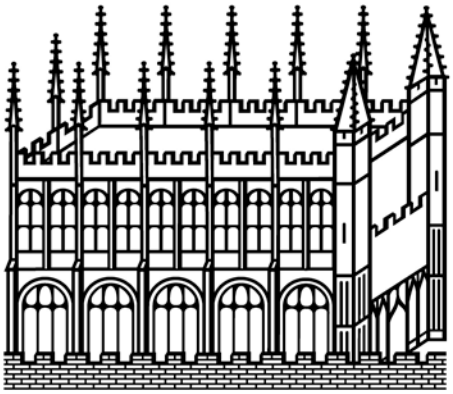

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

BY THE LATE

PRINCIPAL LEE

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS

1884

THE

University of Edinburgh

From its Foundation in 1583
to the Year 1839

A HISTORICAL SKETCH

BY

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MDCCCLXXXIV

THE following sketch originally appeared as an Introduction to *The Edinburgh Academical Annual*, published in 1840, and now almost entirely forgotten.

It contains, in a brief compass, a somewhat comprehensive view of the institution and growth of the Edinburgh University by one whose researches in the history of Scottish learning are well known; and is now reprinted in the hope that it may be of interest to the public at the present time.

W. L.

GLASGOW COLLEGE,
April 1884.

I.—INTRODUCTION.

ANTECEDENTLY to that great change which has been hailed by Protestants as the establishment of the Reformation, the Universities of Scotland partook of the character which they generally bore elsewhere, of being purely ecclesiastical corporations. Erected originally under the auspices of prelates, who, by the authority of the Pope, assigned for their support a portion of the tithes or the spiritualities of benefices, and who retained for themselves the dignity and

power of chancellors, these learned bodies were composed at first of the most studious and zealous of the clergy, secular or regular, whose efforts were directed partly to the instruction of the candidates for orders, and partly to the performance of religious offices, according to the usages of the cathedral and collegiate churches,—an exercise which, in addition to its other objects, had the effect of serving as a model for the due observance of the forms of devotion, and thus familiarising the youth to the ritual services in which they were to be chiefly occupied. The cultivation of letters was subordinate to this professional training, and whatever branches of education of a secular complexion were superadded were primarily applicable to the purpose

of accomplishing the higher orders of clergy for the civil offices, which they were ambitious of combining with their sacred functions; to which they were so far from being confined, that they generally engrossed the highest places as judges, privy counsellors, and statesmen. The study of the civil law, as well as the canon law, was therefore indispensable; and even the science of music, or at least the practice, was a necessary preparation for the academical distinction of doctor in that faculty, which constituted a high recommendation to the first appointments in the choirs, which, from the time of St. Ambrose, in the fourth century, had become objects of the most anxious attention. The mode of study in the Universities, as originally settled, was calculated

to maintain, with little variation, uniformity of tenets and observances, and both in speculation and in practice to perpetuate prejudices and to rivet the chains of superstition. As if scholastic discipline had been too feeble an instrument for detaining the human mind in a state of servile submission to authority, the tremendous machinery of the Inquisition was superadded. The first professor of canon law in the University of St. Andrews was Inquisitor-general for Scotland soon afterwards; and not only were candidates for degrees sworn to resist the assaults of the Lollards, but, under the stern mandate of the Inquisitor, the monstrous spectacle was exhibited of committing scholars to the flames, for uttering expressions which were held to be incon-

sistent with the belief of the infallibility of the Pope. Even after the middle of the sixteenth century, while Knox was paving the way for the overthrow of the old establishment, a new College,[1] with an enlarged complement of professors, was founded in Scotland, for the avowed purpose of counteracting and suppressing the errors of the heretics who had recently sprung up. The entire system of tuition was adapted to the purposes for which it had been constructed, and though it gave scope for the exercise of ingenuity in applying the topics of disputation, it could not be considered as tending to the enlargement of the sphere of human knowledge.

When the Protestant faith was intro-

[1 St. Mary's College, St. Andrews.—ED.]

duced, the Church, though deprived of the patrimony which had been transferred from its former possessors into the rapacious hands of the nobles and courtiers, did not abandon the charge of education. A scheme was proposed in the First Book of Discipline, which, if it had been adopted, would have proved a prodigious advance in the course of philosophical and general study; embracing not only the old curriculum of dialectics, ethics, and physics, but mathematics, politics, municipal as well as Roman law, the Greek and Hebrew languages, medicine, and the most valuable branches of theological learning. The funds requisite for completing this undertaking, though very moderate, were not supplied; and the bishops, who, by virtue of their offices,

had hitherto possessed the patronage of the existing Universities, continued to exercise their power, so as to retain in their places such professors as they conceived to be most faithful to the interests of the Church of Rome, and to fill up vacancies on the same principle. The first check which the Church obtained over this influence was an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1567, for reforming the Universities, and preventing any from having charge in them, except such as should be tried by the superintendents and visitors of the Kirk. This Act came into immediate operation, and the first effect of it was to remove all the professors of King's College, Aberdeen, as enemies of the truth, and to fill their places with Reformers, particularly with

Mr. Alexander Arbuthnot as Principal and Mr. James Lawson as Sub-principal. But the bishops, who still sat in Parliament, contrived to diminish the patrimony of the Universities, so that in the case of Alexander Arbuthnot, it was thought necessary to appoint him to the charge of the parish of Arbuthnot, at a considerable distance from Aberdeen; and in the same manner the Principals of some other Colleges held parochial charges, and even Andrew Melville, Principal of Glasgow College, the uncompromising leader of the Presbyterians, accepted a provision from the tithes of the parish of Govan,—a church which was thus deprived of the benefit of a stated pastor, though well supplied with the weekly instructions of the Principal. The re-

duced resources of the ancient seats of learning prevented them from retaining their former consequence, and it ceased to be an object to send young men to study at the Episcopal cities, which, with the loss of their wealth, fell rapidly into decay. The stronghold of the Reformation was in Edinburgh itself, which, though it sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Knox in 1572, was well supplied with able divines, in the person of his successor, James Lawson, and other men of great piety and zeal. Lawson, who had both studied and taught at St. Andrews, and afterwards on the Continent, is admitted to have been the most active promoter of the design of rebuilding the High School, and founding a College in Edinburgh,—a design which

had been contemplated within two years after the Reformation, and which might have been soon accomplished, if it had not been for the influence of the bishops, and other obstructions arising from the calamities of the times. Through his recommendation it was that Mr. Robert Rollock, who had been four years a regent at St. Andrews, was selected to occupy the arduous situation of first, and indeed sole, professor in the new University of Edinburgh in 1583. Rollock was a man of high intellectual endowments, and well furnished with all the essential qualifications of a teacher of literature and science, being himself a great proficient in the liberal arts, and having been singularly successful in the practice of tuition.

II.—FOUNDATION AND EARLY YEARS.

THE limits of this paper do not admit of any detailed account of the proceedings connected with the foundation of the University of Edinburgh. James VI., in 1582, granted the charter of erection, constituting the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the Burgh of Edinburgh, with the advice of the ministers, electors of all the Professors, with the power of removal, as well as of appointment, and prohibiting all persons not admitted by the patrons from pro-

fessing or teaching any of the sciences within the liberties of the burgh. The King, who was ambitious of being commemorated as the founder and greatest benefactor of this literary establishment, inserted in the charter an imposing list of lands, rents, buildings, churches, chapels, and other properties, formerly belonging to the Black and Grey Friars, and other religious orders, which had formerly yielded a large revenue, but which, though apparently secured to the community of Edinburgh, for the sustentation of the ministers, schools, and hospitals, by a previous charter of Queen Mary, granted in 1566, had been so much dilapidated and alienated by a variety of discreditable transactions, common in that period of national confusion, as to

retain little more than a nominal value. The very ground on which the College was allowed to be built (in the extensive space called the *Kirk of Field*, the site of an old provostry) could not be obtained otherwise than by purchase from a menial servant of the King, who had acquired a title to it; and in the same manner other benefactions, which had a semblance of munificence, if they did not prove altogether delusive, dwindled into extreme meanness. The wonder is, that the King, who had an overweening conceit of his own talents and learning, did not retain the patronage of all the offices,—but his disinterestedness in this matter is very questionable,—for at that time he asserted and exercised an influence over the municipal body, which, if it had been per-

manently secured, would have enabled him to possess unlimited power over the College, as well as every other establishment in the metropolis of his kingdom. In the course of the very year in which the University was opened, the King, disregarding a decreet-arbitral, which he had solemnly ratified five months before, assumed the power of nominating the new magistrates and councillors; and the two succeeding years he outraged the rights of the community still more violently, by placing in the civic chair the Earl of Arran, a courtier of the most profligate, licentious, and tyrannical disposition, who had unhappily corrupted the mind of his young sovereign, and who, if he had not been driven with disgrace from the kingdom, by threats of vengeance

from an oppressed people, would have endangered the stability of the throne. It deserves to be recorded to the honour of the burgesses of Edinburgh, that as they had taken a most conspicuous and efficient part in the reformation of religion, they afterwards proved that their intelligence and fidelity peculiarly fitted them for appointing such magistrates and councillors as were most deserving of confidence in the capacity of patrons of the schools of learning.[1] It is perfectly ascertained that a number of leading men

[1] It is a circumstance worthy of notice, that after the Reformation the trades of Edinburgh gave many proofs of their value for learning, by educating their sons for learned professions. Cowper, Bishop of Galloway, and his brother, a zealous minister, were sons of a mechanic. Preston, Lord Fentonbarns, president of the Court of Session, and Sir Adam Newton, tutor and secretary to Prince Henry, were both sons of bakers in Edinburgh. Many similar instances might be quoted, all indicative of the strong interest in the cause of education which

in the Town Council of Edinburgh, who were in office when King James's charter was granted in 1582, possessed the advantage of having a liberal education, and were members of learned professions,—some of them were masters of arts, and one of them became, a few years afterwards, President of the Court of Session; and if we descend a very few years, to the time when they exercised their privileges without any royal interference, we shall find them equally distinguished for zeal and discrimination. About the end of the century, the administration of the funds, which had never been so prudent

had been excited in the community, and which had derived very slender encouragement from the government. The foundation of the library was also formed by the liberal donation of books by Clement Little, a learned citizen, whose brother honourably succeeded the Earl of Arran as Lord Provost in 1586.

and careful as it might have been, became very incorrect; but in the appointments of professors scarcely any charges of rashness were ever brought against the patrons.

From the time when the College was established, the Town Council, with advice of the ministers and some eminent lawyers, regulated the mode of teaching, the discipline, the fees, and the accommodation of the students. The suggestions of Rollock were in general approved and adopted with respect to the teaching and discipline. Students were admitted upon application to a magistrate, under whose authority they were enrolled, in the same manner as elsewhere they were matriculated by the Rector or Principal. The fees appear to have been at least as

moderate, on the whole, as were paid in other Universities, in all of which there were different rates of scholars, who were taxed according to their quality. The rate of payment settled in the contract with Rollock was, for a year's education to the sons of burgesses, two pounds Scots, and to others, at least three pounds Scots,—a small sum apparently, but not disproportionate to the scale on which the Professor was maintained. The quarterly allowance for board to Rollock was thirty pounds Scots, and his salary was forty pounds Scots paid half-yearly. In the year 1595, the Council ordained that the whole payment for gentlemen's sons, not burgesses of Edinburgh, should be eight pounds Scots a-year, and from the sons of burgesses of Edinburgh, four pounds

Scots in the year. Taking into account the diminished value of Scots money, and the increased price of provisions, the professors had no profit by the apparent advance, for, in 1595 the pound Scots had sunk so low as only a tenth of a pound sterling; and five years afterwards it descended to one-twelfth, which has been the proportion ever since.

The intention of the founders of the University was, that all the students should lodge within the walls of the College. All students were required at first to remain within their chambers the whole night, and to wear gowns during the day, to distinguish them from other young men. The rent of a chamber to a stranger student, having a bed to himself, was four pounds Scots in the year,

for which sum the town furnished seats, beds, tables, and shelves. Students whose parents were burgesses paid no rent, but furnished the rooms at their own charges. It was probably an advantage to the manners and morals of the youth, that the increase of numbers gradually put a stop to this practice. Yet it continued long to be considered by many as a desideratum, that this College did not possess the means of providing rooms and maintenance for the scholars who resorted to it from a distance. So lately as the year 1710, the Dissenters in England, under the influence of Mr. Benjamin Bennet, Dr. Calamy, and others, manifested their willingness to contribute liberally for the support of a *hospitium*, or house convenient for the entertainment of

the students, for which they expected that £1000 per annum, might easily be raised, if their students were to participate in the benefit. The original extent of the buildings destined for such a purpose was very inconsiderable. It might have been expected that greater efforts would have been made for the enlargement and due endowment of the College of Edinburgh, if the Court had not been removed to London within twenty years after that seminary was opened. In reality, the College owed scarcely anything to the countenance and aid of men of rank and landed property in Scotland. In the list of benefactors of the College of Edinburgh, we find the name of only one nobleman, and it is certain that he received a full equivalent in Church property for

the moderate sum which has sometimes been represented as a donation; and even if it had been a donation, the deed was reduced, at the instance of another nobleman allied to the family. But many considerable gifts and legacies were bestowed by merchants, tailors, and other tradesmen, and by widows of burgesses of Edinburgh, and not a few by individual clergymen and lawyers; some of them for assisting in the building, some for furnishing the library, some for providing salaries to professors, and some for bursaries to students. In the year 1590, the Lords of Session contributed one thousand pounds Scots, and the Faculty of Advocates and the Society of Clerks to the Signet, one thousand pounds, to be added to the like sum advanced by the

Town Council of Edinburgh; and in consequence of the formation of this joint stock, it was stipulated that a Professorship of Humanity or Laws should be founded, and that two delegates from the Lords, two from the Advocates and Writers, and two from the Town Council should elect the Professor. This contract continues to be acted upon to the present time.[1]

[1] The application of this fund underwent various changes; but the influence of the bodies connected with the College of Justice was never diminished. In the year 1597 it was resolved, in a second contract, to give the Professor only 100 lib. Scots in the year, and to provide six bursaries with annual allowances of £33, 6s. 8d. to each. In the year 1648, a new contract was entered into between the town and the other bodies, proceeding on the narrative that the year's rent of £3000 was little enough to entertain the Professor of Humanity, and that the number of bursars had *so increased that they had become burdensome to the whole regents of the College*, and securing in all time coming the whole interest to be paid to the Professor (amounting to £240 a year), for which he obtained sasine on the common mills on the Water of Leith. The delegates or commissioners from the College of Justice have always had it in their power to decide the election of this Professor.

The largest of all the early contributions to the permanent funds issued in the introduction of a very essential change in the distribution of patronage, and in the general oversight and administration of the affairs of the College. Previously to the year 1608, the current expenses of every year were defrayed chiefly out of the ordinary revenue, or *common good* of the burgh. At this time, an unappropriated balance of the rents and patrimony of the Church and hospitals was found to be resting in the hands of the treasurer of the Kirk, and not at the time required for the uses for which it had been collected. The ministers and sessions concurred with the Town Council in finding that this balance, amounting to eight thousand one hundred

pounds could not be applied to any more godly or profitable use than the entertainment of the Principal, masters, and regents of the College, and resolved, with one consent, that the annual rent, mutually valued at one thousand merks (nearly seven and a half per cent.), should be destined perpetually for that purpose. The Town Council bound themselves to secure this perpetual payment without any diminution, and regularly to account to the ministers and sessions for the yearly application of the sum. 'And further,' it is added, 'in respect the said session and kirk has freely granted their concurrence, help, and assistance to the entertainment of the said Principal, masters, and regents of the said College, and for their parts has

doted and mortified the said rent to that good and godly use, therefore the said Provost, Bailies, Council, and Deacons of crafts, for themselves and their successors, grants and consents that the ministers of this burgh, present and to come, for themselves, and in name of the said session, because they have best knowledge in letters, shall have vote with them in electing of the Principal and regents of the said College, when they shall happen to *vaik*, and in placing or displacing of them in all time coming.'

This contract was formally concluded by the parties on the 16th of December 1608, and registered in the books of Council and Session December 20, 1608.[1] The terms of it were long regularly

[1] See Register of Deeds, volume 153, in the General Register House.

observed on the occasions of electing the Principal and four regents, or foundation professors. The ministers of Edinburgh were also conjoined with the Council as patrons of many of the bursaries,—for instance, two which were founded by Mr. William Struthers, minister of Edinburgh; two by Mr. Andrew Ramsay, also minister of Edinburgh; and two by his son, Sir Andrew Ramsay of Abbotshall, long Lord Provost of Edinburgh, who, in his will, dated 21st June 1687, left ten thousand merks to be paid 'to the magistrates and ministers of Edinburgh, as patrons and overseers of the said College.' How the ministers ceased to exercise their share of the patronage, and how far their influence, while it lasted, proved beneficial, are questions which it would be out of place here to discuss; but there

can be little doubt that their power in this matter expired because they neglected to assert it. The Town Council, on the other hand, it has been generally admitted, seldom failed to manifest the utmost solicitude to make the best selection in their power, and sometimes they have been least successful when the general voice of the public had applauded if not prompted their choice. This, at least, must be granted, that at no period have they failed to secure the services of as large a proportion of eminent teachers of science and literature as any other University, whose members were appointed under a different system of nomination, has ever been able to boast; and they have often exercised great discernment in translating the most distinguished men from other Universities.

III.—PRINCIPALS; ORIGINAL SYSTEM OF TEACHING.

THE first appointment which the patrons made was peculiarly happy. Rollock was a man of strong intellect, indefatigable industry, deep erudition, and a most Christian spirit. Some of the most zealous clergy thought him in certain instances too accommodating to the Court; but, though more attached to monarchical government than some of his contemporaries, he was a man of independent mind, and, instead of wasting his high faculties in the bustle and warfare of

politics, he wore out his constitution in the assiduous discharge of professional duties, and in the composition of the numerous pious and practical writings which obtained the highest character from the most learned of his contemporaries in foreign countries, and which were often reprinted on the Continent. He died in the beginning of the year 1599, at the age of forty-three,[1] leaving behind him a much larger number of valuable works than the most celebrated of his successors. His commentaries on the Scriptures, and other theological works, some of them of great length, extend to more than twenty volumes; and as a

[1] Rollock's salary before his death, in the capacity of minister of the west quarter of the town, and Principal of the College, was twelve hundred merks, while the salary of one of the ordinary ministers was eight hundred merks.

specimen of the estimation in which they were held by foreign divines, it is sufficient to refer to the recorded opinion of Beza, who characterises some of the earliest of these works, the commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians (printed at Edinburgh in 1590), and to the Romans (printed in 1594), as 'a rich treasure sent from God to His people,' than which he declares (disclaiming all flattery), that he had never read any similar works more eloquent and more judicious, so that he could not refrain from rendering thanks to God for bestowing such a blessing on the Churches.

The successors of Rollock were, like himself, all Churchmen. The two next Principals, Henry Charteris and Patrick

Sands,[1] had been members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh before the death of Rollock. Robert Boyd, who held the offices of Principal and one of the eight ministers of Edinburgh, only a few months of the year 1622 (having been removed by the mandate of the King), was an elegant poet, and one of the most learned divines in Europe, as is sufficiently proved by his voluminous Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, and other works.[2] Adamson, who succeeded him, resembled him in his poetical taste, and

[1] It has sometimes been alleged that Sands was never a clergyman; but though he afterwards followed the profession of the law, he is often designed minister in several registers previous to his appointment; and, indeed, for some time he was a minister in the Presbytery of Edinburgh. (See *Records of Presbytery of Edinburgh*, 1591-1596.)

[2] Calderwood says, that he was removed chiefly because the ministry envied his gifts in the pulpit as well as the schools; but it appears from authentic records that the ministers of

was considered as not a mean theologian. In the capacity of Principal, he manifested great activity, vigilance, and judgment, and the bequest of his collection of books to the library was a substantial proof of his zeal for the advancement of letters. The profound and spiritually-minded Leighton succeeded him in 1653, and held the office nine years, discharging its duties so as highly to promote the prosperity of sound learning and genuine piety. It is most lamentable to reflect, that from the moment of his acceptance of a bishopric, his influence in the Church, which had never been nearly so

whom Calderwood complains had cheerfully concurred in his appointment to both his offices. It was to be regretted that his attention was distracted by the labours of a parochial charge. His Latin poems were read as the Monday lesson in the Humanity class, so lately as the middle of the last century.

great as it ought to have been, appears to have ceased entirely; and his mild and moderate counsels, addressed to his mitred brethren, were so entirely disregarded, that he retired with indignant sorrow and shame from an order of men with whom he had no community of sentiment. His successor as Principal, Mr. William Colvill, was a man of a peaceable temper, unfeigned piety, and high character as a divine. The choice of the patrons in this instance was proved, by his exemplary conduct and learned writings, to have been one of the best which could have been made. No man of equal celebrity in the Episcopalian Church could be found to supply his place after his death.

The first Presbyterian Principal after

the Revolution, Dr. Gilbert Rule, had filled the office of Sub-principal at Aberdeen, before the restoration of Charles II. He was afterwards advantageously known among the Presbyterians, as an able controversial writer, and as an orthodox preacher. His successor, William Carstares, is more generally represented as a politician, and a successful leader in the Church courts, than as a divine or a scholar; but he was a zealous promoter of the interests of the College, and, from the confidence reposed in him by the English Dissenters, he was for some time successful in attracting many students from England to this University. Wishart, Hamilton, Smith, Wishart junior, and Goldie, who successively held the office from 1716 to 1762, were all men of

talents and good learning. It is unnecessary to characterise the two who have occupied that important station during the last seventy-seven years,—Principal Robertson, one of the most elegant and philosophical of modern historians, and Principal Baird, who, among his other personal and professional excellences, possesses the distinction of having originated, and long superintended with the greatest ardour and success, the scheme for increasing the means of education and religious instruction in Scotland, particularly in the Highlands and Islands.

With respect to the appointment of Professors, the regulation of the course of study, the exercise of government and discipline, and the general administration of the affairs of the University, there may

be diversities of opinion; but it cannot be denied that the general results of the entire management have been eminently beneficial. From the earliest time the regents and other professors have been well selected. It may not be unnecessary here to explain the meaning of the term *regents*. In the older Universities every student, when he attained the dignity of master of arts, acquired the faculty of teaching the branches of learning which were known by the title of the liberal arts. But though all were understood to be qualified to teach, and, in certain circumstances, might claim the privilege, all could not be selected to take charge of classes. The practice varied in different Universities, and it would be a waste of time to enter into the meaning of the dis-

tinctions of *magistri regentes* and *non-regentes*, *regentes necessarii* and *regentes ad placitum*. The regents in Edinburgh and other Universities of Scotland were the teachers who conducted the academical youth through the entire course of philosophical study which it was necessary to complete before they could become masters of arts. In Edinburgh, for instance, there were four regents, every one of whom had charge of a class from the period of its first enrolment till the termination of the fourth session, and it was his duty to teach, in succession, the several branches of Logic, Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, Natural Philosophy, and such kindred studies as were most intimately connected with these branches of learning. After the Reformation the study of the Greek

language was expressly required, and whereas no one was admitted to enter on the study of dialectics, who could not write promptly and congruously in Latin verse, or at least in Latin prose, to the satisfaction of the Dean of Faculty, and other examiners, it was expressly ordered that no books of philosophical study should be used in any College, except such as were written in pure Greek or Latin, such as those of Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero. The institution of Professors of Humanity became necessary in consequence of the imperfect preparation of many students for speaking and writing correctly and readily in the Latin tongue. The students of the first year, who entered on the first of October, and prosecuted their studies eleven months,

having a vacation of only one month, were called *Bajans*, an appellation which has puzzled etymologists, some of whom derive it from the French *bas gens*, and others from *bec jaune*. There is no doubt that the word is derived from the Latin *pagani*, *rustics*, who required to be civilised, or humanised,[1] though enlisted among the *cives academiæ;* in the same manner as the name *pagani* was anciently given to the Roman conscripts, or raw recruits, before they were allowed the honourable name of *milites*, and to the lowest order of the *plebs urbana*, before they rose to the mature dignity of citizens of Rome.

[1] The change of *P* into *B*, in many similar words, does not require to be pointed out. Thus, we have *bedellus* (another academical title) formed from *pedellus* (*viator* or *apparitor*). In the same manner, from *parler* we have the Scottish word birlyman or barleyman (an arbiter), and children universally, when calling for a truce, say a *barley*, instead of a *parley*.

The students of the second year continuing under the same regent, were called the *semi* class, or the *semi-bachelors.*[1] Their session, and that of the following year, were also of the duration of eleven months. The regent of the third year had the management of the same youths, under the title of the *bachelor* class, because they might become bachelors of arts, or *determinantes*, before the end of that year; and the fourth year they reached the higher dignity of *magistrands*, because they generally obtained the title of *magistri* at the close of the session, about the end of August. The examinations for degrees were very strict, and, according to the proficiency of the student, he might attain higher or lower distinc-

[1] Sometimes called the *semi-bajan* class.

tion. The attendance of the regents on their respective classes was most assiduous,—and the hours of tuition were as numerous in every such class as they are generally in grammar schools. Every regent required his scholars to take down in writing and commit to memory his *dictates*, or the general heads of his system of instruction on every branch of philosophy. At the time when Rollock studied and taught at St. Andrews, the Dialectics of Peter Ramus had in a great measure superseded the *Organon* of Aristotle in that University, as it had about the same time in the University of Cambridge.[1] Ramus cannot be acquitted of arrogance;

[1] In 1584, a work on the philosophy of Ramus was published at Cambridge by William Temple, who about the same time prefixed a Preface to the Metaphysics of James Martin of Dunkeld, Professor of Philosophy at Turin. In 1576, Roland

but he had the merit of exposing and refuting many of the unsound positions in the Aristotelian philosophy, and introducing a freedom of discussion, which few public teachers had ever ventured to practise till he set them the example.

The method pursued at Edinburgh, though keeping in view the model of other Universities, was not a servile imitation of any pre-existing practice. During the first year, about six months were spent chiefly in the study of the Greek and Roman classics, accompanied by frequent exercises in translation, versification, and original composition. The remainder of

Makilmane, a Scotsman, had published the Dialectics of Ramus at London. The *Dictates* of John Malcolm on Logic, as taught in St. Leonard's College, prove, that about the year 1580, the system of Ramus was introduced into that seminary, while Rollock was a regent at St. Andrews.

the session was occupied in the study of the Dialectics of Ramus, without, however, discontinuing the reading of Greek and Latin authors, and committing to memory and reciting large portions of the ancient poets and orators. In the second year, besides being exercised in Greek themes and versions, the students proceeded in the study of Logic, Rhetoric, and some part of Mathematics. The philosophical works of Aristotle were not neglected, and in the later months of the session the practice of oratory was encouraged by public declamations. The third session, carrying forward the philosophical studies and classical learning, introduced the youth to the knowledge of some branches of Natural History and Philosophy, and gave every one an opportunity of becom-

ing acquainted with the elements of the Hebrew tongue. In the fourth session, Ethics, Physics, and Metaphysics formed the principal object of study; but great part of the time was occupied in the practice of Disputation. The regent prescribed the subject, and every candidate was matched with an antagonist, with whom it was necessary for him to carry on a debate in presence of his teacher. The regents were required to exercise a habitual inspection of their charge, both in the public class and in the hours of recreation in the fields. The Principal was bound to maintain a daily superintendence, presiding in the public devotions, and keeping a watchful eye over all the regents, students, and officers of the establishment; so that, when admonition

or discipline was required, it might not be omitted or postponed till insubordination and irregularity became inveterate or scandalous. Every Lord's Day was partly employed in the religious instruction of the students in their private classes, and chiefly in the public solemnities of divine worship.

At the period to which we refer, other academical improvements were introduced into some of the Universities of Scotland. The exercises of the young as well as the advanced students started far above the old level of school-boy tasks. Of dates prior to the year 1590, as well as for several years afterwards, some elaborate specimens of learned productions, prepared week after week by voluntary associations of students, are still extant in manuscript.

Many of these juvenile essays are Latin poems and dissertations, exhibiting proofs of more than ordinary ability and taste. Several others are Greek orations of considerable length, others are Greek poems of a hundred lines or more. Some of the writers rose to high eminence, and among the rest Thomas Young, afterwards the tutor of Milton.

About this time the introduction of the practice of printing and publishing the philosophical Theses submitted to disputation on the occasion of taking the degree of master of arts, gave rise to much greater exactness and research in the performance of these exercises. The subjects of such Theses were the leading doctrines on Logic, Ethics, and Physics; and though for a long period the dissertations

were prepared by the regents themselves, it is certain that the necessity imposed on the candidates of defending all the tenets which any of the learned auditory might venture to impugn had a tendency to produce greater readiness and dexterity in debate than could have been expected to result from a more quiescent course of training. It cannot be denied that unbecoming liberties and other abuses occasionally sprang from this practice; but it must be admitted that it had the effect of sharpening the faculties, and preparing the disputants for engaging with facility and self-possession in controversial discussion, as well as in didactic discourse. The subsequent practice of defending inaugural dissertations, which were composed by the students themselves, was manifestly

an improvement, at least whenever it could be satisfactorily ascertained that these College exercises were the *bona fide* productions of the professed authors. Only a small number of such dissertations of a later date than the middle of the eighteenth century appears to have been printed, and soon afterwards the ancient practice of taking degrees in arts fell into general disuse in this University.

IV.—PERIODS OF CROMWELL AND THE RESTORATION.

THE appointment of professors from the origin of the University appears, on the whole, to have been very judiciously made. For a long time a public trial was taken of the candidates, and on such occasions the electors generally availed themselves of the aid of the most competent judges. It was sometimes alleged that partiality was shown to competitors connected with Edinburgh, or who were recommended by great men; but the

success of candidates favoured by the local authorities might generally be ascribed chiefly to their greater familiarity with the mode of instruction followed in this University; and it cannot be proved that such preference (which indeed very rarely occurred) was ever undeserved. The supposed influence of men of rank or official dignity cannot now be scrutinised so closely as to warrant an absolute denial that it ever preponderated. But if any instance of it can be established, the temptation to yield to it was very slender. For it has already been observed that scarcely any solid benefit was conferred by statesmen or nobles on this University, which derived almost its sole support from persons in humble station, connected with the city. Indeed, the only apparent ad-

vantages which the College obtained in its infant state from the property of any of the nobility were afterwards withdrawn. The case of Lord Lindsay's gift has been already referred to. Another more glaring case occurred in the year 1612. The second Marquis of Hamilton brought an action against the Town Council for recovery of the value of a building, called Hamilton's Lodging, converted into schools for the University, which, in consequence of the forfeiture of one of his predecessors, had been granted by the Crown for the use of the College, but for which the Court of Session, by deciding in his favour, allowed him to demand and receive the full value. The sum awarded to him was equal to the entire endowment of the Professorship of Humanity. But

the loss of this sum was soon more than compensated by liberal donations and bequests from two or three of the gentry in the vicinity of Edinburgh, and a considerable number of the citizens.

The mode of teaching underwent little change for more than fifty years. In 1635, the bishops, conceiving the religious declaration, or Short Confession of Faith, hitherto subscribed by all the candidates for degrees to be too rigid, prevailed on the patrons and members of the University to lay it aside. Within three years afterwards, the National Covenant (including that Short Confession) was renewed by all ranks. Two of the regents of the College of Edinburgh, Messrs. John Brown and Robert Ranken,

refused to subscribe it, and the Council, with the advice of the ministers, deprived them of their places during the vacation in September 1538, without, however, recording any other ground of deposition, than that few, if any, of their scholars, were likely to return to them, and through their means the College might be deserted, if the electors, who had admitted them during pleasure, did not exercise the power of removing them,—a power which had repeatedly been exercised at former periods, without any formal trial, as in the cases of Mr. Samuel Rutherford, Professor of Humanity, in 1626, and Mr. James Reid, regent, in 1627. From the earliest time, the Town Council had asserted and exercised the right of visitation; and it is remarkable that, whereas

the General Assemblies of the Church, from the year 1638 to 1649, appointed annual visitations of the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, many of the acts of which visitations are still extant, they did not appoint similar commissions of visitation for Edinburgh, probably because there were no complaints of malversation or neglect, and because they conceived the interests of religion and learning to be sufficiently secured in the University of Edinburgh, by the influence of the ministers of the city, both in the conduct of education, and in the government and discipline. During great part of this period, Mr Alexander Henderson, one of the ministers of the city, and the leading man in the Church, was Rector of the University,

—an office which his former academical experience enabled him to exercise with great advantage, and which he retained till his death in 1646. It is very often alleged that the Covenanters were men of so little taste and learning, that they discountenanced and discouraged all elegant and classical study; but this is really a groundless misrepresentation. Through their influence, large additions were made by the Parliament to the funds of the Universities, and while the complement of teachers was thus enlarged, their salaries were greatly increased. As an encouragement to literature, the Presbyteries of the Church universally raised contributions for the support of bursars, and thus adequate provision was made for the College expenses of one young

man, at an average, from the bounds of every Presbytery. Year after year the General Assembly pressed for the erection of grammar-schools in greater numbers, and their commissioners who visited the Universities made great efforts for elevating the standard of education. The General Assembly, in 1645, passed an Act, requiring 'that, for the remedy of the great decay of poesy, and of ability to make verse, and in respect of the common ignorance of prosody, no schoolmaster be admitted to teach a grammar-school in burghs, or other considerable place, but such as, after examination, shall be found skilful in the Latin tongue, not only for prose, but also for verse.' Many of the other regulations in the Acts of that year evince an anxiety for greater proficiency

in learning than had ever been attained before; for instance this,—that those who are taught in Aristotle be found well instructed in his text, and able to repeat in Greek, and understand his whole definitions, divisions, and principal precepts, as far as they have proceeded. On the whole, the orders of this Assembly were calculated to ensure the advancement of learning, and particularly an accurate knowledge of Grecian literature, along with the completion of an extensive course of philosophical study.

Soon after this period, some most judicious appointments were made by the patrons of the University of Edinburgh. Mr. David Dickson was translated from Glasgow as Professor of Divinity, and proved a most zealous and efficient in-

structor. The election of Leighton as Principal (as has already been noticed) was an incalculable accession, not only to the theological faculty, in which his labours were pre-eminently useful, but in all the branches of solid and polite learning. It has been sometimes supposed that the influence of Cromwell was exerted in his behalf, and there may be some reason for the surmise, as it is known that the ministers of Edinburgh, though they professed satisfaction with Mr. Leighton, declared that 'they could not give their votes, because they were not clear in the matter of the call.' It may be true that Leighton was a favourite with Cromwell, and it is certain that he was preferred to Colvill, who had been previously elected, because Colvill was supposed to be too

much attached to the party which had lost popularity on account of the engagement, under the Duke of Hamilton, for the unconditional rescue of Charles I. from his captivity. But it must be admitted that Cromwell, usurper and tyrant as he was, possessed more enlarged views of the duty of the Government in the support and encouragement of the Universities than had been entertained or exemplified by any of the monarchs of the house of Stuart. In the declaration or order of his Council in Scotland, for the better support of the Universities (an Act which is commonly ascribed to Principal Gillespie of Glasgow), large funds from the rents of several of the bishoprics, priories, abbacies and other sources, were provided for the Universities of Glasgow

and Aberdeen; but it is remarkable that, though the Principals of other Colleges known to be favourable to the interests of Cromwell are named in that act as judges of the qualifications of ministers, the name of Leighton is omitted.[1]

While Leighton was Principal, several Acts of the Town Council were passed, which must have been framed with his concurrence, and probably at his suggestion, having for their object the adoption

[1] It may here be stated, that Cromwell proved that he had no mean conceptions of the value of University learning, when, as governor of the forces of the Commonwealth, he wrote the letter addressed to the Speaker (dated Edinburgh, March 11, 1650), heartily recommending to the Parliament that immediate steps should be taken for erecting a College at Durham, for teaching all the sciences and literature. His letters-patent for founding and endowing the College (dated 15th May, 1657), afford further evidence of his earnestness in the cause; and though it is to be regretted that the funds arose chiefly from the lands of the Bishop of Durham, sold by virtue of the ordinance for abolishing of archbishops and bishops, and settling

of means for ensuring the proper application of the funds destined for the support of bursars. It appears that many had obtained these benefits who were either ignorant or disorderly, and therefore strict periodical examinations were prescribed to prevent these eleemosynary provisions from being abused, and the country from being burdened with numbers of unworthy and insufficient pretenders to the ministry and other learned professions.

their lands and possessions upon trustees for the use of the Commonwealth, amounting in value to more than £66,400, it must be confessed that in this respect Cromwell followed the example which had been set by the authorities both of Church and State in Scotland, before his power was established. The design of founding the University or College of Durham was frustrated in consequence of petitions presented from Oxford and Cambridge to Richard Cromwell, after his father's death. It is highly creditable to Cromwell, that a sum of £200 sterling, subscribed by Charles I. in 1633, towards the expense of rebuilding the College of Glasgow, was paid by the Protector twenty years afterwards. Cromwell also made a handsome addition to the funds of the College of Edinburgh.

After the restoration of Charles II., the funds of all the Universities of Scotland were reduced, and the few small grants from the Crown (not equal to one-fifth of the revenue of which some of the Universities were deprived, in consequence of the loss of their share of the bishops' rents) did not nearly suffice for the due support of the teachers. This reverse of circumstances was less felt in Edinburgh than elsewhere, as the University had never been so dependent on endowments as the others had been. The first remarkable occurrence particularly worthy of being recorded was the Act of the Town Council, 10th November 1665, appointing the Provost of Edinburgh to be always Rector and Governor of the College of this burgh in all time coming.

This Act is commonly ascribed to a dispute relating to discipline, by the exercise of which towards one of his own family the then Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Ramsay, is said to have been aggrieved. For a long time before, the Rector had always been a clergyman, or a member of one of the learned professions. In this respect, Sir Andrew Ramsay, six years afterwards, acquired a nominal qualification, having been, through the interest of Lauderdale, appointed an ordinary Lord of Session in 1671, while he was still chief magistrate, as, indeed, he was during twelve consecutive years: but, according to the testimony of Sir George Mackenzie, he was one of 'four ignorant men promoted in two years by Lauderdale to be judges, though not bred as

lawyers; thus rendering the Court of Session the object of all men's contempt.' Unquestionably he was not fit to be Rector, particularly at a time when all the teaching, and all the communications between the students and the University courts, as well as all the exercises for degrees, were conducted in the Latin tongue. Ramsay was merely subservient to the will of Lauderdale, and as at this time it was surmised that disaffection prevailed among the students, the Town Council, under the direction of the Privy Council, required that all students, before being admitted to degrees, must take the oath of allegiance, and all principals, masters, and regents, or professors, must take the same oath, and submit to and own Episcopal government in the Church.

These orders were given in 1666 and 1667. Soon afterwards, attempts were made by Nonconformists to impart instruction in the languages and philosophy taught in Universities; but on a representation from the Universities, the Privy Council of Scotland, in 1672, discharged all persons, not publicly authorised, from teaching philosophy or the Greek language. And thus it was that persons of strictly Presbyterian principles were entirely precluded from the benefits of a learned education, unless they could acquire it by stealth, or by extraordinary personal efforts.

Even at this dark period, some circumstances highly favourable to the University occurred, and one of the most promising was the election of Mr. James

Gregory to the Professorship of Mathematics in 1674; but the hopes excited by the nomination of this distinguished philosopher were unhappily blighted, by his premature death within seventeen months after his appointment. In 1683, his place was filled by his nephew, David Gregory, who, after serving nearly nine years, and having introduced Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries into his course of instruction, transferred the scene of his labours to Oxford, where he was held in the highest estimation. In 1692, he was succeeded by his brother, Mr. James Gregory, who zealously followed his predecessor, in cultivating mathematical science, and illustrating the Newtonian philosophy. The second James Gregory was succeeded by Maclaurin, another friend and follower of Newton.

V.—REVOLUTION PERIOD.

IN 1685, while the country was in a most distracted state, and the Universities languishing and declining in the number of attendants, the Town Council of Edinburgh have the credit of having made an effort towards the establishment of a Medical Faculty in the University. After the physicians had been formed into a College by Royal Charter, the Town Council (March 24, 1685) appointed Sir Robert Sibbald to be Professor of Physic; and afterwards (September 9) added

Dr. James Halket and Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, ordering convenient rooms to be provided for them in the College, that they might have sufficient facility for teaching. To what extent instructions were given in the branches of medical science cannot be fully ascertained; but it is known that Sibbald continued long to lecture in the College, and the eminence of Pitcairn as a scholar and a physician is a matter of universal notoriety.

After the Revolution, the University of Edinburgh, like all the others in Scotland, was subjected to a Parliamentary visitation. A Commission was issued in 1690, and similar Commissions continued to act under the authority of the Parliament till 1702. One of the first acts of the visitors for Edinburgh was to expel Dr.

Monro, the Principal, Dr. Strachan, Professor of Divinity, Mr. Alexander Douglas, Professor of the Law, Mr. John Drummond, Professor of Humanity, and Mr. Thomas Burnet, Professor of Philosophy. Burnet was deprived chiefly because he had published a thesis at Aberdeen in 1686, representing the Reformation as a villainous rebellion, and asserting that the King of Scotland had the power of making and abrogating laws, and imposing taxes, without consent of Parliament. As a reward for promulgating and defending this opinion, he had obtained from the Government a pension, and had been translated from Aberdeen to the College of Edinburgh. The offences charged against the others were erroneous doctrines, immorality, and dis-

affection to the new Government. Messrs. Herbert Kennedy, Andrew Massie, and Alexander Cunningham, regents, were also accused of minor offences, but absolved. Some of the most serious charges were preferred against Dr. David Gregory, Professor of Mathematics, such as atheism, habitual profaneness, drunkenness, and other immoralities. One of the most surprising charges is that he was superficial in his teaching, contenting himself with demonstrating a proposition, once and again, to forty or fifty students, and asking them generally if they understood it, without descending to any minute examination of the individuals. The articles were, however, declared by the Commissioners to be *not proven*, and he was acquitted.

The subsequent proceedings of the Commission, though they might be productive of advantage by bringing many imperfections to light and introducing some improvements, were not characterised by much wisdom. One of the great objects at which they aimed was to have a uniform printed course of philosophical study prescribed for all the Universities. This unprofitable scheme occupied the Universities several years, and, indeed, if it was not of their own suggestion, it seems to have been entertained by them in general with singular favour. The system of logic and general metaphysics was required to be furnished by St. Andrews; general and special ethics by Glasgow; general and special physics by Aberdeen; and the pneumatologia, or

special metaphysics, by Edinburgh. In the year 1696, the faculties of the several Colleges had accomplished their tasks, and were required to revise them and circulate them for the correction or approbation of the other learned bodies; and in 1699, a committee of the visitors had them under consideration, but no practical result of any moment ensued. The Commission, however, introduced one change, which was generally regarded as beneficial, namely, the establishment of a separate Chair for Greek, instead of entrusting the instructions in that language to the several regents, who had previously dispersed the lessons over the several years of the course, probably in unequal measures, and with very unequal degrees of skill and success. In the

year 1699, the Town Council of Edinburgh protested that the appointment and acting of the Commission should be no way prejudicial to, or weaken and infringe, the rights of the town as patrons. But the Commission proceeded in their inquiries, some of which led to the discovery of various oversights, such as might easily be accounted for under a fluctuating administration, especially in times of great public agitation and disquiet. It appears, that in 1699, the Professor of Divinity, Mr. Campbell, besides teaching a system of theology in Latin, as was the common practice, gave instructions to students from the Highlands in the Gaelic or Irish language, as it was called, and required them to write discourses, and other exercises, in that language. The

amount of teaching in the class of Hebrew was very deficient, and several other instances of neglect were discovered. In 1702, the Town Council apologised to the Commission for having failed to appoint a fixed Professor of Greek, on the ground that the Act had never been intimated to them. The Commission found, that all the other Universities had been negligent in this matter, except Marischal College, Aberdeen. At this period, the Professors in the University of Edinburgh were less distinguished than they had been at some former periods; but the Professor of Divinity, Mr. George Campbell, deserves to be honourably commemorated, as a man of great zeal, knowledge, and industry, to whom is due the credit of having founded the theological library. It might

have been proper to state more particularly in a former part of this paper, that the University library, which had for its nucleus the collection of Mr. Clement Little, Commissary of Edinburgh, was augmented from time to time by donations from private individuals connected with the city and neighbourhood, and by the annual contributions of the students, when they took the degree of Master of Arts. The most valuable and curious of the collections given or bequeathed to the library were those of William Drummond of Hawthornden, and of Mr. James Nairne, Minister of Wemyss in Fife.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, a succession of disputes between the patrons and the Senatus Academicus, on

the subject of academical regulations and discipline, had a tendency to retard the progress of improvement, and to relax the authority of the Principal and professors. The Town Council claimed the power of visitation, and in the assertion of their exclusive jurisdiction occasionally outraged the courtesy due to a learned society, and derogated from the respect which they should have encouraged the alumni of the University to pay to their instructors. The civic authorities might have been expected to reflect that, by following a course which depressed the rank of the members of this University below that which was held without challenge by the occupants of similar chairs in this country, they excluded from the competition for vacant offices some of the

most eminent candidates, who might otherwise have come into the field, but who were not willing to sacrifice the dignity of independence which, in their apprehension, was essential to the efficiency of their labours, as well as to their personal tranquillity. There is reason to believe that, from this very cause, Edinburgh lost the advantage of securing the services of a profound and elegant classical scholar, who was a most successful Professor of Greek in another University.[1] There is no ground for alleging that the patrons acted from any other motive than a sense of duty, and in

[1] In 1709, the members of some other Universities in Scotland refused to recognise the College of Edinburgh as possessing the privileges of a University, and particularly the right of conferring degrees. They seem to have forgotten that the Treaty of Union between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, and the Act of Security incorporated in it, had

some instances the Senatus Academicus may have been wanting in the deference due to the patrons; but the effect of the misunderstanding was not favourable to the interests of learning. Under what influence cannot fully be ascertained, the Council sometimes issued instructions, which, as they did not entirely accord with the views of those who were required to carry them into effect, were either inoperative, or more frequently acted as a restraint on the better judgment of the professors; and while this collision lasted, it is not surprising that in some departments of study the University was retrogressive. There were times when the

recognised the *University* of Edinburgh in terms as express as the others, and that the Act of the Parliament of Scotland in 1621 had ratified to it the same rights and privileges which were enjoyed by the other Universities.

College treasurer was discharged from paying the salaries of the masters and regents till they observed the constitution of the College, and when the Council prohibited the granting of any certificates or diplomas by the University which were not sealed with the town's seal, and which did not make honourable mention of the Magistrates and Council as patrons. Other humiliating and irritating proceedings were from time to time instituted, which visited on one race of professors, very unceremoniously, inadvertencies into which they had been led by the mistakes of their predecessors.[1] The spirit of such acts may generally be traced to the disposition and character of the chief magis-

[1] Acts of Council, 3d September, 15th October, and 22d October, 1703; 16th June 1704, etc.

trate at the time; but the most offensive instances of interference appear sometimes to have been countenanced by the ministers of the city. It appears from a report concerning the laws of the University, that the masters and regents of the University had first assumed the title and authority of a Faculty in October 1686, while Dr. Monro was Principal; and if the precedent which was then introduced was unwarranted by the constitution, the error of having followed it might easily have been rectified by some gentler method than the arbitrary course which was followed. For some years subsequently, it appears that the College was attended by a paucity of students, but happily the differences were adjusted about the close of the incumbency of

Principal Carstares, in 1715; and under an improved system, introduced some years before, the business of literary and scientific education proceeded with renovated ardour and vigour.

VI.—THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THOUGH the Town Council, with their advisers, were strict in their superintendence, their own administration of the affairs of the College was not unchallenged. At a former period, they had allowed several of the *mortifications* to be lost through oversight, particularly the valuable bequest of Mr. William Tweedie, one of the regents; and some years afterwards, many of the College Chambers, which had been originally provided by private contributions for the accommoda-

tion of students, were let at very small rents to printers, booksellers, merchants, writers, and private families.[1]

But with some slight exceptions, the zeal, prudence, and fidelity of the Council are deserving of great credit. They entered with commendable promptitude and spirit into the adoption of the best measures for the advancement of academical education. Classes were instituted for the chief branches of medical

[1] This was the case particularly in 1733, when Mr. Ruddiman, printer, Mr. Fairbairn, printer, J. Paton, bookseller, Gavin Hamilton, bookseller, William Brown, bookseller, J. Hutchison, merchant, Mr. Mercer, commissary clerk, Messrs. M'Kenzie and Gibson, clerks, Mr. Wauchope of Niddry, and other persons (some of them females), but no students apparently, were accommodated with lodgings and offices. At that time, many apartments in Heriot's Hospital were similarly occupied. Rooms were let out both for public and private purposes. The King's printer had three or four rooms, from 1672 to 1680. The Duke of Argyle had one in 1729. Several booksellers had apartments there as lately as the year 1764.

science, and for municipal and public law, in addition to the old foundation class of civil or Roman law. The Professorship of Universal History, and Greek and Roman Antiquities, was also a decided improvement on the old curriculum. Edinburgh had the start of some of the other Universities in discontinuing the plan of teaching philosophy by regents, every one of whom had hitherto conducted the students through all the branches of study indispensable for the degree of Master of Arts. The appointment of separate Professors of Logic, Moral Philosophy, and Natural Philosophy, gave a great impulse to the cultivation of these branches of knowledge. The manner in which the classes were taught at different periods might here be described; but the detail

would probably be considered too tedious. An account of the University of Edinburgh, published in the *Scots Magazine* for August 1741, which is ascertained to have been furnished by the several professors, supplies a number of interesting particulars. In the first, or public Humanity Class, which commenced on the 1st of October, and continued till July or August, the students were employed in reading and explaining nine or ten Latin authors, and composing Latin orations, and other exercises; and in a second class, which continued seven months, several of the most difficult authors were read. The Greek classes were conducted on a similar principle. The mathematical classes, taught by Mr. Colin Maclaurin, who had been translated from Aberdeen

in 1725, were four in number, each of them continuing seven months. It is scarcely necessary to say, that a wiser selection of a professor could not possibly have been made. He was profoundly acquainted with his subject, and was not only a popular and brilliant lecturer, but most patient and practical in his method of teaching, insomuch that it has been said, that in the war which preceded the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, nine-tenths of the engineers in the British army were Scottish officers, many of whom had been pupils of Maclaurin. One of the most useful of all the professors at this period was Dr. John Stevenson, who taught logic, metaphysics, and rhetoric, meeting his class three hours a-day during a session which began about the 10th of

October, and continued till the end of May. By the concurring testimony of Principal Robertson, Dr. Erskine, and other competent judges, no instructions could be better adapted for guiding youthful minds in the true path of philosophical investigation, and at the same time enlarging the amount of their knowledge and refining their taste. The effect produced was attributable rather to a felicitous combination of tact and industry, than to superior genius or learning. Stevenson was one of the first teachers of this branch of instruction who forsook the practice of exacting school-boy tasks, and of making the test of proficiency to consist in the literal retention and repetition of the language of the professor's dictates. He prescribed numerous exercises; but they

were such as were expected to be performed without any close reference to the lectures; so that every one who caught the spirit which his master endeavoured to instil had the gratification of feeling that he was discovering truth for himself, and that in acquiring an increased facility in the application of his faculties, he had become the artificer of his own advancement. The exercises which students were required to perform embraced an ample variety of topics, which, without entirely overleaping the field of metaphysical disquisition, comprehended in its range the inductive philosophy of Bacon, the speculations of Locke, the principles and precepts of oratory and poetry, as expounded and illustrated by Aristotle and Longinus, Cicero and Quintilian, and

exemplified in the most pure and finished writings of the moderns. Sir John Pringle was at this time Professor of Pneumatics and Moral Philosophy. Under the first denomination were included the general doctrines relating to matter and mind, and the foundations of natural theology. The theoretical and practical parts of ethics were treated in a popular form, by referring chiefly to the writings of Cicero, Marcus Antoninus, Bacon, and Puffendorf. The course also contained a number of lectures on the origin and progress of civil government; and on every part of it exercises were prescribed. The subjects of this course of lectures had been fixed, at the time of Pringle's appointment in 1734, by a set of regulations prepared by the Senatus Academicus, at the request

of the Town Council. In these regulations the professor was required to give instructions on the existence and attributes of the Deity, the nature of angels and the human soul, with the duties of natural religion and the truth of Christianity, in addition to moral philosophy. For six months he was also bound to give a *public lecture* five days in the week to all who should think fit to hear him; and with respect to text-books, he was expressly required to confute whatever in any of them he found 'contrary to the Scriptures, or the Confession of Faith, or to good manners.' The Natural Philosophy Class was taught by Mr. Robert Stewart from the 10th of October to the 1st of June, during which time the Professor gave instructions on me-

chanics, optics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, astronomy, and other branches of physical science. His age and infirmities incapacitated him from doing full justice to all these divisions; but whatever was defective in the execution of his plan was amply compensated by the good offices of Maclaurin. One of the most attractive and useful classes at this time was Civil History and Antiquities, taught by Mr. Macky, in two separate classes, the one of seven months' duration, and the other of five. The classes of Divinity, Law, and Medicine, appear to have been carried on not less laboriously on the part of the professors; and it is worthy of being remembered, that under the professors who have now been named, a number of our most eminent writers

in the last century received their academical education.

The race of professors who succeeded, though not more assiduous in teaching, acquired still higher celebrity as lecturers and authors. The names of Matthew Stewart, Dugald Stewart, Ferguson, Robison, Playfair, Blair, Finlayson, Hardy, Dalzel, Tytler, Brown, Murray, and others, are associated with most finished specimens of philosophical investigation and polished style. And the professors of the medical school in particular, the Monroes and Gregories, Black, Cullen, Rutherford, Whytt, Duncan, Russell, and we might add many more, attracted a vast concourse of students from all parts of the world.

VII.—RETROSPECT.

THE instructions of almost all the professors whose names have been enumerated were conducted chiefly in the form of prelections, as only a few of them combined with this practice either oral examinations, or written exercises, as means of ascertaining the progress of the students. To those who have been accustomed to the more scholastic modes of academical tuition, it may probably appear incredible that much benefit could be produced by mere lectures, especially in those cases in which even the taking

of notes was discouraged. But while it is admitted that there is apparent ground for this scruple, it is to be considered that none, except those who have experienced it, can form a just estimate of the advantage which has actually been derived from lectures, prepared with exquisite skill by men of high scientific or literary attainments, solicitously observant of the rules of lucid arrangement and logical precision, accompanied by apt and felicitous illustrations, and embellished by the graces of didactic eloquence. On such lectures, especially when delivered with the earnestness and animation which are almost inseparable from the efforts of a lecturer who feels a deep interest in the field of inquiry which it has been the favourite object of his life to cultivate and

to adorn, the attention of students is generally so firmly and profoundly riveted, that the very attempt to take short notes is felt to be a distraction. If their minds continue, day after day, to be intensely applied to the lecturer, and if in the hours of retirement they pursue a well-directed course of reading, they are likely to imbibe the spirit which they have had so much cause to emulate, and though they may not retain implicitly all the views to which they have listened with delight, they may gain the more solid advantage of having the understanding trained to deep and original reflection, the taste refined, and habits both of induction and of composition formed, which they might not have acquired under a more mechanical and authoritative system. It must be

admitted, however, that especially in the earlier stages of the curriculum, an admixture of the Socratic or conversational method of impressing truth, followed up by a considerable number of essays, not merely voluntary, but imperatively demanded from every pupil, must contribute powerfully to ripen the faculties, and to communicate to the youthful mind a decided turn for correct, methodical, and persevering study. When such a tendency is once established, the hours of seclusion cease to be dull and tedious, every literary undertaking is facilitated, the most arduous labours are cheered by the prospect of ultimate success, and the refreshing amenities of rural scenery and bright skies are gladly exchanged for the sombre atmosphere of a well-furnished

library. Those whose minds are stored with classical learning and historical information, and have been inured to close thinking, in the earliest years of their College life, may be expected at a more advanced stage, and especially after they have entered on the studies which are strictly professional, to proceed with sustained and devoted fervour in the only path which leads to merited distinction.

It may be alleged that the discipline of the University has sometimes been less vigilant than was requisite; but if inconveniences have occasionally arisen from the absence of rigid restraint and jealous oversight, it cannot be disputed, on the other hand, that the freedom of intercourse among those who have been enthusiastic in the acquisition of knowledge,

has in many cases contributed to the early formation of a manly, independent, and enterprising character. Unfavourable results may probably have sometimes sprung from the remoteness of the residences of students, who thus could not be under the superintendence of their professors, except during the hours when the classes are assembled. Many who have no faithful monitor near them may have almost unbounded licence to squander, in frivolous pastime, or in unimproving and even dissipated society, the precious hours which should be devoted to study. As the students are dispersed over a vast surface, inhabited by a miscellaneous population, it would serve little purpose to institute a censorship of morals, which it would be imprac-

ticable to enforce. In smaller communities, the exemplary conduct of some, and the idle and disorderly lives of others, cannot fail to be marked. But, on the other hand, even in very limited circles, a considerable proportion of the least worthy may escape animadversion. Experience has also proved, that in Universities not frequented by great numbers, the students generally are apt to form more familiar intimacies than in such a town as Edinburgh. Forty or fifty youths meeting in the same classes day after day in a small town, congregate also for the most part during the hours of recreation; so that in a College, containing not more than two hundred members, there are few who do not become acquainted with almost the

entire number; and the good example of the most diligent must have a salutary influence over many of the others. But it is not less likely, that, in a scene so limited, the majority may be misled and contaminated by the ensnaring influence of a very few, who, possessing more specious accomplishments or more insinuating manners than the rest, may at the same time be depraved in their principles and worthless in their practice. But though in every populous town, which is the seat of a University, similar perils must be encountered, and often from quarters which are unsuspected, it has been considered by many to be an advantage that, in such a town, the students, though meeting daily in the class-rooms, do not necessarily become acquainted, as, after

the hours of public attendance, they separate in all directions, without knowing anything of one another's resorts or associations. Many of the young men who are the most addicted to study have never, during the whole period of their College life, extending probably to eight years, contracted any intimacies, except with the few to whom they are attracted by what may be called the 'elective affinity' of kindred tastes and pursuits. And when such cases as these are the general rule, it never occurs to any one to be matter of regret, that the names of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and Proctors, were never heard within the College walls,—that the terrors of fines and forfeitures are almost unknown, and that the refractory have never been

overawed by the promulgation of statutes '*de captionibus et incarcerationibus malefactorum,—de conservatione pacis,—de ludis illicitis scholaribus interdictis,—de discipulis transfugis,—de noctu vagantibus eorumque pœnis,—de taxillatoribus, arma ferentibus, et frequentatoribus tabernarum non promovendis*'—statutes, which, if they were ever of much avail, have long ceased to be formidable to those who transgress them. It must not be disguised, however, that in all cases of deliberate or continued outrages against good order and public decorum, and still more, when more serious violations of morality are detected, it would be well if the constituted authorities were to wield their powers with a firm and vigorous hand, not only for the vindication of the honour of the University and the

protection of the diligent from injurious molestation, but for the purpose of reclaiming the turbulent, who, if treated with undue lenity, must in all probability sink into inveterate and hopeless debasement. After all that has been said, there can be very little doubt, that order and peace will be most effectually maintained, not by mere intimidation and coercion, but by the nurture of pure principles, and by assigning the highest honours to those who, unsullied by reproach, and enthusiastically devoted to their studies, become most distinguished for scientific attainments, or for classical learning.

It is to be lamented that classical literature has been too much undervalued by many of those, who, when emancipated from the drudgery of gram-

mar schools, have been impatient for distinction in philosophical researches or popular eloquence. But it is a great mistake to suppose that the genius of our Scottish institutions ever frowned on the cultivation of elegant letters, or that it has ever been the policy of the Presbyterian Church to depreciate or discourage the study of the classics. The time was when the sternest advocates of the doctrines, worship, and government of the Church of Scotland produced specimens of Greek and Latin verses which were not surpassed by the scholars of any other country at the same period. Some of these men had indeed resided for a time on the Continent; but all to whom reference is now made were indebted to the schools and colleges of Scotland

for their original education. Such was the case with Andrew Melville, Hercules Rollock, John Johnston, Robert Boyd, Arthur Johnston, John Adamson, Hume of Godscroft, Thomas Murray, and Samuel Rutherford, whose command of poetical diction in the learned languages as much exceeded their English compositions as Buchanan's dedication of his Psalms (beginning, 'Nympha, Caledoniæ quæ nunc feliciter oræ') surpasses in elegance the vernacular style of his 'Chamæleon.'

Among the causes of the diminished number of eminent classical scholars, and the abated passion for the study, may be mentioned, not only the activity with which what is called the utilitarian system of education has been advocated, but still

more the extreme parsimony with which every successive government, during the last and the present century, has neglected to foster and reward the successful cultivation of ancient learning. For a very long period there have been no adequate endowments for the professorships of languages in any of our Universities. There are certainly not six such chairs in Scotland, the emoluments of which, including fees, exceed £500 a year; and there are scarcely any of the highest of the grammar schools, the masters of which can calculate on receiving much more than half that income.[1] Incomparably more paltry is the remuneration to which those schoolmasters can look forward who have the charge of conducting

[1] [This applies to the year 1840.—ED.]

the education of youth in small burghs and agricultural districts. The labourers employed at the iron-works in Wales are more liberally compensated. There are no fellowships in this country to provide the means of enabling men of great literary industry to prosecute their laborious researches. Young men, without patrimony, must generally be teachers of others while they are passing through their own academical education; and thus, by being overworked, their health is often impaired, their spirits exhausted, and their aspirations after excellence chilled or frustrated. But when the hard necessity is laid on them of being at the same time teachers and learners, Edinburgh is the most favourable sphere of any in Scotland for their purpose; and it would

not be difficult to prove that a very large proportion of those who have risen to distinction in the most grave and useful professions, have surmounted this arduous struggle without losing their native energy of mind, and without forfeiting independence of character. In a lot like this, such scholars as Dr. Alexander Murray and Dr. John Leyden, whose minds, by skilful culture, had attained gigantic prowess, passed the earliest years of this century,—and some of their contemporaries, who triumphantly sustained similar toils and trials, still survive, in full possession of their faculties, adorning the stations which they occupy, and, both by their counsel and their example, rousing the ingenuous youth to emulate the honours and advantages which they so hardly earned. To

those who love learning for its own sake, and who are unconscious of any ambition, except that of exploring truth, either in academic retreats, or in the stillness of rural life, incitements will never be wanting to submit to privations, watching, and fatigue, for the gratification of this insatiable passion. In a numerously attended school of liberal study like Edinburgh, the spirit of this generous rivalry has ever been found to be one of the most powerful incentives to strenuous and persevering exertion. It would be doing injustice to this motive to attempt to resolve it into a vain-glorious impatience of inferiority, or an overweening love of pre-eminence. The animating principle to which we refer is of nobler birth, and soars to a higher elevation than is ever reached by the

foolish pride of outstripping others in the pursuit of praise. Every man who emerges from seclusion into a crowded sphere, in which he is compelled to act or to study in conjunction with others, soon perceives that the aim not only of his own efforts, but of the efforts of his associates, must in a great degree be defeated, if he neglect to do his utmost to keep pace with them. By failing to perform his part with all the spirit and nerve which he can summon up, he does injustice to the companions of his studies, because through his languor and listlessness, they are tempted to linger in their progress, and to acquiesce in far meaner attainments than they might easily have reached, if every one who entered on the course, though not of equal agility, had

heartily and honestly striven to run well. But the most important consideration connected with this matter appears to be, that few men, if any, can ever ascertain the extent of their capacities, while they have little opportunity of witnessing what difficulties can be mastered, and what successes can be achieved by other men of ardent and active minds, who, instead of shrinking from labour, appear to derive pure enjoyment from strenuous and varied application. He who observes the facility of mental exertion, the command of language, and the multiplied resources of ingenuity, which have been gained by other fervent and indefatigable votaries of knowledge, must feel that he would be indifferent to his own interest, and unfaithful in the

discharge of the duties which he owes to society, if he were to fail to give at least equal diligence in occupying his talents as they have done, and thus, while he has before him living proofs of the success with which earnest and well-directed labours are crowned, he is powerfully stimulated to essay what he perceives others can so easily accomplish, and, if he cannot exceed the highest standard of their performances, at least to exceed the highest of what he could hitherto claim as his own. By a succession of such experiments, every one who ceases to measure himself by himself, may reap the fruits of genuine emulation, which, unstained by jealousy or envy, not only stirs up his own mind, but amicably provokes many congenial minds to co-operate keenly in the

search for honourable distinction, such as is best secured, not by detracting from the merit of other men's acquirements, or by trying to engross exclusive applause, but by forming such a just estimate of true excellence as cannot fail to impel every honest heart to exult in the lustre which the combined efforts of the several competitors reflect on each other, and to elicit from every individual of the mass unfeigned expressions of personal gratification, springing irresistibly from the experience of mutual benefits, by which none is impoverished or depressed, but all are enriched and exalted.

In some such way as this it is that the exercises performed in well frequented classes, and the written essays and oral discussions in which the members of

literary and scientific associations voluntarily engage, have been found, when conducted on judicious principles, to produce many solid and enduring advantages. Such societies, especially when composed of advanced students, whose minds have previously been wisely disciplined, are generally allowed to have contributed greatly to quicken the ardour and stimulate the industry of a large proportion of the members, enabling them at the same time to arrive at a more accurate judgment of the limits of their own capacities, and with greater success to correct what is erroneous, and to supply what is deficient in their methods of study, than if they were accustomed only to the solitary efforts, in which the attention, unsustained by the presence of other acute

minds, is apt to sink into listlessness, or to glide carelessly from object to object. The Physiological Society was for a time particularly distinguished, but under that name has been long extinct. The Medical, the Physical, and the Speculative, have all been conducted for the most part with great spirit, and formed large and valuable collections of books. The Theological, and several others, have at different periods been confessedly of great service in improving the capacity of writing well, and familiarising the practice of speaking in public with self-possession and readiness, and probably too with greater concentration of thought, as well as method, than could have been attained without early practice. It must be admitted also, that in several

academical societies the sphere of professional knowledge has been enlarged, and a foundation has been laid for most valuable scientific discoveries. It has been alleged, not without reason, that such societies have sometimes withdrawn young minds from the studies proper to their age into speculations savouring of ingenuity, but void of practical utility,—that sometimes they have nursed a spirit of arrogance and self-sufficiency,—that they have too oftened engendered a disposition to contend rather for victory than for truth,—and that the extreme freedom with which subjects of the deepest and most sacred interest have been discussed has in some lamentable instances degenerated into unlimited scepticism. So long as young men shall not have universally learned

to be sober-minded, such risks will be occasionally incurred; but, on the other hand, it might easily be proved by a reference to past times, that the adventurous minds which have been shipwrecked on the opposite shores of dogmatism and scepticism have generally been such as were in a great measure self-trained, and not inured to the checks and humiliations to which they might have been subjected, if they had more frequently come into collision with men of strong intellect and established principles. It has sometimes been suggested that the authorities of the University might do well to prescribe regulations, the serious violation of which would involve the dissolution of a society, or that a power of inspection might be insisted on, which would prevent

any injurious deviation from propriety. But a superintendence which cannot be vigilantly and habitually exercised is in many cases more productive of evil than the absence of restraint. In the former case, the responsibility reposed in a dormant and inoperative body is felt to be a protection to the erring, so long as their aberrations are not called in question; and, in the latter case, it may be hoped that a number will, for the most part, be found, who, knowing that they are not invading the province of any superior jurisdiction, will honourably fulfil the trust reposed in them, by maintaining decorum, and protesting against every approach to any outrage on the majesty of the law, or on the solemn truths and observances of religion.

But against all such perils the surest and safest antidote is, the institution of some efficient and attractive scheme for communicating to all the academical youth, not a superficial, but a solid acquaintance with the evidences, the doctrines, and duties of Christianity. The time was when this was regarded as the weightiest matter to be observed in every system of education. Men have not become universally so much greater proficients in divine knowledge and the practice of piety, as to render it safe to discontinue such instruction, when children cease to attend elementary schools. The adaptation of such a scheme to the present condition of the Universities may be encompassed with obstacles arising from the diversity of creeds,—but there can be no

practical difficulty in realising a scheme which would inevitably lead to very pleasing and profitable results. It is deeply to be lamented that, among the citizens of Edinburgh who have amassed ample fortunes, some of them by the profits of literary traffic, and who have left large sums for the establishment of superfluous Hospitals, it has not occurred to any one how greatly it would have conduced to his posthumous honour, and to the best interests of the human race, if, taking a prospective survey of the perpetually increasing demands of this seat of learning, for the countenance and support of the wealthy, he had wisely resolved to imitate and surpass the liberality of many patriotic burgesses and inhabitants of this city, who, after contributing largely to the good of

the University, according to the circumstances of the times, descended to their graves more than two hundred years ago, —since which period, few instances of benefactions arising from similar sources have been deserving of commemoration.[1] It is to be hoped that some decided and well-considered scheme for supplying this

[1] On the 17th December 1639, exactly two hundred years before this note was written, the Patrons granted their receipt to Bartholomew Somervell, for the amount of his bequest of 26,500 merks, for the maintenance of a Professor of Divinity. This sum, with about 8000 merks more, contributed by eight other individuals (chiefly citizens) a few years before, for part of which the Council were bound to pay ten per cent. annual rent, should have yielded a very handsome ineome, if it had been well husbanded. In the course of the following year, 1640, Alexander Wright, burgess (said by Crawford to have been a merchant tailor), gave 10,000 merks for augmenting the salaries of professors. On the 13th September, 1639, Dr. Robert Johnstone, son of a burgess, left 18,000 merks for the encouragement of learning in the College of Edinburgh. The stream of private bounty continued to flow a few years longer; but there seems to be little risk that it will ever become redundant.

defect, so that the light of divine truth and the influence of pious principles may be made to pervade all the stages of academical education, will be liberally devised, and speedily executed. It was our purpose to make mention of several other *desiderata*, which could not long remain a subject of regret, if more adequate funds were provided by the public. But, waiving for the present various considerations of no mean or transient interest, we deem it most fitting to let this be the conclusion of the whole matter, as it relates to the cultivation of that holy principle, which constitutes the true excellency of dignity and the excellency of power,—which adorns prosperity and irradiates obscurity,—which subdues prejudice, dispels error, and consecrates learning; being at

once the beginning of wisdom and the end of perfection, because it concentrates, in its own blessed essence, the whole duty and the consummate happiness of man.

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