

I.

NOTICE OF ST MARGARET'S CHAPEL, EDINBURGH CASTLE. By DANIEL WILSON, LL.D., HON. MEM. SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND.

Among the few historical remains of the Scottish capital that have escaped the destroying hand of time and of civic reformers, the chapel of St Margaret, on the Castle rock, is the oldest, and in some respects the most interesting. If, indeed, it could be shown that it is the chapel in which the sainted queen actually worshipped, it would possess a value altogether unique; for few among those who played a part in our earlier national history claim a more honourable place than the good queen, who, long after her death, was successively canonised and made Scotland's patron saint. In 1067 A.D., when the Norman conqueror was reaping the first-fruits of his victory at Hastings, "the child Edgar," as the *Ætheling* is called in the *Saxon Chronicle*, made his way to Scotland with his mother Agatha, and his sisters Margaret and Christina, accompanied by Merleswayne and sundry other faithful adherents. The noble fugitives brought with them some needful furnishings; and, precious above all, the famous Black Rood, which became the national palladium till, in 1346, David II. "violated the peace of St Cuthbert," and Scotland saw the last of the famous relic at Neville's Cross. The exiles landed on the shore of Fife, and were hospitably entertained at

the court of Malcolm Canmore. He had then a boy, Duncan, to whom Wyntoun refers as "Malcolm's bastard sowne," and in this he has been followed by subsequent historians. But the mother of Duncan was Ingibjorg, the widow of Earl Thorfinn; and, in the estimation of that age, as fit to be Malcolm's queen as the granddaughter of Edmund Ironside. Malcolm, we may therefore assume, was a widower by the recent death of Ingibjorg; and the arrival of the fair Saxon at his court offered a fitting successor.

The *Saxon Chronicle* affirms that Edgar and all his men refused their consent to the alliance; and Margaret herself was bent on taking the veil and devoting her life to God; "but the king urged her brother until he said yea; and indeed, he did not dare to refuse, for they were now in Malcolm's kingdom." So the royal suitor had his way; and, as the old chronicler adds, the good queen "led the king out of the wrong path into the right; brought him and his people to a better way; and abolished all the evil customs which the nation had followed aforetime; for, as St Paul says, 'full oft the unbelieving husband is sanctified and healed through the believing wife.'" Thus the daughter of the line of Alfred became the queen of Malcolm Canmore, and in due time the mother of successive Scottish kings. She left her impress in other ways on her adopted country. The *Saxon Chronicle* refers to her with all the partiality due to her connection with the native line of kings. But though she was the grand-niece of Edward the Confessor she was of foreign birth; whereas Malcolm had passed his youth and received his early training in England. Margaret was born in Hungary, and grew up there till her seventeenth year, doubtless under the strictest religious training. Her mother, Agatha, was a niece of the Emperor Henry II., who was himself canonised by Pope Eugenius III.; so that her character was already moulded in accordance with the standards of her age before the visit to the congenial court of the Confessor confirmed her in the opinions which she consistently adhered to throughout life. She thus brought with her the refinements of the Continent to a barbarous court, exercising a wonderful influence on Malcolm and his rude chiefs, and remodelling the ecclesiastical system in conformity with that of Rome. The closing scenes of her life are strikingly asso-

ciated with the Castle of Edinburgh; and the possibility of the survival there of any memorial of the good Queen is well calculated to stimulate zeal in the effort to identify it.

When pursuing researches in the Castle in 1845, with a view to the *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*, which I had then in hand, I learned of what was described to me by the garrison chaplain as a small baptismal font, existing in one of the vaults. With some difficulty I obtained access to a powder magazine on the Argyll Battery, where the gunpowder used in firing salutes on special occasions was stored. The only light was derived from a small window in the west wall; and in the obscurity of the little chamber I was able to identify, not a font, but what proved to be one of the sockets for the pillars of the chancel arch of a small Norman chapel. A wooden floor, which divided the nave into two stories, was on a level with the spring of the arch, and so effectually concealed the ecclesiastical character of the building. The gunpowder was stored in the apse; the little round-headed window on its south side was built up; and the garrison chapel, a plain unsightly modern building, which then stood immediately to the east, effectually blocked up the central window. In a large volume of drawings and engravings of Old Edinburgh, presented by me to the Society in 1867, will be found the sketch of the so-called font—the socket of the pillar on the north side of the chancel arch,—made on my first visit to St Margaret's Chapel.

It was not unknown that a chapel of early date had stood within the castle precincts, repeated references to which occur in the Exchequer Rolls and other ancient registers. In Gordon of Rothemay's bird's-eye view of 1547 it appears detached as now, with the three little round-headed windows on the south side, as reopened in our own day; and showing that the superstructure, which so effectually obscured its ecclesiastical character, was of more recent date. Vague references to St Margaret's Chapel more than once occur in modern works, as in Sir Walter Scott's *Provincial Antiquities*, where he refers to it as "the chapel within the Castle of Edinburgh founded by St Margaret, the wife of Malcolm Canmore, whose name it still bears"; but it is more than doubtful if he had any knowledge of the building now referred to.

Its existence was unknown to Dr Robert Chambers when I told him of its discovery ; it receives no notice from Arnot ; and though Maitland describes an ancient church in the castle, he had in view an entirely different building long since replaced by modern barracks.

But the venerable oratory, after being neglected and forgotten by successive generations, is now familiar to all as the most ancient architectural relic within the city's limits. It crowns the summit of the Castle rock ; and while even now presenting externally little indication of its ecclesiastical character, very few additions are required to restore it to its primitive condition. Possibly a corbel table surmounted the present work ; but otherwise the masonry of the south wall, though including work of more than one date, retains the three little windows and other simple features such as it must have presented upwards of seven centuries ago. Internally the ancient apse and chancel arch have fortunately escaped the destructive waste of time and siege ; and the little oratory now presents much the same aspect as it did in the reign of David I.

Some fine examples of Norman chancel arches still survive, as at Duddingston, Leuchars, and Dalmeny. That of St Margaret's Chapel is composed of two orders, enriched with double zigzag mouldings, under a trigonal head on its intermediate face ; and with a string of lozenges running partially round the arch, but changing the pattern in an arbitrary fashion after it has been carried some way. The capitals of the jamb shafts are escalated, with a heavy abacus resting on each. The original shafts were wanting, as already indicated, when the chapel was anew brought into notice, and have been replaced by plain cylindrical columns. As will be seen from the accompanying ground plan (fig. 1), the building is curiously unsymmetrical, both externally and in its internal arrangements. It measures externally 32 feet on the north side, and 31 feet 9 inches on the south. In width it is only 14 feet at the west end, exclusive of the projection of the modern doorway, while it is fully 16 feet at the east end. In this respect it resembles some of the primitive Celtic chapels both of Scotland and Ireland ; such as the little chapel or cell of St Columba on Inchcolm, which measures 15 feet 9 inches in length, with a width of 4 feet 8 inches at the west end, and 5 feet 10

inches at the east end. Those features, added to the unsymmetrical arrangement of the chancel, suggest the probability that the main walls of the building may be of older date than the ornate chancel arch, which is not in the centre. The east window is also considerably off the centre, while there is no indication of the apse externally. The entrance to the chapel is by the original doorway in the west end of the north wall. This, which has been restored externally in the style of the chancel arch, was built up when the chapel was brought to light; but internally it remained unchanged. A modern doorway, which had been broken

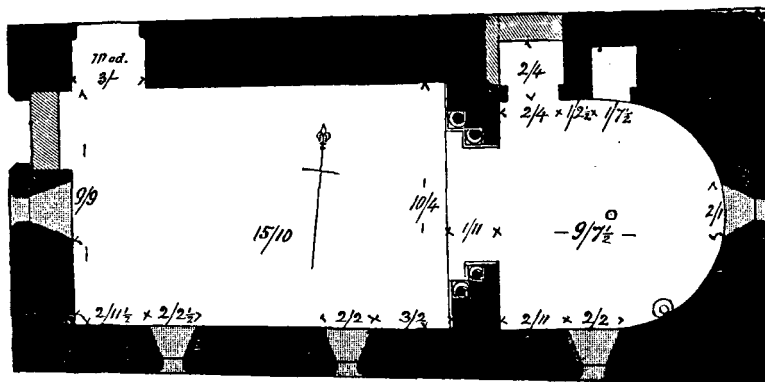


Fig. 1. Plan of St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle
(by Sir Henry Dryden, 1886).

through the west wall, has since been built up. The internal dimensions of the chapel are about 16 feet in length by 10 in breadth. The chancel arch separates this from the plain coved apse, 10 feet in depth, and nearly the same in width. Judging from the masonry of the north wall, it seems probable that another building was attached to it on that side, which may have been the lodging containing the royal apartments, including the one referred to in a charter of Alexander III. as the chamber of the blessed Queen Margaret, in the Maiden Castle of Edinburgh, and with which the chapel directly communicated.

It is with reluctance that a date is suggested for the little oratory

which must rob it of the romance associated with the actual chapel of Malcolm Canmore's queen; but if the entire masonry be ascribed to the same date as the chancel arch, it can scarcely be referred to an earlier period than the reign of David I., the youngest of her sons, by whom the abbey of Holyrood was founded in 1128. The date of Queen Margaret's death is the 16th of November 1093, and the account of the attendant circumstances furnished by her biographer, as he "heard them narrated by a priest of hers whom she loved more fully than the others because of his simplicity, innocence, and purity," seems to indicate that the royal chamber nearly adjoined the oratory, which may not only have occupied the site of the present chapel, but is not wholly unrepresented by it even now. That a church was in existence in the Castle of Edinburgh in her youngest son's reign appears from the mention of it in his charter of Holyrood Abbey; and at a later date, as will be seen, two separate churches within the fortress are repeatedly referred to.

Malcolm Canmore and his eldest son Edward were both slain at the siege of Alnwick Castle, on the 13th of November 1093; and, as we read in Turgot's Life of Queen Margaret—"On the approach of the fourth day after the king's death, her weakness having somewhat abated, the queen went into her oratory to hear mass," and having so done, and partaken of the holy viaticum, she returned to her bed. Her face had already grown pallid in death, when, says her favourite priest, from whom Turgot derived the latest incidents of her life, "she directed that I, and the other ministers of the sacred altar along with me, should stand near her and commend her soul to Christ by our psalms. Moreover she asked that there should be brought to her a cross called the Black Rood, which she always held in the greatest veneration." She was still clasping the prized relic in her hands, when her son Edgar, who had just returned from the fatal siege, entered the chamber of the dying queen. As he reluctantly hesitated to communicate to her the truth, "with a deep sigh she said, 'I know it, my boy, I know it. By this holy cross, by the bond of our blood, I adjure you to tell me the truth;' and so having listened to the fatal tidings, feeling that death was close at hand, she repeated the prayer used by the priest before he received the sacrament, and as she was saying the closing words 'deliver

me,' her soul was freed from the chains of the body, and departed to Christ." The chamber which was the scene of those last hours of the dying queen probably remained, with other ancient buildings in the castle, till the destruction of the whole in the siege of 1573, with almost the solitary exception of the little oratory.

The veneration with which the memory of the pious queen was regarded required no formal pontifical canonisation to give her name a sanctity which doubtless received in time such additions as are the natural tribute of a superstitious age. The chamber in which the closing scene of her life transpired continued thereafter to be associated with her memory, and designated by her name. The earliest notice has already been referred to. It occurs in a charter of King Alexander III., which grants to the monastery of the blessed Queen Margaret at Dunfermline, and to the monks there serving God, a moiety of the land of Beth Waldef, "which John of Strathechyn unto us on the day following the Sabbath before the Feast of St Dunstan the Archbishop, in the month of May in the year of grace 1278, at the Maiden Castle of Edinburgh, in our chamber which is called the chamber of the blessed Queen Margaret, by rod and staff for himself and his heirs, remised, released, and quitted claim."¹

The death of Malcolm and his heir was the occasion of a disputed succession, and the usurpation of the throne for a time by his brother Donald Bane. The castle was besieged by the claimant to the vacant throne; and the removal, under the sheltering veil of a miraculous mist, of the remains of the deceased queen to the conventual Church which she had founded at Dunfermline, is faithfully chronicled by Fordoun. The original nave of the church still stands, with its massive and curiously ornate masonry of the eleventh century, when the early details of Norman masonry were being introduced for the first time into Scotland; but the later choir of the ancient church, with its shrine of St Margaret, has long since disappeared, and it has been replaced during the present century by a tasteless structure erected in the worst period of revived attempt at mediæval ecclesiastical architecture; and with the aim at

¹ *Register de Dunfermelyn*, pp. 52, 53.

fashioning it into a monument for the Bruce, instead of a memorial of the sainted queen.

It was not till the year 1246¹ that the name of Queen Margaret was formally enrolled by Pope Innocent IV. in the catalogue of saints; and four years thereafter her relics were transferred from the old crypt to a fitting shrine in the Lady Aisle of the newly erected choir, not only with great pomp, but—according to the legend recorded by Wyntoun, and with greater minuteness in the Aberdeen Breviary—with miraculous attestation alike of her sanctity and of her loving devotion to her royal consort. But what has to be specially noted here is that there were from a date as early at least as the reign of David II., and probably much earlier, two chapels in the Castle of Edinburgh,—one known as St Margaret's, and the other dedicated to St Mary, both of which must have been in existence when Maitland wrote his *History of Edinburgh*. Of the two there remains now only the venerable little oratory which is appropriately known as St Margaret's Chapel; and possibly still includes in its masonry portions of the oratory of the saintly queen; but if so, it had then another dedication. The Chapel of Queen Margaret had for its most prized relic the famous Black Rood, so called from its black case or fertory. The cross itself was of pure gold, about an ell long, and set with diamonds; and, as Ælred says, "of most wonderful workmanship. It is shut and opened like a chest. Inside may be seen a portion of our Lord's cross (as has often been proved by convincing miracles), having a figure of our Saviour sculptured of massive ivory, and marvellously adorned with gold. Queen Margaret had brought this with her to Scotland, and handed it down as an heirloom to her sons;" and, as Ælred adds, "the youngest of them, David, when he became king, built a magnificent church for it near the city, called Holy-Rood."²

The chapel in which this precious relic was preserved during the life of the queen, and probably till the reign of David I., was certainly not dedicated to her by name. The probability rather seems that it was the Chapel of the Holy Rood. Various charters, granted in the reigns of David I., Malcolm IV., and William the Lion, are dated "apud Castellum

¹ *Register de Dunfermelyn*, Pref., p. 13.

² Bollandists, vol. xxi. p. 335, ap. Forbes Leith.

puellarum"; but only in one, dated in the tenth year of the pontificate of Gregory IX., 1237 A.D., is the curious allusion made to the monastery of the Holy Rood within the castle. "Gregorius Episcopus, servus servorum dei, dilectis filijs abbati et conventui monasterij Sancte Crucis de Castro puellarum ordinis Sancti Augustini, Sancti Andree diocesæ."¹ The famous abbey subsequently founded in its honour by David I. eclipsed all others; but this dedication was by no means rare. The Chapel of the Holy Rood stood in St Giles' nether kirkyard till the Reformation. Another remained till a later date in the valley of Greenside, on the north side of the Calton Hill. There were also three altars in St Giles' Church: one of the Holy Cross, another of Sancti Crucis de Locano, and the third of the Holy Cross of the Body and Blood of Christ; nor must it be forgotten that Queen Margaret's first interment was before the rood altar in the nave of Dunfermline Abbey. Certainly no such dedication as that to St Margaret could have been in use at any period prior to the canonisation of the queen, notwithstanding the veneration with which her name was justly regarded by her royal descendants and by the people at large. Her life, as written by Prior Turgot at the request of her daughter, "the honourable and excellent Matilda, queen of the English," is no piece of mediæval hagiology, garnished with the legends and miracles of a credulous age. It is the biography of a very noble queen, wife, and mother, whose piety was genuine and practical, though naturally influenced by the ascetic spirit of the period. The special virtues ascribed to her in the roll of saints, and even the miracles associated with her relics in later centuries, alike pertained to her as a wife and mother. No wonder, therefore, is it that, as Lord Hailes says: "Long before Pope Innocent officially recognised her worth she had been canonised by the voice of a grateful though superstitious people, who affectionately remembered her sanctity and virtues." With the founding of the magnificent Abbey of Holyrood by David I. the associations of the sacred relic, which had been the special object of veneration by his mother, were transferred to the new shrine; while the name of the good queen would naturally be attached to the oratory in which she had worshipped, no less than to the chamber in which

¹ *Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis*, pp. 53, 54.

she died. Of this, however, there is no evidence till the latter half of the fourteenth century, when the name of St Margaret's Chapel first appears in the Exchequer Rolls; but then, as will be seen, references are more frequent to the chapel and the chaplains of St Mary in the Castle of Edinburgh.

Father Hay, an industrious but credulous antiquary of the seventeenth century, whose hopes of the Abbacy of Holyrood were extinguished by the Revolution in 1688, gives currency to an apocryphal story about St David displacing the nuns of the Monasterium Sanctæ Crusis de Castello Puellarum, by the canons of his abbey, as fitter to live among soldiers. But the story is only the latest version of the old *Castel Mynedh Agnedh*, the castrum puellarum, or maiden castle of mediæval chroniclers, where, according to Sir Arthur Wardour and antiquaries of his type, "the Pictish maidens of the blood royal were kept." But it accords with the known facts relative to the founding of the Abbey of Holyrood by the youngest son of St Margaret, to connect its inception with the little oratory in the castle where the famous Black Rood was the object of her devout veneration, and from which it was brought that she might clasp it in her hands in her last moments.

The masonry of the chapel, as it now remains, is of very diverse periods. The squared Norman ashlar, on the south side, is curiously out of the horizontal, and overlies older and ruder masonry. The unsymmetrical plan, and especially the discrepancy between the exterior and interior of the chancel, appear to me to lend confirmation to the idea that we may still possess in this simple little oratory, however much modified by later additions, the actual scene of Queen Margaret's last devotions. It seems in accordance with the spirit of filial piety, as well as with the veneration so generally attached to the memory of the good queen, to assume that the original walls were preserved by her sons, and ultimately beautified by the youngest of them with the addition of the chancel arch which now forms the most characteristic feature of the chapel. It is difficult to conceive of its being pulled down, if only to be replaced by so small and unornate a structure. It could not have been dedicated to St Margaret at the date to which the chancel arch must be assigned, for the queen was not enrolled in the calendar of saints till 1246 A.D.;

but her name continued to be attached to various prominent features of the ancient fortress, besides the chamber of St Margaret referred to in the charter of Alexander III., till all except the little chapel perished in the siege of 1573. One of the items, for example, specified in "the Inventory of the Royal Wardrobe," &c. (p. 168), is a "ane irne yet for Sanct Margareth's toure." In the account of the siege in the *Diurnal of Occurrents*, it is noted that "the south quarter of the toure of the Castell callit Davids Toure, feil throw the vehement and continuale schuting, togidder with some of the foir wall, and of the heid wall besyd Sanct Margaretis Zet." It is thus apparent that, so long as the more ancient features of the castle survived, the queen's name continued to be associated with the royal chamber and oratory, tower and gate. In addition to those, there still remains what was referred to in the description of some of the earliest gifts of David I. to the Abbey of Holyrood, as "the fountain which rises near the corner of the king's garden, on the road leading to the Church of St Cuthbert."¹ It reappears in the account of the siege of 1573, when some of the garrison suffered owing to the water of St Margaret's well being poisoned by the besiegers; and—more fortunate than the miraculously gifted well at Restalrig, which was also dedicated to St Margaret—the fountain still flows as freely as when the queen and her sons and daughters walked in the royal garden, and drank of its waters. In the spring of 1873 it was adorned with ornamental masonry, from a design furnished by a valued member of our Society, the late James Drummond, at the cost of the officers of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders. It is thus obvious that Queen Margaret's name was intimately associated with the fortress which furnished a secure place of residence for the royal family while Malcolm and the Scottish host were harrying Northumberland, and where her life drew to a close. Above all, therefore, that name would naturally be attached to the chapel which was her most favoured place of resort and the scene of her latest act of devotion immediately before her death.

At some period subsequent to the death of Queen Margaret, of which no definite record exists, another chapel, or church, was built within the castle, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary; unless we assume that the

¹ *Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis*, p. xi.

little chapel still standing is the old St Mary's Chapel, and that a larger one was erected and dedicated to St Margaret subsequent to the canonisation of the queen. But this idea is not confirmed by the known facts, slight as they are. The larger church may have been built in the reign of Alexander I., and so have been "the Church of the Castle of Edinburgh" referred to by David I. in the charter of the Abbey of Holyrood; but the earliest notices now recoverable refer to its rebuilding. Unfortunately, the architectural features of the later structure are very imperfectly known, though it still existed in Maitland's and Arnot's days. It is shown in a view of the castle from the east, drawn by T. Sandby in 1753, and the portion of it represented there lends some countenance to the assumption that the more ancient church had not been entirely displaced in the rebuilding of the fourteenth century. It stood on the north side of the quadrangle styled "The Palace Yard" or "Grand Parade," and was not demolished till the present century. Its east gable, with low-pitched roof and small windows, forms a prominent feature in the engraving from Paul Sandby's drawing in Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*; and nearly the same view is repeated in a drawing by the Hon. John Elphinstone, reproduced in 1788 in Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*. This may have been the east wall of the original Norman structure. The south elevation, with tall windows and buttresses more in accordance with the probable date of its rebuilding, is shown in an earlier drawing made by Gordon of Rothiemay in 1647. Unfortunately, the views here referred to are all on a small scale, and cannot be depended upon for minute accuracy of detail. The building is described by Maitland as a very long, large, ancient church, which from its spacious dimensions he assumes "was not only built for the use of the small garrison, but for the service of the neighbouring inhabitants before St Giles's Church was erected for their accommodation."¹ The latter assumption would unduly antedate the building of the church; for the curious Norman doorway on the north side of the nave of St Giles's Church, which only disappeared about 1760, was to all appearance a work of earlier date than the chancel arch of St Margaret's Chapel.

Unfortunately Maitland wrote his *History of Edinburgh* at a period

¹ Maitland's *Hist. of Edin.*, p. 145.

when little attention was given to ecclesiology, and he has furnished no detailed description of the architectural features of the ancient church. But the demolition during the present generation of the modern building that had replaced it has supplied some means of judging of its style and date. Numerous fragments of mouldings, mullions, and tracery were found built into the modern masonry, indicating for the most part late fourteenth-century work. This fully accords with the evidence supplied by the Exchequer Rolls, which seems to point to its restoration, if not entire rebuilding, towards the close of the reign of David II. The remains thus brought anew to light include a plain moulded stoup apparently of that period. But some mouldings of other stones are of earlier character, while the tracery is rather fifteenth-century work. This evidence thus serves to confirm the idea that the church underwent repeated modifications before its final demolition. It appears to have fallen into neglect and disrepair in the sixteenth century, and even then to have been diverted for a time to secular uses, as is shown by an entry of the year 1595, in the Records of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, "Anent the desyre of James Reid, constable of the Castell of Edinburgh, in effect craving that, seeing thair was ane parochie kirk within the said castell, command wald be given to John Brand to baptise the barnis borne in the Castell. The Presbyterie understanding that the Kirk thairof is unreparitt, willis the said constable to repair the same, and to dedicatt it for no uther use bot for preiching. Theirafter his desyre sal be answeritt."¹

The earliest reference to this church in the Exchequer Rolls is an entry, of date 9th January 1366, of the account of Simon of Edinburgh and other bailies of the town of Edinburgh, crediting them with the payment of ten pounds to William of Calebra, "the chaplain officiating in the Chapel of the blessed Mary, rebuilt within the Castle."² Repeated entries in nearly the same terms occur during the twenty years immediately following, of payments to his successor "Sir Allan the Canon," "to the brother officiating in the Chapel of St Mary within the Castle," or more frequently "to the chaplain," without his being named. There are no entries for the years 1383-85, nor for 1387-89; and the next payment,

¹ Wodrow, *Misc.*, vol. i. p. 463.

² *Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum*, Ed. by Geo. Burnett, LL.D., vol. ii. p. 246.

made by Adam Forster and William Naper, collectors of the town of Edinburgh, is to Sir Geoffrey, or, as he is subsequently more fully designed, Sir Geoffrey Lyttyster, "the chaplain up to this time officiating in the Chapel of St Margaret, situated in the Castle of Edinburgh, and who for the future will officiate in the Chapel of St Mary, rebuilt in the same Castle." The larger chapel was apparently undergoing extensive alterations or rebuilding during the previous unnoted years, in which divine service had been carried on in the small Chapel of St Margaret until the restorations were completed. But now a definite transfer of the services of the chaplain to the chapel of St Mary accompanies the "payment of the eight pounds of his yearly stipend to be received by him and his successors, chaplains, who shall officiate in the same chapel in perpetual succession yearly for ever, in accordance with the charter of our lord, King Robert the third."

The charter of King Robert III. here referred to was executed on the 3rd December 1390; and is a confirmation of one executed at the close of the previous reign, which sets forth, in the name of Robert II., by the grace of God king of the Scots, "for the health of our own soul and that of our late dearest wife Euphemia, Queen of Scotland, as well as the souls of our late grandfather, Robert, of revered memory, and our uncle David, &c., have given and granted, and by this our present charter have confirmed unto God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Saint Margaret the Queen, and to Geoffrey Lyttester, the chaplain officiating in the chapel of the same Saint Margaret the Queen, situated in our Castle of Edinburgh, and to his successors, our chaplains, who shall officiate in perpetual succession in the same, whose installation shall pertain to us, and to our heirs, kings of Scotland, in perpetual succession, eight pounds sterling, to be received yearly from our great tax of our town of Edinburgh." The gift was a liberal one according to the value of money at that date; and the charter which King Robert II. executed very shortly before his death was ratified and confirmed by his successor in the following month of December, but with this proviso—"That is, so far as the said Geoffrey and his successors are bound to officiate in the Chapel of the Blessed Margaret, the Queen, by the charter of the said lord, our father, we will that the aforesaid

Geoffrey and his successors be bound for ever to officiate in the chapel of the Blessed Mary in our Castle aforesaid."¹ The only conceivable motive for such a transfer of the services of the chaplain from one to the other chapel is, that he had been officiating in the smaller one while the other was in process of restoration and enlargement. This, therefore, may be assumed to determine the fact that the large church, which, till the close of the eighteenth century, stood on the north side of the palace yard, was St Mary's Chapel. The chapel of St Margaret was not, however, wholly abandoned, and the fact that the chaplain did from time to time officiate also at the altar in the little oratory, may account for the entries of payments made to him, as recorded in the Exchequer Rolls, sometimes being to the chaplain of St Margaret's, and at others to that of St Mary's Chapel.

But a contemporary record of a very different character from the formal entries in the *Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum* supplies some interesting details, as well as curious traditions, relative to the ancient Chapel of St Margaret; and serves to show that special attention was being directed to it at the very time when the first Stuart king made it the object of his pious largess. The great national epic, "The Story of the Brus, writ be Master Johne Barbour Archdecon of Aberdeen," was in progress, and indeed far advanced towards completion, in 1375. The poet assigns that year as the "tym of the compiling of this buk," in a passage which occurs after two-thirds of the poem had been completed. Subsequent gifts authorised by the king to be paid to Barbour, out of the customs of the burgh of Aberdeen, are believed to have been in acknowledgment of his labours; and there is good evidence in proof that the gift of a pension, made to him by King Robert in 1378, of 20 shillings yearly out of the fermes of Aberdeen, was a special mark of royal bounty on the completion of his metrical history of the achievements of his illustrious ancestor, King Robert the Bruce.

One of the incidents narrated in the poem is the surprise of Edinburgh Castle, about the year 1312, by a band of Scots, under the leadership of William Francis, a follower of Earl Randolph. The gallant

¹ *Register of the Great Seal*, Roll X. No. 9, p. 197.

deed is pronounced by the poet as unparalleled in courageous daring, unless it be by Alexander, the conqueror of Babylon's tower.

“Outane this taking anerly
 I herd nevir in na tym gane
 Castell that was sa stoutly tane.
 And of this taking that I mene
 Sanct Margaret the gud haly quene
 Wist in hir tym throu reveling
 Of him that knawis and wat all thing ;
 Tharfor insted of prophesy
 Scho left ane takning richt joly,
 That is, that scho in hir chapell
 Gert wele be portrait ane castell,
 Ane leddir up to the wall standand,
 And ane man tharapon clymand ;
 And wrat owth him, as ald men sais,
 In French, *gardys vous de Fransais*.
 And for this word scho gert writ sa
 Men wend the Franchmen suld it ta ;
 Bot, for Fransas hattin was he
 That sa clam up in prevate,
 Scho wrat that as in prophesy,
 And it fell eftirward suthly
 Richt as scho said, for tane it was,
 And Fransas led tham up that plas.”¹

The brilliant and successful achievement thus referred to was of such an exceptional character that, according to the poet, it had been revealed to St Margaret upwards of two centuries before ; upon which the favoured queen, instead of putting it on record in the form of a written prophecy, had the scene portrayed on the walls of her oratory, with its ambiguous warning against the “Fransais,” by whom its English garrison was to be so valiantly overcome. Whatever languages the early continental training of the queen in Hungary, and her later residence at the English court, may have made her familiar with, only the spirit of prophecy could have anticipated the French of the fourteenth century. The painting to which such prophetic significance was assigned by the poet bore in the legend on its scroll sufficient evidence of its being the

¹ *The Brus*, lxxxiv. 150-172.

work of a later age than that of Queen Margaret. If such a picture did actually adorn the chapel wall, it was probably an allegory; somewhat after the fashion of Bunyan's "Mansoul," rather than the picturing of any actual siege. But the description has an interest for us now, apart from its reference to St Margaret's Chapel, as an illustration of the style of church decoration in Scotland in the reign of King Robert II.

Turning once more to the evidence which the prosaic records of the Exchequer Rolls supply in reference to the ancient chapels and chaplains of the Castle of Edinburgh, an account of Sir John Lyon, Lord of Glammys, chamberlain of Scotland, of the year 1380, records the delivery by him of the sum of £707, 8s. 4d. to John Gray and John Pollok to keep in custody within the Castle of Edinburgh, in the place above the Chapel of the Blessed Margaret, assigned to them for this purpose by the chamberlain. But for a quarter of a century subsequent to the year 1365, the chapel and chaplain of St Mary are alone referred to in all disbursements for the services at the altar in the castle.

The reoccupation for a time of the Chapel of St Margaret, under the chaplaincy of Sir Geoffrey Littyster, apparently during the rebuilding of St Mary's Chapel, has already been referred to, along with the transfer of his services to the latter chapel. But, unless we assume that the names of the two chapels were used interchangeably in the record of payments to the chaplain of Edinburgh Castle, service continued to be maintained at St Margaret's altar. The entries in the Exchequer Rolls record the payments made from year to year to Sir Geoffrey Littyster, as the chaplain officiating in the Chapel of St Mary in the Castle of Edinburgh, till January 1393; and then in the following year a payment of eight pounds appears "to the chaplain officiating in the Castle of Edinburgh in the Chapel of St Margaret, for his salary for the year." There is no entry for 1394, but similar entries to the above reappear in 1395 and the following year, to the chaplain, unnamed. In 1397 the name of Sir Geoffrey reappears, under the designation of "the king's chaplain officiating in the Chapel of St Mary within the Castle of Edinburgh"; and in nearly all the succeeding entries from 1397 to 1405 the chaplain continues to be referred to as officiating in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin. In one or two entries no chapel is specified; but in

the first of those years a sum of eight shillings is allowed for "a lump of wax bought for light for the altar of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary within the Castle of Edinburgh, delivered to the chaplain of the same."¹

Another interval occurs, from 1414 to 1425 A.D., during which neither chapel nor chaplain is specifically named; but the latter is generally referred to as "the chaplain officiating in the Chapel of the Castle of Edinburgh on behalf of the soul of the late king," or, more generally, of the kings. The period is chiefly embraced within the usurped regency of the Dukes of Albany and the captivity of James I., the poet king. In 1424 he wedded the Lady Jane, after embodying the romance of the courtship of the royal prisoner of Windsor, in his beautiful poem of "The Kingis Quair." On the 21st of May, in the same year, he was crowned at Scone, and Scotland entered on the new epoch of its history, "the period of the Jameses." But the favourite residence of James I. and his court was at Perth, which may perhaps account in part for the fact that from 1425 to 1434 no entries in the Exchequer Rolls refer to the chaplaincy of Edinburgh Castle. Then "the chaplain officiating in the chapel of St Margaret" reappears. In 1446 A.D. Sir Ninian of Spot is named as the incumbent; and he continued to serve the altar of St Margaret's Chapel till 1450, when he was succeeded by Sir Henry of Crichton. Only once thereafter is the Chapel of St Mary mentioned. The entries run, with slight variation, in these terms:—"To the chaplain of the Blessed Queen Margaret, officiating in the chapel of the same, within the Castle of Edinburgh, from the foundation of King Robert the Second;" but a special entry in 1466 draws attention to the fact that, although the said chaplain has, by royal grace, been the recipient of £10, the original grant was no more than £8. He receives the larger sum for that year "at the risk of the Accountant; and it is enjoined on the Accountant that he pay to him no more than eight pounds without fresh instructions." In 1469 Sir John Rynde is named as "the chaplain officiating in the Chapel of St Mary within the Castle of Edinburgh," to whom a payment of £10 is made "at the risk of the Accountant." But the next and last entry returns to the older title; and with due care lest the payment of the larger sum shall be drawn into an established

¹ *Exchequer Rolls*, vol. iii. p. 438.

precedent, records the payment "by the grace of the king, ten pounds ; although the foundation contains only eight pounds, as is evident in the preceding rolls of the year of account, from the command of our Lord the King, under his royal signet and sign manual set out over the account."

The definite records of the Exchequer Rolls relative to the chapels and chaplains of Edinburgh Castle thus abruptly end in the latter part of the fifteenth century. It was a period of extreme confusion and disorderly violence, during the minority of James III., a sovereign who in later years incurred the ire of his rude Scottish barons by his preference for the society of artists and musicians. Unhappily no trustworthy record remains from which a judgment might be formed of the true character of Cochrane, the mason or architect who stood foremost among the royal favourites, and of whom Pitscottie says, "this Cochrane had sick authoritie of court and credence of the king, that no man gatt audience of the king bot be his moyane." It is wholly inconceivable that the royal favourite was a mere stonemason ; but, like royal favourites in all ages, he probably abused his influence with the king, and increased the aversion of the nobles, by his magnificent establishment and the insolence of his numerous dependants. The reign of James III. was remarkable for a striking revival of architecture in Scotland. Till the demolition in 1848 of the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, founded at Edinburgh by his queen, Mary of Gueldres, in fulfilment of his own purpose, one remarkable example of the architectural skill and bold exuberance of fancy, so characteristic of the period, remained among the historical buildings of the Scottish capital. But Stirling Castle was the favourite residence of James III. ; and there accordingly, and not in Edinburgh Castle, the king gratified that love for "building and trimming of chapells, halls, and gardens," with which Drummond of Hawthornden charges him as a taste that usually pertains to the lovers of idleness.¹ The charge comes somewhat ungraciously from a poet's pen. If the buildings erected during that reign in Stirling Castle are the work of the king's master mason, they prove him to have been an artist of great fertility and bold originality

¹ *Drummond of Hawthornden*, p. 61.

of design. But if any similar work was executed by him in Edinburgh Castle, it must have been expended on the chapel which formed the north side of the Palace square, and so perished on its demolition. No doubt, however, the service in the castle chapel, though interrupted and repeatedly allowed to fall into neglect amid the troubles that marked the prolonged minorities of successive kings, must have been resumed on those occasions when the castle became the royal residence, as it repeatedly did in the minorities both of James II. and James III., and again in that of James V., when he had for his faithful page and monitor Sir David Lindsay, whose *Satire of the Three Estates* contributed so largely to the revolution alike in opinion and in government in the subsequent reign, and brought to an end in Scotland the reverence for saints and saintly shrines.

Among the queens specially associated with the Castle of Edinburgh, Marie de Lorraine, daughter of Claude, duke of Guise, claims a prominent place. In the month of June 1538, when in her twenty-fourth year, she was received at Edinburgh as the bride of James V. with every demonstration of loyal welcome. The anniversary of Scotland's patron saint and queen had been chosen for the auspicious reception; and so, as an old diarist remarks, "On Sanct Margaretes day thairafter, she made her entres in Edinburgh with greit triumphe, and als with ordour of the haill nobillis; hir Grace come in first at the West Port, and raid down the hie gait to the Abbey of Halyrudhous, with greit sportis playit to hir Grace throw all the pairtis of the toun."¹ The experiences of Mary of Guise, as wife and queen, lie beyond the present theme. It is subsequent to her widowhood that her name comes into notice in connection with the castle. Once more, under altogether exceptional circumstances, the crown of Scotland had passed to a child; and troubles grew ever more violent, while the hapless Mary Stuart, all unconscious of the tragic romance on which she was so soon to enter, was passing her youth in pleasant dalliance at the court of France. Mary of Guise was unquestionably a woman of exceptional ability; and her accession to the regency in 1554, in the place of the weak and incapable Earl of Arran, was welcomed by all parties. She was naturally inclined to

¹ *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 22.

moderation; but she entered on the government of Scotland under circumstances that demanded rare wisdom; and her relations with France and the House of Guise rendered it impossible for her to pursue an impartial course. The bitterness, moreover, of factious strife was intensified by the presence of a body of French troops sent to overawe the populace. Amid the troubles of foreign invasion and civil war, Holyrood Palace was deserted for the "Guise Palace" in Blyth's Close, opposite the head of the West Bow, which in the earlier years of the present century formed one of the most curious historical memorials in the old town of Edinburgh. But this she had to abandon, first, for safety under the protection of the French garrison in Leith; and finally, for the royal chambers in the castle. There, enfeebled in health, and distracted by the cares of state, we have to imagine her anxiously watching from the ramparts the siege of the neighbouring seaport by the Lords of the Congregation. Knox thus pictures to us the scene:—
"The Queen Regent satt all the tyme of the assault (quhilk was baith terrible and lang) upon the foir wall of the Castell of Edinburgh; and quhen sche perceivit the overthrow of us, and that the ensenyeis of the French war agane displayit upoun the wallis, sche gaif ane gawfe of lauchter, and said, 'Now will I go to the Messe, and prayse God for that quhilk my eyes have sene!' And so was Freir Black reddy for that purpose."

Friar John Black, of whom we thus obtain notice as the last recorded chaplain officiating in the chapel of the castle, was a Dominican, celebrated for his learning; but whom Knox, and other contemporary writers, including the metrical satirists, describe as more notorious for open profligacy. He is styled "The Queen's Black Chaplane, weill surnamed Black, and not nicknam'd; for Black were all his workes." Mr David Laing gives some account of him in the appendix to the *Works of John Knox*. He was Master of "Our Lady College" at St Andrews, and was slain at Holyrood on the night of David Riccio's murder. That the altar of the chapel, either of St Margaret or St Mary, continued to be duly served by an officiating priest or chaplain so long as the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, survived cannot be doubted.

¹ *Works of John Knox*, Laing, vol. ii. p. 67.

But the only further notice I have been able to recover occurs in the official record of details relative to her funeral rites. The death of the Queen Regent occurred in the castle at midnight of the 10th of June 1560; and in the Treasurer's Accounts for the same month the following entries appear:—

Item, to Johne Weir, pewterrar, for ane wobe of leid weiland — stanis, to be ane sepulture to inclose the Queenis Grace in, iiij lb. xv s.

Item, to the said Johne for sowdane of the said wobe of leid, xxxij s.

Item, for ij^e dur nalis to the Queenis Grace sepulture, iij s.

Item, for xxj elnis and ane half of blak gray to hing the chapell of the Castell of Edinburgh the Queenis G. bodie lyand thairin, vj lb. ij s. iiij d.

Item, four elnys of quhite taffateis of the cord to mak ane cross abone the Queenis Grace, price of the eln xxiiij s. summa iij lb. xvj s.

Great as were the changes which had come over Scotland in the long interval since the dead body of the widowed queen of Malcolm Canmore was laid in state in the chapel where she had so recently been a worshipper, the circumstances that attended the death of another queen in the Castle of Edinburgh present some interesting analogies. The body of the deceased Regent lay there, as Knox tells us, "lappet in a cope of leid," apparently till the following spring, when, as narrated in the *Diurnal of Occurrents*—"Upoun the xvj day of the said moneth of March, at xij houris in the nycht, the corpes of vmquhile Marie Quene Douriare of Scotland, and Regent, was convoyit secretlie furth of the Castell of Edinburgh, and put in ane schip in Leith, and convoyit thairfra to France."¹

But it is in the reign of Mary Stuart, the daughter of James V. and Mary of Guise, that, under very singular circumstances, the name of St Margaret reappears in association with that of her whose misfortunes and tragic fate have won for her a no less prominent place in romance than in the national history. The Queen of Malcolm Canmore stands alone among mediæval saints as the mother of a large family, who reared sons and daughters to do her credit, and died surrounded by her weeping children. Hence the exceptional virtues ascribed to her. Good mothers looked to her in their maternal troubles; and she

¹ *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 232

occupied the place in mediæval hagiology of the classic Eleithya. Hence Sir David Lindsay, when in *The Monarchie* he denounces superstitious pilgrimages, thus includes the royal saint in his anathema:—

“Some wyfes Sanct Margaret doith exhort
Into thair birth thame to support.”

The training of Queen Mary, at the court of Francis I., was not calculated to rob her of her faith in saintly shrines; and when accordingly in 1566 she retired to Edinburgh Castle as a safe retreat, in anticipation of the birth of her son, the future King of England as well as of Scotland, she bethought herself of the special virtues ascribed to her sainted ancestress. We learn accordingly, from Papebroch's additions to the *Life of St Margaret*, that the most effectual means were resorted to for securing the material efficacy of the saint's relics. The body of St Margaret, which had been secretly and with much difficulty transported from the Castle of Edinburgh immediately after her death to the church of the Benedictine Abbey founded by her at Dunfermline, was transferred, on the 19th of June 1250, from its original resting place in the nave to a costly shrine in the choir. There, in spite of revolutions and changing dynasties, her relics had been preserved, and attracted the veneration of devout pilgrims for upwards of three centuries. But the reverence which had so long guarded the remains of the dead saint from profanation had to give way to the exigencies of a living queen. The faith which Queen Mary manifested in their special virtues was shown in a singularly irreverent fashion. The head of St Margaret was detached from her body and brought to Edinburgh Castle,—probably with no less secrecy than when the bearers of her body stole away, under cover of the mist to which Fordoun assigns a miraculous origin, when Donald Bane and his Islesmen were laying siege to the castle in 1093.

In an earlier age, while the faith in such saintly relics was universal, the ferty of the royal saint would have been transported from Dunfermline to Edinburgh with every public demonstration of ecclesiastical pomp. But all that was at end for the time. Only eleven years before, under the regency of the queen's mother, Mary de Guise, when the

canons of St Giles's Collegiate Church, and the chief clergy of the city, undertook to bear the statue of St Giles through the streets of Edinburgh, dressed in their full canonicals, "with tabrons and trumpets, banners and bagpipes," the Regent herself gracing the procession, the image was profaned with the grossest indignities, and the ceremonial ended in an ignominious rout. Matters had not improved since then, for only the year before that in which Queen Mary gave birth to her son, Sir James Tarbat, a priest, had been imprisoned, exposed on the pillory at the Market Cross, and pelted by the rabble, for the crime of "Massing," or officiating as a celebrant at the altar in the season of Easter. Hence, no doubt, the desecration of the saint's remains. Queen Mary had fallen on evil days; and what otherwise would be chargeable as a grossly irreverent mutilation of the body of St Margaret, may doubtless be ascribed to the necessity of transporting the relic, with all its prized virtues, to the castle with the utmost secrecy.

The little oratory stood then as now on the summit of the Castle rock, and perpetuated the associations with the saintly queen which tradition has preserved through so many centuries. When, therefore, the head of St Margaret was brought back, after so long an interval, it seems most probable that the chapel which bore her name would be selected for its safe keeping. No account has been preserved whereby to learn what special results were ascribed to its presence there at the time; but the little chamber still remains familiar to all where, on the 19th of June 1566, the infant was born in whom the rival crowns of Elizabeth and Mary were united, and Shakespeare's phantasy in the vision of Macbeth was realised. Banquo's line had stretched thus far "to the crack of doom"; and here was the first of those

"That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry."

The subsequent history of St Margaret's relics is curious, but it would carry us far afield from our present subject to retrace in detail their devious wanderings. On the flight of Queen Mary to England in 1567, the head of St Margaret was secretly transferred to the house of the Laird of Dury, where it was guarded for years by a Benedictine monk. It was then conveyed to Antwerp by John Robie, a Jesuit father. In

1620 the Bishop of Antwerp issued letters of authentication of the sacred relic, and granted leave for its exposure to public veneration. It was next translated, in 1627, to the Scots College at Douay, where it was seen by the historian Caruthers in 1785. It was then in excellent preservation, with the fine fair hair of the Saxon princess still abundant, nearly seven centuries after her death. Pope Innocent X., by special brief, granted a plenary indulgence to all who should visit the church on the festival of St Margaret; and the privilege was renewed from time to time by his successors, till in the furor of the French Revolution this relic of the sainted queen passed beyond reach of further veneration or indignity.

Meanwhile the headless body, ejected from its shrine by earlier revolutions, was translated at length, under favour of Philip II., to the church of St Lawrence at the Escorial. There, according to Papebroch, two urns containing the royal remains of Malcolm and his queen are inscribed "St Malcolm, King; St Margaret, Queen"; for it would seem that not only the queen, but also Malcolm Canmore, had been entered on the roll of saints. The late Bishop Gillies invoked the aid of Pope Pius IX. with a view to the restoration of the saintly relics to a Scottish shrine in the chapel of St Margaret's Covenant, built under his oversight on the Borough Muir; but possibly the Spanish custodians of the accumulated relics in the church of the Escorial were reluctant to part with them, and so, as reported, they could no longer be identified.

When I was last in Edinburgh my old friend, Mr William Nelson, had already conceived the idea of liberally carrying out, at his own cost, a series of restorations of some of the most historical features of the ancient castle. The work of restoration, including the Argyle Tower and the ancient banquet hall, are now, I believe, far advanced towards completion, and cannot fail to add greatly to the attractive interest of the grand old fortress. St Margaret's Chapel was also included in the proposed work. But every stone of the venerable little oratory is historical; and it is to be regarded as fortunate on the whole that it escaped the renovating process which an architect is too apt to carry out under the name of restoration. In the deliberations which I held with my old friend in reference to this work, I was led to renewed

inquiry into the history of the chapel, to which I first drew public attention upwards of forty years ago; and I now transmit to the Society this sketch of its history, in so far as I have been able to retrace it under the disadvantages incident to want of access to the stores of the Advocates' Library, and other sources of information, familiar to me in early days.