



DUNBLANE CATHEDRAL FROM S.W. 1865

SCOTTISH

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SIX miles north from Stirling, on the great railway line to Perth, Aberdeen, and Inverness, stands the antique Cathedral City of Dunblane, which may be said in every way to be renewing its youth, for the old thatched houses which lined its narrow street have in recent years disappeared, the street has widened out to double its former width, on every side the town is expanding, a great fashionable and much-frequented Hydropathic crowns the rising ground behind, and within the last few years the princely munificence of Mrs. Wallace of Glassingall, and the wise knowledge and trained artistic and archæological tastes of Dr. Rowand Anderson, have restored to Scotland and to the world the beauty and the sweetness of a Cathedral which, if small and, as some would say, insignificant, is charming in its simplicity, and superlatively pleasing in its want of ostentation.

It is said that the site was first occupied by a fraternity of Culdees, established here in the latter half of the sixth century by St. Blane, who lived and died and was buried at Dunblane. The Culdees lingered on here later than in most other places in Scotland, and do not seem to have disappeared till the thirteenth century. The Cathedral seems to have been founded by King David I.—the “Soir Sanct for the Crown”—in 1140, but it made slow progress towards completion, and a letter from the Pope in 1240 speaks of it then lying bare and roofless. The nave was built during the episcopacy of Bishop Clement, which lasted from 1233 to 1257, and later on Bishop Ochiltree (1429-1448), and the first Bishop Chisholm (1481-1527), enlarged and beautified the edifice. To the latter Bishop are due the upper two storeys of the tower, on the southern parapet of which his arms are still to be seen.

The part which actual violence at the time of the Reformation played in the destruction of our ecclesiastical buildings in Scotland has still to be accurately determined, but it appears the buildings had already suffered considerably from revenues sadly diminished by illegal gifts, and that in June of 1559 the altars and images were violently “reformed”—that is, destroyed—by an excited multitude from Perth, who were led by the Duke of Argyle and Lord James Stewart, who was later on known as the Earl of Moray. The great agent of destruction, however, seems to have been the poverty and consequent neglect which followed. The nave stood roofless from shortly after the Reformation till the recent restoration, begun in 1888 and

completed in 1893, and it is more than wonderful that, after three and a half centuries of exposure to wind and weather, it was still possible to preserve the building. The choir was kept roofed and was used continuously as a place of worship by the National Church, first Episcopalian and afterwards Presbyterian, till the whole building, after leaving Dr. Rowand Anderson's hands, was once more restored to the uses for which it was intended.

The Cathedral is indeed a wonderful study, and a marvellous illustration of that essential permanence in the midst of change, which marks so many things in this world. In the nave, at its north-west corner, stands a weathered and worn cross-slab, one of a numerous class which abounds over the north-east of Scotland. It must, at latest, belong to about the end of the tenth century—it is probably of a considerably earlier date—and it suggests if it does not certainly speak of the Culdee occupation. The four lower storeys of the tower are early Norman work, and are supposed to belong to the twelfth century, while the fact that the wall of the nave is simply made to abut on and does not even run parallel with the walls of the tower, shows that the nave belongs to a later time.

Recumbent effigies of two bishops lie, one in the choir close to the great eastern window, and another, which has been shockingly mis-used, under the window of what does duty for the south transept. Another monument is said to commemorate and represent an Earl and Countess of Strathearn, but the warrior's shield—if it ever showed his bearings—now tells no tale of noble lineage. In the floor of the choir, in front of where the altar had once stood, there are three great slabs of blue limestone, the matrices of brasses, unfortunately, long since disappeared. These are said to mark the resting-place of Lady Margaret Drummond and her sisters who, for reasons intelligible to those who study and understand state-craft, were poisoned because James IV. had married, or was about to marry, the Lady Margaret.

The Cathedral is rich in the possession of pre-Reformation furniture—the stalls, canopied and uncanopied, of the Chapter. These are adorned with interesting and curious carving.

The new pulpit in itself presents an epitome of the interesting ecclesiastical history of Scotland and Dunblane. Besides being adorned with panels showing the usual sacred emblems and the symbols of the passion, it is further ornamented with statuettes, which recall the phases of man's ever-changing opinions on matters ecclesiastical—St. Blane, King David I., Bishop Clement, an Earl of Strathearn, John Knox, Bishop Leighton, Principal Carstairs—while round the canopy overhead, partly as commentary, partly as reproof and warning, is inscribed the words—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”