Robert Gordon, 1665-1731; his hospital, 1750-1876; and his college, 1880.

Robert Gordon,
His Hospital,
and His College.

lexander Walker.

William Kelly.

300 Copies Printed.

No. 67

ROBERT GORDON

1665=1731

HIS HOSPITAL

1750=1876

AND

HIS COLLEGE

1880

ABERDEEN
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Dedicated

TO

ALEXANDER OGILVIE, LL.D.,

Principal of Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen,

AND TO HIS SON,

FRANK GRANT OGILVIE, A.M., B.Sc., &c.,

Principal Elect of Heriot-Watt College, Edinburgh.

ROBERT GORDON.

"He hath dispersed abroad:
He hath given to the poor:
His righteousness remaineth for ever."

ROBERT GORDON.

WHENEVER an individual, or an institution, long publicly noted for some beneficent course of action, changes the method of the beneficence, and starts forward on a new line, public interest is afresh awakened, wise heads are shaken against the change, and open utterances that "the old was better" are freely made. Still, under the feeling that we can with much interest, and without fear, trace the past in the present, I shall endeavour to set before you as much as we can now discern of that man who, above all other men, has done more, and is doing more, for education in this city and district than many among us think.

Robert Gordon, the man about whom I am to speak, was the son of Arthur Gordon, Advocate, Edinburgh. He was born there in 1665, and there his earliest years were spent. George

Heriot's very magnificent Hospital had been some years open, and its benefits were flowing to the burgess bairns whom Heriot wished to help. The only son of the eminent lawyer in Edinburgh must have heard much in his father's house, and at his father's table, of the great good which "Jingling Geordie's" wealth was then doing to the city, but particularly to the sons and grandsons of the Guild Brethren and Craftsmen, not neglecting puir folks' bairns. Mr. Arthur Gordon came to reside in Aberdeen after amassing in Edinburgh a fair fortune. He had besides his son Robert, a daughter Mary, who became the wife of Sir James Abercrombie of Birkenbog.

In 1680, when Robert Gordon was 15 years old, his father died in Aberdeen. In April, 1684, when only 19 years of age, Robert Gordon became Burgess of Guild of the City of Aberdeen—

Apud Aberdein vigesimo quinto die mensis Aprilis anno Domini 1684 In pntia. prepositi Balivorum Decani gilde et Thesaurarii et diversorum Consulum dicti Burgi Quo die Robertus Gordon filius unicus legittimus defuncti Magistri Arthuri Gordon Advocati Receptus et admissus fuit in liberum burgensem et fratrem gilde dicti Burgi

Jure paternitatis solut. Pre. decem minis Decani gilde pro lie gild wyne ac etiam solut. preposito quinqz solidis in alba bursa ut moris est Et despensavit fuit cum jure jurando quia pupillus et infra etatem.

But before losing sight of the immediate progenitor of our great benefactor, I may mention that Arthur Gordon, his father, like George Heriot, was the cadet of a good house, being himself the ninth son of Gordon of Straloch.

It is matter of regret that one cannot accurately discover where in Aberdeen, or in the Aulton, the retired lawyer and his family lived. I am told that the house stood in Huxter Row, at the northern Broad Street corner of the Row. It was in front of this house, I believe, that Dr. Samuel Johnson stopped, on his way up the Broadgate to visit Marischal College. Some men were engaged in the process of "Harlin'" the old tenement, and the work interesting the Doctor, he pressed nearer to observe it better; in doing so, he politely remarked to the men that "he hoped he was not in their way." "Na, na," said one of them, as he hurled against the wall a great soft mass of lime and small pebbles, "If yir nae in yir ain wye,

yir nae in mine." The house was pulled down to make way for that house lately occupied by Baillie Hugh Ross, and now is No. 12 Broad Street. The Row itself, the old and famous "Lemon Tree Hotel," and much else, were swept away to make room for the new Municipal Buildings and Advocates' Hall. In comfort, and with all the domestic elegancies of the time, we doubt not, Robert Gordon was surrounded.

Outside his father's house, he had the interesting operations of witch-burning and "drummin out furth o' the burgh" to interest him. If studious, the eager utterances of the Quakers, so "ensnaring" in that time of tumult, were likely to draw the attention of an educated and thoughtful youth, whose father's house does not seem to have been troubled with Presbyterian, Prelatic, or Romish heat. Barclay's famous "Apology" had appeared while the family lived in Aberdeen, but we have no evidence of the side taken by the old lawyer.

On his father's death, Robert Gordon went from Aberdeen. He may have heard in Edinburgh

ere he left his native city the sermon preached in honour of George Heriot by the Reverend John Macqueen, which concluded with words which may have tended to shape in after years the work of Robert Gordon. "He has left," said the preacher, "a lasting monument of charity and piety. So long as there will be any memory of this honourable city his name will be mentioned with honour and esteem. When all the flashes of sensual pleasure are extinct, when all the glances of temporal felicity and human excellency are forgotten, when all the flowers of glory are withered, when earthly trophies have vanished in their funeral ashes, when the eulogies of conquerors engraven on marble or on brass have shared the fate of good deeds written in water or on sand, when this world and its parade shall be consumed, when the elements shall melt and the earth be burned up with fervent heat, the name of the renowned George Heriot shall be blessed before Thee, Lord, and his works shall be in everlasting remembrance." With these words ringing in his ears, Robert Gordon starts on his travels.

I find his share of his father's fortune is stated to have been about £1100, and with this sum, his biographer tells us, "he went to the Continent," a vague enough place to set him in. The same authority would make us believe that he played the part of the wanton and unthrifty "Heir of Lynne." This may be so, but he came of a thrifty race, and as we find him a merchant in the great city of Dantzic very shortly after leaving Scotland, we may infer, if he ever played the part of libertine and spendthrift, he soon turned to the paths of purity and industry.

I hold in my hand for your inspection a volume, written by Baillie Skene, of Aberdeen, which Robert Gordon had in Dantzic with him. His signature, with the date 1690, is at the bottom of the title page. You will notice that it is only five years after the book's issue from the printing press of John Forbes, printer to the City and University, that Robert Gordon possessed it. At that date, our Skenes and Rollands and Gordons and many another Guild brother's family traded and trafficked with

Dantzic. There the Aberdeen hose, plaidins and fing'rins, were in regular demand, and here the standard of goodness of the make of all these was watched with an assiduity by the Dean of Guild and his Court in a way undreamt of in those days, when shoddy is lord and every man is seemingly allowed to do what is right in his own eyes.

Mr. Gordon made business visits to Aberdeen, but the date of his return and settlement here is uncertain.

I have in my hands three documents, of dates 1699, 1707, 1708, instruments in legal transactions in which Robert Gordon was engaged. He is herein described as "merchant in Aberdeen." Before these papers came into my hands, some Vandal hand had cut off the signature of Robert Gordon. I have also seen in Mr. Duguid of Auchlunies' possession a bond to Robert Gordon, by Baillie Collieston of Auchlunies, for 2000 merks, on the lands of Easterton and Westerton of Auchlunies, and the salmon fishing in the river Dee adjacent to the said lands, called the Butchard

and Pot of Puttachie, all lying within the parochin of Maryculter and the Sheriffdom of Kincardine—the date is 1709. In 1718 Mr. Gordon assigns this bond, and there is plenty evidence in existence to show that whatever his merchandising may have been at this date in Dantzic, his money-lending, on the security of land in Aberdeenshire, was considerable.

About 1720 Mr. Gordon seems to have taken up his residence, as a lodger, in Aberdeen permanently. He was never other than a lodger, and from the first he set himself to save money.

In personal appearance Mr. Gordon was tall and straight. He always wore a long coat, and invariably used white gloves. He was a well-known personage in the City, from the habit he had of walking very much about the streets, on the Plain Stones, and in the Shiprow. He held a good position among the gentry, both in the country and in Aberdeen, and he maintained it all his lifetime; yet having framed the noble design of doing for youths in Aberdeen what George Heriot had done for youths in Edinburgh, he denied

himself for years the comforts and conveniences of life.

Many stories still exist of the way in which he scraped and pinched and saved. A mouse in the night had been drowned in his basin of milk. He relieved the fluid ere he used it in the morning, remarking as he squeezed the little creature dry, "Fat waur is the milk that there wis a drooned mouse in it?" "Don't light the candle, we can see to speak in the dark." "Gloves worn on the hand wear; I make mine last by carrying them in my hand." It is said that he gratified his taste for reading when it grew dark, without having to pay the cost of candle or of lamp in these gasless days, by lying on the floor of his sitting room and holding his book above the light which came up through an opening from the light of an industrious cobbler tenant of the premises below. It is also reported of him that, as often as he could, he dined out.

He made no secret of his wish to found an Hospital for boys. He liked to stroll about with his friends upon the very place on which he

wished it built, telling them of his intention of acquiring it, for the purpose of erecting there his Hospital.

The Magistrates gave him little encouragement, but being a man of determined and resolute mind, he told them that if they did not want the benefaction he would convey it elsewhere; and, it is said, he was actually on the road to the South, at the Tolla Hill, when they overtook him, and persuaded him to re-cross with them, in peace, the Brig o' Dee.

The ground selected was that on which had stood the Dominican Priory, with church and garden. It had originally been a palace and garden of King Alexander II., who gave it in 1240 to the Dominicans, as William the Lion had given his, some 40 years before to the community of the Monks of the Holy Trinity, for the redemption of captives from the bondage of Moslem slavery. This gift, and that of Alexander II., are striking evidences of the esteem in which our early Scottish Kings held the Monastic Orders. The only original portrait of King William the

Lion was carefully preserved in the Monastery of the Holy Trinity. This Heirloom of inestimable value now occupies a place of honour in the Hall of the Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen, to whom it came in gift from Dr. Guild.

These early occupants of the site of Robert Gordon's Hospital were exclusively engaged in preaching and in theological and scientific discussions, and were great patrons of all that is in any way connected with architecture, painting, and the fine arts. Strange that on this spot, where these men dwelt, we now have the Art Gallery, Museum, and Art School of Aberdeen.

On the very spot where the Art Gallery now is, I saw many of the skulls of these pious men turned up again to the light of day, and a few feet beyond the northern gable walls of the Museum there were found, some years ago, in a sort of vault, three skeletons. This vault was in front of the high altar of their little chapel, and belonged to the Keiths, Earls Marischal. On the neck of one of the skeletons, a silver heart was attached to a silver chain: it is now in the Museum at

Tarves. I got it photographed, and have pleasure in showing it to you.

Three hundred and fifty years ago, then, these fathers of whom I have spoken, were occupied at this place in teaching the best intellects of our ancestors. They only taught adults, and never engaged in general parochial teaching, or preaching. May we not sympathise with them as they were driven from their old and peaceful cloisters, and cast a last, long, lingering, loving look to the graves of their departed brethren in the cloister garth, lately so rudely disturbed.

As Provost Cruickshank strolled there with the intending pious donor one day, it is said, he had the courage almost to remonstrate with Mr. Gordon, and say—"Do you mean to leave nothing to Mary and her family?" "No," said Gordon, "and what am I to expect if the Provost pleads against a settlement from which the citizens are to derive so great benefits?" No one of us will think less of Provost Cruickshank for not forgetting that the needy of a man's own household have the first claim on his generosity.

Mr. Gordon made a formal application to the Town Council for the ground he admired; on the 21st September, 1730, they granted him a feu of that part of the Dominican Friars' place, which is entered as the Manse of the Black Friars and Two Gardens, for an annual payment of £10.

Early in the spring of the next year the end of Robert Gordon came. They say he so gorged himself at a feast in a friend's house that he suddenly became ill. His nephew, one of Mary's sons, apprentice to a doctor in town, was sent for. He let blood, and cared for his uncle, but to no purpose; in much suffering, in a few hours he died. His body lay in state in Marischal College, where all who wished to see it were admitted, and had refreshments. At the funeral the bells were tolled, and cannon fired, and much expense incurred, "but," says a waggish chronicler of the time, recollecting the habits of the man, "it was too late for Mr. Gordon to object." In the transept of St. Nicholas Church they laid him, and the plainest and meanest of mural tablets is all the monument as yet bestowed. So closed the life on earth of our great benefactor.

Robert Gordon was a Protestant, in the proper sense of the word. His education and residence abroad had broadened his toleration, and we may be sure that he was of the school of Scougall, and Campbell, and Beattie, else the Menzies and he would not have been the friends they were.

As we proceed with our subject, we shall see how closely Gordon followed Heriot in the same deep desire for "religious upbringing," and in the same earnest wish to benefit a particular class of boys.

His Deed of Mortification expressly states his wish that the first place should be given to his own relatives, and next to boys of the names of Gordon and of Menzies.

George Heriot's wealth was £26,000 worth of land in the City of Edinburgh—to-day this yields £28,000 a-year. Robert Gordon's was some £10,000 or £12,000, mostly lent on bonds over properties in the county—to-day it yields over £6,000 a-year from the rents of farms in the county. The trustees of both have cared well for their inheritance, and each have had very tasteful houses built to the glory of the donors.

HIS HOSPITAL.

Robert Gordon.

"He being dead yet speaketh."

A public benefactor of his country.

He was descended from the family of Pitlurg,
one of the oldest and most distinguished branches of the noble
House of Huntly.

He was also nearly connected by consanguinity with the
ancient families of Drum and Pitfodels.

This Institution

Which he founded by Deed of Mortification,
dated 13th December, 1729,
is designed for the maintenance and education of boys who are
sons and grandsons of Burgesses of Guild, or Trades' Burgesses
of Aberdeen, a preference being shewn to the names of
GORDON AND MENZIES.

BORN 1665—DIED 1731.

HIS HOSPITAL.

A few months after Mr. Gordon's death, Sir James Abercrombie made application for a grant from the miser's hoard, on behalf of his wife, Mary Gordon, the only sister of Robert Gordon, for whom Provost Cruickshank had dared to plead. I found, by the papers in the safe in the old building, that the Town Council granted the sum of 7000 merks to Mary; and "mourning suits," shoes, and swords to the Laird of Birkenbog and his two sons. They also ordered and paid an honorarium to William Abercrombie, the nephew who had "let blood and attended" Mr. Gordon.

The Council then granted to themselves, as Governors, in 1732, the feu charter of the ground already mentioned—the transaction had not been completed before Mr. Gordon's death—and in the same year the Governors applied for, and got, from the Principal and the Professors of Marischal

College, on feu, for the yearly payment of 20 bolls of bere, "all the croft of land, houses and yairds," which of old belonged to the Black Friars.

The Town Council now began actively to build. They had already bought a grey horse, a black horse, and a horse with a switch tail. These horses, under the care of Alexander Kemp and two assistants, were occupied in carting in from the adjacent fields and hillsides all suitable surface stones. Quarrying, as now practised, had not begun in 1732. Mr. Adams, of Edinburgh, built under no contract, to the orders of the Provost and Council. Many a confab was held with Mr. Adams, in Mrs. Cooper's, Mrs. Fyfe's, or Mrs. Leslie's, about the building. Here is one of the accounts incurred at Mrs. Cooper's—

8 bo. claret	... ...	16s. 0d.
12 do. ale	... ...	1s. 6d.
Bread ...	... ...	0s. 2d.
Pipes and tobacco	...	0s. 1½d.
		17s. 9½d.

Committee meetings are dry now, "we are virtuous, and there is no more cakes and ale, gentlemen."

Before the close of the winter of 1732 Robert Gordon's Hospital was roofed in and completed, but all untenanted and unused it stood for more than a dozen years, the Governors not feeling themselves at liberty to commence its proper work with the resources then at their command. The first occupants were not the poor boys that Robert Gordon wished to care for. They were soldiers of King George, under command of the Duke of Cumberland, on their way to the North to crush the Stuart outbreak. These men, in compliment to their leader, called the place "Fort Cumberland." They occupied it, once again, as they came back from "bloody Culloden." £300 was paid for this unwonted use of the House.

In 1750 the Hospital of Robert Gordon began its destined work with 26 boys. The Governors were not long in setting aside some of the old bachelor's ideas. The fathers of the City shared not his dislike to womankind, so they wisely set aside his prohibitory and hurtful instructions, and elected a matron. In 1780 she had 60 boys under her motherly care.

Tradition has it that shortly after the establishment and opening of the Hospital, while its whole community was one Sunday away at Church, some robbers entered the house and began to ransack the premises for money or valuables. Meeting with opposition from a servant girl, who had been left in charge of the house, they murdered her in the hall of the Hospital, now used as the Committee-room, and there her blood, like that of Rizzio at Holyrood, may be seen deeply staining the floor.

The boys, as the custom was, and is, in many old institutions, had a uniform, consisting of a tailed coat of good blue cloth, a blue woollen bonnet, and knee breeches of corduroy. The coat and waistcoat had full gilt brass buttons on them, thus making more complete the mannikin mimicry of the boys.

The House was popularly called "Sillerton," and its little occupants "Skitties." How these nick-names came to be adhibited, I never could discover. Some said the first indicated the popular opinion of the wealth of the trust, the last, the

Mrs. Grundy notion of the effect on the boys of a dietary, not believed to be generous, and popularly denounced. The carelessly cooked "Thursday's dinner"—"brose with vegetables"—had its influence; the vegetables were cabbages, and when these had been forgotten to be freed from their superabounding caterpillars, the mess was not attractive, and many a hungry boy went without his dinner. The food allowance of that day was, by the testimony of several old boys and reference to the dietary scale of the period, shamefully short of what was needed by active growing lads. They told this outside the Hospital, and often, at the back gate, a sister or a mother might have been found handing in an "eke," thankfully received, for self and friends.

When the boys had their half-holiday, they invariably returned to the Hospital laden with contraband provender. To check this, searchers were told off, whose duty it was to "ripe" every boy's pockets as he came in. The boys, when the searchers were on the scent, posted scouts to give warning. Any passer-by would have been tickled

with the activity of hand and jaw as the upcoming boys' ears caught the warning cry of the scout—

Ripen pouches, boys—ripen.

Up the "middle walk" the boys are streaming, many a "mealy puddin'," "sheave o' loaf," "barley scone," or "bannock," has been in much fear taken care of. The searchers are busy, the scouts have been equally so, but few "captions" have been made. Half-way up the walk a searcher is struggling with a little boy, who loudly protests against "ripen *his* pouches"; and, as he wriggles and twists to get away, he may be heard shouting—"I've naething bit mealocks—jist mealocks." And it was quite true, for on hearing the warning cry of the scouts—what of his mother's bannock he could not get chewed and swallowed, he had made into "mealocks."

At the date we have now reached, the Hospital had been guided on the original lines for some 60 odd years by a bachelor-master, bachelor-assistant teachers, and a spinster matron. The master and his assistants taught the boys reading in English, writing, arithmetic, and church music. "To such

of the boys as discover a genius for it, shall be taught all, or either of the following branches, viz.: English grammar, book-keeping, French, the elements of geometry, trigonometry, navigation, geography, and drawing." The Proverbs of Solomon and the Shorter Catechism, with regular attendance at the West Kirk, and notes of the sermons heard there, formed for many a day the full course, and surely he is a captious or an ill to please critic, who calls it either bad or defective.

"The Sillerton Laddies" had something more to do in the West Kirk, besides taking notes of the sermons preached. A selection from the best voices formed for many years the chief part of the choir, and forget not that the West Kirk was then, as now, famous for its choir. On "Farmer George's Jubilee," in 1810, the boys sang an anthem in the King's honour, their performance giving much satisfaction. As an evidence of the easy, kindly ways of these days, it is said that in the afternoon, as the lights grew dim, the preacher, Principal Brown, bent over the pulpit, and asked help from the beadle, in classic doric, "Johnnie, snuff the caunles."

The bequest of Mr. Simpson of Collyhill enabled the Governors to increase the number of boys. In 1831 they numbered 90. These, and the whole management of the Hospital, in education, clothing, feeding, training, continued as they had been since the opening of the House. The celibate brotherhood, and the spinster matron, often led, we find, a cat and dog life.

A book in the safe in the House, entitled, "The Journal of Robert Gordon's Hospital," in its entries, extending over many years, tells how, on such an evening, Mr. —— stopped in town, did not return till 12 o'clock. Mr. —— was not at prayers either in the morning or evening, and he went out to his supper and did not return until past 10 o'clock. These were the days, as one of these old teachers said to me, "when there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days." And yet these teachers were, many of them, the best intellects of the day, but the system engendered petty smallnesses, and living in the House, they had little after school hours to do, and they too often turned their wit

against each other. The head master was thus lampooned in a local print by one of the junior teachers :—

A boy in Latin, and a babe in Greek—
You'd think him Porson if you heard him speak
Of Homer, Plato, and Demosthenes,
Anacreon, Hesiod, and Euripides!
In Geometry he thinks himself perfection,
Yet he's a tyro at a Conic Section!
He scarcely knows the meaning of a function,
Yet talks of vulgars with a kindred unction!
Moral Philosophy he knows by heart,
With the exception of the practick part!
And then in politics he's quite at home,
Could teach a Canning and instruct a Brougham!

The same mad wag, in order to irritate another teacher, whose name was Muil, caused the boys in his class frequently to read the words, not to be like the horse or mule which do not understand, &c., &c.

Foremost among the matrons of the Hospital, both from her length of service and her birth, stands Miss Keith, who held the office from 1780 to 1833. She was the natural daughter of Marshall Keith, the younger brother of the Earl Marischall, who was attainted for the part he and

his brother, then quite young men, took in the Jacobite rising of 1715.

Although of illegitimate birth, she always maintained the position and dignity of a lady of gentle blood. She was dressed, on high days and holidays, in black satin, and being of a tall and noble presence, she looked every inch a daughter of the House of Keith-Marischall. She never wore anything on her head, and her hair, if it was her natural hair, was dark. She wore a white kerchief about her neck, a large white tippet on her shoulders; on her hands there were many rings, and black thread gloves, with white cuffs going well up her arms. When she walked through the House, Betsy, her maid, followed, carrying her mistress' embroidered handkerchief in her hand. The Governors and the Masters treated Miss Keith with marked respect, and when she died, at the ripe age of 93, she was buried in S. Nicholas Churchyard with considerable pomp.

Rough practical joking and bickerings amongst the Masters, with gross insubordination amongst the boys, were the rule when Mr. George Melvin

became Head Master. He was well qualified to be the head of an educational establishment. His kind and genial nature made him a universal favourite with Masters and boys. Into its internal domestic arrangements he introduced many improvements, and his influence as a teacher was felt, and is now acknowledged, by many an old boy. Mr. Melvin was the first Head Master who was not in orders, and I cannot but think this innovation judicious. Under Mr. Melvin's wise and liberal government the training of boys for secular pursuits was well conducted. In every branch of learning taught in the Hospital the boys made progress. Mr. Melvin devoted his whole time and abilities to the discharge of the duties of a teacher and instructor of youth, and did not allow Church or State Politics to tempt him to step aside. Not every man can find himself equally useful in School and in the Church.

In 1839, the proceedings of the Governors were for the first time reported in the Newspapers.

Mr. Andrew Findlater succeeded Mr. Melvin, who became Parish Schoolmaster of Tarves, and

the excellent style of teaching introduced by Mr. Melvin is continued.

Unsuccessful efforts were now made to let the boys sleep out of the Hospital. Successfully, however, the tailed coat and brass buttons are denounced, and, at length, abolished, the teaching of Latin introduced, and a higher standard of entrance examination fixed.

On Mr. Findlater's acceptance of an important position in the establishment of Messrs. Chambers in Edinburgh, the Rev. W. D. Strachan became Head Master.

In 1849, the subject of allowing the boys to get out of the Hospital on the Sunday afternoons, became matter for fierce discussion. Opinion of Edinburgh Counsel is sought and got, not anyways to the calming of the discord. One Governor dissented, protested, and printed reasons of dissent; another took legal measures to prevent money being paid for an opinion of Counsel; while a third declined to be bound by any opinion. Yet, after all, the relaxation is conceded, and no evil follows.

Mr. Strachan spends three hours weekly in visiting boys who have left the Hospital. The Governors go now and then with the boys to their annual trip, and the good old rules continue.

In other parts of Scotland what was doing here was doing there. Edinburgh had felt in Heriot's, Glasgow had felt in Hutcheson's, what Aberdeen had felt in Robert Gordon's. In all these places the Hospital system was being condemned. They had all moved against it before Aberdeen had. The Edinburgh ratepayers had got an Act of Parliament declaring that, in the sense of George Heriot's deed, all citizens were Burgesses who paid rates.

Influence and example, with proved results of advantage to teachers and to taught, had this effect in Aberdeen, that now married teachers were tolerated—some were even allowed to live out of the Hospital. The boys were permitted on Sundays to go elsewhere than to the West Kirk —good transcripts of the sermons which were preached there didn't, to the young scribe, bring the same advantages as of old. Even the musically

inclined among them, when the change came which converted the Hospital into the College, had become indifferent to the honour of being admitted members of the West Kirk choir.

After an honourable service of nearly five and twenty years, Mr. Strachan retired on pension in 1872. The Governors made a fortunate selection of a successor. Their choice fell on the Rev. Alex. Ogilvie, at that time Parish Schoolmaster of Monymusk. There he had proved himself an apt teacher, and an advanced educationalist, one of a race of born teachers whose whole energies centre in their profession. Robert Gordon's Hospital, when Mr. Ogilvie became its head, needed the best powers of a strong man. After a stern trial, Mr. Ogilvie bent it to his will, and made the last years of the Hospital creditable to all connected with it. He also aided in every way the effort then being made for a Provisional Order to enable the Governors to turn its revenues to a better use.

When the Provisional Order came into force on the 1st August, 1881, there were 35 foundationers

resident in the Hospital; these were discharged as their time ran out. The last boy left on the 25th May, and on the 26th May, 1882, the matron and the servants left, and the great kitchen was turned into a classroom and workshop, the coal vault into a blacksmith's forge and smithy.

Before we turn our backs on the Hospital, let me ask you to refuse to condemn it entirely, as many at present too readily do. The monastic form of rule, and the Hospital system of life and teaching, which with the best knowledge of the time Robert Gordon's benevolence had for 130 years given in his Hospital, have answered well. I quite admit that, in very many ways of teaching,

> Down the ringing grooves of change
> We sweep into a better day.

But, by this admission, neither I nor you ought to condemn entirely the past.

At the time Heriot, Hutcheson and Gordon set their hearts to do what they did, there was no other way of doing it than by erecting a house, with a master and a matron, as father and mother to the boys they wished to care for. The junior

teachers were elder brothers to the boys—were with them night and day—and were expected to grow up as members of one family, and so they do grow up to this day most helpfully in many a richly endowed Hospital in England.

By the benefits of Robert Gordon's Hospital boys from every class of the community have been educated and started in life. Of 2100 who, from 1750 to 1880, were enabled by him to enter into "the world's broad field of battle" with a fair chance of triumph in the fight, many have done well. To-day, in Aberdeen and elsewhere, the highest posts are held, as they have often before been held, by men who, as boys, were nurtured by Robert Gordon; but on the fingers of your two hands you may count the number of those old boys who in after life praised their benefactor, and quietly restored, as requested by that prudent old Merchant in his deed of settlement to his treasurer, the £100 which he estimated his Trustees would spend on the upbringing and education of each of them.

HIS COLLEGE.

"—— —— work out your freedom.
Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip, and spite,
And slander, die."

HIS COLLEGE.

One hundred and fifty years elapsed between the date at which Robert Gordon's Trustees began to build his Hospital and the year when the Hospital and all its revenues were first used in the new direction of his College, as secured by Act of Parliament. Not a bit too soon was the change made.

The College, as now constituted, consists of a day school and an evening school. It is not necessary here to detail the work of the day school in the junior department; but in the senior the work branches off into three divisions, the studies being specialised with a regard to the line of work the boys intend pursuing on leaving school. In the Commercial School prominent attention is given to modern languages (French and German), mathematics, arithmetic, book-keeping, and letter and précis writing, the studies in science being also continued. In the

Trade and Engineering School the studies carried forward are English and one foreign language (French or German); but most of the time is devoted to mathematics, experimental science, and drawing; applied science and technical drawing being the features of the second year. The teaching in both years is accompanied by systematic instruction in the workshop (in wood and iron); while for intending young engineers there is a special course in steam and the steam-engine; and for those aiming at the building trades, a special course in building construction and drawing. The workshop, which is under the superintendence of a practical man, is large and well equipped. It has thirteen benches, three vice-benches, a forge, a 4 horse-power gas engine, power lathes, and a planing machine. The third division of the school—the Classical—is for boys intending to proceed to the University.

Many of the boys are taught to make in the field sketch maps of a district, and to finish these in school. In this exercise they take much interest, and their work has called forth the highest com-

mendation. Specimens of it sent, by request, to the Geographical Exhibition in London have been referred to in the Report of that Exhibition, as showing what may be done in the way of teaching Geography in a real manner.

An interesting collection, consisting of specimens of the work of day pupils, has been sent to the International Exhibition in Edinburgh from the College. The most strikingly attractive items of this exhibit are the parts of a vertical drilling machine, a lathe, with slide-rest and fittings, and a roof-truss, showing a degree of skill in working in metal and wood that would do credit to a trained workman. There are, however, many smaller but no less important specimens of work. The subjects exhibited have been selected with a view to illustrate the teaching of the College in drawing, handicraft, and surveying. The drawing examples show the successive stages of instruction in freehand drawing from blackboard and other copies, model drawing from familiar objects and models, shading in chalk from the round and casts, and in water colours from nature.

The geometrical and technical drawing exhibits are carefully considered and well-worked gradations of drawing to scale from dimensioned sketches, while the work of the advanced pupils consists of several well-finished inked and coloured examples of machine and building construction—drawings of a flour mill, a hay cutter, an open roof, and a beam engine, and also drawings, from measurements by the boys, of the Town and County Bank, George Street, and the gas engine of the College. While the execution of these is admirable as the work of boys taking up the subject as one of a school course, and spending at it only a few hours a week, they are surprising when considered in relation to the method of their execution and the training required for its success. The specimens from the workshop are of a singularly practical character. In woodwork, there are examples of the various joints, wood-turning, geometrical models, and full-sized and enlarged models of details of machines and building construction. These last are in wood, and are made so as to exhibit to a drawing class

the points to be attended to in the representation of nuts and screws, wall boxes, wall brackets, plummer blocks, knuckle joints, parts of iron roofs, &c. Pattern-making is illustrated by the patterns of a pinion and the frame of a vertical drilling machine. The machine cast from this is also shown, bored out, and faced up. Further examples of working in metals are hand-turned bolts, handles and details of brasswork, the screw cut for the drilling machine, and a lathe bed with slide rest, showing planing, fitting, and finishing of a thorough workmanlike character. An electric bell and pieces, showing the stages in its construction, represents the instrument-making department. Not the least striking objects in the collection are a set of sketch maps, executed by boys from actual survey, each boy having taken a section and finished his map within an hour and a half in the field. Specimens of the general map compiled in school from these are coloured, and finished in such a manner as to give a very vivid and accurate idea of the portion of the country represented. In this last-mentioned case the maps

embrace the old and new bridges of Don, Seaton House, and Oldmachar Cathedral.

In February, 1886, there were 825 scholars, 120 foundationers, and 90 day scholars, receiving instruction in the workshop in relays of fifteen at a time, one hour being devoted to the workshop, and four hours to ordinary teaching. The school hours are five per day, and most of the school-work is done in that time, the pupils, though not altogether exempt from home-work, not being oppressed by it. Plenty of time is thus given for exercise and enjoyment; and there is no complaint of "over-pressure," either on the part of teachers or taught.

The evening school, which is open to adults, and to girls as well as to boys, is divided into two sections. There is a General and Commercial section, in which instruction is given in such subjects as English, arithmetic, French, German, theory of music, phonography, and political economy. Then there is a Science and Technology section, having classes for practical, plane and solid geometry, machine and building construction and

drawing, applied mechanics and steam, metal working tools, carpentry and joinery, magnetism and electricity, electrical engineering, inorganic chemistry, and botany. To the Physics and Chemistry lecture rooms are attached a large apparatus room and commodious laboratories; and the means and appliances are enlarged from time to time. In the Applied Mechanics class, the strength of materials and the strains in structures are investigated experimentally; while the class meets occasionally on Saturday afternoons for experiments in practical mechanics in the laboratory, or to study the actual applications of mechanics in some of the engineering works in the town.

Electric lighting has been introduced into four of the largest classrooms with most satisfactory results, and an arrangement has been made by which the current generated for use in the lamps may be applied to experiments in illustration of the lectures on Electricity; these can now be performed in a manner at once most striking and instructive.

The good work of the College is largely helped by Gray's School of Art, founded in 1884 by John Gray, Esq., head of McKinnon & Co., Engineers, provided and equipped at his cost to give a liberal art education. The course of training embraces drawing, painting, modelling, and design, also lectures on geometry and perspective, artistic anatomy, architecture, &c. Day classes are held for ladies and gentlemen desiring to pursue an artistic education. Evening classes are held for the education of artizans, teachers, designers, painters, decorators, monumental sculptors, architects, and art workmen.

The value of the work which the College is accomplishing can hardly be over-estimated. The objects of the Institution, as now recast, are—in addition to the education of foundationers—to afford a good elementary education at fees so small as to make it within the reach of the sons of working-men; to help its own scholars, and boys leaving Board Schools, to a knowledge of subjects not otherwise readily attainable; and to furnish to the apprentice and the artizan

instruction in science and technology of a higher grade. The College, in short, aims at being a complete and efficient secondary school, and really forms for the city of Aberdeen the much desiderated link between elementary and university education—a link that will be more apparent and more serviceable when the universities come to be reformed, and when more attention will likely be paid to scientific than to classical studies.

The Commercial School provides an education well suited for young men who intend engaging in the various occupations and industries of the town and district; while in the evening classes they have every opportunity of continuing their studies as their inclinations or their pursuits dictate.

But the most important work of the College is the scientific and technical education it imparts. The object here is to furnish in the day school such an elementary practical knowledge as will prepare boys to become intelligent apprentices; in the evening school, on the other hand, to furnish higher theoretical instruction to boys and men really at work. The workshop is for the use

of day scholars only; the evening pupils find their practical training in their daily work, and come to the College to learn the theory. The day school aims at teaching the pupils on the technical side the elements of the constructive arts and the character of materials, concurrently with thorough education in the interpretation of working drawings. It is explicitly intimated that "it is by no means intended that a boy should learn his trade in the College, but only that he should lay the foundation of the scientific and technical knowledge which has become an essential concomitant of trade experience and manual dexterity." This distinction has to be borne in mind; for Gordon's College is not an "apprenticeship school," such, for instance, as the one maintained by the Paris municipality in the Boulevard de la Villette, which turns out its pupils, at the end of a three years' course, as having finished their apprenticeship, and as being ready for employment as journeymen, or even as foremen. The fault of this system of training artizans is that it underrates what is to be learned in the ordinary

workshop; and instead of having recourse to it, the governing body of Gordon's College set to work on the lines just mentioned.

The College gives in the evening to young craftsmen, in scientific and technical teaching, far better trade training than ever careful foreman, or kindly prentice-master, could have given in former times. The lad who wishes to enter an office or shop, or has already entered, can in an evening for little learn much, while the poor boy with scholarly likings from any of the Board schools may come to Robert Gordon's College and win the means of getting all the Latin, Greek, or mathematics which he requires to carry him through the University Competition.

Mr. Mundella, speaking to an Edinburgh audience, said—"I am glad to know that in one part—in one city in Scotland—there is a model worthy of imitation by the city of Edinburgh. I have here in my hand a report of the Science and Art Department on the Gordon College in Aberdeen. This College has been recently re-organised. The endowment has been re-arranged

by the mutual consent of all parties, and to the entire satisfaction of all parties. I wont trouble you with any long quotation, but I may say that the whole report is of a satisfactory character. The Science Inspector from South Kensington thus reports:—'I saw 11 classes under instruction. There were between 500 and 600 students in attendance, and nine different subjects were being taught;' and he gives the number in the classes. 'There were 13 in advanced electricity, 83 in building construction, 35 in stage I. of mathematics, 26 in advanced machine construction; 110 in elementary machine construction, 6 in organic chemistry, 16 in practical, plane, and solid geometry; 97 in advanced geometry, 60 at steam, 67 at applied mechanics, and 17 at practical inorganic chemistry.' Now this change has all been effected within the last two years, and while I had the honour of being connected with the Department; and I must say that I never was so glad as when I was called upon to sanction that scheme. Altogether, the College to which I refer is a model for Edinburgh."

Higher praise could hardly have been given. Yet the facts and figures which I am about to give will show still more how well the new system is working; and I shall, before I finish, lay before you the evidence that the benevolent and charitable wishes of Robert Gordon are also fully carried out, and in a way greatly more in keeping with present requirements than any former system.

Under Dr. Ogilvie's energetic administration this new educational machinery is not kept idle; a more numerous and a highly gifted staff enable the College to attain results never before dreamt of. Last November there were learning—

1. SCIENCE CLASSES.

Practical, plane, and solid geometry ...	104	
Machine construction and drawing ...	130	
Building construction and drawing ...	106	
Mathematics	45	
Steam and the steam engine	137	
Applied Mechanics	150	
Electricity and magnetism	66	
Inorganic chemistry, theoretical ...	76	
Do. practical ...	73	
Organic chemistry, theoretical ...	12	
Do. practical ...	11	
Physiology	25	
Botany	22	957

2. TECHNOLOGICAL CLASSES.

Metal working tools	45	
Carpentry and joinery	28	
Masonry and brickwork	16	
Telegraphy	29	118

3. COMMERCIAL CLASSES.

Arithmetic	244	
English	104	
Writing and book-keeping	173	
Phonography	173	
Theory of music	36	
Latin	16	
French	41	
German	21	808

Total number of class tickets issued	1883
Number of individual students ...	1254

Grants earned from Science and Art Department and City and Guilds of London last year £654.

While there were in Gray's School of Art—

Attending Day Classes	96	
Do. Evening Classes ...	322	
		418

Grant earned from the Science and Art Department last year £203.

Can better evidence than this be given of the extent to which this teaching is taken advantage of? Is there anywhere else in broad Scotland

where such teaching produces such results? Yet that teaching and these results do not please some amongst us, who insist that to get this high-class teaching at the price at which it is given Robert Gordon's wishes are set at open defiance—that, in short, good, sound, high-class teaching is procured cheaply to the children of the middle classes, at the cost of the children of the poor. A more false and misleading statement could hardly be made. It is the merest cant, a kind of cant too, plausible as that once heard in Jerusalem—"Why this waste? give it to the poor." Well, it so happens that the carefully prepared Provisional Order made complete provision for "giving to the poor."

Robert Gordon's Hospital at its opening, as I have already mentioned, had 26 foundationers; his College to-day has 120 of the same class.

They who make this noisy clamour about the class Robert Gordon meant to benefit, make also an attempt to show that the Grammar School of the city is injured by the breadth of the curriculum of Robert Gordon's College—that Latin and Greek

ought not once to be spoken of there—that any foundationers who show capacity for the classics should be sent to the Grammar School, Robert Gordon's money being, by these gentlemen, held to be rightly used in paying fees at the Grammar School. I am glad these ideas are not held by the governing body, who give to their own scholars, in their own halls, all that they need to carry them from that, if they are fit, to the gates of the University.

In the Hospital days, some few boys were enabled, when they showed talent, to attend at the cost of the trust, as private scholars at the University, for a session or so. During the last few years 25 students of Robert Gordon's College have won, in open competition at the University, bursaries varying in value from £5 to £30 a-piece. Of that two dozen, one is at this moment a pro-consul in Bombay, another is to-day sixth on the list of the Indian Civil Servants of the year, and a few days since he won the Sanscrit Prize.

A thousand boys are at this hour receiving scientific, classic, general, and commercial edu-

cation of a kind, of a quality, and at a price, which nowhere else that I know of could they get.

For 66 years Robert Gordon lived—for twice that period his Hospital has been father, home, school, and prentice-master to over 2000 boys. Who will venture to guess the number of boys who in the years to come will be benefited at his College?

A. W.

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