularies of *Ecclesia Collegiata Sancte Trinitatis de Edinburgh* call up no more definite idea than those of the old Kirk of Field, printed alongside of them in the Bannatyne Club volume of Charters of the Collegiate Churches of Mid-Lothian, as those of *Ecclesia Collegiata Beate Marie virginis de Campis de Edinburgh*. The founder of the latter is unknown, and its ruin dates from 1562, when "the hale bigging sumtyme callit the Kirk of Field, baith auld and new, with kirkyard, luginis, &c.," were sold by its provost, for the sum of "one thousand pounds Scots," to the magistrates of Edinburgh, for the purposes of the new University.

The Kirk of Field still stood roofless and dilapidated when, on the night of the 9th of February 1566--7, the house of its provost was blown up, and the murder of Darnley, the worthless husband of Queen Mary, was effected by Bothwell and his accomplices. But to its association with that historic tragedy is due the preservation of such a memorial of the Collegiate Church as enables us still to realise in some degree the aspect of the ancient ecclesiastical structure.

A rough but spirited sketch, illustrative of the locality and the incidents of the barbarous assassination, appears to have been executed at the time for the information of Queen Elizabeth and the Lords of Council. This has remained ever since in the custody of the State Paper Office, and now furnishes the sole surviving record of the building of "Our Lady Kirk of Field," the site of which has been appropriated for upwards of three centuries to the uses of the University.

No such appalling historic tragedy marked the destruction of the royal foundation of Queen Mary of Gueldres; nor are the prosaic uses to which its site has been applied as a railway station calculated to perpetuate such an interest in it as pertains to that of the University of Edinburgh, towards the founding of which Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney,—one of the ambassadors to the French Court in 1558, on the occasion of Queen Mary's marriage to the Dauphin,—bequeathed the first contribution of 8000 merks. But it seems fitting that a historical memorial of the fifteenth century should not be allowed to be swept away without some effort to preserve as definite a record as can be secured, to enable future generations to know what it really was;

and as I already find myself almost the last survivor of the Fellows of this Society who bore an active part in the efforts to avert its destruction, some account of its actual appearance and architectural details may not be unacceptable from me. The condition of architecture and the kindred arts in Scotland in the reign of James III. has an important bearing on the historical incidents of his era; and hence the characteristics of the royal foundation of the Queen Mother have a special value. Of the church, which was the earliest specimen of the ecclesiastical architecture of his reign, I am able to contribute a series of illustrations, both general views and details, which may possibly include materials no longer recoverable from other sources. Owing to the delay in the actual demolition of the building, consequent on the persistent efforts of this Society to avert its threatened fate, the Railway Company proceeded to clear away the surrounding houses. Thus for a brief period the ancient structure was exposed to view, unencumbered by buildings which had long concealed some of its most striking features; and was probably seen to greater advantage than at any previous period since its erection (fig. 1). I availed myself of the advantages thus afforded for making careful sketches of the doomed structure; and I have accordingly the pleasure of submitting to the consideration of the Society drawings of the earliest Collegiate Church founded at Edinburgh, from points of view which may enable them to form a truer idea of its main features than could be done from any engravings of it hitherto published.

It was probably due to the proceedings taken for the establishment of the royal foundation of Mary of Gueldres, for which a papal bull was issued by Pius II., in 1460, that the citizens were stimulated to have their ancient parochial church—or as it is styled in the charter of Preston of Gortoun, in 1454, “oure mother kirk of Sant Gele of Edynburgh,”—raised to the dignity of a Collegiate Church. The charters of erection and confirmation are no longer extant; but the royal consent, granted at the request of the magistrates and citizens of Edinburgh, for its erection into a collegiate institution, is dated the 28th of October 1466.

The site chosen for the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity was the low ground outside the city gate styled the Leith Wynd Port, or at

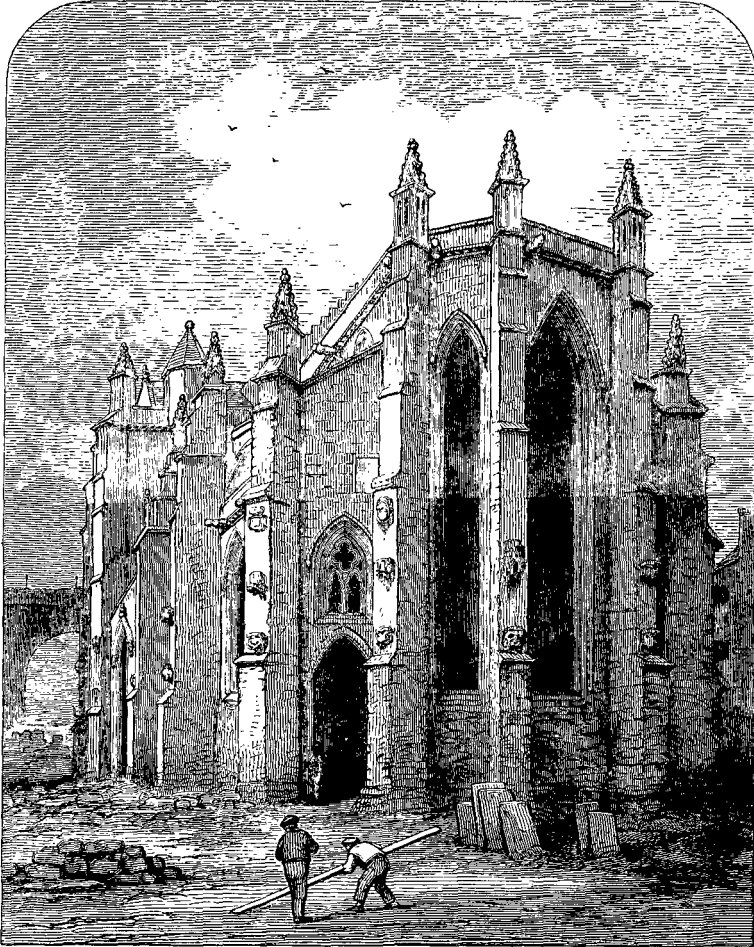


Fig. 1. Trinity College Church, Choir.

an earlier date, St Andrew's Port, where a suburb had grown up, called from an ancient chapel on its north side, St Ninians; and which has now well-nigh vanished, along with the Collegiate Church which in 1462 took the place of the more ancient chapel. Not, indeed, that it occupied the actual site of the chapel of St Ninian, for that stood considerably to the north, and its ruined walls only finally disappeared in 1814, in clearing the ground for the erection of the Waterloo Bridge. In olden times, and on into the sixteenth century, the suburban village of St Ninians was subject to the abbots of Holyrood and the canons of their ancient burgh. In a licence granted in 1654, by Robert Stewart, Abbot of Holyrood, "for augmentatioun of dyuine service at ane alter to be biggit within our sayd abbay, quhare Sanct Crispine and Crispiniane, yer patronis, sall stand," it is ordered that "ye Cordinaris dwelland within our regalite besyde our chapell of Sanct Niniane, outwith Sanct Andrews Port, besyde Edinburch," shall be in brotherhood and fellowship with the Deacon and Masters of the Canongate craft.<sup>1</sup> But this fellowship of the Cordwainers of St Ninians appears to have been transferred at a subsequent date from their brethren of the Burgh of Holyrood to the Edinburgh Guild, as was apparent from the inscription which latterly graced their hall. "The Shoemaker's Land," or Hall of the Cordwainers of the suburb of St Ninians, stood immediately to the north of Trinity College Church. It was among the most prominent and substantial buildings in the district, and confirmed by its appearance that "The Souters of St Ninians," had continued to be the leading craft there down to the eighteenth century. The hall was a building which accorded in appearance with its date. It was plain and substantial, but not wholly unornate; for a sculptured tablet over the main entrance was decorated with elaborate ornamentation according to the taste of Queen Anne's Augustan age. The sculptured panel bore the device of a shoemaker's paring-knife surmounted by a coronet, with the date and motto: "1713, GOD BLISS THEM CORDINERS OF EDINBURGH WHA BUILT THIS HOUSE."

The unornate character of the north wall of the chantry chapel, in which it contrasted with every other part of the exterior of Trinity

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Cartarum Sanctæ Crucis*, App. p. 291.

College Church, suggests the idea that from the first it was concealed by the close vicinity of neighbouring buildings, including possibly an earlier hall of the Cordwainers of St Ninians, on the site occupied till 1848, by the structure built in the reign of Queen Anne. We thus learn of this suburb, while the chapel of St Ninian was still a vicarage of Holyrood Abbey, and in greatly more recent times, as in occupation by the Shoemakers' craft. At no period of its history can it have been an aristocratic resort; and in its later days it had become pre-eminently noted as a mean and squalid suburb. In Sempill of Beltrée's poem, "The Banishment of Poverty," written about 1680, the author, in company with the Genius of Poverty, enters Edinburgh by night, and the pair make for this as their fittest haunt:—

" We held the Long-Gate to Leith Wyne,  
Where poorest purses used to be,  
And in the Caltoun lodged syne,  
Fit quarters for such company."

One of the most ancient and picturesque fragments of St Ninian's Row, opposite to the old well, and not far from the site of St Ninian's Chapel, and also of Dingwall Castle, is engraved among the illustrations of the *Memorials of Edinburgh*. The ruins of the castle are shown in Gordon of Rothiemay's Bird's Eye View, as a square keep with round towers; and an entry in the Council Records of 30th September 1584, refers to "the awld fundatioun of the Lipper hous besyde Dyngwall;" so that here also stood in ancient times a hospital for lepers. Sir John Dingwall, from whom the castle is believed to have derived its name, succeeded to the provostship of Trinity College in 1525; and in 1532 became one of the judges, on the spiritual side, in the College of Justice. He was a wealthy pluralist, a protonotary apostolic; and receives notice in one of Buchanan's Latin Epigrams for the proud titles on his monument, and the great wealth acquired by him at the Court of Rome.

The Latin of Gordon of Rothiemay disguises the later name which this locality had acquired as the Beggar's Raw, under the double cognomen of *Niniani suburbium seu mendicorum platea*. The crypt of St Ninian's Chapel, with some fragments of the superstructure, remained

till the erection of the Regent Bridge in 1814. The basin and tabernacled canopy of a piscina, which must have marked the site of the altar of St Ninian, was transferred from the ruin, in 1778, by Mr Walter Ross, to a Gothic tower which in the earlier years of the present century overlooked the Water of Leith at Dean Haugh. This sole relic of the ancient chapel, which Arnot describes as "the baptismal font" was secured by Sir Walter Scott, and now forms one of the miscellaneous decorations of Abbotsford.

The chapel of St Ninian, the precursor of the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, stood alongside of a roadway, old at least as the Romans. Traces of an ancient causeway, recovered on the demolition of the church, confirmed other evidence of an earlier date, including the finding of fragments of Samian ware, which pointed to the passing of a line of Roman road from the neighbouring sea-port at the mouth of the river Almond, along the *vicus Lethensis*, or the Low Calton, as it was latterly termed, southward by the Pleasance and the Roman stations in the Lothians, to the wall of Hadrian.

But the locality had undergone many changes before the final revolution which swept away nearly every trace of its earlier features in its transformation to a railway terminus. Until the erection of the North Bridge it was the main entrance to the town from the neighbouring sea-port of Leith. The whole low ground from this point westward to St Cuthbert's Church was an undrained marsh or lake; and at the time of the erection of the Collegiate Church in 1462, it must have stood in comparatively open ground, unencumbered on every side except the north, and at no great distance from the eastern verge of the Nor' Loch. The dense mass of houses of the walled town rose over it to the south, while an abrupt spur of the Calton Hill, called of old the Dow Craig, overshadowed it on the east. Soon after its conveyance by royal charter to Sir Symon Prestoun, Lord Provost, and the Magistrates of Edinburgh, while King's and Queen's men were at open feud, we read in the *Diurnal of Occurrences*, under date 1571, of a battery erected on "the Dow Craig abone Trinity College, beside Edinburgh, to ding and siege the north-east quarter of the burgh." The old Gaelic *dubh* or Black Craig is no inapt name for the abrupt, but picturesque cliff of

trap-rock, which perhaps constituted one of the attractions of the ravine sheltered by it from the east wind. One might indeed be tempted to suggest the choice of a locality so little adapted to show off the purposed church to advantage—

“Because the monks preferred a hill behind  
To shelter their devotions from the wind.”

In reality, however, the site for the royal foundation was most probably selected with a view to the spiritual wants of a populous and neglected district outside the city walls. It gives additional interest to this, the first Collegiate Church at Edinburgh, that the proposal for its erection appears to have originated with James II., the son of the poet king and the Lady Jane Beaufort, “the fairest and the freshest young flower,” the sight of whom from his prison window, in the tower of Windsor, took in thrall the captive’s heart, and inspired “The King’s Quair,” the finest poem from a royal pen. Unhappily little more than the preliminary steps for the proposed foundation had been taken when the death of the king occurred, on the 3rd of August 1460, by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of Roxburgh Castle; and it was left to his widowed Queen, Mary, daughter of Arnold, Duke of Gueldres, to carry out his intentions, and become the actual foundress of the Collegiate Church.

By the bull of Pius II., dated at Rome 23rd October 1460, and another of 1462, the Hospital of Soltre, and the Chapel of Uthergall, in Fife, were transferred to the new foundation; while by a later bull of September 1463, his Holiness granted plenary indulgence to all who should visit the church for devotional purposes, every fifth year, on the 10th of July,—the feast of its dedication,—or any day within the octaves following; and the privileges thus granted were to be continued until fifty years had expired. Of the offerings of devout pilgrims resorting to the church at those special seasons two-thirds were to be employed in the completion of the building; the remaining third was reserved for the Papal treasury, “to assist in carrying on war with the infidels.”

Thus provided with means towards the erection and endowment of the



church, the building appears to have been carried on with energy, under the direction of Sir Edward Bonkill, the first provost, and of its architect, John Halkerstone, both of whose names repeatedly occur in the Exchequer Rolls in connection with the expenditure of funds in the progress of the work. But the death of the royal foundress, before the provisions for the erection and endowment of the church could be completed, must have greatly impeded the work in its first stage; and the untimely fate of her son, James III.,—to whose love of art the revival of Scottish architecture which characterised his reign has been ascribed,—arrested its progress, and so left it devoid of the more prominent and attractive features of external adornment which might have averted its destruction in our utilitarian age. Only two entries referring to the building of the church occur in the Exchequer Rolls subsequent to the death of the king, in 1488. The work was indeed resumed in 1504, when Robert Dennis appears to have succeeded to the office of master mason; but the later accounts refer chiefly to the completion and furnishing of the interior, and especially of the choir, of which Rickman remarks, in his *Essay on Ecclesiastical Architecture*—“The interior 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.”

In the introductory account which accompanies its collected charters, it is described as “one of the finest ecclesiastical buildings, even in its unfinished state, which existed in Edinburgh.” Unfortunately little remains, either at Holyrood or St Giles, wherewith to institute a comparison; but the unqualified commendation of it was not altogether without good reason, limited by Mr Rickman, to the interior.

Externally the general appearance of the church was less attractive; and until the demolition of the surrounding buildings, preparatory to its own destruction, the fine apsidal choir, which constituted the most beautiful feature of the exterior, was dwarfed or hidden by mean buildings in close proximity to it. As it stood, the unfinished structure consisted of the choir, transepts, and chantry chapel, with the central tower partially built, and evidently temporarily finished, with plain crow-stepped gables and a hipped roof. The general view of the church from

Craig End, in which all those features are apparent, is one snatched at a favourable moment in the brief interval between the demolition of the surrounding buildings and its own destruction; it shows the north wall of the Chantry Chapel fully exposed, as I imagine, for the first time, in a general view of the church, since its erection. Of all the features included in this view, the only one still remaining is the old well with its characteristic stone roof, which long formed the source of water for the populous suburb that then surrounded it, and probably occupies the site of a more ancient well. The district lay entirely outside the limits of Edinburgh; and when the canons of Holyrood ceased to retain their burgh and its dependencies under their care, it was regarded ecclesiastically as a landward outskirt of the neighbouring sea-port. Until the renovation of St Mary's Church, Leith, about forty years ago, a beam under the north-west gallery bore the inscription in carved and gilded letters: "FOR THE CRAIG END, 1652." This old name has passed out of general use; but an unheeded inscription over the well door, shown in the drawing, still records it as the designation of the dwellings built there at "the Craig End," right against the Dow Craig. The well itself is built in like fashion against a projecting spur of the crag, and on its lower west side may still be read ST NINIAN'S ROW, 1752; the date, it is to be presumed, of the erection of the present well.

If the original design of the church had been carried out, with its nave and central tower, the view from this point would have been a striking one; but as actually shown, the want of elevation is very apparent, and detracts from its effect as a whole. The illustrative drawings of the church now produced are accompanied by a carefully executed ground plan, made immediately before its demolition, for which I am indebted to the professional pencil of my friend, Mr Andrew Kerr, F.S.A. Scot., then on the architectural staff of H.M. Board of Works. From this the original design is apparent as that of a cruciform church, of which the nave remained unbuilt. The arrangement of the groining of the roof is also laid down, showing especially the convergence of the vaulting ribs in the apse which so greatly contributed to the beauty of the interior. The peculiar disposition of the

south porch in the angle of the transept is also shown, with the groining of the arch thrown from the transept to an extended buttress of the choir. Some other peculiarities in the plan are also deserving of notice. The south transept was shorter than the north transept, and the south aisle of the choir was much narrower than the north aisle, although nothing in the site or the surrounding buildings indicated any necessity for deviating from uniformity in the proportions of the two sides. The main entry into the church was by the porch already referred to, constructed in the angle of the transept. Within this was a circular headed doorway of rich mouldings characteristic of the Scottish Decorated style of the period. The peculiar features of the south porch are shown in the accompanying drawing (fig. 23, p. 162). It is worthy of note that while the square window under the porch was placed in the centre of the arch, the doorway stood entirely to one side. As the porch was constructed between the transept and the first buttress to the east, it corresponded internally with the breadth of the bay between the two most westerly pillars of the choir; so that, both externally and internally, the position of the doorway was in manifest disregard of that architectural uniformity which rules to excess in modern ecclesiastical detail. Rickman describes it as "an open porch formed by a circular segmental arch, between two bold buttresses, with good groining," and recognises in it the original which furnished the model for a smaller porch at Roslin Chapel. The sacrifice of uniformity, both externally and internally, in the position of the doorway, was probably with a view to economy of space in the aisle for the various altars of the Collegiate Church. Of these, unfortunately, no record exists; but the confirmation of its foundation by the primate, James Kennedy, bishop of St Andrews, sets forth its purpose, in accordance with the Queen's petition, as a perpetual college, or collegiate church, for a provost, eight chaplains or prebendaries, and two choristers; and to those a dean and sub-dean were added in 1502; along with a gift of the rectory of Dunottar, Kincardineshire, for their support. The object of the foundation was "the praise and honour of the Holy Trinity, and of the ever-blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, of St Ninian the confessor, and of all the saints and elect of God," the salvation of the soul of the late king, of that of the royal

foundress, and those of their kindred, including the Bishop of St Andrews. The accounts of expenditure on the fitting up and suitable ornamentation of the interior include payments for rich covers to the high altar; for an image of the Blessed Virgin, and for curtains of plesaunce with silk fringes above her head; as also for an image of St Margaret. The foundation charter, moreover, provides for the celebration of a weekly mass at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, which I conceive to have stood alongside of the credence and beautifully carved piscina, in the Chantry, or Lady Chapel, on the north side of the choir. The Hospital of Soltre was dedicated, like the new foundation, to the Holy Trinity. That of the Hospital of Uthergall is uncertain. The parish church of Dunottar was dedicated to St Bridget, to whom therefore an altar may have been set apart in the Collegiate Church; probably also St Crispin, the patron saint of the Cordwainers who constituted so important a fraternity in the suburb of St Ninians, was not forgotten. We may also assume, from the notice of the image of the royal patron saint of Scotland, and of the venerable St Ringan, or St Ninian, the patron saint of the locality, that there were altars to St Margaret and St Ninian the confessor. But all alike vanished, along with the images of the saints, and their costly hangings and other furnishings, in the iconoclastic furor of 1558. One invaluable decoration of the interior, the beautiful diptych which Dr David Laing identified as the altar-piece of the church,<sup>1</sup> happily survives, as a unique relic of the altar-pieces of the Scottish churches before the Reformation.

The history of the foundation and of the building of the church may be gathered in some detail from the volume of Charters of the Collegiate Churches of Mid-Lothian, printed for the Bannatyne Club in 1861. The introductory account, from the trustworthy pen of our old associate, Dr David Laing, supplements his own careful narrative with a series of extracts from the unpublished Exchequer Rolls, which furnish the names of the first provost, and the architect, or as he is there styled, the master builder of the fabric; and also of **Robert Dennis**, mason, who by

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings*, vol. iii. p. 8, with plate; and vol. x. p. 310.

a contract, dated 8th April 1531, undertook, for the annual fee of £26 and a bounty, "to labour and remain for his lifetime, in all manner of labour concerning his craft, to and for the said college." The same authentic source supplies many other minute details concerning the progress of the building. Unfortunately the oldest register, extending from the date of the foundation in 1462 to 1503, and other early deeds, including the original foundation charter, are no longer known to exist. But the entries recovered from the Exchequer Rolls in some degree supply the loss; and a later register in the city archives, extending from 1504 to 1531, with copies of later deeds and acts down to 1586, preserved in the same folio volume, supply many authentic details, not only in relation to the progress of the building, but also of the rich furnishings of the interior. In addition to the images of the Virgin and St Margaret, and the curtains and rich coverings for the high altar, already referred to, payments are noted for silver chalices and reliquaries, and for organs and bells. Had the older register survived, we might have expected it to furnish the desiderated accounts for the fine diptych, which there is no room to doubt was the altar-piece of this church. This invaluable national painting has already been minutely described in the Society's *Proceedings*. It undoubtedly preserves to us authentic and beautifully executed portraits of King James III., and his Queen, Margaret of Denmark; of the young prince, afterwards James IV.; of Sir Edward Bonkill, the first provost, and the confessor of the royal foundress; and possibly also of Mary of Gueldres herself, though it must have been painted after her death. This fine historical work of art now constitutes the sole surviving relic of the royal foundation, unless we reckon the structure patched up out of materials of the ancient church, which has been built in the rear of the new parish church in Jeffrey Street. It has indeed pieced together valuable fragments of the ancient building, but the result suggests an altogether inaccurate idea even of that portion of the beautiful though incomplete church which is attempted to be reproduced. The venerable foundation of Queen Mary of Gueldres has vanished beyond recall. All that remains to be done is to put on record as accurate an account as is now recoverable, from pen and pencil, of its actual features. This is accord-

ingly what I now aim at, in submitting to the Society a set of sketches of the church, made under peculiarly favourable circumstances immediately before its demolition.

The volume of Charters or *Registrum Domus de Soltre, nec non Ecclesie Collegiate S. Trinitatis prope Edinburg, &c.*, already referred to, is illustrated with a frontispiece which is thus described—"Trinity College Church, Edinburgh, from a drawing by John Clerk of Eldin, Esq., about the year 1780, in the possession of J. Gibson-Craig, Esq." The choice was a mistake, and a most unfortunate one. An earlier, more accurate, and greatly more effective view had already been produced in Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*, from a drawing by Paul Sandby, about 1750. As to that of Clerk of Eldin, though executed upwards of a century ago, it shows nothing that might not have been more accurately reproduced from the original in 1848. Instead of presenting the beautiful choir, with the lofty pointed windows of the apse, or even, as in Paul Sandby's view, showing the south transept, and the choir beyond, it exhibits little more than the unsightly condition of the abortive nave and central tower, with an inaccurate delineation of the west wall of the transepts, in which the blocked-up arches of the side aisles, intended to open into the nave, are represented as windows. Any one, who reads Dr Laing's description of the church as "one of the finest ecclesiastical buildings, even in its unfinished state, which existed in Edinburgh," and then turns to the frontispiece for confirmation of it, will be apt rather to commend the iconoclasts who rased to the ground this lumpish deformity. It was, indeed, unfortunate that this mutilated west end, with its stunted tower and abortive nave, presented the only aspect daily observed by hundreds as they traversed the great thoroughfare of the North Bridge; while its beautifully proportioned choir could only be seen, and even then very imperfectly, by exploring the mean thoroughfare of the Low Calton, or Beggars Row, where it occupied the low ground immediately underneath the most westerly cliff of the Calton Hill.

The plan and architectural details of Trinity College Church, as we may assume them to have proceeded from the hands of the master of the fabric, John Halkerstone, no doubt included a central tower, and a

west front with a main entrance, on which, according to invariable custom, the chief external ornamentation was lavished. But of the purposed details of the nave, or the design for the tower, no record survives. While it was still hoped that the proposal for rebuilding the church on another site was to be carried out, and for that purpose its stones had been numbered, and careful drawings and measurements taken, the late distinguished architect, Mr David Bryce, exhibited at a meeting of the Society a design for the central tower, in which the general form, and many of the details, were derived from a study of the unfinished tower of Dundee High Church. It was, however, to have been greatly modified, had the purposed restoration been carried out. A curious memorial of the unfinished church shows it in nearly the same condition not very long after the arrestment of the work, as it continued to be until its demolition. In the year 1574, Master Robert Pont, the then provost, and certain of the prebendaries, "haveand respect to the reformatioun of the religioun and abolessing of idolatrie," resolved that the common seal of the college should be changed and reformed, by substituting the royal arms, and those of the foundress, "gif thai can be had," for the objectionable "Ymage of the Trinitie efter the auld maner." As appears from the actual seal then substituted for the original one, not only were the arms of the foundress recovered and engraved thereon, but there was added a representation of the unfinished church as it then stood.

But the imperfections of the uncompleted structure were added to by later defacements. Paul Sandby's view from the south-west, published by Maitland in 1753, shows the large window of the south transept entirely blocked up. Internally repeated adaptations for a parish church led to the erection of galleries, at one time in the transepts, and at another in the aisles; the floor was raised, so as to conceal the bases of the pillars, doors were broken through the east walls of the north and south aisles; and those of the chantry chapel, or vestry, were lathed and plastered. Externally, the choir was hidden to a great extent on the north-east by mean modern buildings; while the remainder was concealed from the wayfarer by a high stone wall, in a narrow street, which precluded the possibility of obtaining an unobstructed view of any portion of the building.

The view from the south-east, imperfect as it was, has been repeatedly engraved. I have an early etching of it, probably by Skene. Storer reproduces it in the *Views of Edinburgh and its Vicinity*, published by Constable in 1820; and nearly the same view, though still more cramped, appears in the *Modern Athens*, a series of engravings from drawings by Shepherd, published by Jones & Co. of London, in 1829. A view of the neighbouring alley of Paul's Work, in my own *Memorials of Edinburgh*, shows the church as it appeared from that point, hemmed in by buildings, some of them of considerable antiquity. But all alike have now disappeared.

In the final process of wholesale demolition, preparatory to the conversion of the entire area from the North Bridge to the Low Calton into a railway station, the more recently constructed and ephemeral buildings were swept away, while efforts were still being made to preserve the sacred edifice. Hence for a brief period the stately and finely proportioned choir was exposed to uninterrupted view, adding to the grief of its appreciative students, who were thus enabled more fully to realise the worth of this fine historical monument on the eve of its destruction. I took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded to secure more than one careful drawing of the fine polygonal apse, and of other views of the church, and also of the Trinity Hospital, or Queen's College, as seen from the east. A full view of the church, as thus exposed, is shown in fig. 1 on p. 131. The architectural skill displayed in the design of this part of the building was well deserving of professional study, and afforded striking evidence of the genius of the old "Master Mason," John Halkerstone. Alike externally and internally, he had achieved a great success in giving to the choir an appearance of elevation greatly beyond its actual height by the proportions of the tall narrow windows and the disposition of the various details.

In the views from the south-east referred to above, modern doorways are shown which had been broken through the east wall of the north and south aisles, where doubtless, prior to their overthrow in 1558, altars had stood. Of this indeed one interesting evidence remained to the last in a beautiful, though mutilated credence table in the north aisle. Its precise site, on the south side of the modern doorway, is shown on the



ground plan; and a sketch of it is given here (fig. 2), from which it will be seen that it consisted of a projecting ledge, or table, the remains of which are manifest, and an overhanging tabernacled canopy of fine design.

Other traces of a similar character, though mostly in a more mutilated condition, helped the architectural student to an ideal restoration of the venerable building in its original condition. The site of a fine, but

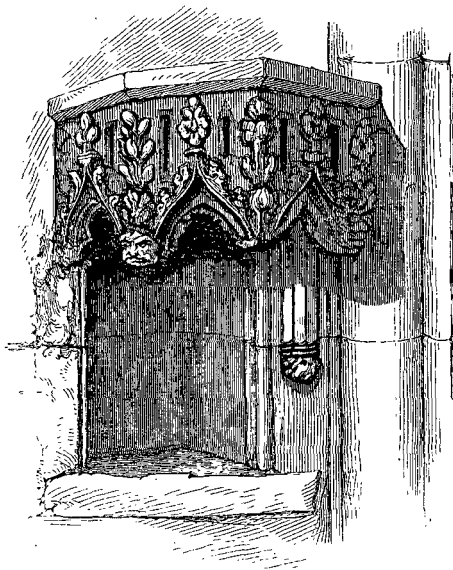


Fig. 2. Credence Table, North Aisle, Trinity College Church.

sorely mutilated stoup, on the east wall of the north transept, is shown in the ground plan. But by far the most ornate and beautiful work of this class was the finely carved piscina in the north wall of the Chantry Chapel (fig. 3). This is the building on the north side of the choir, entered from the north aisle; and which I conceive to have been the Lady Chapel, within which was the tomb of the royal foundress. To

this, accordingly, a special interest attaches; and a description of the appearance presented by it before its final destruction, necessarily involves some reference to the search for the remains of Queen Mary, which constituted the last act preceding its demolition.

During the brief interval between commencing the building of the church and the death of the foundress, at Edinburgh on the 16th of November 1463, the work appears to have been carried on with great energy. The bull of Pope Pius II., dated at Rome on the 10 Kalends of November, only three years before, sets forth the pious object of the queen to be, next to the praise and honour of the Holy Trinity, the ever-blessed Virgin, and all the saints and elect of God: the salvation of her own soul, that of her royal consort, and of all their kin. Anniversaries were accordingly enjoined to be observed on the obit of the royal foundress, and on that of her "most tender husband," King James II.; and special provision was made for the chantry and tomb of the former. By the terms of the foundation, as confirmed by the primate, Bishop

Kennedy, only eighteen months before the death of the queen, each prebendary is directed, whenever he shall say mass, to repair to the tomb of the foundress, and there devoutly read the *De profundis*, together

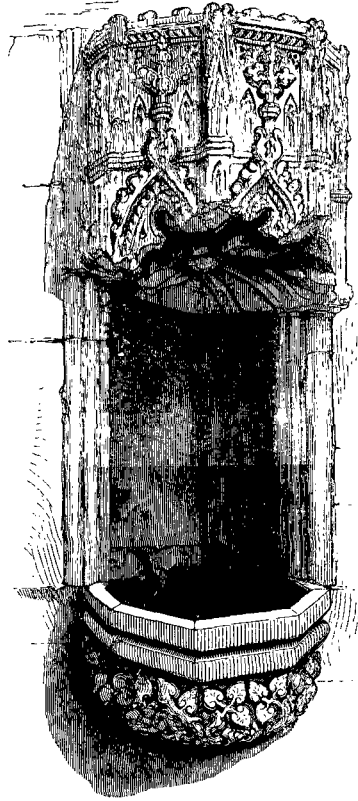


Fig. 3. Piscina in North Wall of the Chantry Chapel, Trinity College Church.

with the *Fidelium Deus omnium conditor et redemptor*, and an exhortation to incite the people to devotion.

But notwithstanding the energy with which the work appears to have been prosecuted by the architect, under the direction of Sir Edward Bonkill, the first provost and the confessor of the queen, the building of the church can have proceeded but a little way when her death took place. It was not, therefore, possible that the royal obsequies could be performed in her own foundation. The record of payments supplied by the chamberlain's account for June 1464, shows that a delay of some months took place before her obsequies were celebrated, and then, for what reason does not appear, the service took place in the cathedral church of Brechin. Meanwhile the completion of the chantry chapel and royal vault may have been hastened; and though no contemporary record of the depositing of the royal remains there has been recovered, no entry in the Exchequer Rolls conflicts with the later statements which refer to her interment, in accordance with the provisions of the foundation charter, in the church expressly founded and built in part for her own chantry. Major, writing less than fifty years after her death, says—"Annō 1463, Regina Scotiæ Edinburgi obiit, et in Collegio Sanctæ Trinitatis, quod quidem ipsa fundaverat, inhumata est." At a later date the same statement is thus quaintly repeated by Bishop Lesley, among the early incidents of the reign of James III.—"Shortlie heireftir, the Queen of Scotland, moder to the King, decessit at Edinburgh, the xvj. of November 1463, and was buryit in the Queen's College besyde Edinburgh, quhilk sho hir self foundit, biggit and dotit." No doubt, indeed, has ever been expressed of the actual interment of Mary of Gueldres in some part of the church in which special provision had been made for propitiatory services at her tomb.

When accordingly an appeal was made by this Society, in 1844, to the Lords of H.M. Treasury to interpose and forbid the destruction of the ancient church, it was specially based on its having been a place of royal interment, within which still lay the remains of a direct ancestress of the reigning sovereign. Unhappily, however, the church had been conveyed without reservation, so early as 1567, to the City of Edinburgh;

and its magistrates, who alone had the right, declined to interfere and avert its destruction.

Every effort in this direction failed, and when in 1848, the doom of the Collegiate Church was pronounced beyond recall, and nothing remained to be done except to rescue the remains of the royal foundress from desecration, attention was directed to the building on the north side of the choir, which presented some very special characteristics of the chantry chapel of the queen. The north wall was unornate, though of well-finished ashlar, and was built probably with reference to the near proximity of other buildings. But the east side, which came into view along with the fine lofty apsidal choir, was decorated with unusual care. The buttress at its north-east angle was more ornate than any other on the building. A fine canopied niche, differing from the corbels and canopies on the other buttresses, in being recessed, was surmounted with the arms of the foundress; and may be assumed to have contained a statue of the Virgin, as in that above "Our Lady's steps," at the north-east angle of the choir of St Giles' Church. Dr David Laing, when suggesting the possibility that the female remains interred within this chapel were those of Katherine Sinclair, daughter of William, Earl of Caithness and Orkney, and wife of Alexander, Duke of Albany, the younger brother of James III., and son of the foundress, adds—"This is most probable, if we attach any importance to the shield with the Albany arms on the outside wall of this part of the building." But this is a mistake. The arms of the Duke of Albany, surmounted by a ducal coronet, and with two bears as supporters, are shown in fig. 4. They occupied a large panel recessed on the side of the buttress at the west angle of the south transept (*vide* fig. 23). Owing to its sheltered position, and possibly to its being of harder stone, it was in excellent preservation; whereas the arms of the foundress on the north-east buttress of the chantry chapel, as well as the shields carved on the buttresses of the apse, were much defaced.

A cast of the Duke of Albany's arms set in an ornate border, was inserted in the panelling of the great hall of the adjacent hospital buildings, a view of which is engraved in the *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*. In addition to the collegiate body of provost, dean, and subdean, prebendaries, and choristers, the original foundation

provided for an hospital for thirteen poor bedemen, who were also bound to pray for the soul of the foundress. This charitable provision has survived the revolutions of time and creed; but in its reorganisation under a new order of things, which no longer recognised the efficacy of such devotional services on behalf of the dead, it was ordered that "the saidis Beidmen sall prepair and mak ilk ane of yame on yair awin expensis an Blew-gown, conform to the first foundation." But this last relic of the ancient order of things has long fallen into disuse; and the annual income of the charity is now disbursed to non-resident pensioners, with no obligation of costume or memorial service to perpetuate the name of the queen, or the origin of her charitable provisions.

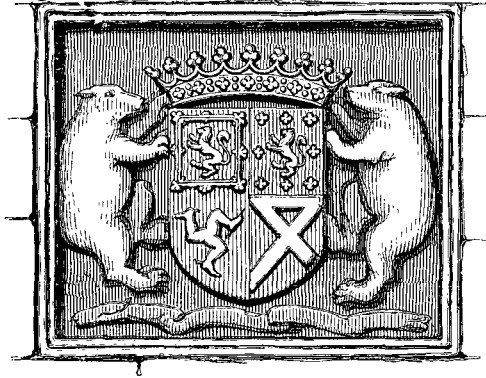


Fig. 4. Arms of the Duke of Albany, from S. W. Buttress, Trinity College Church.

Among the drawings now produced in illustration of the ancient church, is one (fig. 5) showing the details of the fine round-headed doorway which formed the entrance from the north aisle of the choir into what I believe to have been the Lady Chapel and Chantry. A simple roll and triple fillet moulding, with a broad hollow, ran continuously round the arch; and over it a hood mould, springing from ornate corbels, was enriched with flowers in the hollow. The drawing shows the interior of the chapel as it appeared on the morning after the

search for the tomb of Queen Mary of Gueldres, on the 22nd of May 1848, with the fine piscina still *in situ* on the north wall. The evidence of the original destination of this building as a chapel remained altogether indisputable notwithstanding the effacement of some of its characteristic features in its later adaptation as a vestry. It was lighted



Fig. 5. Entrance to Chapel on north side of Choir, Trinity College Church.

by a deeply splayed square-headed window in the east wall, originally divided by a mullion into two lights. The beautifully sculptured piscina already referred to occupied the east end of the north wall; and the removal of the lath and plaster by which the wall had been overlaid, showed where a stone shelf, or credence table, had projected immediately to the left of the piscina. The position of this piscina clearly indicates

the site of the altar under the east window, right in front of which is the grave of what was then thought, and what I still believe was, that of the royal foundress. The scattered remains of a paving of encaustic tiles of orange and purple were found about three feet below the modern flooring. Underneath this a mass of solid concrete enclosed a grave or vault within which lay an oaken coffin, straight and low in the sides; but with high ends finished in semicircular form so as to show that the coffin had been arched or "waggon-roofed." Unfortunately an ill-constructed drain had been carried obliquely across the top of the coffin, breaking through the concrete, and saturating with its leakage the sepulchral vault. The wood of the coffin was accordingly in a state of extreme decay. Nevertheless its contents had not been disturbed.

It lay directly east and west, equidistant from the north and south walls, in the centre of the chapel; and within this lay the skeleton of a female, according to Professor Goodsir, of about thirty years of age. This entirely accords with the independent conclusion arrived at by Dr Laing, as the result of his careful investigation of the historical evidence, that the age of the queen "could not have exceeded thirty years." The bones of the head and face were noticeable for great delicacy of features, small and regular teeth, a forehead broad but not high, and prominent nasal bones, indicating a well-defined and probably slightly arched nose. Such fragments of the wrappings of the deceased as had escaped the destructive influences to which they had been long subjected, proved to be of the finest linen; and the oaken boards forming the bottom were in better preservation than the rest of the coffin, owing to their being saturated with some resinous substance, probably derived from a partial process of embalming. They were held together by a single transverse bar across the centre, and showed that the coffin had been of the same breadth at head and foot.

The foundation charter, as already noted, provided for a weekly mass to be celebrated at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, whose name the queen bore. Another clause in the foundation charter defined certain special services to be performed at the tomb of the foundress, whenever any of the prebendaries said mass. A peculiar feature brought to light, on the removal of the lath and plaster with which the polished ashlar

walls were covered, was a hagioscope obliquely piercing the wall of the north aisle, so arranged as to afford a view of the site of the high altar from the centre of the chapel where the supposed tomb of the foundress was brought to light. The whole arrangement seems to accord with the provisions for the chantry services of the royal foundress, and in so far to confirm the identification of the remains found buried there as those of Queen Mary of Gueldres, the widowed queen of James II.

A door in the north-west angle of the chapel in which the sepulchral remains were found led by means of a spiral stone stair to what had evidently been the muniment room. It was covered by a plain pointed-arched stone vault, and the ambry in the west hall betrayed unmistakable evidence of the violence with which, at some unknown period,—but most probably in 1558,—the door had been wrenched open, and the iron hinges forcibly broken away from their fastenings. This upper chamber had also a square window in its south wall, looking into the adjacent aisle.

It is unnecessary here to make any detailed reference to the subsequent discovery of a second interment, in the choir and near the site of the high altar, which was maintained by some to be that of the foundress. A full account of this has already appeared in the Society's *Proceedings*,<sup>1</sup> from the pen of my old and dearly valued friend, Dr David Laing. It is the only point on which we ever differed. The discovery of other interments in the church was in noway surprising; for the whole north aisle, much of the central aisle of the choir, and other portions of the church, revealed abundant traces of ancient sepulture. One mutilated stone vault in the north aisle, containing the skull and other portions of a male skeleton, was assumed to be most probably that of Bishop Spence, the founder of the neighbouring hospital dedicated to St Paul, and who was interred in the church in 1480. Many other persons of note must have been buried there before 1596, when Lady Jane Hamilton, Countess of Eglinton, bequeathed one hundred merks "to the Hospitall of Edinburgh, the Queen's College, for my buriall place; urtherwais not." In a postscript to his *Remarks on the Character of Mary of Gueldres*, Dr Laing draws attention to

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. iv. p. 66.



this interment of a lady of rank, as one "which may perchance solve the difficulty regarding the first female skeleton that was discovered," viz., that in the Chantry Chapel or vestry. In reality, however, while the appropriation of such a detached chapel, with its special altar, and dedication as the place of burial and the chantry of the foundress, fully accords with the practice of mediæval times; the selection of it in 1596, when its sole use must have been that of the vestry of the parish minister, is altogether inconsistent with the sumptuous obsequies of the Countess of Eglinton. But monuments, sepulchral slabs, brasses, and whatever else was designed to perpetuate the memory of royal and noble dead, had all vanished with the changing centuries; and so, if the conclave of sage antiquaries were not of one mind, there was nothing for it but to shake their wise heads over the insoluble riddle. As to some less grave aspects of the same quest, they are duly set forth in my *Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh*, the dedication of which to my old friend was the subject of genial banter with him, when he welcomed me in the well-known haunt of the Black Letter Muses, on the last occasion on which he ever entertained a group of friends at his hospitable table. As for "the two queens," they both lie now within the sacred precincts of Holyrood Abbey—the one within the royal vault, the other close to its entrance. *Requiescant in pace.*

Externally, as is apparent from the description and drawings, the Collegiate Church was not only incomplete, but greatly marred in its general effect by the lack of some of its most essential architectural features. But internally, in spite alike of its unfinished nave, and of the barbarous modern adaptations to Presbyterian worship, in pews, galleries, pulpit, and all else, it still presented an aspect of great architectural beauty. I have sketches of the interior from various points; but an excellent idea of the general effect may be formed from the view of the chòir, looking east, given in Billing's *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland*. Its only defect arises from the partial concealment of the bases of the pillars, owing to the floor having been raised above its original level in the efforts to counteract the dampness occasioned by the gradual rise of the neighbouring street in the course of four centuries. The descriptive narrative in the above named work

is from the pen of the Scottish historian and antiquary, Dr John Hill Burton, who there speaks of Trinity College Church as, "with the exception of Holyrood Chapel, the finest specimen of Gothic architecture in Edinburgh. It has," he adds, "many of the peculiar beauties of the age to which it belongs, that of the decorated style." It had also not a few of the incongruous and grotesque details, both externally and internally, which only too well accorded with the spirit of the age in which it was produced, and added to its value as an historical monument. One of the provisions, for example, in the foundation charter furnishes this characteristic illustration of the licence of the Scottish clergy in the fifteenth century—"If any of the said prebendaries shall keep a concubine or fire-maker, and shall not dismiss her, after being thrice admonished thereto by the provost, his prebend shall be adjudged vacant." The *Satire of the Three Estates* of Sir David Lindsay furnishes no less piquant evidence, in another form of art, that the manners of the times had not improved in this respect in the later reigns of the Fourth and Fifth James. But the age was at least one of great refinement in art; and the inappropriate and even unseemly sculptures, which a minute survey brought to light, were the sports of irreverent fancy in the working out of details designed as parts of one harmonious plan.

The polygonal termination of the choir facilitated the concentration of architectural beauty there. The tall narrow windows in the three sides, when finished with their original tracery, and filled with painted glass, must have added greatly to the rich effect which there closed the fine vista, and gave an appearance of loftiness to the church greatly exceeding its actual height. To this imagination has to add the carved stalls with which the choir was no doubt completed; not improbably with their *misereres*, there, as elsewhere, turned to account for the freest and most profane licence of the carver. The elaborately sculptured groining and bosses of the central aisle terminated overhead in a large richly floriated boss. The central window was higher than the others; and the light and shade were blended in an unusually effective manner, owing to the different angles at which the windows were set. Richly carved corbels for statues occupied the angles; and over those were

equally ornate corbels, from which rose the vaulting shafts with their varied capitals, sharp as when fresh from the sculptor's chisel. The elaborated details of clustered pillars, carved bosses, corbels, and capitals of the piers, combined to produce an aspect of rare architectural beauty, amply meriting the commendation of Mr Rickman as "not exceeded in design or execution in any English cathedral." When, however, he speaks of their richly carved foliage as the only feature noted by him, he overlooks one of their most characteristic aspects. The elaboration of detail was everywhere kept in fine subordination to the effect of the building as a whole; nor was this harmony in any degree marred by the intermingling with the exquisite foliage of its capitals and corbels, and its heraldic sculpturings, grotesque designs, and purposed caricatures. Small corbels, which blended harmoniously with the general design, when minutely studied, were seen to be sculptured into all manner of quaint devices of imps, grinning masks, satyrs, and caricatures of monks and friars. It was, in truth, a singularly graphic chronicle of the age to which it owed its origin; a historical memorial, not only of the art and architectural skill, but also of the morals of an age in which, as the glimpses we are able to catch of the personal character and private life of the royal foundress abundantly show, the piety which manifested itself in the building and endowing of a church, and diverting to it the revenues of older foundations, was in no degree incompatible with very unsaintly courses. The poems of Dunbar, as well as the *Satire of the Three Estates* and other productions of Sir David Lindsay's satirical pen, abundantly illustrate the ecclesiastical morals of the reigns of James IV. and V.; and, read in the light of the sculptured details of the royal foundation of Mary of Gueldres, they are no inapt commentary on this earlier chronicle in stone.

Of this interesting historical element, in which the ecclesiastical architect turned his chisel to account much after the fashion of the modern draftsman in the choicest of *Punch's* cartoons, various illustrations are furnished in the accompanying sketches. In the process of dismantlement, the temporary scaffoldings and ladders afforded opportunity for sketching some of the profane designs which had been purposely assigned to obscure corners, or placed where only the general

and harmonious effect of enriched carving caught the eye, without the design being too minutely scanned by the observer from below. One of the sketches taken from the capital of the large south-east pillar of the unfinished central tower is highly characteristic (fig. 6). Seen from below, it suggested only a piece of enriched foliage; but when viewed more nearly, its chief feature was a monk in process of strangulation by two imps. Others of the sketches (figs. 7 and 8), show the intermingling of masks and grotesque figures, or caricatures, with the floriated capitals of the pillars. A capital of one of the vaulting-shafts



Fig. 6. Capital of S. E. Pillar of Central Tower, Trinity College Church.

in the apse, projecting over the very site of the high altar, exhibited an obese and most sensual-looking specimen of monkish indulgence, with a devil grinning over his left shoulder, as if in purposed mockery of the sacred rites on which both looked down (fig. 9). Elsewhere the varied pier shafts and corbels showed here and there an angel, a beautiful mask, or other graceful and apt design (as in figs. 10, 11, 12, and 13); but more frequently the devices consisted of leering ecclesiastics, imps, or such crouching monsters labouring under the burden sustained by them as seemed to realise Dante's *Purgatory of Pride*, where the

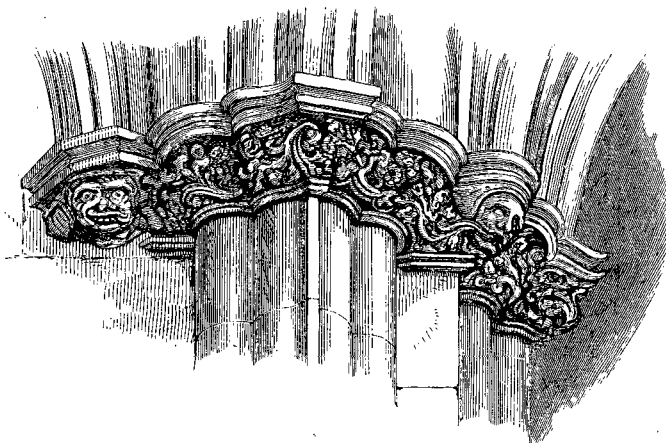


Fig. 7. Ornamented Capital, Trinity College Church.

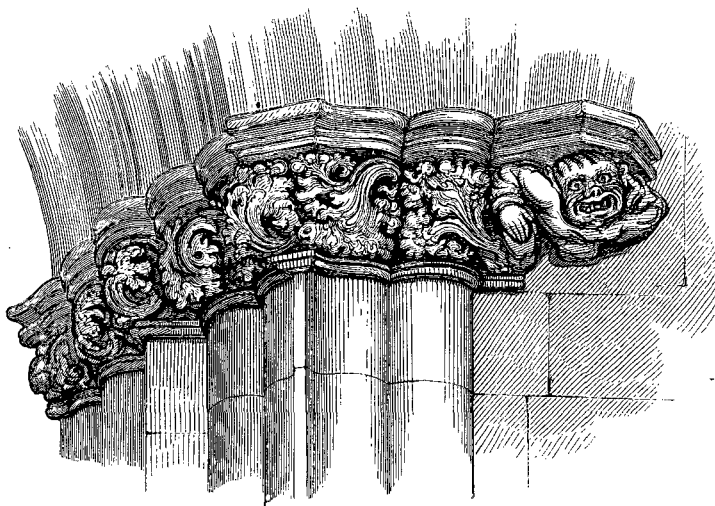


Fig. 8. Ornamented Capital, Trinity College Church.

unpurged souls dree their doom of penance under a crushing load of stone; and are compared by the poet to such sculptured fancies as were already familiar to him in the ecclesiastical architecture of Italy's thirteenth century.

There is a good deal of humour in more than one of the bits of ecclesiastical portraiture; as in the well-fed yet heavy-laden old monk, (fig. 14), and in the graphic figure of another care-worn brother (fig. 15). Another of the same class (fig. 16), with his rope round his waist, and his look of misery, is the grotesque embodiment of the sacrament of penance. But the



Fig. 9.

sacraments and services of the Church were everywhere treated with the freest licence. In a shady angle of the south transept was the corbel (fig. 17). A priest, with service-book in hand,

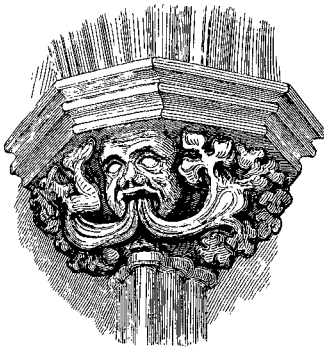


Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

thrusts his tongue out, in manifest derision of the work in which he is engaged. The bats' wings with which he is provided may be supposed

to indicate that, while hypocritically enlisted in the service of God's house, he is wholly given over to the devil. An angle in the neighbour-



Fig. 12.

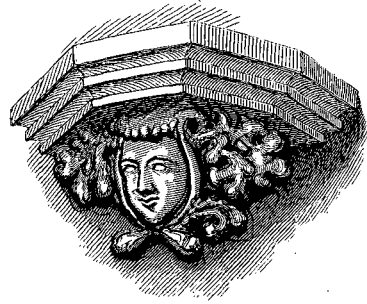


Fig. 13.

ing south aisle was occupied by the satanic imp shown in (fig. 18), where he also did service as a corbel to sustain one of the ribs of the groined roof. Fig 19 shows another specimen of devilish portraiture,—a satyr's

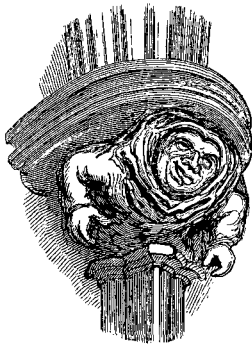


Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.

or imp's head, with a snakey body ending in a floreated tail. Fig. 20 and fig. 21 may be grouped in the same class, though they are rather free bits of humorous sport and grotesque licence, irreverent

but not profane. There was manifestly, however, an absence of the pervading spirit of devout reverence which in a purer age would have found fitting expression in every detail of the sacred edifice; and this

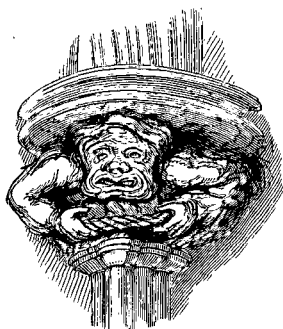


Fig. 16.



Fig. 17.

showed itself still more unmistakably in the disposition to take advantage of any obscure corner for the indulgence in unseemly and profane displays of humour.



Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.

A still greater licence marked some of the ornamentation of the exterior, and especially the gargoyls, which by their very use as



vomitories for throwing off the rain from the walls, tempted the humour of the designer, and appear to have at all times been recognised as a fair field for grotesque monstrosities. Their position rendered them difficult of access; and the sketches of most of those now shown are taken looking down upon them from the roof. One of them is a grotesque figure trussed up with a pole between his legs and arms, after a fashion of punishment in vogue in mediæval monasteries, as shown in contemporary illuminations; and which I saw revived during the American civil war as a substitute for the lash. Another comic-looking



Fig. 20.



Fig. 21.

griffin is seen in fig. 22. But one specially noteworthy illustration of the sensual grossness indulged in by the ecclesiastical sculptors of the fifteenth century was shown in a nude human figure strangely adapted to the purposes of a gargoyle, on the north side of the choir, immediately above the Chantry Chapel, where it was out of sight of the ordinary observer. The exterior of the church has already been described as less attractive than the interior. In the workmanship of the masonry, however, as well as in all the finish of its sculptured details, there was no deficiency. One of the drawings shows the turret-stair, buttress-pinnacle, and gargoyle of the east corner of the south transept,

sketched from the roof of the choir ; and will give some idea of the careful finish where furthest removed from the eye of the ordinary spectator. The workmanship was evidently executed with every attention to minuteness of design in anticipation of the whole, including even the grotesque and profane details, being seen and appreciated.

The effect of the entire church could be very partially surmised from the incomplete structure lacking some of its most ornate external features, and dwarfed or hidden by mean buildings encroaching on its site. If finished, as unquestionably was the original plan, with a central tower, and with the wonted profusion of sculpture on the great doorway and other features of the west front, this would have helped to combine

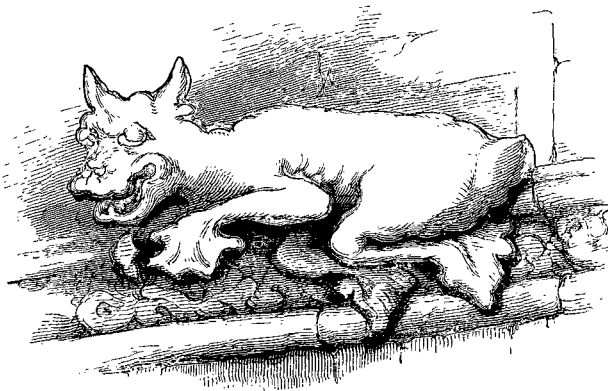


Fig. 22.

the whole into harmonious beauty. The height which the completion of the central tower would have supplied was the element needed above all others to carry out the striking effect of the east end, which, in spite of obstructions and mutilations, fulfilled to the last the aim of its skilful designer.

The building had suffered much more externally than internally, so far at least as the masonry was concerned, alike from time and violence. In the general aspect of the south transept and adjoining porch (fig. 23), a prominent feature is the large window with its characteristic tracery,

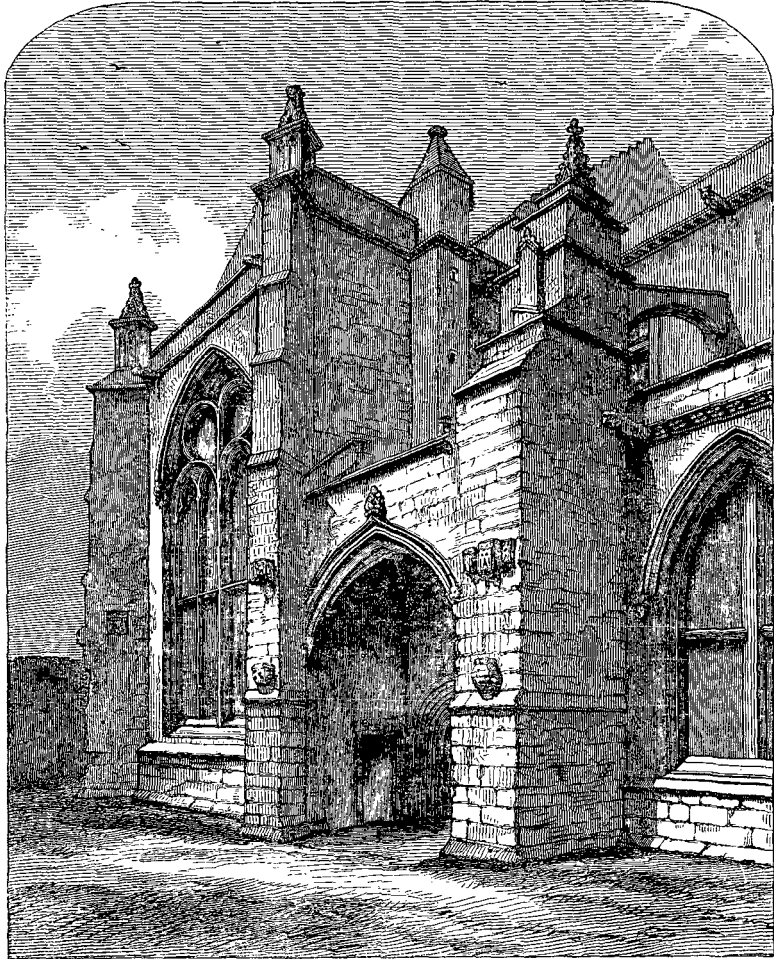


Fig 23. South Transept and Porch, Trinity College Church.

which remained entire in that and in the corresponding window of the north transept. The original tracery of the clerestory windows on the north side of the choir had also escaped destruction, when, as we may assume, the painted glass, with its saints and sacred emblems, provoked the destructive zeal of the reformers in the sixteenth century. But all the other windows had been despoiled of their tracery in what was styled "the work of purification" of 1559, when the altars in the churches of Edinburgh were thrown down, the images destroyed and burnt, and a part of the prebendal buildings of the Trinity College reduced to ruin. Calderwood says, they "made havocke of all goods moveable in the Blacke and Gray friers, and left nothing but bare walls; yea not so muche as doore or window." The southern clerestory accordingly retained to the last the plain crossed mullions and transoms which replaced the older tracery. The same ungraceful arrangement is shown in the windows of the side aisles in more than one of the drawings now produced. The three tall windows in the apse had been entirely despoiled of their tracery, and were fitted with ordinary wooden frames and square panes of glass. Other traces of rude violence were elsewhere apparent.

The corbels and canopies on the buttresses, designed for statues, had greatly suffered. Armorial bearings adorned the exterior at various points, and especially on the east end of the choir, but the most of them had been executed in a soft and friable stone, which had gradually yielded to the rains of centuries, most seriously affecting the exposure to the east, so that some of them were too much decayed to be decipherable. One of those on a buttress at the east end had angels for supporters; another was surmounted by an open crown; and the large tablet of the Duke of Albany's arms, with bears for supporters, already described, on one of the buttresses of the south transept, remained in good preservation to the last. One additional external feature may be worthy of note. In the view of the church from the north-east with the Chantry Chapel the gable is seen surmounted by a simple but picturesque form of the Gothic chimney of the fifteenth century.

In the volume of Charters of the Collegiate Churches of Mid-Lothian, completed in 1861, its editor had the satisfaction of bringing to light

for the first time the name of the architect of the church. John Halkerstone appears to have been a native of Edinburgh; and his name has been perpetuated in the locality for upwards of four centuries as the designation of Halkerstone's Wynd, the *Vicus Halkerstoni* of Gordon of Rothiemay. The name occurs in deeds relating to dwelling-houses in this, the principal access originally from the High Street to the Collegiate Church, as early at least as 1500; and we may presume was given to the Wynd from his association with it as the builder of the Queen's College. He was no doubt a man of some note in his day, and must have been employed on other works of the like kind. To him should probably be assigned the additions and enlargements of the choir of St Giles' Church, made apparently in 1462, when an order of the City Council requires that "all persons presuming to buy corn before it is entered shall forfeit one chaldar to the church work."<sup>1</sup> His hand at any rate appears to be traceable in one of the large windows on the south side, as shown in the engraving from a curious old painting, ascribed to the joint labour of Nasmyth, Wilkie, and Roberts, and for which John Kaye's etchings furnished the appropriate figures. The tracery in this window corresponds in its peculiar arrangement to that of the windows in the transepts of Trinity College Church. The same tracery may also still be seen in the window of an aisle added to the little Norman parish church of Duddingston, on its north side. I am under the impression that similar details are repeated in at least two other churches in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. But I write from memory; and it is impossible for me to test its correctness, removed as I now am beyond the reach of such old and favourite haunts of earlier years.

The Collegiate buildings, erected according to the purpose of the foundress, were built immediately to the south of the church, while the hospital for the bedemen stood on the opposite side of Leith Wynd. But the prebendaries' houses were destroyed in 1558 by the Earl of Argyll and his band of reforming iconoclasts, when the monasteries of the Black and Greyfriars suffered the same fate. Nine years later, the church, with such of the Collegiate buildings as remained, were handed

<sup>1</sup> Maitland's *Edinburgh*, p. 271.

over to the City, through the Provost, Sir Simon Preston; and the hospital buildings being found to be in a ruinous condition, such portions of the Collegiate buildings as were available were fitted up as a home for "the beidmen and hospitularis." This, which is frequently designated in documents of the sixteenth century, the Queen's College, is stated by Maitland to have been rebuilt in 1587. It is shown in Gordon of Rothiemay's bird's-eye view as forming three sides of a quadrangle on the south side of the church, immediately within the Leith Wynd Port. A tower surmounted by a spire, and an arched gateway, appear at the south-east angle; and the roof of the great hall is surmounted by a Gothic louvre. A view of this portion of the buildings of the sixteenth century, with the adjoining City Port, would no doubt have presented a very picturesque aspect; but they had been subjected to many deteriorating modifications before their final demolition in 1848. The appearance which they then presented is shown in fig. 24. Another view, showing the north end more fully, is introduced in my *Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh*. In the process of demolition, some interesting traces of the former condition of the prebendal buildings were brought to light. A beautiful large Gothic fireplace, with clustered columns and a low pointed arch, in the north gable, was probably part of the first building. Two gargois, in the same style as those of the church, projected from the east wall; and many fine fragments of Gothic ornaments, remains no doubt of the more ancient Collegiate buildings, were found built into the walls. One of the grotesque gargois was presented to the Society, on the destruction of the old hospital; and is, no doubt, safely preserved among the miscellaneous treasures of the National Museum of Antiquities. Two views of the interior of Trinity Hospital are given in the *Memorials of Edinburgh*, and show somewhat of the quaint character of the home of the old bedemen of Mary of Gueldres, as it appeared immediately before its demolition.

Thus the beautiful Collegiate Church, alike the work and the tomb of its royal foundress, the queen of James II., and the mother of James III., with the charitable foundation which still perpetuated her piety, and sheltered the poor bedeman who inherited her bequest, after stand-

ing for four centuries, an historical monument associated with names and events memorable in Scottish history, were swept away. It is some poor consolation to reflect that the strongest remonstrances were made

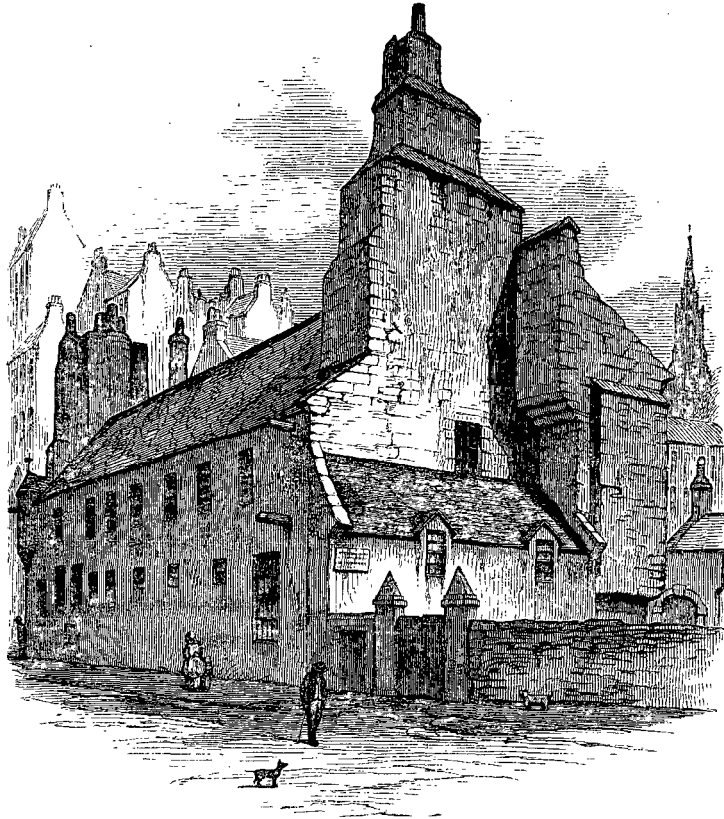


Fig. 24. Trinity Hospital.

by the then representatives of this Society against so irreverent and sacrilegious an act; though they proved wholly unavailing. The whole area is now included in the Station of the North British Railway,

without even a stone to mark the site consecrated for upwards of four centuries as the tomb and chantry of a Scottish queen.

Happily, by a curious coincidence, at the very time when antiquaries and historical students were mourning the destruction of this fine example of the ecclesiastical architecture of Scotland in the fifteenth century, the transference from Hampton Court to Holyrood of a painting long recognised as containing the portraits of King James the Third, and his queen, Margaret of Denmark, led to its identification by Dr David Laing as the original altar-piece of the church founded by the mother of that king. It is a diptych, painted on both sides of its two leaves. On one of these is the king, with his son, the future James IV., who fell at Flodden, represented there as a youth of about twelve years of age; and so fixing the date of the painting about A.D. 1484. The queen, Margaret of Denmark, is identified on the opposite leaf by the armorial bearings. In all respects the historical interest of the work is great. One of the causes of the disfavour with which James III. was regarded by his rude barons was the preference shown by him for the society of artists and musicians. His reign was unquestionably a period in which architecture and the allied arts progressed under the fostering encouragement of royal favour; and this unique specimen of a Scottish altar-piece has a special value from the means it supplies of judging of the actual condition of art in Scotland, at a time when the king was charged with keeping low company, because he advised with his two chief artistic favourites, Cochrane and Ramsay, on State affairs.

Pinkerton justly says of this painting—"Hardly can any kingdom in Europe boast of a more noble family picture of this early epoch." But its local interest has been greatly increased by the identification among its historical portraits of the highly expressive likeness of Sir Edward Bonkill, the first provost of the Collegiate Church, under whose direction and oversight the building was reared. Possibly also Dr Laing is right in the assumption that the St Cecilia of the diptych represents the royal foundress. The shield painted on the organ stool, three buckles and a chevron, was traced by Pinkerton "to the obscure family of Bonkil in the Merse;" without being aware of the actual Sir Edward Bonkill, the confessor of the royal foundress, who is thus



clearly indicated on the altar-piece of the church of which he was the first provost. Pinkerton goes on to say—"Behind is a kind of organ with two angels, not of ideal beauty, and perhaps portraits of the king's two sisters, Mary Lady Hamilton, and Margaret, then unmarried."<sup>1</sup> That they are portraits is most probable; and in consistency with the practice of painters of such sacred subjects in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the representation of the deceased queen in the character of St Cecilia may have had a special reference to her musical tastes, so that the passionate love for music which James III. manifested may have been inherited from his mother. But as the queen mother's name was Mary, and the subject of the altar-piece is the Holy Trinity, had the aim been to represent the features of the foundress in beatified saintship, there would have been a special aptness in the introduction of the Virgin Mother, as the usual counterpart of the Trinity in mediæval art. It may not, at any rate, be out of place here to note, that so early as 1474, proposals were made for the betrothal of the Princess Cecilia, the daughter of Edward IV., to the Prince James of Scotland; and this alliance was not finally abandoned till 1483, when the city of Edinburgh acquired its peculiar constitution as a distinct county or sheriffdom, in return for advancing the money to refund to England the Princess Cecilia's dowry. It is not impossible that the curious intermingling of sacred allegory and portraiture in the altar-piece of the Collegiate Church belongs to one of the latest stages of this proposed alliance with the House of York, and that, as the king is attended by the young prince, so, if we assume the St Cecilia to preserve the portraiture of the queen mother, the attendant angel may represent the affianced princess of the House of York.

All this, however, is apart from my special purpose; though now that the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity has become a thing of the past, whatever recalls to us any memorial of its vanished charms acquires a fresh value. Already a new generation has grown up to whom its name recalls no more definite associations than that of the Blackfriars Monastery, founded by Alexander II. in 1230, which vanished in the reforming outburst of 1558; or indeed of the quaintly picturesque

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of Scot.*, vol. i. p. 423.

Blackfriars' Wynd of my own earlier days, with its palace of Cardinal Beaton, its dwelling of Regent Morton, and other civic relics of the time when, soon after Queen Mary's return from France, she "came up in ane honourabill maner fra the Palice of Halyrudhous to the Cardinallis ludging in the Black Freir Wynd," and was there fittingly entertained; or where in later years she and her attendants were noted by the servants of Bothwell, on her way back from her last visit to Darnley, "gangand before them with licht torches as they came up the Black Frier Wynd."

It is inevitable that the works of former generations shall give way to progress, and be replaced by others adapted to the aims and necessities of a new era. It is vain for us to mourn over obliterated historical memorials, swept away, as so many of those of Old Edinburgh have been in recent years, in the unavoidable operations of sanitary reformation. But the destruction of the ancient church, which I have here attempted to describe, had its worth been recognised by those who were responsible for its preservation, might have been averted without impediment to needful improvements. The appreciation of such a work of art, of great historical interest, is in no degree incompatible with an intelligent sympathy with all the wonderful progress of the nineteenth century. But its destruction was carried out with reckless irreverence. It was a peculiarly interesting specimen of the ecclesiastical art of the middle ages at a period when it reached its highest development in Scotland, of which the worth was only generally appreciated when too late to avert its fate. The preparation of these notes, at the request of some of my old associates, in explanation of the accompanying sketches, has recalled long-forgotten feelings, and revived the keen sense of pain with which I learned of the inevitable doom, and watched the demolition, of a national work of art that with ordinary care might have perpetuated for centuries the evidence of native artistic skill in the era of James III. The church is now gone beyond recall. The old friends and associates with whom it was then my privilege to co-operate are themselves, for the most part, now only the subjects of fond memory. But as time passes, such vanished fragments of history acquire a fresh interest and value. The *Proceedings* of the Society have been enriched by Dr

David Laing's critical descriptions and illustrations of the invaluable relic of Scottish art which originally formed the altar-piece of the church founded by the Queen of James II. I shall be gratified if the materials now contributed in illustration of the building which that fine diptych once adorned, can be turned to account in perpetuating some imperfect memorial of the vanished Chantry of Mary of Gueldres.