DR. PENNY'S

REMONSTRANCE AND APPEAL

AGAINST THE

NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT

OF AN

Additional Professor of Chemistry

IN

ANDERSON'S UNIVERSITY.

TO THE MANAGERS AND TRUSTEES OF ANDERSON'S UNIVERSITY.

GENTLEMEN,

On 1st September—that is one fortnight past—I was startled by reading in the morning newspapers that "a Chair of Chemistry" had been founded and endowed by Mr. James Young, President of Anderson's University—that the parties appointed by him to superintend the working of the New Chair had been selected from the body of Trustees who hold control of the Chair which I occupy—and that a Professor had already been appointed. Within a few hours thereafter an additional surprise reached me, in the information that a meeting of the Trustees of Anderson's University, specially convened, had been held that same day—that a formal legal document had been read at the meeting intimating what Mr. Young had already done, together with a request on the part of his Trustees that a portion of the Andersonian buildings should be appropriated for the uses of the New Chair—that the minute of the meeting of Managers at which Mr. Young's offer had been previously submitted (the meeting consisting of a quorum of Five Managers, embracing Three of Mr. Young's own Trustees) was read, recommending to the Trustees of Anderson's University the acceptance of Mr. Young's offer—and that the Trustees of Anderson's University had, at that day's meeting, actually assented to the recommendation of the Managers. I was at same time assured that, although the entire business had been pushed through at a sitting of a very few minutes' duration, several of the astonished Trustees had yet found time to gather their thoughts, and had asked for information and for delay,

and that one gentleman, with whom I had no previous communication, had spontaneously protested against the hastily concluded proceedings, on the ground of their positive illegality.

No other information, excepting what has in a similar chance manner been gathered, has reached me. I am however enabled, through the friendly but unofficial offices of a Trustee, to glean, from a perusal of Mr. Young's Trust Deed, an indication of the mode in which it is intended and provided that I shall be practically superseded in my office, and cruelly, however unwittingly, injured in my feelings and legitimate pecuniary interests.

I have, therefore, neither directly nor indirectly, been consulted as to the arrangements under Mr. Young's Trust. So far as I am concerned, the whole matter has been planned and settled without my having the slightest knowledge of what was being transacted. My interests and my feelings have been wholly unconsidered and equally disregarded. I am very unwilling to believe that, outside of a very small circle of individuals, there will be found a disposition to question the right that I claim to be considered in this matter in virtue of my position as the thirty years' occupant of a Chair to which I was appointed to teach, and in which I have taught, Chemistry in all its branches. The changes which time has brought have removed from my side many honoured names who encouraged my early struggles, against adverse influences, to give a position to the Chair of Chemistry in Anderson's University, with which my name would hereafter be honourably associated—but there will surely be found as many remaining, who, in the memory of those efforts, will lend a friendly ear to my statements, and procure for my present Remonstrance and Appeal a fair and dispassionate consideration. I therefore request your serious attention to the conditions set forth in Mr. Young's Trust, so far as they relate to Anderson's University.

A sum of £10,500 is vested by Mr. Young in his own hands, and in those of his son and of four co-Trustees, for the purpose of founding and providing for the permanent establishment and support of *a Chair of Chemistry* in connection with Anderson's University; and to this Chair, including the laboratory and school, the *name* of *Technical* Chemistry is given. Standing apart from the Andersonian, and pursuing a limited object, it would necessarily be long ere the new Institution could acquire prestige, and the teacher or teachers could

scarcely be offered, and would scarcely have accorded to them the title of Professor, a title which, when held in connection with an ancient Institution, governed by a large, influential, and publicly appointed Trust, confers deservedly a dignity and status creditable and useful to the holder. And therefore it is, no doubt, that the new Institution is placed under the protecting wing of Anderson's University, so that the title of Professor, which is at once to be assumed, may accord to Mr. Young's nominee almost all of privilege or status that Anderson's Trustees have conferred, or can confer upon me, or upon my successors. In return, Mr. Young agrees that the Trustees who may succeed to manage his Trust shall be chosen from the Trustees of Anderson's University.

Now this is substantially the character and extent of the connection between Mr. Young's Institution and the Andersonian. One of the titles and privileges of the Andersonian is to be bartered for the questionable advantage that Mr. Young's Six Trustees, as vacancies occur among their number, are enjoined to select from among Anderson's eighty-one Trustees a gentleman to fill the vacancy. Anderson's Trustees are to receive no part of Mr. Young's £10,500—they are to have no control over the application of any portion of it—not only so, but by a stringent special prohibition Mr. Young requires his Trustees "on no account, either temporarily or permanently, to allow the money to be mixed up with the funds of Anderson's University, or lent to the Managers thereof," much less given to the Institution. Anderson's Trustees have no power as regards the appointment, the conduct, the duties, or the dismissal, of the occupant of Mr. Young's Chair; they have no jurisdiction over the classes he will conduct, the courses of instruction in Chemistry that he will give, or the fees he will charge. This seems a strange one-sided connection. It is sanctioned by no analogy—no precedent—no experience. The only point in which Mr. Young's Chair corresponds with that of Anderson's University is in the matter of rent. Both Chairs will pay a rental to the exchequer of Anderson's University. In the one case, however, that rent is paid by Trustees from their own funds and for the benefit of their Professor—in the other case the rent is paid by the Professor out of his own funds. Mr. Young's Trustees propose to occupy a portion of the premises for the uses of their Chair, and to pay a rent for the same, but they are under no obligation under the Trust Deed to do

so, neither can they be held bound to continue the occupancy, unless under arrangements of lease. Still, Mr. Young's Trustees will pay their Professor's rent, and the probability of having a monied lodger may be a very important element in the minds of some of Anderson's Trustees in determining this question, for, as the records of the University show, my predecessor was unable to pay his rent; and there is considerable doubt how far my successor, shorn of his poor privileges as he hereafter will be, may be able to pay the rent which for thirty years has been exacted from me. It is not, however, improbable that the portion of the Andersonian buildings proposed to be rented and used for the new Laboratory may prove in a few years unsuitable for the purpose, and if such an event should occur there is nothing in the Trust Deed to prevent Mr. Young's Trustees from going elsewhere for the required accommodation. So much for the connection and its reciprocal advantages.

Of the money provided for the Young Institution, £5000 is to be applied to fitting up a laboratory and other necessary apartments for the Professor or Professors of the Young Institution, and in the purchase of such apparatus as may be requisite. The revenue arising from £5000, another moiety of the original sum, is to be paid each year to the Professor in the Young Institution, and an additional sum of not more than £100 in any single year, is to be paid to the same party out of the remaining moiety of the original sum. The person to be first nominated by Mr. Young is not to be removable without Mr. Young's consent, but the right to all future appointments is to be shared by the co-Trustees he has assumed with himself to manage his Institution. From these few and plain conditions, it is manifest that there has been no donation to Anderson's University, and that no part of the munificent sum provided to found and establish the Young Institution will enrich the exchequer of the Andersonian.

As regards my own interests I view this intrusion of an additional Professor of Chemistry—co-equal with myself in title, status, and privileges, and, in addition, placed independent of the governing power which controls me—as most prejudicial to my vested rights and to my future success and usefulness. It is at all times difficult and unpleasant to write where selfish considerations are avowedly the subject matter of the theme. And where thoughts of injustice done and of ungenerous consideration accorded are continually

starting up and crossing the course of my argument, I am fully and indeed painfully aware that whether my words be few or many I lay myself open to the blame of having said either too little or too much. There are, however, occasions when, whatever may be his anxiety to avoid the charge of egotism, a man is justified in referring unreservedly and unhesitatingly to his own actions and to his own deservings.

I was appointed by unanimous election to the Chair of Professor of Chemistry in Anderson's University on the 31st July, 1839. I was appointed unconditionally—excepting the payment of a specified rental for the premises I occupy—and I have now held the office, with such privileges and advantages as it confers, for 30 years. In common with my predecessors, I undertook and was entrusted with the responsible task of discharging ALL the duties of the Chemistry Chair, comprising Medical, Technical, Metallurgical, and Agricultural Chemistry. At the date of my appointment the Institution was several thousand pounds in debt, and the Chemistry Classes were at a very low ebb; so low indeed that my predecessor was unable to pay either the moderate rental of £20 per annum or to defray his laboratory expenses. His rent was excused him and a donation was made him. The greatest total number of students he enrolled was 58. With the poor but highly prized crown conferred upon me in the title of Professor, I was placed in occupancy of the poorer kingdom of bare walls, bare tables, and empty cupboards which constituted the Laboratory. No allowance for apparatus, assistants, materials for use and illustration, coals, gas, &c., was then, or has since been made to me. The burden of rent, amounting to £38 per annum, and in addition, of all local rates and taxes, was laid upon me. Added to these impediments was the opposition of the endowed University of Glasgow, and of the rival Portland Street School of Medicine. I arrived in Glasgow a perfect stranger, not having a friend with whom to shake hands, but supported by the favourable introductions of Professor Graham and others, and encouraged by the generous sympathy of the late Mr. Walter Crum, Mr. Wm. Murray, and other respected trustees of that time, as well as by the cordial good wishes of my then colleagues, Drs. Hannay, Laurie, Brown, Watt, Hunter, &c., I devoted myself with enthusiasm, and—as far as money considerations go—with self-sacrificing zeal to the work, and with the result that in the first year I enrolled 87 pupils, with fair indication

of that steady increase which aftertimes have evidenced. For several years, however, following my appointment the emoluments yielded a pittance much below the salary of an ordinary clerk, and I wish sincerely I could now leave my successor, as assuredly I could before Mr. Young's Trust was agreed to, an escape from the wearing and anxious years of toil that passed before a fairly remunerating and self-supporting income was achieved. And when at length the prosperous time arrived that had so long been waited for, and when I had at last fairly recouped my pecuniary sacrifices in the progressively increasing earnings of several years, it was only to see those earnings, invested in the Western Bank, washed away in the devastating pecuniary ruin which, to many, attended its failure. The depressed mental energy and bodily ill-health that followed that misfortunate epoch was to me a calamity that lowered the earnings of many successive years. Still I progressed, and on four successive occasions the Trustees have been called upon to provide enlarged accommodation for the increased number of students who sought admission, and who were not unfrequently turned away for actual want of space. It is, I trust, with some pardonable degree of pride that at the present moment I can in face of any challenge, review my present position and the actual progress of past years. During the session just concluded, the number of students working in my laboratory throughout the day, has exceeded that of any laboratory in Great Britain, excepting one, and that exception is one so peculiar, and so really exceptional, as to deserve exclusion in the estimate. All the other Chemical Courses of instruction have been similarly well attended, while the number enrolled in the popular class, viz., 541 is, I am informed, not only larger than that of any former year, but exceeding that which has ever been enrolled in any course of instruction in Chemistry. These are facts, to others I leave the commentary. Such is the general position of the Chemistry Classes in Anderson's University.

It is now necessary that I should remove a misconception which has been studiously propagated regarding the nature of the courses of instruction conducted, and the quality of the students who attend upon these instructions. The pupils who frequent the Laboratory throughout the day are not medical students, but are, with very rare exceptions, either sons of chemical manufacturers or young men following earnestly the study of Chemistry with

a view of becoming connected with chemical works. My Laboratory is unmistakeably a Technical Laboratory. The instructions given and the processes illustrated have special reference to the industrial arts and to chemical manufactures. From reliable information I am enabled to say that in very many of our chemical works either the Principal or the Chemist has to a greater or lesser extent pursued his studies and acquired his knowledge within the walls of the Andersonian. In connection with this reference to the teaching of Technical Chemistry, which has so long and so forcibly engaged my energies, I think it desirable to explain what perhaps few of the Trustees know,—that many years ago, in order to meet the requirements of those who were in circumstances different from my day pupils, and who were engaged throughout the day in pressing and absorbing engagements, I commenced a cheap course of instruction in Technical Chemistry and Analysis in the evening. And this course has proved so eminently successful that in the past year I have enrolled seventy-three names.

So far, therefore, and with only the means at the disposal of an unendowed Professor, I have successfully—and as I feel with a creditable success—established in connection with Anderson's University a widely known and highly commended school of Technical Chemistry. If, in the pursuance of this branch of instruction in Chemistry I had neglected any branch, or failed to advance every branch to a position that will bear honourable comparison with that of any School of Chemistry throughout the kingdom, whether endowed or unendowed, I might now be silent and submissive. If, in particular, the teaching of Medical Chemistry had been neglected, or held a subordinate place, I might be mute. But the manner in which I have discharged my duties in the teaching of Medical Chemistry—although my labours have been so little remunerative—has been conspicuously attested. The warm-hearted and wide spread commendation of the Medical profession, and the approval, support, and sympathy that have reached me from the most highly educated and prominent of its members, is a certification of duty fitly discharged, that enables me to defy censure. I make this statement perforce—painful because repeated by myself—but necessary as forming part of my general statement. And here I may ask what would be the answer of the Trustees if next year some wealthy citizen offered to found and endow a Professorship of *Medical* Chemistry, exclusive of the

present Professor—myself. I feel confident that the Trustees would at once reply "No"—and that they would instantly recognise that such an appointment could not fail to injure my interests and reputation. And why is this? Simply because the meaning of the term "Medical Chemistry" is well understood, and my duties connected therewith well known and valued. I feel equally assured that the response would have been the same, and would have been equally prompt and decisive if the proposed new Professorship, heralded and placed before the Trustees under the novel and mysterious title of *Technical* Chemistry, was in the same degree known as constituting the principal department of my teachings and of my labours for many years. Dr. Adams, in his Protest, has not inaptly compared the pleasures and advantages which the Andersonian Trustees will derive from the "donation" to the rattling of money in a padlocked box, and I feel assured that the imposing and vaunted title of "Technical" Chemistry, has equally led some of the Trustees to believe that in accepting Mr. Young's offer of associating his Institution with the Andersonian, they have contributed to establish something new, and have met a pressing demand on the part of the public.

To many persons I have no doubt the title of Technical Chemistry is an entire novelty, and it is not unlikely therefore to prove deceptive so far as leading them to suppose that it is some new and uncultivated branch of Chemistry, at least in Anderson's University. The real fact, however, is that Technical Chemistry, *i.e.* Chemistry in its applications to the industrial arts and to manufactures, has been made, with Medical Chemistry, the main subject of the teachings in my lectures and in my Laboratory. Technical Chemistry has been, I repeat, the principal source of my earnings and income, and to its cultivation my energies and labours have been chiefly and uninterruptedly directed. At the commencement of my career in your Institution, I was led to believe, from the statements of Professor Graham and others, that it was the cultivation of the classes connected with the Medical School which would tend most considerably to the profit and reputation of the Professor and University. I soon found, however, that it was utterly hopeless to realize even the barest livelihood from the Medical Classes. The burden of rent, taxes, &c., and the unavoidable expenses for assistants, lecture demonstration, &c., far exceeded the total receipts. But I was not

long in recognising that my lot had been cast in the midst of a vast area of industrial activity, and I threw myself at once into contact with the workings of the busy hive. I had the advantage of having been trained in a laboratory of manufacture—the largest of the kind at that time in this country. By degrees,—having joined the Andersonian at the early age of 22,—I became not merely in a general manner, but most intimately acquainted with the minutest details of all the leading manufactures in Scotland, and after a time with others in England. The various works were most liberally thrown open to my inspection, and information on every point, even the most confidential, was freely supplied to me. In this way, as well as by extensive consultation and professional employment in cases of litigation connected with patents, and other causes of dispute, I acquired a complete and thorough practical knowledge of every essential process and operation of Technical Chemistry, and of the most approved construction of apparatus and appliances in use on the large scale.

There is scarcely a branch of Chemical industry in which I have not been more or less engaged, and in connection with many I have had occasion to conduct both practical and scientific investigations, and to institute improvements.

The result of all this has been that I have now one of the largest consulting and analytical practices in Scotland, and with the exception of criminal cases on behalf of the Crown, this practice is almost exclusively in connection with Technical Chemistry.

From the same causes I have also been enabled, for many years, to give in my lectures, without violating confidence, extended and accurate descriptions of the various processes of Chemical manufacture as witnessed by myself on the large scale, and these technical teachings have been fully illustrated by experiments, models, drawings, &c., in the lecture room. In the same way I have been led to direct the student's attention in the laboratory to those practical problems which have reference to manufactures and to his future pursuits. In a word, if there is anything that has, conjointly with Medical Chemistry, characterised my lectures and instructions, it is the prominence I have steadily given to Technical Chemistry. It is into this successfully cultivated, and now fertile field of my labours that a new Professor is to be introduced. He is to be made at once co-equal with myself—to share my students—to share my consulting

rooms or place of business, viz., Anderson's University—and generally to participate in all the benefits and advantageous results which have cost me so many years of labour and of thought to build up. It should require no words from me to show the inevitable result of placing two occupants in the same Chair. It is a grave mistake to suppose that the instruction in the Young Institution can be essentially different from that given at present in the Andersonian. Every student must first learn the principles of the science by attendance at lectures, and must also pass through the usual elementary training in the laboratory before he is qualified to direct his attention to any special branch of Chemistry. As however there are no restrictions or stipulations laid upon the new Professor as to the subject or extent of his teachings, it is safe to assume that every branch may be held essential to a knowledge of Technical Chemistry. The Professor of the Young Institution—or rather the Professors—for provision has been made in the Trust Deed to extend the number—will have the power of conducting and of giving instruction in any part, or in the whole domain of Chemistry. He is amenable only to Mr. Young's Trustees. The Trustees of Anderson's Institution are out of court—have no position—are utterly helpless to interfere. Mr. Young's Trustees from their limited number have a restricted allegiance, and are under no obligation to regard the remonstrances of either the Professors or of the Trustees of Anderson's University.

There is also another aspect of the question that is involved in the proposed connection of the Young Institution with Anderson's University. The Managers of Anderson's University are Nine in number, but Five out of the Nine, including Mr. Young himself, are Trustees of the Young Institution. The Managers of Anderson's University are usually regarded as the Executive of the Institution, and that they actually are so is sufficiently evidenced by the position into which the present matter has drifted before I have had a chance even of remonstrance. It may not be on every occasion at which innovations are made upon the established constitution of the University that a Trustee will be found to protest against the legislation to which a few minutes' consideration has been accorded. I have no wish for one moment to question the good intentions of the Managers in the event of difficulties, disputes, and injuries arising; but would they form a tribunal which can be held as desirable and proper for my interests? I cannot resist the impression that they are

too closely identified with the welfare and progress of the Young Trust to give that unbiassed consideration to future events which circumstances may demand; and while anxiously desirous not to make a remark that can be viewed in any way as offensive, I am constrained to add my conviction that Mr. Young's position as President of Anderson's University, is not compatible with that of sole arbiter in many matters connected with his own Trust. With a rival as an an enemy in the camp, and generals in league to favour his machinations, I can have no cover for safety, and no heart for combat.

The existence of an institution, endowed and specially devoted to the teaching of Chemical Science, openly antagonistic and competitive with the Chemistry Chair of Anderson's University is indeed a heavy blow dealt at the Chair, but its chief force and injury can only produce disastrous effects when that blow is directed by the hands of the Managers of Anderson's University, strengthened by the sanction of the Trustees. The Young Institution standing apart, would leave me at least no room for reasonable complaint, and I have lived too long in the atmosphere of open, active, but honourable competition to shrink from any that could be offered outside the walls of the Institution which I have so long been privileged to regard as my own peculiar domain and domicile. Beyond these walls, and unconnected with the University which gives me title, and unpatronised by that honourable public body whose protection and support I claim, I fear neither for myself nor the fame of the University. The present Andersonian Laboratory, which is spacious, well arranged, and very commodious for students, affords all the necessary accommodation they require, and though the Young Institution would have the advantage of being furnished, perhaps, with more costly apparatus and conveniences, these are by no means essential to the study of practical chemistry, and are too frequently like a large library, a mere luxury and not of much real use. The great Faraday has justly said that all the leading facts and principles of chemistry may be learnt with the aid of the simplest apparatus, a few bottles, tubes, and glasses. If established and conducted apart from the Andersonian there need be no apprehension of the Young Institution doing any serious or vital injury to the Chemistry Chair.

It is of course to be regretted that Mr. Young made no attempt to carry out his intentions in such a way that the vested interests and privileges, and emoluments of the present Professor of Chemistry,

and of his successors would not be injured. I have not the slightest doubt that matters could have been arranged to meet the views and interests of all concerned, and that the great injustice and vital injury which I now deprecate could have been avoided.

I accepted the appointment of Professor of Chemistry in Anderson's University thirty years ago with feelings of gratitude for the status, and for the honourable introduction it gave me at the outset of my professional career, and for the privileged opening it afforded me in the search for remunerating employment. During these thirty years—the better part of my life—I have devoted myself with heartfelt loyalty to discharge the compact then made between myself and my patrons and protectors, the Trustees. I *know* that I have made the Chemical Department of the Institution famed and respected, and I feel that I am amply entitled to ask with open frankness for a manifestation of good faith towards myself. I have paid into the exchequer of the Andersonian considerably above £1000 in annual rental, irrespective altogether of the burden of every local rate and tax, and of every other form of expense connected with the Laboratory and Lecture Rooms. It is not, I feel well assured, known either to the general body of the Trustees, or to the public, that, apart altogether from competition, I have had to contend against such heavy odds. It may be interesting to the Trustees, and it may in some shape be useful to my successor, to know that the outlay connected purely with the Chair of Chemistry was last year fully £400 before one shilling of my earnings was available as income for personal use. There are some who may cry out against the selfishness that can lay bare this question in a monetary point of view, but I am fully sensible that I require to make no excuse. Next to honourable and honest dealing the monetary aspect of a personal question is the most important to all men. On this point there is still another consideration which should not be shut out from view, but which should claim, and from a generous mind will surely receive the tenderest sympathy and dealing. The position of a Professor of Chemistry in any University or educational institution is so peculiar and so contingent that his business is not marketable. The philosophical and chemical apparatus in which year after year his earnings have been invested have little value apart from himself. If his Chair becomes vacant by his resignation or death he cannot, like the merchant or tradesman, secure a reversionary interest for himself or

his family by the disposal of the business and goodwill; it is gone from him the moment his connection with the Chair is severed; and for the Professor of Chemistry in the Andersonian there is, I need scarcely say, no retiring pension.

For these, among other reasons, any act, which in whole or in part, is even likely to affect prejudicially, his interests and prospects, should be most calmly and deliberately weighed beforehand. If the duties of my Chair had been neglected—if I had become unfit for the post from age or physical infirmity—or if the Chemistry Classes in all or in any department had fallen off in my hands, then, and then only can I admit that a division of the duties and privileges of my Chair might have been desirable, but even then, the very smallest regard given to my interests and feelings demanded, after my lengthened labours in the Institution, that I should at the very least have been consulted.

It can not surely be expected in the face of the opposition now favoured that I shall continue as heretofore cheerfully and freely to invest money in the purchase of apparatus and laboratory furnishings. It was only last week that the Secretary made formal application for the rent of the laboratory, and this, notwithstanding that the debt of the Institution has been removed which for so many years furnished the pretext—I should add—the reasonable and the only alleged grounds for demanding any rent. And this demand upon me was made almost to the day and hour, when the Trustees were called upon to sanction the nomination and appointment of a rival Professor endowed with a salary of nearly £300 a year, and with rooms, laboratory, and everything free and unburdened to him. Well may it be said that the measure I am considering is an apt illustration of that policy, which, going to the encouragement of every lateral extension, and favouring weeds and suckers, and every excrescence that may be offered to the Institution, leaves the parent trunk to languish and to perish.

What may be the motives that have prompted the course of action upon which I am now commenting I can only darkly guess. The personal differences between myself and the President, to which so much and so frequent allusion has been made, are to my thinking so petty as to supply no adequate motive. However this may be, and aware as I am of the frequency with which a small motive is linked with a great action, I dismiss the matter without farther

allusion. For even in the lowest point of view, and assuming that there could be a motive beyond what appears on the surface, I know well that there are among both Managers and Trustees men who, if misled, have too much nobility of thought and action to become the instruments of any man's pique or pleasure.

I have disburthened my mind in what I have now said. I have presented no magnified statement of grievance. Every statement I make is based on facts that claim consideration, and that would become amplified on investigation. Your sanction has been obtained without due consideration, to ratify and uphold an action that is neither one of honourable right or of profitable wrong. I come before you on manly grounds, and with the plain confidence of an honest servant relying on the equity of a candid and discerning master, and I ask you to undo this act.

FREDERICK PENNY.

44 Windsor Terrace,
Sept. 15, 1869.