



A REMNANT OF SMITHFIELD.

without thought, judgment, and even good taste, as regards contrasts, or harmony of each tint with its surrounding lines. In no instance did I find two or more blocks of the same material together, so as to present large patches of black, red, or green; but altogether the colours are judiciously arranged, and the whole effect is exceedingly rich and pleasing; especially as the frequent rains, or "Scotch mists," keep the stones almost constantly wet; hence they appear as if polished, and thereby give the colours a deeper hue.

Another unusual feature in these buildings is, that no labour whatever has been bestowed on jointing the coloured stones: they are not even "hammer dressed," and at present, externally, not a trace of mortar can be found in the joints; the walls are all built dry, that is, the stones are piled up without mortar or other cement in the joints. In building, if the stones tottered one upon another, small fragments were tucked under to steady them, but no working has been attempted. Limestone, and fuel to calcine it, are both scarce in the western isles, especially at Iona; consequently mortar must always have been expensive in such a neighbourhood: this may probably account for their edifices being almost destitute of such material.

On leaving these illustrious relics, it was not without a melancholy emotion that I contemplated the neglected fragments of what had been, during perhaps a thousand years, the most holy and religious structures in the north-west of Europe. It was a sanctified spot of ground, where the good, the great, the powerful, and the regal were alike anxious that their mortal remains should be mingled with this dust. Of this fact, the almost innumerable richly-carved and inscribed gravestones tell a mournful tale; something like an imaginary narrative of what Westminster Abbey might present if it were deserted and given up to all kinds of destruction for three or four centuries. This is by no means an exaggerated or overdrawn contrast: these two religious establishments were founded about the same date, that in Scotland rather the earlier; they were both used for equally dignified purposes: in one were interred or deposited the royal, noble, and religious personages of South

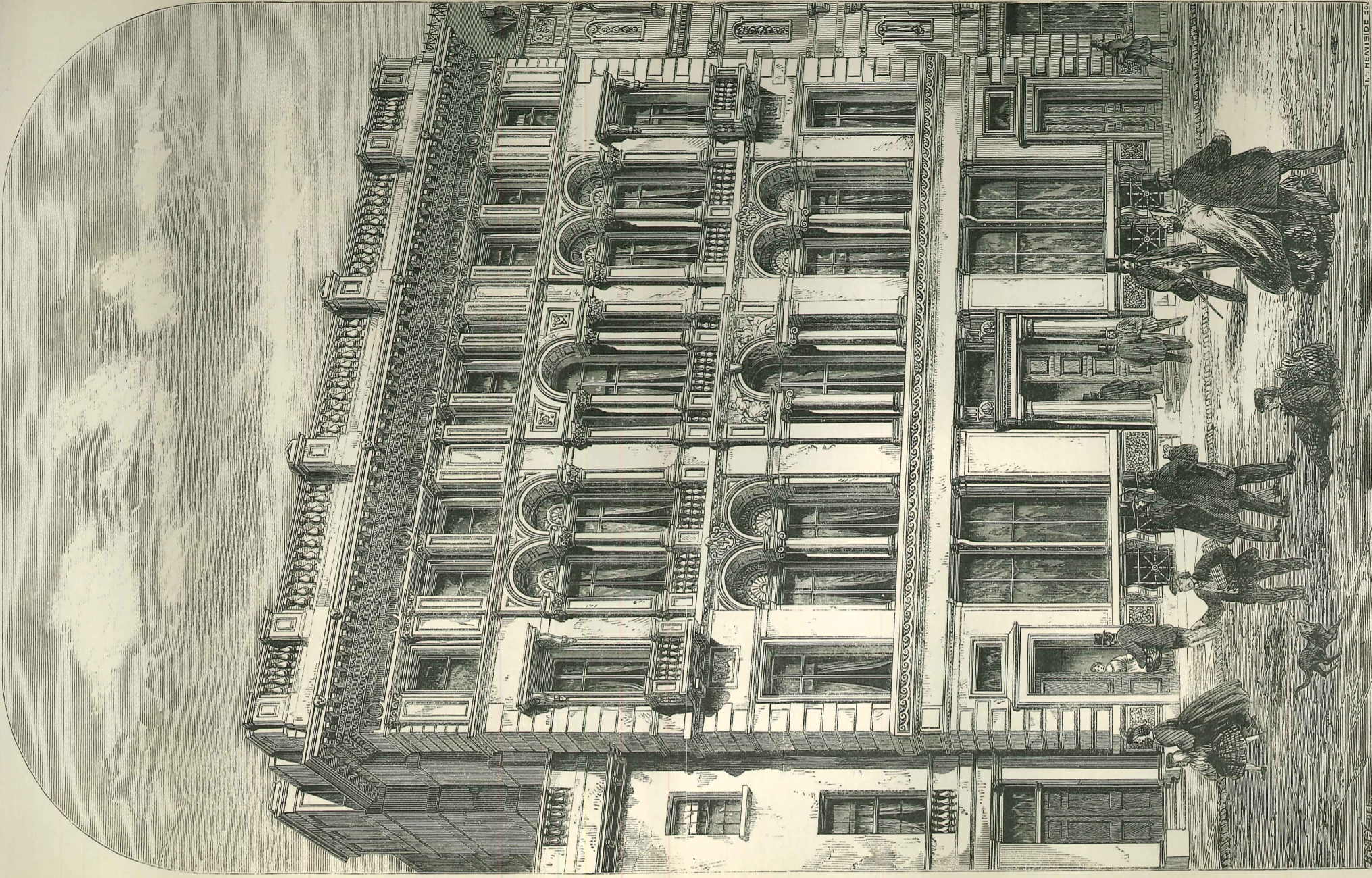
Britain,—in the other, unquestionably as many sovereigns, lords, and ecclesiastics of the North; yet, with all this interesting evidence before us, it is extraordinary to observe with what coolness and indifference the greater number of even educated visitors view these venerable relics of a former age of religious enthusiasts.

It may now be useful to say something about the present condition of these interesting remains. This place of sepulchre, including well-executed architectural specimens, monuments of the illustrious departed, and all belonging thereto, has been so thoroughly neglected, that even the comparatively few fragments, which now attract so much of the archaeologist's notice, cannot long remain in their present positions, unless some careful supervision and preparation be very shortly made to preserve them from further dilapidation, not only from the severe weather, peculiar to this district, but also from injuries unintentionally inflicted by thoughtless visitors. Legally, these ecclesiastical and monumental remains belong to the Lord of the Isles, the present Duke of Argyll, whose ancestors came into possession of the island about the year 1693. But all who have carefully examined and are well acquainted with the particulars and history of these old walls and tombs, must smelly entertain the patriotic feeling that they are not merely private property, but decidedly national monuments, which every true Briton should endeavour to preserve from decay, annihilation, and oblivion. For this purpose, all that is required is a donation from the noble proprietor, a grant from our Government, or an open subscription of about 200*l.* or 300*l.*, to secure these antiquities for at least two or three hundred years.

C. H. SMITH.

A LAST GLANCE AT NORTH SMITHFIELD.

"Gone, gone," and soon, before the advent of improvement, the domestic edifices of Old London will be altogether "gone." To preserve a record of some of them is desirable; and here we have a picturesque group of houses and shops which are vanishing before the railway



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