History of the University of Edinburgh from its foundation

Dalzel Andrew
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Author: Dalzel Andrew

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HISTORY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
FROM ITS FOUNDATION.

BY ANDREW DALZEL
PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THAT UNIVERSITY

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

VOL. II.—HISTORY.

EDINBURGH
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS
1862.
PREFATORY NOTICE.

In printing the following work, the Author's MS. has been carefully adhered to, with only a few verbal corrections. Professor Dalzel's intention evidently was to have continued his History of the University, in the form of Annals, to the commencement of the present century, but it terminates abruptly about the year 1723, when the University had laid the foundation of its eminence as a School of Medicine. This intention appears from the table of Contents prefixed to his MS., in which he has given the titles of two additional chapters, but which, judging from the state of the existing manuscript, were probably never written. We cannot, therefore, but feel regret that this portion of Professor Dalzel's History, which would have embraced an account of his own times, was left unfinished, if we consider the facilities of daily and familiar intercourse that existed at a period when several of the Professors resided within the Collegiate buildings, and when so many eminent men were associated with the University. The titles of these two chapters are as follows:—
"Chapter VII. From the institution of the Medical
Faculty to the time of Dr. Robertson as Principal,
in 1762.

"Chapter VIII. From the beginning of Dr. Robert-
son's presiding over the College, till the end of the
eighteenth century."

There however remains, as materials to be employed
for the illustration of this part of his subject, a series
of extracts from the Records of the Town-Council,
between August 1724 and May 1779, which the
Author had made with considerable labour and care.
These extracts have been compared with the Council
Records; and as furnishing a variety of facts illus-
trative of the history of the University during that
period, they have been inserted in the Appendix,
No. V.

In connexion with the History of the University,
Professor Dalzel intended to have prepared lists and
biographical notices of the Professors in the various
chairs. Having only partially completed this part of
his plan, the portions which were actually written are
given in the subsequent pages;¹ and a few documents
marked to be inserted, have been supplied in the Ap-
pendix. It may also be mentioned, that a complete
Chronological List of the Principals, Regents, and Pro-
fessors is contained in the volume entitled "A Cata-

¹ See footnote to page 330.
logue of the Graduates in the Faculties of Arts, Divinity, and Law, of the University of Edinburgh,” published in 1858. I find, however, from Mr. Dalzel’s researches, as embodied in the present work, that the above List of Regents, from 1583 to 1707, needs revision, by forming a separate list of Professors of Humanity during that period.

Having been requested to act as Editor of the following work, as I could not, without assistance, devote to it the time that would be requisite, it is but proper to state, that I was assisted by the Rev. James Anderson, author of the “Ladies of the Covenant,” and other works; and that he undertook not only the necessary task of searching out and collating the various papers to which reference is made in the course of the History, but also the more serious part of transcribing and arranging the Author’s manuscript for the press.

DAVID LAING.
CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.
From the Institution of the College in 1582 to the Accession of James VI. to the Crown of England in 1603, . . 1

CHAPTER II.
From the Accession of James VI. in 1603 to his Death in 1625, . 52

CHAPTER III.
From the Beginning of the Reign of Charles I. to the Restoration of Charles II., . . . . . . 81

CHAPTER IV.
From the Restoration to the Revolution in 1688, . . 186

CHAPTER V.
From the Revolution to the New Regulations respecting the Regents of Philosophy in 1708, . . . . . . 226

CHAPTER VI.
From the New Arrangement respecting the Regents of Philosophy to the Institution of the Medical Faculty in 1723, . . 304

SEPARATE NOTICES.
Principals of the University, . . . . . . 331
Rectors of the University, . . . . . . 333
Professors of Divinity in the University, . . . . 334
CONTENTS.

Professors of Mathematics in the University, ............... 336
The Library and Librarians, .................................. 345
Professors of Humanity, ...................................... 355

APPENDIX.

I.—Elegiac Verses to the Memory of Principal Rollock, 1599, ... 373
II.—The Printed Theses of the Regents and Students of Philo-
sophy, 1556-1707, .............................................. 375
III.—The Discipline of the College of Edinburgh, December 3,
1628; wherein is contained the Offices and Duties of the
Professors, Masters, Scholars, Bursars, and Servants, as it
has been observed many years ago, ................................ 376
IV.—Mortifications to the College, and the Sums thereof restand
in the Town's hands, ............................................ 387
V.—Extracts from the Edinburgh Town-Council Records relating
to the University, from August 12, 1724, to May 9, 1779, ... 394
VI.—Mr. Clement Littill's Deed of Conveyance of his Library to
the Town-Council of Edinburgh for the College, 1582, ........ 452
VII.—Memorandums for a History of the University of Edinburgh
from the Year 1646, ............................................. 455

INDEX. ........................................................................ 457
HISTORY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

CHAPTER I.
FROM THE INSTITUTION OF THE COLLEGE IN 1582 TO THE ACCESSION
OF JAMES VI. TO THE CROWN OF ENGLAND IN 1603.

Soon after the reformation of religion in Scotland, which was established in the year 1560, the Magistrates and Town-Council of Edinburgh, with the Ministers and other respectable Citizens, were solicitous to promote the cause of learning and the liberal education of the youth, which had, during the troubles of the kingdom, been much neglected. They considered, also, that it was attended with great inconvenience and expense to send away the youth from the capital of the kingdom to be educated at St. Andrews, or any other university at a distance; and especially that parents in narrow circumstances, however willing, were altogether unable to bestow a learned education on such of their sons as seemed to be possessed of talents fitted for literary pursuits.¹ They therefore proposed that a University should be founded in their own city; and

¹ Robertson, Vitæ et Mortis Rob. Rolloci Narratio, p. 5.

1561. Proposal to have a University founded in Edinburgh.
they were encouraged in having this scheme carried into execution by a legacy of 8000 merks Scots, which had been bequeathed for that purpose, about the year 1558, by Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney. But the Abbot of Kinloss and others, who had possession of this money, being unwilling to give it up, the Town-Council were not able to recover it till the year 1582. They purchased, however, in the year 1563, for the sum of one thousand pounds Scots,¹ the right to a great part of the ground and buildings which had belonged to the Provost and Prebendaries of the Collegiate Kirk of Field, anciently denominated “Templum et Praefectura Sanctæ Marïæ in Campis,” to be a site for their intended College. This is the very place which the University buildings now partly occupy, and which, before the South Bridge was erected, included also the space betwixt the east front of the New College and the Royal Infirmary, through which the street now passes, but which was formerly garden ground.

This place was soon after rendered remarkable by the unhappy fate of Henry Lord Darnley, husband to the Queen. The apartments where he lodged, and which were blown up by gunpowder on the 10th of February 1567, were either the same which had been possessed by the Provost of the Kirk of Field, or the lodgings of the Prebendaries in the vicinity of the Provost’s house to the east. This house was afterwards

¹ Pennyquick, Parson of that Ilk, and Provost of the Kirk of Field, dispose to the town the hall bigging called the Kirk of Field, with the kirkyard, for the sum of 1000 pounds Scots.—Town-Council Records, vol. iv. June 21, 1563.

Nicol Hutcheson, one of the Prebendaries of the Kirk of Field, resigns his prebend in favour of the town, for payment of 70 merks.—Ibid. vol. v. Dec. 30, 1570.