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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUNDEE,
ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY.

5th June, 1900.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH,
SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND.

MY LORD,

I desire to offer myself as a candidate for the Professorship of English Language and Literature in the University of Glasgow.

I am forty-one years of age, and a Master of Arts of Glasgow University, where I was a student for seven sessions. I studied also for some time at the Universities of Göttingen and Marburg. For a year of my undergraduate course in Glasgow I acted as assistant to the Professor of Mathematics, and thus gained an early lesson in the teaching and conduct of University classes.

My experience in University teaching and lecturing on the subject of English Language and Literature extends over the past seventeen years. From 1884 to 1889 I was assistant to the late Professor Nichol, and in his absence during the session of 1885-6 I discharged by appointment of the Senate the duties of his Chair. During the same period I held the Lectureship of English Language and Literature in Queen Margaret College, now incorporated in the University of Glasgow; and I was also much engaged in lecturing and teaching in connection with the University Extension Scheme in Scotland. In 1890 I was appointed to the Professorship of English Language and Literature in University College, Dundee,—an office which I still hold. In 1892, at the suggestion of the Scottish Universities Commission, and by the arrangement of the Court and Senate of St. Andrews University, I also undertook the teaching of English Language and Literature in the United College, and for five years conducted the classes of both Colleges. The course of studies in my Pass and Honours classes is similar to that of the English classes in the other Universities of Scotland, and includes the study of Language as well as of Literature. I have also during my tenure of the Chair in University College delivered each session a course of University Extension Lectures of a more popular character in Dundee.

In 1894 I was unanimously elected by my colleagues a representative of the Senate on the University Court of St. Andrews, and I have taken part from time to time in the work of the Scottish Universities Joint Board of Examiners. I have also for many years had the honour of assisting the Scotch Education Department in the Leaving Certificate Examinations and the inspection of secondary schools in Scotland,—an experience which has been of much use to me as a teacher in a Scotch University. At the request of the General Medical Council, I have lately been associated with educational representatives of England and Ireland in conducting an inquiry respecting the various preliminary examinations of the Universities and Medical Schools in the United Kingdom. The report which we have recently submitted contains suggestions for some reforms which have met with general approval, as tending to raise the standard of secondary education and connect it more closely with that of the Universities.


The leisure which the duties of my Chair have left me has been mainly given to an attempt to establish the principles for arriving at the correct text of the works of the chief English and Scottish poets who wrote before the invention of printing, especially Chaucer and his immediate followers in Scotland. The completion of this task is still before me; but some of the results of my investigation have received the attention of English and Continental scholars.

The testimonials referring to my candidature for the Berry Chair at St. Andrews which I received from some of those scholars and from others acquainted with my work as a teacher, are of a date so recent that I have not thought it necessary on this occasion to ask for more than the permission to reprint them for your Lordship's consideration. And I have the honour to add some testimony offered by my colleagues in St. Andrews and Dundee.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's obedient and humble Servant,



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