

Our aged poor : a plea for Gillespie's Hospital : being a lecture delivered at a conversazione of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, on 21st April 1865 / by James D. Gillespie, M.D.

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OUR AGED POOR:

A

PLEA FOR GILLESPIE'S HOSPITAL;

BEING

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT A CONVERSAZIONE
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, EDINBURGH,
ON 21ST APRIL 1865.

BY

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MDCCCLXV.

OLD FASHIONED BOOK

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OUR AGED POOR.

No one can walk through Edinburgh and its suburbs without remarking the number of elegant and costly structures reared for the education and maintenance of the young. No fewer than eight stately edifices adorn by their architectural beauties the city, and by the benevolent objects for which they were designed perpetuate the memory of their founders. George Heriot, by his noble bequest in 1623, was the first to give that impulse to the Scottish charitable mind which has produced such extensive results, and the following extract from his will may be taken as illustrating the prominent idea of the founders of all these institutions up to the present day :—

‘ For as mekle as I intend by Goddis grace In the zeal of
‘ pietie To found and Erect ane publick pios and charitable
‘ worke within the said Burghe of Edinburgh To the glorie of
‘ God ffor the publict weill and ornament of the said Burghe of
‘ Edinburgh And for the honour and due regaird Quilk I have
‘ and beares to my native soyle and mother citie of Edinburgh
‘ foresaid And In Imitatione of the publict pios and religious
‘ work foundat within the Citie of London callit Chrystis
‘ Hospitall their to be callit in all tyme Coming——Hospitall
‘ and Seminarie of Orphans for educatione nursing and upbringing
‘ of Youth being puir Orphans and fatherless Childrene of
‘ decayit Burgesses and freemen of the said Burghe destitut
‘ and left without meanes.’ (Steven’s “Memoir of George Heriot.” Edited by Dr Bedford. Appendix, p. 22.)

It appears from this extract that, Christ’s Hospital in London, which was in his time conferring its benefits on a very different and more needy class than is now the recipient of the charity,

suggested to George Heriot this method of disposal of his wealth, and, with very few exceptions, the same prominent idea, as regards Edinburgh at all events, has influenced subsequent wealthy testators. In the present day, however, it is notorious that the funds of some of the educational establishments have increased so enormously under the careful and praiseworthy administration of the parties to whom they have been intrusted, that "puir Orphans and fatherless children" are not now the only recipients of the charities; and many parents who are well to do in the world, or at least not much pinched by poverty, can now boast that one, and perhaps more, of their children, have been educated gratuitously; and that they have been relieved from the expense of their education and maintenance for six or eight years. I shall not here enter on the question, whether it is advisable to relieve parents from the obligations incumbent on them. The principle has for many years been the subject of argument in this city; it being held on the one hand, that it is right to remove their children from the control of wicked or improvident parents; while on the other it is argued, that such a procedure is tantamount to relieving unworthy objects of their obligations, and virtually is a direct encouragement of vice and improvidence.

There cannot be much difference of opinion as regards orphans or fatherless children. The benefits conferred on these helpless and generally destitute creatures by charitable educational establishments being palpable to all; but evil consequences may sometimes result from doing too much, and such has, I think, been the case in Edinburgh. I firmly believe that the spirit of imitation has been carried too far here, and that charitable bequests might be directed with more benefit to the community into other channels; and as no indication of such a change has yet been evinced, hospitals for children still cropping out at comparatively short intervals, I shall endeavour, in the following essay, to bring under your notice the claims of indigent old age;—to point out how much has been done for the young, how little for the old, and more especially shall I allude to the limited resources of Gillespie's Hospital, the only asylum for the aged poor, save the workhouse, now existing in Edinburgh.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, however, that not a word I am about to say in making this comparison is to be interpreted as in any way censuring the large outlay on children which necessarily takes place at the different hospitals. The evil, if such it is, has already been done by the wills of the testators or the rules of the founders; and I may take this opportunity of paying a deserved tribute to the many philanthropic gentlemen, who have throughout long periods of years conducted these charities with so much prudence and active benevolence, and who have by their efforts placed these institutions on a far more prosperous and princely footing than could ever have been anticipated by their founders. It would be but a sorry and ungracious undertaking on my part, were I to endeavour, at the expense of the young and their benefactors, to advance the cause of the aged, but it is surely quite a legitimate subject for enquiry, whether hitherto the sympathies of the benevolent have not been allowed to point too much in one direction; and it is the absence of any appearance of a change which has prompted me to select for my lecture, what must surely find a friendly corner in the hearts of all my numerous and varied audience,—the claims of our aged poor.

My first object, then, is to direct your attention to the amount of what may be called posthumous wealth, devoted to the education and maintenance of children, leaving out entirely from consideration the twelve Heriot's schools with their 3000 children, Gillespie's Free School, and those mainly supported by annual contributions, such as the two Industrial Schools. The institutions to which I allude are:—

	Founded in
1. Heriot's Hospital,	1628
But not occupied by children till,	1659*
2. Merchant Maiden Hospital,	1695
3. Trades' Maiden Hospital,	1704
4. Orphan Hospital,	1734
5. George Watson's Hospital,	1738
6. John Watson's Hospital,	1828
7. Donaldson's Hospital,	1850
8. Daniel Stewart's Hospital,	1855

* Cromwell made use of this hospital for many years for his sick and wounded soldiers.

The total annual income of these eight institutions is about L.40,000, and this is steadily increasing. The total number of children deriving benefit is about 877, so that, if we were to take a very general view of the matter, we might say that these 877 children were educated and fed at the expense of about L.45 a-year each, without taking into the reckoning the rent we might legitimately add for living in such very costly structures. But L.45 a-year is above the average of what an ordinary working man can earn to support himself and family, so defunct benevolence bestows on 877 children, for seven or eight years, more than the parents of many of them can earn for the support of large families ! I have avoided instituting invidious comparisons between the outlay of the different hospitals, for many circumstances, doubtless, concur to render the average higher in some than in others, as, for instance, a more expensive course of education, and large allowances made to children on leaving the establishment. All I wish to indicate is the fact, that the children brought up in these institutions cost annually a large sum per head ; and when we come to consider the amount of charity bestowed on the aged poor, I trust I shall be able to show how much more requires to be done now for their behalf than for the already too much benefited classes of children, who enjoy the benevolence of their deceased patrons. I have stated, that a rough estimate of the annual income, devoted to these children, gave an average of about L.45 per head ; but it is reduced to about L.40 by a computation, which leaves out the expense of working the trust funds, and any other items of expenditure, which are not directly connected with the education and maintenance of the children.

Let us consider now what has been done for the aged.

There are a good many Societies in Edinburgh, which undertake, in a small way, to assist the aged, and by their timely interference and support add much to their comfort ; while in some instances, perhaps, they enable them to struggle on independent of the workhouse ; but I do not purpose alluding to these further, for they are supported mainly by voluntary contributions, and I would trespass far too long on your time were I to enter on such an extensive subject. I shall confine my-

self to the amount of charitable bequests devoted to the support of the aged poor.

Three only can be enumerated, as in any way resembling the endowments for children, viz., Trinity Hospital, Gillespie's Hospital, and the Craigcrook Mortification; and of these Gillespie's Hospital alone provides an asylum for the beneficiaries.

The annual income of these institutions may be stated in round numbers as follows:—

Trinity Hospital,	.	.	.	.	L.2700
Craigcrook Fund,	.	.	.	.	1050
Gillespie's Hospital,	.	.	.	.	1390
Total,	.	.	.	.	<u>L.5140</u>

In the year 1862-63 the number of recipients of these charities was, at

Trinity Hospital,	.	.	.	.	160
Craigcrook Fund,	.	.	.	.	112
Gillespie's Hospital,	.	.	.	.	37
Total,	.	.	.	.	<u>309</u>

We have thus 309 old men and women getting L.5140 a-year distributed among them, while we have 877 children reaping annually the benefit of L.40,000 of hard cash expended on their education and maintenance.

Of the 309 old people, only thirty-seven get the comforts of a home provided for them; to wit, at Gillespie's Hospital; their annual cost being about L.37, while of the remainder

4 get L.26 per annum.	175 get L.10 per annum.
36 „ 20 „	46 „ 5 „
11 „ 15 „	

If we make the comparison in another way, we have 877 children gratuitously fed and educated at an average yearly of L.40 a-head from trust funds; and 309 frail old people getting, on an average, L.16 from the same sort of source.

It may be said that the relations of the aged are bound to support them, or, if not, that they have the tender mercies of the poorhouse in store for them; but have the young not the same, and even nearer relatives, to look to for support?

With the exception of John Watson's and the Orphan Insti-

tutions, the hospital children are, for the most part, not deprived of one or other of their natural guardians, while it may be truly said of most of the aged recipients of the charities, that they have either outlived their near relatives, or that the latter are in no position to give them aid.

The following analysis of the children at the six remaining hospitals will show the number of their nearest relatives who were bound by the ties of nature to give them support.

At Heriot's Hospital, in 1864, there were 179 boys. Of these, 116, or about 2-3ds, had both father and mother alive ; 18, or about 1-10th, had the father alive ; 37, or about 1-5th, the mother ; while 8, or 1-22d of the whole, were orphans.

At George Watson's Hospital, in 1862-3, there were 111 boys. Of these, 49, or 7-16ths, nearly one-half, had both father and mother alive ; 9, or about 1-12th, the father only ; 41, or a little more than 1-3d, the mother only ; while 12, or about 1-9th, were orphans.

At the Merchant Maiden Hospital, in 1862-3, there were 80 girls. Of these, 30, or 3-8ths, had both father and mother alive ; 11, or about 1-7th, the father only ; 29, or about 3-8ths, the mother only ; and 10, or 1-8th, were orphans.

At the Trades Maiden Hospital, in 1864, there were 46 girls. Of these, 24, or more than one-half, had both parents alive ; 1, the father only ; 15, or about 1-3d, the mother only alive ; while 6, or nearly 1-8th, were orphans.

At Donaldson's Hospital, exclusive of the deaf and dumb children, who are special objects of charity, whether their parents be alive or not, there are 126 hearing children. Of these 22, or about 1-6th, have both father and mother alive ; 4, or about 1-31st, have father only ; 78, or about 3-5ths, have the mother only ; while 22, or about 1-6th, are orphans.

At Stewart's Hospital, in 1862-63, there were 69 boys. Of these 9, or about 1-8th, had both parents alive ; 8, or about 1-9th, had the father only ; 35, or about one-half, the mother only ; while 17, or about 1-4th, were orphans.

Illustrative Table.

	Total Children.	Father and Mother Alive.	Father Alive.	Mother Alive.	Orphans.
Heriot's Hospital, . . .	179	116	18	37	8
George Watson's do., . . .	111	49	9	41	12
Merchant Maiden do., . . .	80	30	11	29	10
Trades' Maiden do., . . .	46	24	1	15	6
Donaldson's do., . . .	126	22	4	78	22
Stewart's do., . . .	69	9	8	35	17
Total, . . .	611	250	51	235	75

From these figures it is evident that about 5-12ths—not very far from one-half—of the children in the six hospitals, where it is not incumbent to select orphans, have both parents alive, while only about 1-8th of the number are orphans.

I am quite aware, that a more minute investigation of the matter might show that not a few of the children, whose parents were both alive, were nevertheless claimant objects of charity ; but I am just as well satisfied, that many children are elected to some of the hospitals whose claims are not so apparent. George Heriot, for instance, never contemplated, if we may judge from his will, that in the present day two-thirds of the inmates of his hospital should have both parents alive, but such is actually the case. That the Governors of the Hospital are to blame for this it would be erroneous to infer ; for it is quite possible that there may be a scarcity of orphans among the class for whose benefit the funds are now applied. But what I have already stated with regard to the comparatively small number of orphans, taken collectively, is, I submit, strong evidence of the educational system of endowment having been overwrought in Edinburgh ; and yet within the last year the foundation for a somewhat similar princely palace has been laid ; and if a change does not take place in public sentiment others are sure to follow.

It is foreign to my object in this paper to enter on the question of the advisability of wealthy men leaving the bulk of their property away from their relatives or connections and sinking it in what is called a charitable institution. There

is abundant evidence to show that, notwithstanding public opinion may be against it, there will still be found opulent testators, disregarding natural ties, or by accident isolated from them, leaving large endowments for popular charities ; and my endeavour here is chiefly to point out a better field for *post mortem* benevolence. The more a knowledge of the facts is brought out, the more likely is it that another and more useful direction may be given to the benevolent stream.

Clergymen, medical men, and last, though not of least importance, the legal profession, have a great deal in their power, for they are often the advisers of the men who bequeath their accumulated gains to unrelated posterity ; and upon them would I impress the facts enumerated above, and urge them, when consulted, to propose another channel for the distribution of posthumous wealth.

A learned professor, at a late conversazione of this College, alluded to the three professions named, and told us that from medical men alone was he always certain to get benefit. This was, of course, peculiarly flattering to the Esculapians, and I, for one, am not disposed to cavil at the doctrine ; but I am perfectly satisfied that the aged poor, though not that distinguished scholar, could get material aid from all three professions.

I need hardly give illustrations of what must be patent to all, but as evidence of the influence of the clergy at a death-bed, I may allude to the various handsome churches which have from time to time been reared and endowed by charitable bequests. Then with respect to our legal friends, the handsome tablet erected in Donaldson's Hospital to the late John Irvine, W.S., as the confidential friend and adviser of the testator, would indicate that his services were considered of much weight ; while the medical profession may be fitly represented by the member of its body who lately, I have been told, though far removed from our good town, advised a lady to bequeath the bulk of her fortune to some of our most popular charities.

To the class of men, who have chiefly furnished the funds for the many hospitals that adorn our city—the Merchant Princes of Edinburgh—I would also specially appeal, for if it

becomes a generally adopted opinion among them, that their ancestors have allowed their nobly charitable views to dwell too much on the necessities of youth, the claims of old age may be more likely to receive a due mead of support from the present and subsequent generations. True it is that there are many charities ill provided for in Edinburgh, and that there are others scarcely ever thought of; but I must adhere to the text with which I began—the claims of our aged poor.

There are several societies that in a small way minister to the comfort or relief of the aged; but the only institutions, which really attempt to give anything like adequate support, are the three previously enumerated, and of these, as before remarked, Gillespie's Hospital is the only one that provides a home. I except, of course, the City and St Cuthbert's Poors-houses; for I consider the parochial system for paupers a necessity, not a charity, and I would, indeed, be sorry to be told, when urging the claims of the particular class of deserving poor who apply for the benefit of the endowed charities, that the poors-house ought to be their residence, or that the small weekly pittance, accorded as out-door relief, was ample provision for their declining years. It is not so much for the aged of the poorer classes that I am pleading, for I believe that the privations which they suffer, during a long struggle for procuring the bare means of subsistence, render the poors-house fare and accommodation a luxury rather than a hardship; but it is for those who have seen better days, and who, it may be, by no fault of their own, have come to feel the pinching wants of poverty at an age when they are ill fitted for striving against its cares—and who have outlived the relatives whose natural ties might have led them, if possible, to minister to their wants—that an asylum such as Gillespie's Hospital is peculiarly applicable. It seems, indeed, strange to me that so many men, either citizens or connected by birth with Edinburgh, from George Heriot down to James Donaldson, should have taken such special care of the young of their own class, and have never bethought themselves that many of their own grade in life, on whom fortune had ceased to smile, would be better recipients of their charity, and be thus enabled to enjoy a peaceable and comfortable old age. At a visit which I paid lately

to the city poors-house, I saw comparatively few who appeared to me to have seen better days; and I am informed by Dr Smith, whose long connection with that establishment must give his evidence much weight, that, though occasionally he comes across a better-class inmate, the occurrence is rare; and that it will almost invariably be found, that dissipation or reckless improvidence has been the cause of his admission. In the way of out-door relief, however, many deserving a better fate may be met with; and when we consider that the average weekly payment to such cases is two shillings, we can easily imagine, that a vast amount of privation requires to be borne by persons who at an earlier period of life were in much better circumstances.

An examination of the roll of out-door paupers in the city parish during the year 1863, gives 1086 adults getting relief, and of these 653, or about three-fifths, are above 55 years of age. If such be the proportion on the roll, and if we take into account that the number of adult lives below 55 years must be vastly greater than those above that age, we can then form an estimate of the very large percentage of old people, who require extraneous assistance. Such being the case with the poorest class, it does not require much reasoning to come to the conclusion, that, when we rise a little higher in the scale, a considerable amount of distress may be found among the aged. It is for this class that such an institution as Gillespie's Hospital proves invaluable, but its funds are quite inadequate to meet the many pressing claims on the charity. As all the candidates for admission come to me for examination prior to the elections, I am well able to judge of the urgency of each case; and the frequent disappointments which necessarily ensue, owing to the very limited number that can be selected, make me fully sensible of the benefits which would result were its resources much more widely extended.

Before proceeding further, I must allude shortly to an article in the *Scotsman*, of date November 18, 1864, in which the writer expresses an opinion adverse to the principle recognised in the charity. He objects to it on the ground, that all almshouses are objectionable; and that it would be much more conducive to the comfort and happiness of the recipients to

give them an annual sum, and allow them to choose their own lodgings. With all deference to such an authority, and admitting that certain individual cases would be so benefited, I have no hesitation in saying that there are many poor old people, who could not make the happy selection of a home, so confidently spoken to by the *Scotsman*, and who, accustomed to many little comforts while in the enjoyment of health and strength, would feel their declining years, and, it might be, a long period of bed-ridden decrepitude, ill cared for when harboured by a stranger. That the opinion expressed in the *Scotman's* article is not appreciated by the present inmates of the hospital, at all events, whom you will find to be regular readers of the newspapers, has been proved to demonstration; for a panic was, I am told, created lest the Governors, moved by arguments coming from such a weighty source, should go to Parliament for powers to clear out the building, and make the unhoused, and previously happy old people very possibly uncomfortable annuitants.

If we examine the lists of applicants to fill the vacancies caused by death in the Hospital, we will notice how many come back year after year with the vain expectation of at last being elected; and if we come into contact with the old people themselves, it will, indeed, excite surprise to find how hopeful and confident they are of success: all estimating their own claims on the charity as overwhelming, and unable to realise the fact, that where three or four have to be chosen out of fifty or more, at least nine-tenths of them must be necessarily disappointed. Owing to the advanced age arrived at by the inmates, and the limited resources of the hospital, very few vacancies, sometimes none, occur annually; and the old people, expecting to be admitted, are kept for years in suspense; some, who applied to fill the three vacancies in January 1865, having actually been soliciting election since the year 1856; while others, who might truly say, that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," have given up in despair; and not a few have gone to their long home unrelieved, cut off by death from the list of applicants.

The Treasurer informs me, that latterly he has given up advertising the vacancies, as applications came in upon him in

shoals ; nevertheless a goodly number of schedules still come into his hands. I suppose it was before he made this salutary change, that I had to examine above 70 candidates, where only two or three of that large number could possibly be elected.

From the 1st October 1863 to the 1st October 1864, there were, including those who died in the interim, 46 inmates, their united ages amounting to 3506 years. This gives the average age of residents at 76 years. During that time 9 deaths occurred, at 93, 90, 85, 85, 82, 81, 80, 80, 74, giving an average of $83\frac{1}{3}$ years as the death period. The average would be considerably higher, viz., $84\frac{1}{2}$, were we to leave out the old lady, who died at 74 of pulmonary consumption, a rare disease at her age.

I do not think it at all likely that such a good old age could be attained, were the views of the *Scotsman's* leading article adopted, and the old folk pensioned and allowed to choose their own quarters and aliment.

The average age at which the paupers connected with the City Parish die who have passed 55 years, is 66, so that the inmates of Gillespie's Hospital, who must be upwards of 55 years before they can be elected, have a longevity of upwards of 17 years more than the city paupers. This is perhaps too sweeping an assertion, for the statistics given are too slender for such an absolute inference ; but the period was not specially selected by me, and I am certain that were I to examine the ages of the inmates for years back, the death period I have given would be found not far from the truth.

I have now said enough to place before you the position of Gillespie's Hospital as a charitable home for the aged poor. Its benefits are not confined to Edinburgh, for all Scotland has the privilege of sending candidates for admission.

When the Government Annuities' Bill was proposed by Mr Gladstone, I hoped that the facilities for securing a competency in declining years would be such as to modify to a considerable extent the hardships and wants of old age among the labouring classes and small tradesmen ; but on examination of what has as yet been adopted, and brought partially into operation in England, I do not believe it will be such a boon as I expected. The tables of premiums are constructed on the principle that

no possible loss can occur to the Consolidated Fund, a precaution which is, I think, most likely to result in the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt having a handsome sum placed to their credit thereby : then, again, no money is returnable, so that, if a person has contracted for a deferred annuity, and regularly paid weekly, monthly, or annually, sums of money,—which must have stinted him, and perhaps his family, to some degree, of various necessities or comforts,—should the contracting party die at any time within the period, all the money is irretrievably lost.

I fear it is not likely that many people will be found so patriotic as to place in the hands of government a portion of their weekly earnings during a long period of years, on the understanding that, should they die in the interim, their small savings should be hopelessly applied to the extinction of the National Debt. I do not pretend to be well up in assurance matters, but I should suppose that some of our most popular Scottish offices could start a scheme for small deferred annuities on more favourable terms than have been offered by government.

As an illustration of the tables, I may take the case of a person aged twenty-five, which is about the time when it may be reasonably expected that an effort might be made to lay by a small sum as provision for after years. This person, if a male, by paying eight shillings a month, or at the rate of two shillings weekly, can secure for himself thirty years thereafter, at the age of fifty-five, an annuity of L.22, 10s. ; or, if a female, at the same rate, L.18, 6s. To get these annuities L.144 must have been altogether paid by instalments ; and no return whatever is given for such an outlay should the expectant annuitant die.

There is, however, a promise that at some future period tables may be prepared for Deferred Annuities, recognising the principle of a portion of the money paid out being returned to the heirs of a deceased contractor for an annuity.

The framer of the tables must have been intimately conversant with the difficulties of getting rid of a female annuitant, as described so forcibly by Outram in his celebrated song, for she receives much less for her money ! Indeed, I think the ladies get but scrimp justice in the matter, for, if their expect-

tancy of life is so much more favourable, that they have to pay more for an annuity, how is it that their premiums on an ordinary insurance policy are at the same rate with their shorter lived brethren ?

The measure has not been introduced into Scotland as yet, but probably will be in the course of a few months. I doubt much, however, whether, even supposing it is extensively adopted, the condition of the class of aged poor, for which I have been pleading to-night, will be much ameliorated. Few, indeed, of those, who are applicants for the endowed charities, could have afforded in their younger days to lay by two shillings a week from their earnings with a view to securing an annuity at a more advanced period of life ; and even these few would have been likely to be still further deterred from entering into such a contract by the knowledge, that their families could reap no benefit from the arrangement.

Much better would it be to store away in a savings bank small sums, which, by their accumulation, might ultimately afford enough to purchase an annuity, when ill health, or the infirmities of age, rendered it difficult to procure by their own labour the necessities of life ; and when the money, whatever might betide, was still available for their families or friends.

I have inquired into the nature of the charities in the towns and counties of Scotland, and find that the same love for educating and maintaining the young, the same comparative neglect of the old, holds good as in Edinburgh. In Dundee, for instance, though there are a few small bequests for behoof of the aged, much the greater amount of residuary wealth is for the benefit of children.

It is curious to observe the different directions taken by the charitable mind. One of these Dundee worthies left the interest of L.100, to be given annually for a sermon against cruelty to animals ; while another bequeathed L.4 per annum for a sermon on the wonders of Providence ; a third old lady, had evidently been a martyr to servants, for she left an endowment of L.5 a year each for 15 aged women, but "menial servants" were strictly prohibited from participating in the charity.

In Glasgow, Aberdeen, Perth, and Inverness, the same ten-

dency may be observed, the great preponderance of the money left as charity for the use of posterity being for the benefit of youth.

Elgin and Banff seem in some degree exceptions, for in these two counties the bequests are more equally and equitably distributed.

In England the claims of old age have been taken more into consideration ; but I shall only adduce London as an illustration. In a book entitled, "The Charities of London," by Mr Sampson Low, much valuable information is supplied regarding London benevolence, and I shall now quote from its pages enough to illustrate the truth of my observations.

In London there are 124 colleges, hospitals, almshouses, and other asylums for the aged. Their annual income is L.95,321. The number of residents is 2486. The cost of these per head is about L.38.

For children there are 34 establishments, whose annual income amounts to L.167,485. The number of children is 4880, and they cost per head per annum L.34.

This includes the monster institution of Christ's Hospital, where 1200 boys are maintained and educated at a cost of about L.39 a year each ; but if apprentice fees, and the expense of management of an income of L.58,000 be taken into account, their annual cost each is about L.48. Christ's Hospital may almost be considered now a national institution for children of the upper classes, though not originally so intended ; and if it be excluded from the computation, there is no great disparity between the amount of wealth expended on the young and the old ; but even when we include it, we find, that the proportion of young to old is as 2 to 1, while in Edinburgh it is as 20 to 1 ; and as regards funds, in London it is as 19 to 11, not so much as 2 to 1 ; while in Edinburgh it is 28 to 1.

In making this comparison, I have only taken Gillespie's Hospital into account, for it is now the only institution in Edinburgh at all similar to the 124 London Asylums for the aged. There are innumerable societies in London for benefiting the aged on the principle of the Trinity and Craigcrook funds, but as I have not taken into estimation those belonging to that class in London, it would not be fair to do so with those in Edinburgh.

It is thus apparent that though George Heriot, and his Scottish imitators in later years, borrowed their ideas of charitable beneficence from the London charity, Christ's Hospital, the inhabitants of London, from former ages down to the present day, have not been so completely led away, but have in their last testaments made ample provision for the claims of the aged.

If these facts may subsequently lead to a more true appreciation of the want, not only in my native town, but in Scotland at large, of due provision for the infirmities of age ; and may, even in a small degree, divert the already overworked current of benevolence to the young, and turn it into a new channel, my labour has not been vain.

As a special plea for Gillespie's Hospital, I can confidently state, that the admirable way in which it is managed renders it well worthy of support ; that were the funds in a more prosperous condition its sphere of usefulness could be very much extended ; while the healthy locality in which it stands, the amount of ground in which it is enclosed, and the facilities of adding to the building, render it an excellent object for the charity of any wealthy member of the community who does not feel himself bound by the ties of relationship to leave his fortune in private hands.

J. D. G.



