



**CENTRE FOR RESEARCH COLLECTIONS
EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
GEORGE SQUARE
EDINBURGH
EH8 9LJ**

TEL: +44 (0)131 650 8379

FAX: +44 (0)131 650 2922

BOOK-SCANNED 2019

SHELF MARK: Per. .9 Edi.

TITLE: The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club Vol. 29

AUTHOR: Old Edinburgh Club

N.B. Scanned as spreads.

The text contains some pagination errors.

THIS IS THE BEST COPY AVAILABLE.

The University of Edinburgh Library



This PDF is supplied under a Creative Commons CCBY License:

you may share and adapt for any purpose as long as attribution is given to the University of Edinburgh. Further information is available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

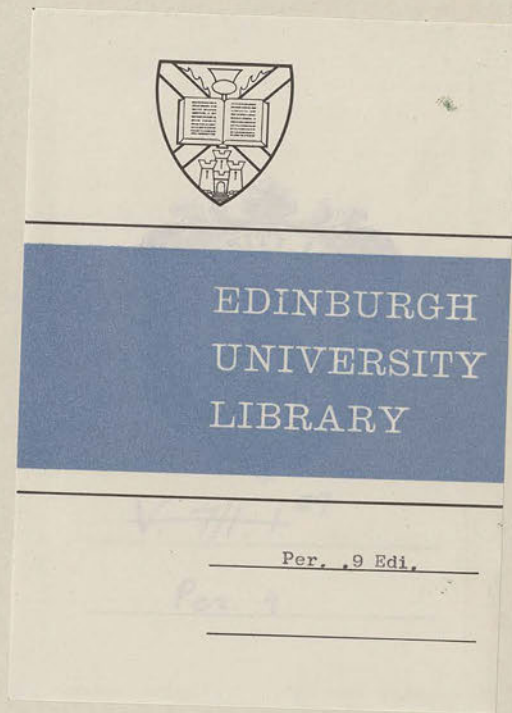
Please address all enquiries to Centre for Research Collections.

The Library wishes to be informed of work based on this Pdf copy, and would welcome a copy of any publication that makes use of it.

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336



OLD EDINBURGH CLUB



EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Per. 9 Edi.

[illegible]

14 JUN 74

U.L. 27 SEP 74

25

U.L. 17 DEC 76

13 SEP 1993

3 MAR 1994

NOV 1 1994

THE BOOK OF THE
OLD EDINBURGH CLUB

Issued to Members
August 1956

THE BOOK OF THE
OLD EDINBURGH
CLUB

TWENTY-NINTH VOLUME



EDINBURGH

PRINTED BY T. AND A. CONSTABLE LTD.
FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CLUB

1956



THE MINUTES OF THE MERCHANT MAIDEN
HOSPITAL

By

Rev. EDWIN S. TOWILL, B.D., B.Ed., F.S.A.Scot.

FOUNDED in 1694 by the Company of Merchants of Edinburgh as the result of a generous mortification from Mary Erskine, the Merchant Maiden Hospital is the oldest of the famous Merchant Company schools, and one of the earliest foundations for female education in our country. Until 1870 it remained a 'hospital,' that is, a charitable institution providing for its foundationers both education and maintenance and undertaking full responsibility for the girls under its care. In that year, in common with most such hospitals, it underwent considerable change as a result of new statutory provisions which allowed alterations in the terms of such trusts, and became a moderately priced fee-paying school, with a core of foundationers still receiving free education and a maintenance grant.

The Merchant Maiden Hospital is one of the more important of a large group of such hospital schools which were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and even into the last century, and which are often designated in England as 'charity schools.' Many of them, however, catered for quite a different type of foundationer from the later English charity schools, and unlike them never provided education for the illiterate masses. The minutes reveal that at one period girls were not allowed to take advantage of their foundation unless they were able to read. These foundations were designed to assist the less fortunate members of the burgess class, and entry to them was regarded as a privilege rather than a stigma.

After the Reformation, Scotland found herself impoverished both in educational provision and in charitable benefaction.

In the general seizure of church monies little regard had been paid to preserving those bequests which provided for education or relief. Knox and the Reformers fought to retain sufficient funds to put into operation the comprehensive educational provisions outlined in the Book of Discipline, but they received little support from the secular authorities. As a result the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were periods of difficulty and impoverishment in education; the old mediaeval school system had gone, and, great as was their concern, the Reformers had not the resources to establish a new system to take its place. This want was felt most acutely in the larger burghs, and in these places the gap was partially filled by a remarkable series of generous bequests, among the first of which were those of Mary Erskine. It is significant that the benefactors were themselves of the wealthy and increasingly important burgh class and that their foundations were designed for the relief of burgh children.

Of Mary Erskine herself, little is known; she was of noble birth, proud of her kinship with the Earl of Mar and of her connection with the Erskine family. She must have been one of many daughters of the old aristocracy who married into the ranks of the rising burgh citizens and so formed a bridge between the two classes. It is possible, even probable, that she was that Mary who, born in 1639, was the eldest child of Sir Charles Erskine of Alva by his first wife, Mary, daughter of Sir Thomas Hope of Craighall. If such were the case, her paternal grandfather was John, seventh¹ Earl of Mar, and her paternal grandmother, Marie Stewart, daughter of the Duke of Lennox.

According to the custom of the time, she continued to be known by her maiden name although she was twice married. There is an entry of marriage in the General Registry Office showing that on 19th July 1661, Robert Kennedie, writer,

¹ Lord High Treasurer of Scotland: second earl by the creation of 1565, or seventh by a previous creation.

married Marie Arskin, and there is another reference to the same marriage as taking place on 21st July of the same year. Although it is not known where Kennedie lived, there is a reference to his furniture and to his giving and taking bonds, and in the public records for 1672 there is his Testament Dative, in which reference is made to 'Marie Ereskine, his relict spouse.'

After three years of widowhood Mary Erskine was married to James Hair, merchant, by Thomas Wilkie, minister of North Leith. This marriage was entered at the General Registry Office with the date 23rd September 1675, and the spelling is on this occasion Areskine. This James Hair, a druggist in the High Street of Edinburgh, remains another shadowy figure in Mary Erskine's story. In the list of Edinburgh apprentices he appears in 1671 as 'James Hair, son to James Hair in Glentochar, prentice to Archibald Oliphant, apothecary.' In the Register of Burgesses and Guild Brethren of 1676 he is recorded as burgh and guild merchant, prentice to the same Archibald Oliphant. It is not known when he died, but the succession to his estate is recorded in the Register House in 1688.

Widowed for the second time, probably in her forties, Mary Erskine turned her thoughts to charitable objects, particularly to the provision of a hospital for girls on the lines of that which George Heriot had left for boys. The first concern was to provide a home, clothing and maintenance, and the educational provisions followed. Soon after its foundation, however, the educational advantages of such an establishment at a time when other provisions for girls were practically non-existent, led to many applications where education rather than charity was obviously the deciding factor.

The Merchant Maiden Hospital was not the only enterprise of Mary Erskine in this direction; it is sometimes forgotten that she founded two girls' schools, both bearing her name, both existing side by side in rivalry for nearly two hundred

years, and to-day both continuing, although in changed forms. The second of these, both in point of time and in wealth and numbers, is the Trades Maiden Hospital, or, more correctly, 'The Maiden Hospital, Founded by the Craftsmen of Edinburgh and Mary Erskine'¹; the first, and that with which we are here concerned, is 'The Maiden Hospital, Founded by the Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh and Mary Erskine.'

The Edinburgh of Mary Erskine's day was dominated by the merchants on one hand and the trades or craftsmen, descendants of the mediaeval guilds, on the other. Of the histories of these bodies, and the keen rivalry between them, full accounts have been written elsewhere. The craftsmen were already banded together in the Incorporated Trades, and in 1681 the cloth merchants formed themselves for protection and mutual assistance into the Edinburgh Company of Merchants. An important function of similar bodies at the time was the management and dispensing of charitable funds, a duty which the company has worthily performed until the present day. When Mary Erskine contemplated the mortification of part of her considerable fortune for the foundation of a girls' hospital, it was natural that she should turn to the newly formed company, especially as James Hair had himself been a merchant, even if in a different line from those who formed the original members.

It must have been both something of a surprise to the company, and a token of confidence in its integrity when, on 14th June 1694, just thirteen years after its foundation, the Master intimated that

'Mary Erskine, relict of James Hair, druggist, had mortified 10,000 merks for the maintenance of burges children of the female sex, and that the money was actually left to the town of Edinburgh for that effect.'

¹ See 'The Minutes of the Trades Maiden Hospital', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* vol. XXVIII.

The Company accepted the offer, and as it considered that a sum of 20,000 pounds Scots would be needed to erect and maintain such a hospital, it launched a 'fund for the lasses,' which had an immediate response from merchants and others both in the town and beyond. There are some indications that the school was actually open in 1695, but it was not until 1696 that a committee was appointed to find accommodation for the hospital. Probably Mary Erskine had envisaged some worthy building after the style of Heriot's Hospital, but the maidens had to wait until 1818 before they acquired anything approaching these commodious quarters, for the funds were never such as to leave a large margin for building. Upon the committee reporting that the girls could be housed in the Company's own halls, the following resolution was approved—

'to lend to the said female children at the term of Whitsunday next (1697) for seven years until their stock increased, the Gallarie above the companies Hall or meeting place with one of the sellars below, which has a kitching chimney in it for the use of the said female children.'

Mary Erskine continued to take a lively interest in the foundation and evidently considered the premises unsatisfactory, for in 1706, after the seven years' lease had expired and the Company had made no move towards a new building, she herself purchased for 12,000 merks a 'great lodging and yard in Bristo,' and presented it to the Company for the hospital.

In the meantime, inspired by the example of their rivals, the Incorporated Trades had started a fund for a similar hospital for the daughters of their own indigent members. Mary Erskine interested herself in this fund also, and mortified such a generous sum that the Conventry included her name as co-foundress and gave to herself and her family certain rights of presentation. Thus the Merchant Hospital has about seven years' precedence over its rival, although the Trades Hospital had its own building, in Horse Wynd, about two years before the Merchant Maidens moved into Bristo.

Mary Erskine lived long enough to see the last Scottish Parliament ratify the constitutions of both her hospitals; a month later, on 19th April 1707, she made her will, confirming her previous gifts, and at some unknown date during the same autumn she died. Her Testament Dative was confirmed on 22nd November, but the date of her death is not given. On 12th September of the same year her kinsman James Erskine, Lord Grange, wrote a letter which clearly implied that she was 'still alive,'¹ so the date of her death may be fixed as between 12th September and 22nd November 1707.²

The Statutes and Constitution

It is not our purpose to give in full the constitution of the hospital, which was printed and circulated in 1731 in a small booklet which makes an appeal to the charitable reader for further legacies—

'As there is no duty more frequently commanded and commended in the Holy Scriptures than Charity and Bounty and Liberal Giving toward the Poor, so no Charity is more pleasing to God, and profitable to mankind, than the Erecting and Providing Hospitals for the maintenance of the Aged and Young, who can do nothing for themselves, being most Diffusive, Extensive and Lasting, and so most Honourable to the Giver.'³

The original statutes were framed on 20th November 1697, and were enlarged on 23rd February 1702. An Act⁴ of the

¹ The full text of this interesting letter is printed in Appendix I.

² The great table cover which hangs in the present Mary Erskine School is claimed to be her work. The border bears the date 1710, her name, that of the Merchant Maiden Hospital and various texts; red roses form the centre.

I am indebted to W. Cyril Wallis, Esq., of the Royal Scottish Museum for the following note on the cover:

'This is a hand-knotted pile carpet of so-called Turkey work carried out by passing double strands of wool through a coarse canvas ground, knotting them in the fashion of Turkish carpets (with the Ghiordes knot) and clipping the wool to form a thick, close pile. The design of the border is of seventeenth-century type and it is unlikely therefore that the carpet is later than the date assigned to it.'

³ See Appendix II.

⁴ A.P.S. Vol. IX, p. 487.

last Scots Parliament, 25th March 1707, ratified the statutes and gave powers to make alterations in the future. The parallel courses which the two Mary Erskine schools were taking is shown by the fact that another Act of the same Parliament deals similarly with the statutes of the Trades Hospital. Slight alterations were made on 9th February of the following year and approved by the Town Council on 19th March; after a further slight amendment on 10th February 1783, the statutes remained in force until in 1869 the Company obtained powers to transform the hospital into a fee-paying day school.

With the foundation of the Merchant Maiden Hospital the Company began a policy which they followed in connection with their subsequent bequests from George Watson, James Gillespie and Daniel Stewart; instead of administering the trusts directly themselves, they set up a Board of Governors for each institution, and each managed its own funds and properties, with a limited amount of borrowing and lending between the various funds. At one point the governors of Watson's and of the Maiden Hospital were at litigation in the Court of Session, although in an amicable way, over the disposal of bequests.

The Maiden Hospital was governed by a body consisting of the Master of the Company, thirteen members chosen by the Company, five by the Town Council, three by the City Ministers, to which were added two of the name of Erskine and a Treasurer chosen from the Company. They met usually in the Hospital, but occasionally in the Merchant Hall, and, until a declaration was later substituted, they took an oath of fidelity on appointment; they elected a Preses and held statutory meetings for the submission of accounts and the election of foundationers; they annually appointed panels of visitors to supervise the running of the school, and as time passed it became the practice to appoint committees to undertake the various aspects of the work.

Of these committees, one of the most important was the 'Landed Estates,' for the governors became important landowners of widely scattered estates. In addition to extensive holdings in the Border country, they owned the land on which is built the modern town of Peterhead. The minutes of this committee give, over two centuries, a detailed account of the growth of Peterhead; indeed, in some of the minute books, more than half the space is given to details of the management of these estates. In 1739 the tenants of Peterhead presented a petition to the governors asking for the restoration of their cannon in order to defend their town if necessary, and in 1746 the tacksman sent a letter deploring the fact that the tenants had under compulsion paid their previous year's cess 'to those concerned in the Rebellion,' and asking consideration of the hardship of having to pay it over again. The governors, however, refused to allow any rebate, although they did so occasionally when times proved hard in the North. The building of the harbour and the railway and the foundation of the Peterhead school are all dealt with at length in the minutes, and this intimate connection between the Company and the burgh remains until to-day.

If, as was natural, it was the business men from among the Merchant Company representatives who interested themselves most in the care of the estates, the representatives of the ministers were most active on the Education Committee, which engaged itself with staffing and with the education provided in the Hospital.

Citizens who were to become prominent in the life of the city, as Provosts or in other ways, figure from time to time in the minutes; if the Merchant Hospital lacked any figure as sinister as Deacon Brodie, who is reputed to have graced the board of the rival hospital, it had as governor for many years Sir J. Y. Simpson, who was elected as one of the Company's representatives.

The statutes make clear the original intention of the

bequest, to provide maintenance and education for the daughters and granddaughters of deceased or indigent burgesses, merchants of the city. The presentations, which were in part laid down in the original statutes and in part added to by purchase either by individuals or public bodies, were of two kinds. In the case of the normal presentation the presentee had to fulfil the conditions of membership of the burgess class; in the case of open presentations, any girl could be presented provided that she was a deserving object of charity. These rights of presentation were regarded highly, and were willed or bought and sold. Girls were admitted between the ages of seven and eleven, and left, with a bounty, at the age of seventeen or eighteen.

Among the miscellaneous papers preserved by the Company are several interesting examples of early presentations, couched formally as a petition or crave; some of these are printed for circulation among the governors, others, like the following example, are handwritten; the spelling and punctuation are as in the original—

PETITION OF ELIZABETH MERCER, 1723.

'Unto the Honourable the Preses and other Governours of the Maiden Hospital founded by the Compeny of Merchants and Mary Erskine.

The Petition of Wm Mercer, merchant burges and gild brother. That albeit I once had a fair prospect of busyness in Edin'. whereby I might have maintained my Family and Educate my Six Children, yet by bad Debtors and other Losses I was sometime ago nessessitat to give over all trade that way and to give up all that I had to my Lawful Credetors after which I betook myself to honest but mean employment about the Excise, To wit a Gadger by which though I have thirty pounds yearly Sallary yet being thereby obliged to keep a horse for travelling through my District the aforesaid Sallary can do little more than maintain my said horse myself and defray the Charges of Travelling, much less can it go any length to maintain my wife and six children, it being known that a Single man cannot live well in that station. That being informed your honours has several

and frequent vacancies in the Merchants maiden hospital, I presume to petition you in behalf of my Daughter called Elizabeth Mercer, who is of Competent age, having been born the 30th of May 1715 conform to Testificat herewith produced, and who is fully intituled to your charity not only by my own burgess ticket but also by that of John Scott her Grandfather who and his predecessors have for many Generations been of the order and calling of Merchants burgesses and gild brothers of Edin. as could be Instructed by many old burgess tickets and by documents if needfull.

May it therefor pleas your Honours to Elect and Choise Elizabeth Mercer as a proper object and full Intituled to Supply the first vacancy in the said Hospital.

And your Petitioner shall always pray.¹

From 1733 complete minutes are available and a large number of extracts from them is presented in the following pages; it has not been our purpose to extract those minutes dealing with changes in presentations or the management of stock and property, but rather those which serve to furnish some picture of the changing life of the school through the years. The first minute, which set the general form to be followed through the years, is as follows—

‘At the Merchant Maiden Hospital,
Bristo. The 29th October, 1733.

Sederunt of the Governors of the said Hospital—

Baillie John Cochran, Presses (here follows sederunt, including four bailies, two ministers and William Tod, Treasurer.)

After prayers were said and the last minute read. The Clerk, having laid before the Meeting a Minute of Sederunt of the Master and Assistants and Treasurer of the Merchant Company . . . wherein they nominate and present Bethia Baak, daughter to Duncan Baak, merchant and member of the above company . . . upon one of the funds in their presentation now vacant’.

After the Treasurer had laid before the meeting his annual accounts, which were approved, other financial business was

¹ For another, and more pathetic, petition, see Appendix III.

transacted, the old governors were dismissed and the new Master of the Company took his seat as Preses, then—

‘The Governors, taking to consideration that for a number of years there had been no regular method observed to the Cloathing of the Girls, which of late had occasioned a good deal of confusion, as well as loss to the Hospital, nor any rule yet established for distribution of profits of the girls’ work, for preventing whereof and for establishing a Rule for the said Distribution and Cloathing of the Girls in time coming, they appoint a Committee of their number. . . . to take the said matters into consideration, and to report their opinion in writing to the Governors.’

Another Committee was then appointed to investigate the diet and report on the cheapest method of serving the hospital with bread, auditors were named, visitors were appointed, and finally the Governors, Mistresses, Girls and Servants were exhorted by the Rev. Wm. Brown ‘as usual.’

The Hospital Buildings

As has been indicated, the first home of the Merchant Maidens was the Company’s Hall in Cowgate, where they were granted the use of the ‘gallarie’ and the ‘sellar with the kitching chimney.’ This house, one of the most interesting of old Edinburgh mansions, was demolished in 1829. It stood in the Cowgate, hard by Society, and had a back entrance from Candlemaker Row. The site is now beneath the southern piers of George IV Bridge where the cul-de-sac Merchant Street commemorates its connection with the Company. Chambers’ *Traditions* and Grant’s *Old Edinburgh* both give descriptions of this ‘court of old buildings’ with its great second-floor room with panelled walls and ornamented stucco ceiling and its grounds which later became famous as a bowling green. The house belonged to Macgill of Rankeillor, from whom it was rented by its most famous tenant, Thomas Hamilton of Priestfield, Lord President of the Court of Session, and later

first Earl of Haddington, whom James VI nicknamed Tam o' the Cowgate. When the king revisited Scotland he and his court dined with Hamilton in the building. Later it became the first Hall of the Merchant Company and in 1730 it was let as the Excise Office, finally suffering demolition in the improvements which led to the erection of Chambers Street and George IV Bridge.

We have seen how, in 1706, Mary Erskine purchased the 'great lodging and yard' in Bristo, which from that date housed the hospital for some 120 years. This building has also been completely swept away and the topography of the district so altered that it is difficult to visualise how it appeared in Mary Erskine's day. The hospital stood just behind the buildings which now compose the corner of Lothian Street and Bristo Street. At that time the former street did not exist, east to west passage being provided by Thieves' Row, a narrow lane which ran along the outside of the old city wall, represented now by the cul-de-sac of Bristo Port. Bristo Street itself was a lane, having on the west side the city wall, which turned sharply south at Bristo Port and westward again at what is now the Teviot Place—Bristo Street corner; on the east side of Bristo Street, immediately outside the wall, was a famous coaching inn, The George, and a number of buildings of which Mary Erskine bought the largest for the hospital. It faced Bristo Street and had at the back a considerable garden reaching to the city wall, and indeed, marching with the Trades Maiden property in Argyle Square.

At first the whole property was not needed for the girls, and tenants continued to dwell within the same 'land,' entering by separate doors but coming into the hospital to draw their water. The outside stairs of these houses remained until 1764, when the following minute occurs—

'As five stairs of the Hospital's houses are to be taken down for widening the street now repairing . . . to ask the Lord Provost either to leave them or pay for new ones.'

—in the end it was decided to ask the 'good town' to pay one-half the cost.

As the years passed, the character of the district, which had at first been a salubrious suburb outside the walled city, changed for the worse. In particular, there were some tumbledown workshops and factories beyond the garden, and a high tenement known as Sprott's Land immediately to the south. Even at first the high city wall¹ across the narrow street must have cast its shadow over the front of the building. Over the wall the upper stories of Darien House and other mansions could be seen, but later these gave place to the city Bedlam and the Charity Workhouse.

Even when Mary Erskine acquired it the building was old, and not really suitable for the purpose. In 1734 the minutes record that the accommodation was 'much scrimped' and the governors resolved to take in Mr. Scott's house, which formed part of the 'land'; the tenant was unwilling to move, but offered them two rooms above their hall. At the same time they turned the cellar next to the kitchen into a dining-room for the girls, the first of a long series of alterations by which they endeavoured to adapt the house more conveniently to its purpose. In 1735 it is recorded that—

'The girls' beds and partitions of the house were infested with bugs to that degree that the girls could get no rest, which straitened them exceedingly . . . resolved that these beds and partitions be taken down and a number of tent beds bought.'

At this time the governors asked an architect to report on alterations to the house; it was decided to confine the sleeping quarters to the first and second floors, to make a new dining-room and writing-room and to carry out certain other improvements. Although their financial position would not permit of any but the most necessary alterations, they decided

¹ Telfer's Wall, not the Flodden Wall. See *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, Vol. II.

that these improvements were needed in the interests of health.

As the girls were not allowed outside the premises, the garden provided their only opportunity for getting fresh air, and the governors took some pains to make it as pleasant as possible. In 1743 they made alterations to it, removing trees, laying out gravel paths and providing seats with little roofs. From time to time apprentices and local lads found themselves attracted to the maidens' garden and proved a source of worry to the matron and the governors. The attraction must have been further increased when an open air bath was installed. In 1780 a report is read from Dr. Hamilton, one of the governors, and Mr. Andrew Wood, the hospital surgeon, 'representing that they had examined the bath in the garden and found that it is necessary to adopt some measures which may serve to make it watertight, and further, that there was a necessity for providing a covered shelter for the use of the girls in which they may dress and undress before and after using the bath, and as they considered the use of bathing as equally conducive to cleanliness and health they thought it their duty to lay the above before the governors.'

After the turn of the half century the character of Bristo began to alter rapidly. In 1743 the Charity Workhouse, a gaunt dismal building, had been erected about a hundred yards across the city wall, while stately Darien House and the mansion adjoining were now both utilised for the housing of lunatics. On the other hand, the value of the land was increasing, for the city was spreading southwards outside the old walls to George Square, Chapel Street and Nicolson Street. In 1765 the governors considered

'selling the laigh houses in Bristo Street and area and part of the garden owing to such subjects getting very high prices at this time.'

Nothing came of the project, but again in 1772—

'The governors, taking into consideration the state of the Hospital funds, and that in appearance they will increase so in a few years as

to admit a much greater number of girls than at present, recommended to the Preses and Auditors to consider the State of the Hospital house and to take the advice of Tradesmen as to the repairing and enlarging it, or what price the Hospital's property next to Bristo Street may sell for, and likewise, what may be the expence of building a new Hospital house in the garden if that should be thought proper.'

This is the first mention of a possibility which they kept before them for many years, that of feuing the most valuable part of their property on the main street line and rebuilding for themselves over part of the large garden, where ultimately the Relief Chapel was erected. Nothing came of the suggestion and they continued to make alterations to the old building.

'The Treasurer and visitors represented that the girls were too much crowded in their Bedding upon account of their number being increased,'

and after a plan for additional beds had been approved

'they were also too crowded in the schoolroom and that this room might be rendered much more convenient by moving the Petition (*sic*) further into the Trance.'

In spite of this shortage of accommodation for the children, there were still parts of the building let to tenants as late as 1776, when they resolved to take in the house of Mr. Johnston in the same tenement.

In the same year Dr. Steedman gave in a full report on the girls' health, which included several matters dealing with the house. The sick-room, which looked into the street, was neither quiet nor well ventilated, and he suggested a room over the matron's parlour, with two sunny windows to the garden. There is no mention at this date of any water being laid on above ground level, and one of the recommended rules as a result of the report is that no person, neighbour or tenant be allowed to come in to carry out water from the cistern. A bell is to be fitted to the door to stop the practice of neighbours walking in and out as they pleased. A new dining-room was built, and three years later a new schoolroom was made from

rooms previously occupied by a tenant. In 1780 the old building was harled; next year the meeting-hall within the hospital was repainted and the names of donors painted on the walls; in 1782 the governors' hall was painted white and in 1785 they appointed 'a female porter whose sole duty be to attend the outer door.'

During the same year (1785) we read for the first time of the proposed changes which were to give the Bristo area the pattern which we know to-day. A special meeting is held to consider

'a plan that is at present in agitation for opening a new road of communication from the intended South Bridge to join the great West Turnpike Roads and which new road it seems to be intended to carry through the ground belonging to the hospital lying behind the Hospital house occupied at present as a place of recreation and exercise for the girls.'

This street, which was never built, was a more northerly variant of Lothian Street. The governors, while 'desirous of helping any scheme which may tend to the ornament and convenience of the city,' cannot support this proposal, but suggest accommodating the town with as much ground as necessary 'to widen the present road by the Townwall if it shall be determined to carry the road in that direction'—that is, they suggest improving the narrow lane which ran immediately outside the wall. This, however, would have entailed the main east-west road taking a sharp right-angled bend at the Bristo Port, a suggestion which could hardly find favour with the town-planners even of that day. For a time it looked as if the governors might get their way. The Lord Provost himself attended their next meeting and agreed to lend his support to their suggestion. Although powers to widen this old road were included in the Act which the Council obtained, nothing was done for eight years, when, in 1793, the governors learned of a printed memorial addressed to them, but never submitted, in which the Improvement Trustees suggested that



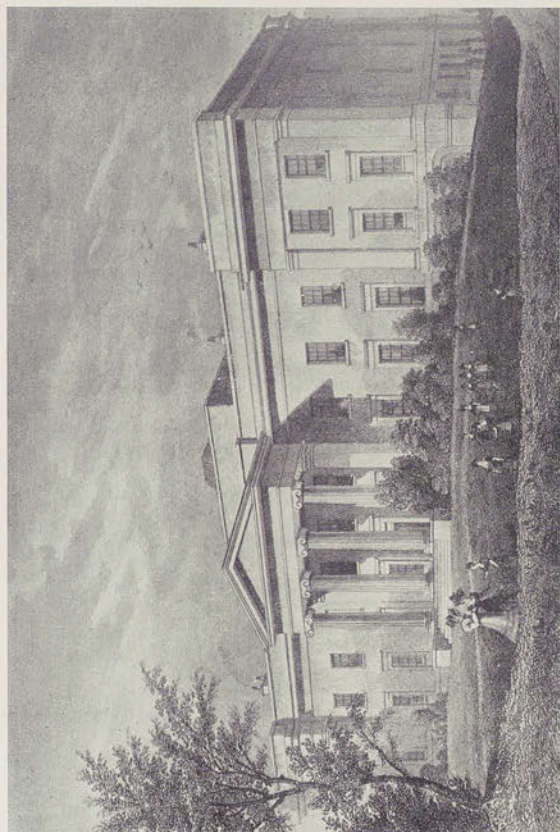
MERCHANT HALL, COWGATE—FIRST HOME OF
THE MERCHANT MAIDEN HOSPITAL

*From the engraving by Bruce in Chambers, 'Minor
Antiquities of Edinburgh,' 1833*



SECOND HOME OF THE MERCHANT MAIDEN
HOSPITAL IN BRISTO

From Storer, 'Views in Edinburgh,' 1820



National Museum

MERCHANT MAIDEN HOSPITAL, LAURISTON

From the drawing by Shepherd engraved by Henshall, 1820

Photo

MERCHANT MAIDEN HOSPITAL

17

as the road for which plans had been granted was circuitous, a new east-west road, south instead of north of the hospital, might be authorised. This would involve pulling down Sprott's land and close and the old wright's shop which stood near the hospital garden and which had already been several times on fire, and would pass by the side of the building itself. In return the Trustees offered to close the old lane by the wall and give the ground to the hospital.

In the end the governors persuaded the Trustees to construct the new road slightly further south and to grant them the ground which lay between it and the hospital. Thus the presence of the old house, now long since swept away, determined the two reverse angles in the College Street-Lothian Street-Teviot Place road. It was not an ideal arrangement for either party, for the Trustees built a road which was off the straight, while the hospital was left too near the intersection of two increasingly busy thoroughfares. Indeed, when the revised plans showed that the road would approach at one point to within five feet of the house, the governors agreed that they must either reconsider erecting a new hospital on their present site but further from the roadway or else seek a site elsewhere—

'The Governors, after considering the probable advantages at which the property presently occupied by the Hospital may be feued and the necessity they would soon be under of building a new House, as well on account of the decayed and incommodious state of the present one as of the inconveniency of its being so near to the intended new road, did appoint a committee to consider whether a more eligible situation could be got for a new house.'

Within the next four years the new street had been built, and the Lighting Commissioners installed lights in Bristo Street. The governors strongly resisted the charges which were laid on them for this lighting, for under the original Act of the Scots Parliament they had been granted freedom from all ordinary charges which were laid upon the citizens; this

they interpreted as granting exemption for all time from all rates and other dues which in these years were multiplying rapidly with the increase in public services. At the same time they were perturbed at the lack of lighting, as the district was becoming rowdy at nights and they were on an exposed corner site.

'They consider that by the opening of Lothian Street, the Hospital's property is a good deal exposed on that quarter and that it might be proper and expedient to have some lights put up there during the winter season which would afford a protection to the Hospital's property, and resolve . . . to erect a lamp either upon the south or the west.'

In the last years of the eighteenth century they continued to make some alterations in the classrooms to render them of a more convenient size, and even at one point considered buying more land in Lothian Street, but in the first year of the new century they passed an important resolution

'that if a convenient spot could be found for the new hospital it would be more advisable to leave the present situation, as the ground has from the great increase of new buildings about it become in some degree less eligible for such an institution, while by these buildings it had upon the other hand become much more valuable as a property.'

They remitted to a committee the task of looking out for such a new site and of making plans of the present grounds with a view to seeing what they might bring for building. In 1802 they reported

'that the increasing insufficiency of the Hospital House which requires a constant and expensive repair and becomes everyday more unfit for the family not only as to accommodation but even in some degree as to safety [makes it necessary] to form a determined resolution upon the subject, and remit to the standing committee to consider, 1. The present state of the fabric, 2. Whether it would be expedient to sell or feu the ground, and if so whether it would be practicable to obtain another situation, and 3. What the probable expense of a new hospital would be.'

In July the Committee reported

'1. That the state of the present fabric is such as to render it absolutely necessary to have a new hospital. 2. That it would be highly inexpedient to sell or feu out the ground about the present house, because after the fullest enquiry no other situation can be discovered nearly so central and convenient. At the same time the committee are of the opinion that the new Hospital may be so placed as to allow the Governors to feu at some future period a strip along Bristo Street and returning a certain distance into Lothian Street, if such a measure should appear not to be detrimental to the new house. 3. That the expense of a new house cannot be accurately estimated but would not be below £5000.

As a result of this report the governors resolved to build a new hospital facing Lothian Street. This did not mean, however, that steps to implement the resolution then began; there was a considerable body of opinion in favour of waiting and obtaining some more eligible situation, and the decision seems to have been regarded as a test of opinion round which discussion might freely revolve for some years.

In the meantime the governors received an intimation which in the end influenced them in their decisions regarding the new hospital. In 1802 died George Grindlay, respected member of their Company and a governor of both Watson's and the Maiden Hospital. In the following year it was announced that he had bequeathed his fortune to be divided equally between the two hospitals, but only in the event of his son George dying without issue before reaching his majority. Apparently the lad was not strong, for the governors regarded themselves as being, if not actually in possession of the money, at least with great expectations. When he did die, in the year 1810, they found that the estate would realise at least £10,000, including half the lands of Orchardfield. At the time the latter was not looked upon as a very valuable part of the estate, but soon it became the site of Lothian Road and the adjoining commercial and residential properties.

In April 1804 ignoring their previous resolution, the governors resolved to advertise for suitable ground for a new hospital. Although at first these enquiries proved fruitless, they determined to continue their search, and in the meantime carried on negotiations with a Mr. Ritchie, slater, for the sale of their Lothian Street ground. As a result of further advertisements they began to consider the purchase of ground in Lauriston, belonging to Mr. Adam Keir, whose name is now remembered in the street adjacent to the Vennel. There remained, however, the difficulty of price, for they were unwilling, and indeed unable, to pay more than £1800, while Mr. Keir would not let it go at that figure. After negotiations had dragged on through the autumn, they decided once again to investigate the building of a new hospital on their present ground, placing shops at the front. On 27th May 1805 they ratified this decision and offered a prize of twenty-five guineas for the best plan for the new hospital. Several entries were submitted, from which they chose that of Mr. Harvey, architect in Edinburgh, but they decided to postpone for some time the actual commencement of the work. In the meantime both the hospital and the adjacent buildings were suffering from neglect and from the prolonged indecision; in 1808 a minute tells of

'the ruinous state of the houses in Bristo belonging to the Hospital'

—and two years later a committee reports

'that as the ruinous state of disrepair into which the present hospital is rapidly falling and the possible dangers that may arise therefrom, agree that the building of a new house was not now a matter of choice but had become absolutely necessary and that they should proceed to take the necessary measures without delay.'

Their funds for this purpose were now in the region of £1700, together with the expectations of the sales of some land in Peterhead, but this was all too small for extensive rebuilding. It seems strange that a body of men so careful in the administration of their funds should not have attempted

to provide for this in one of two ways—by keeping the number of presentations down and so conserving some of their monies against property depreciation, or else by again launching a 'fund for the lasses' through which they might have appealed to the liberality of the merchants and citizens.

On 28th May 1810 they reaffirmed their minute of 1805 to proceed with work at their own site and they employed Robert Reid, architect, to put into execution Mr. Harvey's prize plan. However, this plan was not the first architect's dream which has appeared better on paper than when translated into stone and lime. Mr. Reid reported that the plan 'contained certain unsurmountable difficulties' by which we may conjecture that he doubted whether such a hospital would have remained standing upright. Mr. Reid then himself prepared plans, which the committee revised and finally approved.

These plans were for a hospital facing Lothian Street, with a strip left vacant along Bristo Street which could be used for feuing for a line of narrow buildings. On the first floor were to be schoolrooms, eating- and play-rooms; connected by a covered passage were kitchens, washhouses, etc.; in the central part of the second floor was the dining-parlour for mistresses connecting with the kitchen by a separate stair; in the wings of this floor were sleeping-apartments for the girls with a servant's room adjoining each ward; there were also separate sleeping-quarters for 'the grown up girls' and sick quarters above. The main fault of the plan was its restricted playground space.

In January 1811 the governors were notified that by the death of the lad George Grindlay the whole of the residuary funds (£25,559, less £9950 for annuities, plus rents of about £445 annually with feus on Lothian Road) would be divided equally between George Watson's Hospital and their own funds. In May they received tenders for the new building, the lowest of which (£11,850) exceeded their estimate by over £2000. As a result they decided again to delay building

and to ask Mr. Reid for plans for a 'double' rather than a 'single' type of house, as they believed it might be cheaper. The architect then furnished them with a report in which he strongly recommended the type he had already planned. We may suspect that by this time Mr. Reid's patience was somewhat exhausted, but the governors persisted and requested plans 'striking off every ornament which is unnecessary and adopting the most economical mode of finishing each part both exterior and interior to reduce expense.'

This was done, but again they desired him to draw up an entirely new plan 'on the lines of the old one, but cheaper.' In January 1812 he laid before them three sets of plans—(a) one prepared by himself but on the lines of the double house suggested by the governors; (b) two different sets of plans given in by tradesmen. In the end none of these many plans was to be translated into stone, for at the same meeting—

'The Preses, reminding them that they had the joint rights of Orchardfield, off Lothian Road, said that it appeared to afford a desirable situation upon which the Hospital might be put down . . . before proceeding further the governors should take the opportunity of exploring fully the nature and situation of this ground, so a committee should be asked to visit the ground and go into it in all its bearings.'

Three months later the governors met to consider a memorandum from Mr. Anderson, the Preses, and a report from their committee. The former is in favour of Orchardfield, both for health reasons and because the feus there are likely to take little from their revenues while the ground at Bristo is now very valuable. The Committee's report weighs carefully the two suggestions; the advantages of Bristo are that it is nearer the town for the governors attending meetings and for the girls going to market and to Church; it is also more convenient for ladies bringing work to be done by the children. Among disadvantages are, nearness to the street, the limited extent of its site and the fact that additional buildings will soon be erected very near it. Orchardfield has the advantage

of a secluded situation and a greater extent of ground for recreation and for growing vegetables; in addition, there would be no interruption in the life of the hospital as the new one could be erected while the old was still in occupation. On the whole the committee inclined to the Orchardfield site. A point of interest is the weight put upon distance from 'The Cross' and the fact that even in the second decade of the nineteenth century Lothian Road was considered far from the focal point of the town's life—

'Taking South Bridge to one [hospital] and the Mound to the other, the distance from the Cross is not more than five minutes further. That to Gillespie's Hospital is greater, and to Watson's not much less. Employers of girls' work come chiefly from the New Town, and would find it easier, and anyway as the total work only realises £50 this is not important. As to Church, the girls could go to the new Church now building in Charlotte Square.'

The governors resolved to build on Orchardfield, and went as far as to interview the Lord Provost and magistrates with a view to securing sittings in St. George's when it was built. They found difficulties, however, in securing a portion of their own land as they had only a half interest in it, and a year later no progress had been made. They continued to repair the old house, remaking floors, walls and ceilings, taking down some of the more dilapidated buildings adjoining and adding ground to the garden. Three years later there was still no signs of progress and the Education Committee again 'recommended the earnest attention of the governors to the erection of a new hospital.' The Treasurer also reported—

'The whole building, particularly timber, is far advanced in decay and will in a few years be uninhabitable.'

It was now forty-three years since the idea of a new hospital had first been proposed and twenty years since they had resolved to build, but nothing had been done. Rather naturally the governors were now a little uncertain of what

actually had been decided over this period of years, so they called yet another committee to review the steps already taken by previous governors. From the deep bag of plans and projects which this committee unearthed appeared several by the long-suffering Mr. Reid, but the plan which most attracted their interest was by Mr. Crichton, one of their own number who was also an architect. In this economy was the keynote. After reviewing English establishments of a similar type he had prepared a plan estimated to cost only £7000. In place of Mr. Reid's eight bedrooms for the girls it had three large wards or dormitories holding forty beds with two to a bed; the chapel and play-room had disappeared and the school and sick-rooms were reduced in size. The front had 'a neatness sufficiently attractive for a building of a charitable character.' As a sop to any aesthetic objections it was noted that a handsome colonnade could be added at a future period. It is obvious that Mr. Crichton had taken as his model the English charity school of the poorest type, and we may be glad that his plan never materialised.

To complicate matters, the situation at Orchardfield had now somewhat changed. No longer was it a secluded locality, for the canal basin was proposed there, with a branch railway from it to Leith. The governors also realised that to build there meant extensive outlay in drainage and long walls, facilities which were already to hand in Lothian Street. On the other hand, Lothian Street was already up for sale, and before long 'from there to the University may be covered with lodging-houses, not a desirable neighbourhood for a female hospital.' Indeed, they were now between the devil (in the shape, may we say, of divinity students) and the deep sea, or at least the Union Canal.

The only resolution of the dilemma was by finding a site different from either, and so they resolved to explore the possibilities of a park in Lauriston belonging to the heirs of a Mr. Brown. With their usual thoroughness they made a



National Museum



Photo

SAMPLERS BY MERCHANT MAIDENS

From the originals in the Mary Erskine School. By Jane B. Holway, 1844, and Helen G. Holway. The initials are those of classmates, the names of the Governess and Mistresses

preliminary survey, sending Doctors Hamilton and Wood to make a report. This report provides an excellent picture of the Meadows district as it appeared in 1815—

'We repaired to the park and traversed it in every direction. We remarked a few good dwelling houses upon the east side, and upon the west the ground is open all the way to the house of Drumdryan and to the road leading to Wrightshouses tollbar, and will likely remain open in all time coming. We went into the Meadows at the south side of the park which we found to be greatly improved; in place of the impure soil from the buildings in George Square and Buccleugh Place now conveyed in a sunk drain which tends to the east and opens about St. Leonard's Hill, pure and surface water rises in the open drains of the Meadows to the westward and contributes greatly to the amenity of the place. We have not disregarded the Distillery at Lochrin; we are aware that volumes of smoke from fires of pitcoal issue from it and that this smoke may be occasionally carried over the ground in question . . . but we do not apprehend that it will prove injurious to health.' [The present hospital] 'is much changed from what it has been; placed in our recollection in the outskirts of the town, it resembled a country house with a fine exposure and good ventilation, that in the lapse of years, houses after houses have been built in the immediate neighbourhood and that there is a prospect and probably not a distant one of it being completely shut up on the south, the only opening it yet possesses. That it has, of course, been placed as it were, in the centre of a town, deprived of pure ventilation, likely soon to be secluded from the cheerful rays of the sun and overlooked from adjoining houses.'

This very practical but almost lyrical report is followed in the minutes by one, severely matter-of-fact in character, from Messrs. Dickson and Thin, builders. As a result, the governors called on their committee again to review the advantages of two sites—this time Lothian Street and Lauriston. There was still some feeling in favour of the old Bristo corner, but the committee advised that if they were to rebuild there it would entail buying the Old George Inn, and constructing a sewer—which suggests that previous drainage had been by cess-pool.

D



National Museum



Photo

MERCHANT MAIDENS, 1841

From water-colours in the Mary Erskine School

Strangely, they rate among its advantages 'the elevated situation and airiness and the long and certain experience of its salubrity by the uninterrupted health enjoyed by the children,' and indeed there were far more outbreaks and epidemics after they had moved to Lauriston than there had been in the old house.

In the end they decided for Lauriston and offered for the ground. Mr. Brown's trustees, however, would not accept a figure less than £2600, and so reluctantly the governors decided to seek a new situation. Again they turned to Orchardfield, but found that as the division of the land between the beneficiaries was likely to drag on for some time there was little hope of building there on their own land. In February 1816 Mr. Brown's widow offered them the 'park' for £2400, which they accepted.

They asked five architects to prepare plans for a building, without ornament, costing not more than £7000. One of the five was Mr. Reid, who declined, probably considering that they already had too many of his plans stored away in their files; a second did not answer the request, so in the end they had three plans before them, for each of which they paid twenty-five guineas. The selected plan, which was to become such a prominent feature of the Meadows district for over a century, was by William Burn, who designed Edinburgh Academy, St. John's Episcopal Chapel and the Melville Column and who restored St. Giles. It cost just £1500 over the figure which they had laid down. Before finally beginning the work, the governors, with their usual caution, obtained the advice of Dr. Andrew Duncan, professor of Medical Jurisprudence, 'who had paid much attention to the internal arrangements of hospitals,' and finally, on 22nd June, they foregathered on Brown's ground, 'preambulated the same' and drove in the stakes to mark the building lines.¹ On 2nd

¹ Before building commenced the line was moved some yards north of the original site as marked out by the governors.

August they again met

'on the new ground at Lauriston, when the Foundation Stone of the New Hospital was laid by Mr. William Ramsay, Preses, in their presence and the ceremony concluded with a suitable and impressive prayer by Dr. Johnston.'

At the same time they enquired fully into their financial position and found that, while the cost of running the hospital was now £1845 annually, they were saving some £1000 on their revenue. For the new building they borrowed £2500 from the Orphan Hospital, £2000 from James Gillespie's Trust and £1000 from the Master and Assistants of the Company.

The new hospital, which took two years to build, stood to the east of Chalmers Street, on the ground now occupied by the Nurses' Home at the foot of Archibald Place. After the Merchant Maidens vacated it in 1870, it became the first George Watson's School,¹ and as such many citizens remember it. When it was built, neither Chalmers Street nor Archibald Place had been feued, and the entrance was by the narrow Lauriston Lane, of which to-day only a truncated portion remains beside the Infirmary mortuary. The Maidens were never given an entrance into the Meadows, and the Hospital during their occupation was enclosed by a ten-foot high wall. On 21st October 1818—

'The Committee having met this morning, at the family entering into the new Hospital, the governess, mistresses, teachers and children attended in the Principal School-Room and after being congratulated on the occasion and the excellent appearance they made, Dr. Johnston made them an interesting address and concluded the whole by an impressive prayer.'

The building, in the chaste Georgian style which so well suited our city, suffered both externally and internally from the severe economies which the governors had imposed on their architect. It had three classrooms, the westmost of which was

¹ In 1870 George Watson's Hospital became a school under the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act of that year.

used also as a chapel, and three dormitories, in two of which a mistress slept with the girls. The many refinements which Mr. Reid had suggested were absent, and the constant need for repair and alteration suggested that quality of material had also to some extent been sacrificed.

In the meantime the governors held a public roup of the furniture at Bristo Street and proceeded to feu the land. For some time there had been enquiries from the Portsburgh Congregation of the Relief Church and in the end the governors offered them land behind the Lothian Street frontage, with entry from Bristo Street by a short street of two-storey houses; this was later amended as entering from Lothian Street, and is to be seen to-day in the Ministry of Works (store) building and the cul-de-sac named Brighton Street.¹ In 1819, when the old hospital had stood derelict for six months, the governors conceived the idea that the land might feu better if the high city wall facing it were removed. There is no sentiment or affection for the historic remains shown in their minutes—

‘Sir William Forbes stated that he had waited on the Lord Provost and suggested that taking down of the City Wall along Bristo Street as a public improvement and which might afford not only a more enlarged access from Lothian Street to Teviot Place but by throwing the ground open belonging to the Charity Workhouse might enable the managers of the institution to feu out that ground to advantage. That he had been received by His Lordship with great politeness and the matter having afterwards been brought under consideration of the managers of the Workhouse, communications have passed between them and the magistrates on the subject which were likely to terminate in an arrangement which would be satisfactory to all parties and by which this Hospital’s property would be considerably benefited, in so far as the front of their ground to Bristo Street would become more valuable by

¹ The relief trustees proved in the end unable to face the interest on a bond of £2000 which they had secured towards its erection, and the feu-duty of £90 annually. The bondholders took possession of the building and in 1846 it was purchased by the E.U. congregation, which had been meeting in Roxburgh Place Chapel; see *Brighton Street Church, history and jubilee*, Fairgrieve, Edinburgh 1894.

a removal of the City Wall and of the building occupied as a Bedlam, which was comprehended under the proposed arrangement, and Sir William submitted that until the proposed arrangement was completed it would be inexpedient to dispose of any of the areas fronting Bristo Street or of the corner area fronting it and Lothian Street.’

At the end of the same year the Bristo property was exposed to public roup, but as there were no bidders it was disposed of privately. Soon after the new hospital was built, Mrs. Archibald feued the ground to its north for a new street, now Archibald Place, and the hospital was granted a right of entry from that street. In 1826 the open drain in the Meadows in front of the building was closed in. In 1827, just eleven years after its erection, the roof was reported to be off the level. As Mr. Burn, the architect, gave them no satisfaction, perhaps feeling that he had given as good a bargain as possible for the money, they called in the Deacons of Mary’s Chapel, who pronounced that while unsightly, it was safe enough.

Heating the huge stone building was always a problem, and it was suspected that the girls’ health, which was not as good as it had been in Bristo, was connected with the cold and damp. At first they introduced a system of hot-air from the kitchen led under the floors, like the old Roman hypocaust; in 1839 they opened the original fireplaces, which had been blocked up, and refitted the windows to prevent draughts, dismissing as impractical the new patent hot-water tubes which were recommended to them.

Nor was the original plumbing adequate; before the full water supply for the town came into being both quantity and pressure of water were poor. Times were changing, and in 1859 they stated that

‘neither did the sanitary system form so important an element in public institutions as it now does . . . and the Hospital is now greatly inferior in this respect to nearly all the other institutions of a similar kind in town.’

There were only two small baths on the ground floor, sufficient to provide only one bath each a fortnight, 'and even then the rota commences at three or four o'clock.'

'There was no proper arrangement for lavatories in the original plan. For a single dormitory of fourteen girls there is a small apparatus with four basins in a closet entering from the stairway, where is also a water-closet for teachers; the upper floor with 82 girls has only one lavatory with 21 basins.'

Of water-closets there were originally only two, latterly four, one of which was next the larder. At the same time (1858) they complained that there was a disagreeable smell on the ground floor which they suspected came from the drains. Gas had been introduced into the house in 1830.

As early as 1835 the governors had before them suggestions for major repairs and alterations, and by 1858 they decided that the matter was pressing and that £3500 would have to be expended—a larger sum than it would have cost to accept Mr. Reid's more suitable plan forty years earlier. The floor and ceiling of the Council Room were raised, a new dining-room for the girls built below it and the former eating-quarters turned into kitchens. The dormitory on the main floor was turned into a classroom and one of the existing rooms divided, giving five classrooms in place of three. All sleeping-quarters were concentrated on the second floor, sick-rooms placed in the attics and more adequate lavatory and washing facilities provided. In order to pay for these improvements they realised some stock and sold part of their Roxburghshire estate.

While the governors of the Victorian years were as short of money as had been their Georgian predecessors, they felt the prevailing urge for embellishment, not always in the best taste. In place of the simple sashes, plate glass windows were fitted in the Council Chamber, and plans obtained for stained-glass windows bearing the arms of the Company, the City and

the Earl of Mar.¹ Two ornate lamps similar to those at the Physicians' Hall in Queen Street were erected on the outer stairway, and chairs bearing the Company's crest were purchased.

In 1859 the governors found that their old worries about undesirable neighbours were cropping up again in their new quarters. They protested when they heard that a house next to their entrance in Lauriston Lane had been let for a 'Home for Fallen Women.' They were unable to prevent this, but for two years they held up a proposal to turn number seven in the same street into a Hospital for Sick Children. While they had certain fears about the danger of infection, their main concern was about the type of child and visitor who would be brought near their property. When it was reported that 'the lane is full of squalid paupers on certain days,' they took steps to make a new entrance. Rejecting the suggestion of an entrance from the Meadows, they resolved to make one at the foot of Archibald Place, but as this was not done until 1869 the Maidens had the use of it for only one year before they themselves left the district.

In 1870 came the transformation of the hospital into a fee-paying school and the building became the 'Edinburgh Institution for Young Ladies' or 'The Collegiate School for Girls,' in which the foundationers found themselves joined at their lessons by a large number of fee-paying day girls. The dormitories were needed as classrooms, and houses were taken in Saxe-Coburg Place, and later in Royal Crescent, for the boarders. In 1871 it was resolved to sell the building to George Watson's, now also transformed into a day school, as

¹ In 1878 the governors had to decide between rival claimants to the Mar presentations in the persons of the Earl of Mar and Kellie and the Earl of Mar; in 1874 the House of Lords had granted the title to the former. In the miscellaneous papers of the Company relating to the M.M. Hospital there is a very full account of the rival claims. The rights of presentation for the future were given to Lord Kellie, although Lord Mar had in 1866 been made a life governor and his presentations recognised.

'they had found it desirable to remove the Educational Institution to the New Town.' For this purpose they made extensive alterations to the Hopetoun Rooms at the west end of Queen Street, which they still occupy.

Life in the Hospital

Reference to daily life of the hospital is scanty, particularly in the early minutes. These matters were left to the Governess, supervised by the rota of monthly visitors, and only if a question of finance or discipline entered in was anything recorded in the minutes.

A term frequently used in the early days was 'the family,' and this is not an inaccurate description of the relationship which existed between the governess or matron with her two assistant mistresses, and the forty girls under their care. The staff were homely and practical rather than highly educated. There were few precedents to serve as guides in feminine education, and the training was designed to produce capable housewives rather than, as later, governesses and teachers. School work was at first restricted to the 'three R's' and the methods of teaching were slow and cumbersome; there was much practical work—sewing and spinning took a great deal of time; the older girls helped in the kitchen and went to the market with the mistresses. Most girls had parents or friends in the town, to whom weekly visits were allowed. Apart from these excursions into the old town it was a confined life; at first even walks together were confined to the weekly church parade to Greyfriars, and the back garden provided the only form of outdoor recreation. In this miniature universe the generations of maidens passed their girlhood years, supping their porridge from wooden basins with pewter spoons and drinking their half-mutchkin of ale, while successive governesses grew old in quiet and faithful service to youth in days when modern methods were unknown and the word psychology still unheard.

Like other such hospitals, the Merchant Maidens had their uniform, which the governors, as befitted merchants, supervised as to quality and quantity. One of the first minutes gives a full list of the garments, most of which were made by the mistresses or the girls themselves; it includes such unusual items as 'night mutches of linnen and day mutches or duds with musline borders.' At first the 'gown of Orkney stuff' was to be dyed 'blue or green or any other colour'; later the colour was standardised as green, until in 1782 they decided—

'the girls to be supplied with white freeze cloaks in place of the old green ones.'

But white cannot have been a practical colour and five years later they resolved on cotton drugget 'of a different colour to the Trades Maidens.' There is an early petition from two of the girls—

'Janet Mitchell and Mary Johnstone craving each a new pair of stays for the reasons therein mentioned . . . they deferred consideration to a more frequent meeting.'

For as the matter involved expenditure, and perhaps even a matter of principle, it was not considered trivial; in the end, after debate, the petition was refused. Later in the same year, when the colder weather had set in, three more girls petitioned for new night-gowns—

'they were called in and it appearing that their gowns were quite worn out the meeting allowed new gowns.'

Even then, clothing was a costly matter and the Governess often found difficulty in persuading the Board to make adequate allowance for growing girls. In 1740 she complained that the napkins, or scarves

'are so yellowed and worn that they cannot go to Kirk with them, and they are also cold. As they are not allowed pattens the winter shoes

get worn out and they are detained from Kirk in the hazard of catching cold while they could be repaired for sixpence each.'

And three years later—

'that as the children are allowed only four shifts every two years they not only grow from them but are constantly complaining and in ragges before the time of their getting new ones . . . that there is a very great scarcity of bed linen occasioned partly by the great sickness and partly by the small supply that has been made these several years bygone.'

In 1791 the Governess informed the governors that the girls were going to church in different coloured bonnets and hats given them by friends, so they were granted black silk bonnets, and later beaver hats, the cost being defrayed by the work done by the girls; she continues that

'as they have Cloaks to go to Church in winter, they have nothing for summer round their necks but a single handkerchief, and their appearance would be improved by a worked shawl or plaid at five shillings each, and as this would be used only on Sundays it would do a number of years.'

The Diet and Health of the Girls

In 1733 the governors appointed a committee to enquire if the diet was satisfactory, and a complete diet sheet is given. For breakfast there was 'pottage and milk' and for supper 'pottage and ale' or bread and ale. On Sunday there was one egg to dinner and a flesh supper; Monday and Friday, boiled meat and broth; Tuesday and Thursday, roast meat; Wednesday, two eggs; and Saturday, bread and butter. From time to time alterations were made in the diet, and on occasions there were complaints that it was insufficient. After their entry into the new hospital in Lauriston they asked their surgeon to investigate and in 1823 he reported that he had compared the diet with that of other hospitals and found it equal to any; in particular—

'That in comparing the diet of the Merchant Maiden Hospital with

that of the Trade Maiden Hospital, the inmates of which most nearly resemble one another, the diet of [the former] is superior, because meat is served out two days in the week more than in the Trades Maiden Hospital, for on the two soup days the meat is dispersed in the soup or broth and served out along with that to the girls, whereas in the Trades Maiden Hospital the meat is taken out and consumed by the mistresses and servants. That the quality is of the highest, principal pieces of meat only are received and well prepared.'

No statistics of illnesses are given, but in the minutes there are all too frequent notes of diseases and epidemics. In 1734, on the governors enquiring why the surgeon's account was up, it was reported that the children had had the itch during the summer. In these early days scurvy was common in the house, and in 1737 two girls suffering from it were sent to Corstorphine 'for the water.' When it persisted among the children, the Board blamed too much pottage in the diet, and substituted more bread and ale or bread and milk. We note the almost complete absence of green vegetables from the diet, which to-day would be linked with the outbreaks of this disease.

Gradually there was a realisation that the standard of hygiene of the House was related to the question of health, and in 1776 Dr. Steedman, the hospital surgeon, read a paper to the governors on the health of the girls and made suggestions which were the basis of a series of improvements; his report gives some indication of the living conditions of the time—

'1. The sickroom is exposed to the noise of the street; it has windows on one side only and the ventilation is insufficient. When infectious or putrid diseases are present the air is offensive. [He suggests a room overlooking the garden with a convenient closet.]

2. Through bad habits the feather beds were rotted and should be replaced by flax and wool mattresses.

3. Owing to the shortage, the sick girls have no change of bedding and when sick girls have to be removed back to the dormitories before they have recovered, the others have been forced to sleep three to a bed. More spare bedding is needed.

4. Bed curtains might be dispensed with, as in the Infirmary—this might meet with a bad reception as their use is so universal, but there was a period when this piece of delicacy was unknown in the country nor was it productive of bad consequences; perhaps in their place an extra night cap might be provided.

6. There should be a frame for the open-air airing of blankets.

7. The wooden bed frames harbour vermin and, as in the Infirmary, iron bed frames with canvas bottoms should be substituted.

In 1779, when Dr. Steedman was succeeded by Mr. Andrew Wood as surgeon, a remarkable family connection with the hospital was begun, for in 1812 his son, Dr. William Wood, was conjoined with him and eventually succeeded him, and in 1843 the grandson, Dr. Andrew Wood, likewise became colleague to his father, the three generations holding the position for over a century in both the Merchant and the Trades Maiden Hospitals.

During the eighteenth century there is little mention in the minutes of the recurring epidemics which affected the family in later times, but this may be due to the fact that they were accepted as normal happenings. In 1798 Rebecca Rae, one of the girls, became insane, but although 'she was in a most melancholy state' they resolved to keep her in the house as Dr. Wood hoped for a recovery. In 1814 St. Vitus' Dance, 'a nervous infection or indisposition, though not dangerous' affected several of the girls, who were during the epidemic boarded out in lodgings a little distance from the house with a proper nurse.

In 1824, after removal into the new building, it is recorded that an 'epidemic, prevalent in town, affected the girls; two died, but of diseases unconnected.' Following the epidemic there was much scrofula; some were sent home until better, while others were removed to the 'Bathing Quarters.' The Governess was desired

'to enquire for a proper lodging house at or near Seafeld for them to continue their education there.'

In 1827 Mary Murray, one of the girls, lost her hand and had to leave the hospital; it was decided that she be

'provided with an artificial hand with fork, hook and spring . . . the governors to see the work properly executed.'

In 1830 another girl had her leg amputated and was allowed a cork leg. In the same year there was another serious outbreak of scrofula. In 1832 there was an outbreak of 'spasmodic cholera' in the town and as a precaution everyone in the hospital was confined to the grounds; at the same time a donation was sent to the Peterhead Cholera Fund. The quarantine was imposed on 27th January, and as the outbreak in the town flared up again in the summer and autumn the girls remained confined until 10th December, a period of nearly a year.

In the years following, scarlet fever and scrofula were again prevalent, and in 1838 there is the first mention of a death from consumption, a disease which was to take a very heavy toll in the next twenty years. The next year two girls died of the disease, and a third of water on the brain. From 1823 to 1838 there had been 19 deaths out of an average roll of 90 girls. The governors record their 'painful feelings and anxiety,' but decide that, as for five years during this period there were no deaths, there could be nothing in the building itself to cause alarm. They recommend, however, certain alterations to make the house warmer and encourage the mistresses

'to ensure that active playfulness which in youth is at once the concomitant and cause of good health.'

And they decide also to encourage the early draining of the Meadows as 'likely materially to increase the salubrity of the hospital.'

In the next two years there were three more deaths from

consumption, bringing the total to eight in twelve years, and in addition the surgeon pointed out

'that small pox had been very prevalent in the Hospital of late, 34 of the girls having been attacked with the disease, all of whom, however, were now convalescent with the exception of Mary Johnstone who, it was feared, would lose the entire use of her eyesight. All the children attacked had been previously vaccinated. One girl removed from the Hospital some time before for ill health had since died of disease of the lungs.'

Because of this report it was decided to postpone the admission of new children. Mary Johnstone unfortunately did lose her sight and was sent to her mother with a special grant to enable her to learn a trade.

There can be little doubt that the damp and badly ventilated house, the inefficient drains and the marshy condition of the Meadows had been responsible for much of this ill health. When these were all improved, in the middle years of the century, the mention of disease becomes much rarer and in the later years of the hospital occurs hardly at all.

The Hospital Staff

During the whole period of the Hospital's existence staffing continued on the lines laid down in the original constitution. Supreme authority was vested in the Governess, or Matron, who was assisted by two mistresses, with a visiting male teacher for writing, English and arithmetic. When the number of the family grew, a third mistress was added and the number of visiting teachers, usually men, grew with the addition of extra subjects as the curriculum became wider. The Governess supervised the servants and acted as housekeeper as well as matron, but although she had authority over the mistresses, she did not herself teach. Much of the mistresses' time was devoted to teaching sewing and housewifery, but they assisted with school subjects. The system broke down in both the maiden hospitals, after nearly two centuries, owing to the

increasingly complex pattern of education; the same woman could no longer manage the household arrangements and effectively supervise what amounted to a primary and secondary school, and in both cases a headmaster was appointed. Then came the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, which changed the whole nature of the school.

In appendix VIII the names of such masters and mistresses as are mentioned in the minutes are recorded, but fuller mention must be made of the governesses. From the first minute in 1734 to the great change in 1870, the Hospital had eight governesses. In this period the establishment changed from a simple house of charity for poor girls, providing shelter and the '3 R's' to an educational academy for young ladies, many of whom were in training as governesses or teachers. It is quite obvious from the minutes that the type and character of the governess changed also, with the passing of the years, from the homely and simple eighteenth-century woman to the highly educated Victorian governess.

The early minutes mention a Mrs. Wenson as governess; in 1765 there is the first mention of the choosing of a new governess. The salary at that time was £12 annually, and the list of four is interesting as it provides an insight into the type of applicant—

- '1. Janet Balderstone, age 52, housekeeper and governess to private families.
2. Elizabeth Haliburton, 51, has been my lady's own woman and housekeeper.
3. Margaret Montgomery, 49. Doctrix to Miss Wylie all the time she kept a school, presently keeps a school as mistress.
4. Margaret Anderson, 49, housekeeper in the best families and had charge of the inferior servants and children.'

From this list Margaret Montgomery was chosen; nine years later she died, still in the service of the house. Her successor was Mrs. Hog or Hogg, a widow, who served from

1774 to 1793. During these nineteen years both staff and pupils proved more than usually unruly. The disturbances among the girls, referred to in the minute as 'riots,' are dealt with under the later section on Discipline, but her difficulties with the mistresses must have proved equally worrying.

In 1779 Miss Duncan, the mistress in charge of the 'white seam,' had been reprimanded for her work by the governors and doubtless bore a grudge against the rest of the staff. Within two years the disharmony came to the ears of the Board, and on investigating they

'found that Miss Duncan and Miss Syme did quarrel before the girls in a manner very unbecoming and improper and ought to be reprimanded therefore. Miss Duncan is also remiss in her duties, leaving her classroom and destroying the character of Mrs. Hogg. Her complaints of excessive drinking and neglecting the girls by Mrs. Hogg are not accepted.'

As a result Miss Duncan was dismissed. Four years later the third mistress, Miss Jack, refused to move 'her school' to suit the new arrangements when the house was altered, and she also suffered dismissal. The next year, 1786, Miss Syme, who had previously been associated with Miss Duncan, was brought before the governors and

'found guilty of disharmony with the Governess and Miss Mountford and rudeness to the Governors and ordered to be dismissed at Whitsunday or immediately if she does not conduct herself with propriety.'

During Mrs. Hogg's term of office the salary of the Governess was raised to £20 and that of the three mistresses to £12, as the result of a petition which stated—

'Education is more extensive and liberal than formerly, particularly in millinery, mantua making, washing and dressing caps etc., nett work, lace and fine sewing. That the mode of living and dressing is now very different and much more expensive than they were 50 years ago.'

In 1793 Mrs. Hogg died, and one of the mistresses, Mrs.

Grizel Mountford¹, was elected Governess, a position which she held for 20 years. She inherited many of the difficulties which had faced Mrs. Hogg; the house was falling into disrepair and the attention of the governors was mainly directed to finding a site for a new building; the district had become rowdy, bringing problems of discipline, and the girls themselves were straining at restrictions, affected by the ideas of liberty preached outside. It is no coincidence that these were the years of the French Revolution; in the great world beyond the walls the Bastille had fallen; in the little world inside, Miss Mountford and the governors set up their own chamber for solitary confinement in their attempt to preserve the old order. Miss Mountford, a simple devout Christian of the old eighteenth-century ways, attending the dissenting chapel in Argyle Square when not at service with the girls at Greyfriars, left the imprint of her personality upon the hospital longer than most governesses, and is perhaps most typical of them all. Commencing her service with the Hospital about 1783, she was for ten years one of the mistresses and then for twenty years ruled the establishment as Governess or Matron. Although in her time many of the old ways were passing, the curriculum was widening and the privileges of the burgess class for which the Hospital had been founded were falling, she retained much of the simplicity of the early matrons. She had no new ideas about freedom or self-expression, but if her discipline and her punishments appear severe and even savage, it was because she set the same austere standard in her personal life. She is free from the artificiality of her Victorian successors and treats her charges as healthy girls growing to womanhood rather than as young ladies aspiring to become governesses. At Bristo, she fits as naturally into her little room with its narrow window as she would have been out of place behind the stained glass of Lauriston. She

¹ Referred to in the minutes as either Mrs. or Miss. It would appear that she was a widow and that the latter was a courtesy title.

died just five years before the family's connection with the old building ended.

During her term of office the list of governors included such well-known figures as Sir William Fettes, Sir Henry Moncrieff, minister of St. Cuthbert's, and Mr. George Grindlay, and most of the preliminary negotiations for moving from Bristo were completed. At the beginning the European wars made the food position difficult and a special meeting was held with the authorities of the other hospitals, at which it was agreed to cut down the consumption of bread and to use only the wheaten loaf recommended by the Privy Council and known as Portland Bread. Five years later the price of oatmeal caused them to substitute wheatmeal entirely in the diet.

In 1805 there was a complaint that the imperfect singing of the girls was causing 'interruption' in the psalmody at Greyfriars Church, and the governors invited

'Mr. McDonald, precentor in Greyfriars, and teacher of music to another hospital, to be assistant teacher of music in the hospital, with no salary during the life of Mr. Aitken the present teacher.'

—and they also suggested—

'That the managers of Watson's Hospital and the Trades Maidens be persuaded to permit an exchange to be made of the Seats occupied by the Boys of Watson's Hospital with those of the girls of the Trades Hospital, so as the Boys of Watson's and the girls of this Hospital might sit in Old Greyfriar's Church and the Boys of Heriot's and Girls of the Trades Maidens in New Greyfriar's Church.'

The minutes of the Trades Maiden Hospital tell more fully the story of the intense rivalry which existed between the two maiden hospitals in church, of which this minute was an attempted solution. At one point the rivalry grew so acute that when one hospital sang, the other girls stopped, and remarks were passed about their faces and figures.

In 1809 there was a complaint of harsh treatment of the

girls by two of the mistresses; on the advice of Miss Mountford one was retained, but the other, Miss McColl, was dismissed. Some months later Miss McColl wrote to the governors with serious charges against Miss Mountford. The minutes give no indication of what these charges were, but the governors considered them sufficiently serious to merit a full investigation. On 15th January 1810 they met and intimated that as Miss McColl had not written to substantiate her allegations there was no case to answer; while this motion was being made, however, they were interrupted and a sealed packet was handed in with Miss McColl's substantiation of her statements. Although, after a further investigation, they supported their Governess and rejected the complaint, some of them obviously felt that the time had come for Miss Mountford to retire. Many irregularities of conduct on the part of the older girls suggested that her control over the family was not as firm as once it had been. In 1813 they met to consider whether the Rules and Regulations were sufficient; they decided that they were, but added—

'In the management of so large a family of young girls an unyielding firmness in the enforcement of general rules, and a constant exertion of the powers, both of the mind and body in the head of the family are absolutely necessary, and that these qualifications cannot be expected to be exercised with the same effect in a very advanced period of life.'

It is significant that in the same minute they mention the need for widening the curriculum as now many of the girls desire to become governesses. In September Mrs. Mountford sent in her resignation after thirty years of service.

In 1814 Mrs. Isabella Campbell was chosen as Governess, a position she held for less than four years. Two years later it is recorded that she nursed the girls so carefully during an outbreak of fever, which affected 37 of the children, that on their recovery they presented her with a small gift and a letter,

thanking her for her 'tender care.'¹ It is the more surprising, therefore, that during the same year she was called upon to face serious charges brought by one of the mistresses, and supported by several of the governors led by a Mr. Anderson. To minor charges of keeping a dog which had bitten several of the girls, staying up late, going out at night and taking meals apart from the rest of the staff, he added that of unjust and excessive punishment of a girl, Isabella Foggo, who had recently left. For three months this girl had been confined to her room without candle or heat, except when taken to the sewing-class, where she was segregated from the other girls.

Mrs. Campbell gave in a report which indicated that Foggo had carried on correspondence with a boy called Denholm, whose mother had appealed to her to try to stop the affair. The girl denied writing an improper letter, but had slipped away from the others when going to church to join the boy; that after trying all other means she had confined her, but only under the care of Miss Saunders, one of the mistresses. A majority of the governors agreed that, while she had acted without their consent, it was in the girl's best interests, but a minority strongly opposed this motion and desired the dismissal of the Governess. When a compromise motion was passed, several 'took instruments' to protest, either because it was not strong enough in its criticism of the Governess or because of the rebuke it contained. In the meantime, discipline slipped badly; one mistress left and the disharmony among the staff was so great that the governors appointed a master until the family was put in order. At the beginning of 1817 all the former mistresses either left or were dismissed and a completely new staff was engaged; in October of the same year Mrs. Campbell herself resigned.

¹ This is the only instance of a gift from the girls to a Governess, but in 1831 some of the older girls presented the Treasurer, James Burgess, with a ring and a letter of appreciation. The governors doubted if this were permissible under the Statutes; it was accepted but the donors were warned 'not to do so under any pretext whatever in future.'

During the remaining months of the year the governors themselves made attempts to restore discipline, prosecuting several young men who had broken into the house or garden and expelling some of the older girls. In February 1818 the new Governess, Miss Geddes was introduced, and in October of the same year she led the family into the new hospital in Lauriston.

To Miss Geddes fell the difficult task of fitting the family into its new quarters. While the building was a great improvement upon the ancient house in Bristo, it suffered, as has been indicated, from economy both in fittings and arrangement of rooms and from the sanitary standards, which still remained primitive. The Governess had to contend with an increasing amount of illness and even death among the children, while the problems of indiscipline continued. The habit of complaining to the governors about the Governess had been established, and within three years this weapon was used against Miss Geddes. A letter signed by 'Veritas' brought charges of 'carelessness, cruelty and of having cruelly beaten one of the girls who had come from, or had to go to, the sick-room.' The real situation appeared to be that the girl had poured boiling water into a pail where another girl was washing her feet 'whereby she was much scalded,' and the Governess had given her a slap on the back of the neck. In support of the Governess one parent wrote to the governors—

'I beg you'll state to the Directors my sincere and heartfelt gratitude and admiration of the excellent Education, both with respect to morals and other acquisitions which she has received at their precious institution, and to assure them that no time shall erase the impressions which I have conceived of the manner in which it is regulated.'

In 1825 a letter signed by a parent and an uncle of two of the girls brought further complaints against Miss Geddes, for

'refusing permission to the Girls to leave the House on those days when this is allowed by the rules, in inflicting severe punishment on

the elder girls in particular cases, and in general harshness of behaviour towards them.'

An investigation lasting several months ensued, when it was revealed that the Governess had been annoyed by several young men communicating with the girls while coming to and from church; two of the younger girls, both aged 15, had tricked the seniors by forging a letter as if it came from the young men, which act had disturbed and annoyed the family. When this was discovered and acknowledged, Miss Geddes had inflicted 'a personal punishment in presence of the other children.' The governors interrogated the girls concerned, Isabella Gardner and Jemima Dalrymple, interviewed the complainers and other parents, the governess and doctor, held four meetings and set up a sub-sub committee; after some months the matter ended with a report—

'Although some of the complaints are not altogether without foundation, yet it appears to the Committee that a higher colouring has been given and a different construction put on the matter . . . than the real circumstances of the case seem to justify . . . it has appeared that punishments of the kind alluded to have been inflicted in the House, and on the last occasion with an appearance of severity which the Committee must and do disapprove of, although they conceive it to be just to the Governess to mention that it does not appear to . . . have been resorted to more than three times during the period of eight years, and . . . on the last occasion for a deep moral offence which, had it been brought before the governors would have merited expulsion. The Committee disapproved of the mode of punishment alluded to in any and in every case not only because it does not meet with sufficient discrimination the different degrees of offences for which it may be inflicted, but because it is quite improper and unsuitable in a female institution like that of the Hospital.'

In fairness to Miss Geddes we must note that in 1825 there must have been many such institutions which employed the birch, and that she was seeking some substitution for the governors' penalty of long periods of solitary confinement, sometimes with the cutting out of the hair at the beginning

and expulsion at the end. The two ministers on the Board dissociated themselves from the report, perhaps because the Church inclined towards established customs, or perhaps because they sympathised with the matron's difficult task. In the years following the problem of discipline became no easier, and in 1832 Miss Geddes laid before the Board a letter which she had intercepted passing between one of the former pupils and a girl in the Hospital. It was not revealed what the contents of the letter were, but the governors ordered their Education Committee to consider the whole internal management of the House, particularly that part coming under the control of the Governess. After some months' investigation the committee reported—

'There is at present, and has existed, for some time past, a certain degree of relaxation of discipline among the Girls of the Establishment, more particularly when out of doors and in the grounds of the Hospital. This, however, does not seem to extend itself to the Schools as there, both those under the management of the female mistresses and those under Mr. Johnstone, the Girls are reported to be obedient and submissive to their Teachers. When out of school, the case seems otherwise, the Girls showing a carelessness and inattention to what is said to them, a restlessness under control, and when on the grounds a spirit of mischievousness which leads them to destroy both fruits and flowers, and for which they have not been or will not suffer themselves to be checked.'

This the governors put down partly to the long period of quarantine during the cholera epidemic, but partly to the irritability of the Governess

'who did not enjoy the respect and affection of the children in a degree which is to be desired on the part of an individual filling the responsible situation which she holds.'

As a result of this adverse report it was decided to admonish Miss Geddes and to direct her to visit the schools more frequently; a minority in favour of dismissal raised the question again at the next meeting, when it was agreed to pension her and to advertise for a successor, 'who must be

fully qualified to superintend the education as well as the domestic economy of the hospital.' Miss Geddes had been Governess for fourteen years, and she continued to draw her pension until her death in 1859.

During Miss Geddes' term of office the Board made an interesting presentation to Sir William Fettes for his services to the Hospital—

'It was proposed that he should be requested to accept of the Iron Chest which had been discovered when the Family removed from the old House in Lothian Street as a mark of the sense which the Governors entertain of the value of his services, trusting that the antiquity of the chest and its curiosity as a piece of ancient workmanship may induce him to accept of it.'

Miss Jess Leechman began her twenty-five years of office as Governess in 1832. When appointing her the governors let it be known that they might expect her to teach, probably not so much from the possibility of this arising, for the complete management of an institution of 96 girls entailed full-time supervision, as from their desire to have a Governess who was capable of teaching and so of effectively controlling the larger number of visiting teachers. During her term the curriculum was broadened to provide for the increasing number of girls who left to become governesses in private families or teachers in schools. A large number, however, still left to go into dressmaking or millinery, and during her day the system of 'out-boarding' grew up, whereby such girls were allowed to leave the Hospital at fourteen and begin their apprenticeship; although they lived at home they remained in the care of the governors and drew benefits from the funds until they reached the normal leaving age of seventeen.

Disciplinary problems disappeared during Miss Leechman's day, and there is only one letter of criticism recorded against her. This is not due entirely to the changing times, and the greater submissiveness of the Victorian maiden, but mainly to the introduction of this boarding-out system whereby the

number of older girls in the Hospital was greatly reduced and those who remained were interested in the broader studies which they would need for their vocation. Even the ancient name of the institution, with its associations of charity, was avoided by the staff, and in 1840 the Board records—

'The governors, having been informed that some of the Teachers and others connected with the Hospital were in the practice, when alluding to the Institution, of styling it "The Merchant Maiden Seminary" instead of "The Hospital," the meeting were of opinion that it would be proper and expedient to record in the minutes . . . that the above change received no sanction from them and that they did not recognise any other title, but that conferred on it by the statutes.'

During her predecessor's term, in 1830, the governors decided to combine the office of chaplain with that of English, writing and arithmetic master, and appointed the Rev. William Johnstone to the post. Mr. Johnstone's influence upon the education of the Hospital was noteworthy. He introduced a modification of the monitorial system of teaching which had been popularised by Bell and Lancaster. In 1835 his salary was raised to £135 per annum and he was engaged for full-time duties. Although the change is not recorded officially in the minutes, it appears that he was known as the Headmaster and given charge of the educational side of the institution. He resigned in 1859 after almost thirty years' connection with the school, and died in 1869.

In Miss Leechman's day the Hospital was modernised and new manners and customs replaced the old. The girls' half-mutchkin of ale had long given place to other beverages, and the practice of their drinking a dish of tea with their Governess was encouraged by the governors.¹ In 1845 they suggested

¹ In 1774 Mrs. Hogg had petitioned the governors that 'the use of tea is now become so common that it would be even Indecent not to have it in the Hospital upon some occasions and what tea has been used has been at her expense'; she had entertained the mistresses with tea for breakfast five days in the week and given it to sick girls and friends who visit them. The governors granted a sum for tea as 'a proper Diet or Refreshment for the girls when indisposed.'

that they might further economise on the quantity of malt liquor consumed by the servants—although 'this was given on washing and cleaning days only it might encourage habits injurious to them in later life.' Extra tea and coffee was to be allowed in place of ale.

In 1843 the Disruption had its repercussions within the institution. On 29th May the governors discussed a letter from several of their own number and others petitioning that the girls should follow Mr. Sym from Old Greyfriars and 'sit under him in the Free Presbyterian Church.' The Rev. Dr. Clason and the Rev. David Runciman, representing the City Ministers on the Board, withdrew before the discussion. A motion that they be not sent to Old Greyfriars was carried, whereupon the minority who adhered to the Establishment took instruments and threatened legal proceedings if the motion were put into effect. It was agreed to take Counsel's opinion on the powers which the governors possessed of withdrawing the girls.

On 3rd July a special meeting was called to consider the opinion of Counsel. At the beginning a question arose—had Dr. Clason and Mr. Sym, two of the governors, a right to sit, as they had demitted their charges in the parish church and so could no longer be said to represent the city ministers? Dr. Clason affirmed his continued interest in the welfare of the Hospital and said he had only attended because he was summoned; he resigned and withdrew. Mr. Sym said he had no instruction from the body appointing him that his connection had ceased and he intended to continue, but he withdrew from the discussion, safeguarding his own interests. The governors recorded their loss of Dr. Clason from the Board.

Counsel's Opinion was that in the statutes 'established religion' did not mean only the parish church but any other holding the same faith and doctrine and observing the same forms of worship. This had been tacitly recognised in the case of Miss Mountford, who had been accepted as Governess

although she belonged to a dissenting body, and so the Governess would not be affected unless she refused to accompany the girls to the established church. Both statutes and custom, however, bound the governors to send the children to the parish church.

A motion was carried 'regretting that the opinion does not afford a correct view of the powers of the governors but that considering the threat of legal proceedings it was inexpedient to enforce (their rights) at present.' In a lengthy protest against Counsel's Opinion they reserved the right to remove the girls later if they desired. To a letter from the Presbytery Clerk intimating the names of new minister representatives to the Board, they replied that they were unaware that any vacancies existed.

No further move was made to remove the girls from the parish church, and within a year Dr. Lee of Greyfriars was lecturing to the pupils on modern history. In 1845 it was reported that as Greyfriars had been burned down the girls had attended St. John's, and they debated whether St. John's or West St. Giles would be more convenient, in the end deciding for the latter.

In 1853 there was hung on the great staircase of the Hospital a portrait of Mr. Roderick Gray, factor of their estates at Peterhead, commissioned by them from Sir John Gordon. Mr. Gray, who had factored the estates for forty years, had risen to be provost of the burgh. The painting was considered one of the best of Gordon's works and permission was given on two occasions for it to be temporarily removed and sent to Paris and to Manchester for exhibitions.¹

When Miss Leechman resigned in 1857, Miss Katharine C. Bathgate, matron of the Edinburgh Female Blind Asylum, was appointed. Miss Bathgate was the last matron of the old hospital, and when in 1870 it was turned into a day-school she continued as matron of the boarding-houses where the

¹ The portrait now hangs in the Merchant Hall.

foundationers were accommodated. During her time the establishment, which had been 90 to 96 in the first half of the century, began to drop, to 80 and then to 75. Changes were coming and the whole hospital system was being severely criticised. The year after her appointment it is mentioned that 47 out of the last 61 girls leaving had gone as governesses; the demand was for secondary education more specialised than could be provided even by their wider curriculum.

During Miss Bathgate's years the minutes devote space to more pleasant domestic topics—annual excursions to places as far distant as St. Andrews, the Falls of Clyde, North Berwick, Hopetoun and Jedburgh; photographs taken of the girls about to leave; donations to the Matron and governesses to visit the International Exhibition; holidays in the summer and at Christmas and New Year.

Then, in 1868, came Mr. Simon Laurie, eminent educationist of his day, with a horror of all hospitals and their system, to inspect and peer into every nook and cranny. The ordeal for the Governess must have been severe, but even he has to praise her in his report—

'The girls are evidently quite happy, that is to say, with that negative kind of happiness which seems to be characteristic of hospital existence.'

Discipline

Before passing to the subject of the curriculum it is necessary to return to the old days at Bristo to consider such cases of discipline as have not already been noted in connection with the Governesses. During the years in the old Hospital the number of girls increased from 40 to over 80 and the task of keeping such a large family happy under the restrained manners of the time cannot have been easy. Most of our insight into the life of the maidens is obtained through their misdemeanours, because, then, as now, sin has greater 'news

value' than virtue and the breaking of rules is recorded at length while the keeping thereof is not reported.

Day-to-day discipline was in the hands of the Governess, but graver breaches of rules were brought to the notice of the Board. The lesser punishment was a public rebuke, while in more serious cases the girl would be 'extruded from the house' and lose her foundation benefits. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the latter punishment was replaced by, or accompanied by, long periods of solitary confinement in rooms specially constructed for the purpose, with bread and water diet, and on occasions, the cutting out of the hair. In 1825 the governors forbade in matters of discipline the use of corporal punishment, which had been administered on occasions publicly by the matron.

The first recorded minute relating to discipline is in 1757 when—

'The Governess complained of diverse misdemeanours of Jean Meggat who was called in and rebuked by the Rev. George Hay in presence of the Governors.'

In 1761 a more serious domestic fracas arose, as a result of which the staff and girls were called before the governors and new regulations were read to them.¹ Four years later further additions to the regulations were made—

'The roll shall be called before going about family worship in the evening, and if any of the girls be wilfully or unnecessarily absent they shall be duly chastised.'

And if any girl stays out overnight the Preses is to be notified before she is readmitted.

In dealing with the staff we have noted the wave of delinquency which began about this time and lasted until well into the next century. This was due to the large numbers of older girls of sixteen and seventeen who found the restriction

¹ See Appendix IV.

irksome and longed to start their apprenticeship as dress-makers or milliners, and the task of the governors in checking it was made more difficult by outside influences both on the part of parents and of students and apprentice lads who paid undue attention to the inmates, with unsettling results.

In 1766 Isobel Vere Jackson

'having been reprov'd for certain misdemeanours did thereupon desert the House and has been several nights absent.'

After reading a letter from her mother, the governors resolved to extrude her from the House and deprive her of her emoluments.

In 1774 a riot occurred in which several girls were involved—

'Last night being Sunday, about 7 o'clock the Family had been disturbed by some young men who got into the Garden and broke several Glasses in the Windows of the Hospital while the Family were at public worship. The Governors called in the Governess to inquire about the affair and being acquainted by her that she had got the names of the most guilty persons, ordered that they be forthwith pursued in name of the Governors before the Sheriff of the County to answer for this misdemeanour.'

There is no record of the success of the prosecution, but the governors continued to tighten up the discipline and enforce additional rules.¹

In 1785 Ann Ross was publicly rebuked and expelled, having

'been guilty to several offences and had not attended School for these five weeks nor done any work notwithstanding repeated admonitions by Visitors and Governess and Mistresses.'

¹ In 1775 a girl called Mary Scott was extruded for theft, after having been for two years 'chastised, reprov'd and threatened.' At the same time the governors stopped the practice of going out to evening service as some had used the opportunity to slip away in the darkness—'under no pretence whatever' was any girl to be allowed out after dark.

She led several others into trouble, for it was reported that—

'The Governors had the declaration before the Magistrates of Finlay Wilson and Rutherford, surgeon apprentices, and Weir and Borthwick, painters, whose company the girls had frequented and some of whom had been detected in the Hospital under night. By this it appears that Ann Ross, lately expelled the house, Ann Ramadge, Bell Burt, Jean Lauriston, Ann Livingston and Fanny Burnet had not only kept company with these young men at unreasonable hours, but had gone with them to a house of very ill fame in the town. The Committee called Ann Ramadge and Bell Burt who are the oldest and seem to be the most aggravated offenders, and admonished and reprimanded them in the strongest terms, but without being able to make any deep impression on them. They next sent for Jean Lauriston and Fanny Burnet and talked to them at great length of the great impropriety of their late behaviour and of the immanent danger which they run by frequenting such company, when they appeared to be much afflicted with a sense of their fault and promised amendment. Ann Livingston was so deeply distressed that she could not appear and there is reason to hope that these last three will never offend again.'

As a result the two older girls were extruded from the House, a servant who had connived at the disturbance was dismissed and the others were warned. The Procurator Fiscal was left to deal with the young men concerned, and a month later there was a letter from Alexander Weir,

'father of one of the young men concerned in the late riots . . . setting forth that his son had now been above four weeks confined in prison, and as he wished to send him to America he was willing to give Bond to the governors that he would not remain longer in the Country than until he could find a Vessel to carry him thence, and also for his good behaviour till then, and therefore praying that the Governors would consent to his being liberated from prison.'

To this course the governors agreed on condition of his paying a fine and costs. Even these stern measures did not prevent a similar occurrence two years later, when one Sunday evening three girls climbed the garden wall to meet some

young painter apprentices. In addition to prosecuting the lads, the governors appointed a portress to spend her full time guarding the door—and, we may presume, keeping an eye on the garden wall. The girls concerned refused to give any information to the governors and showed no signs of repentance; reluctant to resort again to the extreme penalty of expulsion, the governors introduced the system of solitary confinement which was to be increasingly used during the remaining years in Bristo—

‘Decided to put Ann McLardie, Peggie Douglas and Christian Rankin into confinement for the space of six weeks, and to be fed during that period on bread and water.’

The period was to be shortened if there were signs of repentance, but if there was no contrition expulsion was to follow—

‘The Committee set apart a proper place for that purpose, and gave orders for fitting it up in three separate apartments. And when it is ready (resolved) to meet to carry it into effect in presence of all the girls.’

The offence was committed in April 1787, but it was not until two months later, on 13th June that the punishment was carried into effect. On 14th July when they had been confined for a month, the girls wrote to the Treasurer—

‘Honoured Sir,

We are very sorry that we have disoblged you and put you and the Governors to so much trouble about us. We own we have been greatly in the fault, but we hope through the strength of God to do better in time to come. We are very sensible it is for our own good that we have been so confined, but not so much as we deserved. We are sensible of the care that has been taken of us and we return our most humble thanks to the Governors and Ministers for their good advices, and we will be very much obliged to you for our liberty if you please to grant us. . . .’

The most genuine clause in this rather pathetic epistle is undoubtedly the last one; many of the others sound as if they had been inspired by some kindly adult—one of the ministers or mistresses. The psychologist to-day would be very unsure of the professed repentance, but the governors were so satisfied with the results of their new mode of punishment that they resolved to keep the rooms ready, and gave the Governess full power, with the approval of the Treasurer, to confine any girl for a period of one week.

In the following January the peace of the House was again broken by an ‘outrage’ in which some of the girls previously punished were again concerned—

‘On the night of the last day of the year, three young men, namely Moses Lothian, apprentice to Mr. Deuchar, seal-engraver, James Williamson, apprentice to Mr. King, painter and glazier, and Alex. Borthwick, apprentice to Mr. Figgins, solicitor at law, broke into the Hospital by getting into the Garden and thence into the House by one of the back windows and afterwards the door of one of the principal wards had been forced open. . . . That this outrage had been committed with the knowledge of some of the girls . . . that they had taken declarations from some of the girls, and these were now laid before the Committee. The Treasurer further informed them that two of the young men had absconded, but Alex. Borthwick still remains in town, and he had been examined and the particulars of that examination were laid before the committee . . . they considered with the fullest attention the affair in which the most serious interests of the House are materially concerned. They were unanimously resolved that it was absolutely necessary to make severe examples of those girls who had taken a prominent part in it.’

This time they resolved to expel and deprive of benefits, Christian Rankin, ‘who had been deeply concerned in a former delinquency, and Katharine Alexander, Ann McLardie and Margaret Douglas were to be put into solitary confinement, fed on bread and water and have their hair cut out, after which punishment they were to be dismissed the house earlier than the date on which they would have been due to leave. A fifth

girl was to be confined for a shorter period and fed on bread and water. When word was received that Ann McLardie's father, who had emigrated, was willing to receive her home immediately, the governors resolved to pay her passage and dismiss her at once. In her place, Katharine Alexander was placed in the punishment room, where she remained, week about with the girl Rankin, for six weeks. On hearing that the young men who had occasioned all the trouble had been fined only one guinea, the governors wrote to protest at the light sentence.

By their severe handling of this case the governors secured peace for ten years, until, in May 1796, arose that which is known in the minutes as 'The Case of Campbell Grant,' which deserves the pen of a novelist rather than the brief extract in our Appendix to do it justice.¹

We have already noted the rivalry which existed between the two foundations sponsored by Mary Erskine. This was aggravated by the fact that they both attended the same place of worship and that their two gardens were separated only by the old city wall. In 1806 three of the Merchant Maidens made a physical attack upon the Trades Maidens, in 'circumstances of an aggravated kind,' the details of which are not given—

'In justice to the other girls of the House, and to the family of the Trades Maidens, the girls were severely censured in public and . . . carried to their place of confinement.'

New Year's Day was always a time of anxiety to the authorities, and in 1813 a disturbance arose on that night—

'Four girls, along with three girls from another hospital, had dined with some young men in a Tavern in Bank Street, where they remained until six o'clock in the evening, and where they were left by the girls of the other hospital. That on leaving the house, they accompanied the young men in a Coach to another Tavern in Bruns-

¹ See Appendix V.

field Links where they remained until nine o'clock, and then returned to the Hospital. That on being questioned on their coming home where they had been and how employed, they gave evasive and false answers, and that a few nights after this happened Isa Foggo and Joan Douglas had gone out of the House without leaves and under disguise and had remained out for a little time.'

While the governors considered that no criminal act had been committed they decided on solitary confinement and sparse diet under doctor's orders for four weeks, and arranged for the rooms, which had fallen into disuse, to be prepared that it might be carried out without injury. It was also decided to abolish the New Year's holidays, the girls to be given tea on the last day of the year and a dinner on New Year's Day.

At the same time they attempted to trace the causes of the disturbances which had been all too frequent during the past half-century. They discontinued the practice of allowing the girls to go outside for lessons from teachers who were not on the staff, and they encouraged the older girls to take increased responsibility, giving them a small sum for assisting in teaching the younger. It is also obvious that they had lost confidence in Mrs. Mountford, who was now advanced in years, and they welcomed her resignation, which followed the recent disturbance. An increasing number of the governors felt that the Bristo district was now so altered that the best solution was to make a clean break, and from this time they agitated to obtain a new building in a different district at an early date.

Five years later the family moved into the new Hospital. The disciplinary difficulties which beset them there have been detailed in our account of the governesses. The final solution to a long period of discontent among the older girls was found not in more rigorous discipline, but in the introduction of 'boarding out,' a system which will be explained more fully in the next section.

Development in Education

It is significant that the first minute dealing with the education of the girls concerns practical training, where for many years the main interest lay—

'Upon a motion by the Governess that the girls should be educate for some months before their going out of the Hospital at the Paistry School, the governors deferred consideration.'

In the same year, 1734, they decided

'to apply to the Trustees for encouraging Linnen Manufactory in Scotland, that one of the French spinning mistresses be allowed to come, without expense, into the Hospital to teach girls the art of spinning.'

And next year

'they resolve to try both French and Scotch ways of spinning, to repair the old wheels and to get six French wheels.'

In 1744 they received a petition from the Trustees mentioned above, that they allow a teacher to instruct the girls in:

'spinning yarn fit for Cambrick after the french method, so that they be taught a business by which they can never be in want of bread.'

At this time, and for the remainder of the century, the girls did a large amount of work which was bought by the ladies of the town. Unlike English Charity Schools, however, the governors did not profit by these sales but divided the proceeds amongst the girls on their outgoing from the Hospital. In 1761 mistresses were rebuked following complaints of the poor quality of this work, and in framing new regulations the governors laid down that it was to be 'neatly and sufficiently done before it be carried Home.' For many years the chaplain's salary was also defrayed from the proceeds of the sales. In considering possible sites for the new hospital at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the governors took into account the effect on their customers in bringing and collecting

the work; they felt that as most of the ladies now lived in the New Town it would be even more convenient for them to call at Lauriston than at Bristo, and in addition, the sum realised from the sales was now so small as to render it unimportant.

As so many of the girls left the hospital to become dress-makers, mantua makers or milliners, sewing remained an important part of the training during the two centuries of its existence. There are references to the mistress in charge of the 'white-seam' and to special classes in dressmaking and mantua-making.

The early minutes are almost devoid of any reference to academic education even of an elementary kind. In 1737, when they chose a new mistress, the governors decided to test her in reading an English book, and to get a report from one of the ministers as to her ability to teach the Christian religion. The appointment of a new mistress in 1745 was postponed owing to the occupation of the town by the Pretender's troops, and in the following year they recorded

'that by the late Calamity of the Country no election had hitherto insued . . . they gave opportunity for renewing applications.'

In 1766, for the only recorded time in the Hospital's history, one of the senior girls was appointed schoolmistress. Ten years later the monthly visitors record that they are not satisfied with the progress in English, and consider whether it would be proper to have a special master or mistress to teach the first principles of reading. This is the first of several adverse reports on progress in reading. In 1777 they had a motion before them to engage a man to devote his full time to teaching reading, writing, arithmetic and church music and to act as chaplain. This was not put into effect and the one visiting English master sufficed for some years.

At this time Mr. Laurie, the visiting teacher, showed the governors a manuscript containing 'several useful instructions

and religious and moral advices for the girls,' and they ordered 500 copies to be printed for their use. Later, Mr. Laurie published a music book, and they ordered copies for the use of the girls, but after inspection ordered the last two songs to be removed.

In 1781 the governess and mistresses presented the petition for increase in salary which has been referred to above, and from which it is clear that they still regarded their work as mainly teaching sewing in its various branches. Three years later, as a result of more adverse reports on the education of the girls, the governors called for a full report from their Committee on Education. This report admits that the present state of education in the hospital is 'very defective,' and suggests

1. That a new teacher attend, whose sole employment in the House shall be to teach English according to the present improved methods received in the established English schools of Edinburgh. That no candidate should be considered who is not either married or at least 40 years old.

2. That this English master should attend and teach six hours in summer and five in winter every lawful day except Saturday.

3. That the girls (about 80 in number) be divided equally into four classes.

4. That the hours, as well in sewing as in work, be—Summer—7-9 a.m.; 10-12; 2-4.30 p.m.; 5-7. Winter—9-12 noon; 2-4.30; 5-7 p.m. That each of the four classes should attend the English master for one period each day.

5. On Saturdays the English master shall attend each class for one hour solely for explaining religion.

6. The Writing master, who is also to teach arithmetic and singing, shall attend three hours—the two senior classes to attend him, viz, the third for writing, the fourth for writing and arithmetic.'

They decided to draw up new regulations for masters and scholars, to have a book for reports, and to give small premiums annually for the best work. Dr. Hamilton proposed that instead of engaging a master one of the three mistresses

should be engaged solely in teaching English; this was, however, considered inadequate and Mr. James Mowat was elected the first English Master. As a result of this one of the mistresses refused to move her 'school' to suit the new arrangements, and had to be dismissed. Later in the year the visitors reported themselves highly pleased with the progress of the English and Writing Masters.

Although the education was still restricted to the '3 R's' and, by later standards, very elementary, these reforms of 1784 placed it on a sound basis. The Education Committee which had brought them into being was allowed to lapse, and not revived again until 1797, when it became a permanent committee of the governors until the last days of the Hospital. One of its first tasks in 1795 was to accept the offer of the Writing Master to teach some geography, and to buy a terrestrial globe, an atlas and a few copies of school-books on the subject. On inspecting the work in the various subjects, the committee reported that it was well satisfied. Mr. Mowat, however, was in declining health and was pensioned off. In 1802, as the Writing Master was considered inefficient, one master was engaged for both writing and English.

In 1805 the governors decided to award annually 'as excitements to emulation' four medals, to be worn at the examinations and school functions. These were for the best reader and reciter of English, the best writer and accomptant, the best sewer and the best in general good behaviour. The four were to be chosen partly by popular vote. These were increased to seven medals, and a year later to ten.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century some of the girls were leaving to become governesses, and as the education provided within the Hospital was inadequate, the custom arose of parents paying for their daughters to receive lessons in French, music and other subjects outwith the building. In 1813 the governors forbade the practice because of disciplinary difficulties, but decided to investigate the possibility of widen-

ing the curriculum to provide for those becoming governesses. As a result of this investigation instrumental music and French were provided at the parents' expense, except in cases of hardship when they were given without charge; at the same time

'older girls showing proficiency shall be employed to instruct and bring forward the beginners, and such Teaching Girls shall get a small sum from the Work Fund.'

Dancing lessons had been added some time previously, and soon the charge for the French lessons was discontinued and it became a regular subject of the curriculum. The governors inspected the work periodically at a function which combined the properties of an examination, prize-giving and display—

'The Family being called in, the children gave specimens of their progress in the different branches of their education which were highly satisfactory, after which the usual premiums were distributed and the family exhorted in terms of the statutes.'

For several years after moving into the new Hospital there were no changes in the girls' education, except that there seems to have been increasing emphasis on academic attainment and a neglect of sewing and housewifery which had once been the main subjects. In 1830 and again in 1833 the governors sense a certain danger in this trend; in the former year they record that as some girls still leave to become dressmakers and nursery governesses they should be taught the washing and getting up of fine linen; in the latter year they desire the girls to be thoroughly instructed in sewing before leaving 'in the event of their afterwards becoming Tradeswomen.' As a result of this uneasiness the Education Committee was instructed to report fully on sewing, and also on instrumental music.

In 1834 the Committee reported. As regards music, the pianos were too old and had lost tune, and the matter was put right by purchasing two new ones. As to sewing, the younger

girls were getting three hours daily; forty girls in the white seam department were receiving four hours daily; thirty seniors were getting five hours daily and were making up the work taken into the Hospital, also—

'All the children's clothes, with the exception of the cotton stockings and the plaiting of their bonnets are made and repaired in the House... so those girls who go to the mantua making trade must leave with a considerable knowledge of it.'

The annual proceeds of the work sold is now about £31, 10s., which is much less than formerly, but—

'The same quantity of work is not now offered by the Public to the Hospital, due to the peculiar situation of the country and to the increased number of respectable females in reduced circumstances who are now compelled to seek their livelihood by their own industry and who engross a considerable proportion of the employment formerly given to the Hospital.'

In addition, they had had to refuse work during the cholera epidemic. The children too were busy making the extra articles of clothing which formerly they did not have—two full sets of nightdresses (formerly they wore their day-shifts at nights) and one set of slip-bodices had been made.

In 1833 the Rev. Mr. Johnstone, who in addition to being chaplain taught English grammar, writing, geography, history and arithmetic, was appointed full-time teacher, and from that date the mistresses confined their teaching to sewing and domestic branches. Although the Governess still had nominal supervision of the education, Mr. Johnstone gradually became regarded as headmaster of the school.

By 1844 it had become obvious that on the one hand the girls who intended to become governesses found the curriculum too restricted when compared with other schools, while on the other hand those going out to a trade such as dressmaking found the standard too high and the last years at school irksome. The governors called for a full report from their

Education Committee, and as this document is of interest in providing a detailed picture of education in the hospital a century ago, it is given as Appendix VI.

This report mentions for the first time the possibility of 'boarding out' those girls for whom the last two or three years were of the least use. The governors followed this up, and two years later, in 1846, received another report. Contrary to that of 1844, this report indicates that most of the girls still go out to become dressmakers. It estimates the cost of maintaining and clothing a girl in the Hospital at £15-£16 per annum; without additional expense to the governors a girl becoming apprentice to a milliner might leave at 14 and might be allowed during her three years' apprenticeship £16 per annum with £10 for her outfit.

As a result of this report it was decided to introduce the 'boarding out' system, with certain safeguards. A girl, on completing her fourteenth year, might become articulated to a dressmaker or milliner or similar trade if the governors approved the case; regular reports on her conduct and progress would be called for and she would still be considered as belonging to the institution; she would receive an allowance of £15 per annum for three years, or until she became 18, when she would receive her benefits as if she had newly left the Hospital. Time spent on sewing was to be slightly cut down, the younger girls getting three hours with one hour for play in place of four hours sewing; the older girls were to get less repairing and mending and concentrate on finer work; for the making and mending of clothes outside assistance was to be secured.

Now that some of the girls were out-boarded, the governors were able to raise the educational standard of the seniors to suit the embryo governesses. In 1851 there is mention of classes in Natural History and Physical Science, and in the same year the Education Committee reports—

'It is of the utmost importance to all aiming at the profession of

governess, which is the case with nearly four-tenths of the girls, to have as great an acquaintance as possible with the modern European languages, particularly French, German and Italian, so as to secure at their first outset such a status as may enable them the more easily to procure proper situations, and may tend materially to smooth their path in after life.'

They decided to offer French and German in the curriculum leaving Italian to be added later. In 1852 they began to print the courses of study each year after the fashion of the ladies' fee-paying seminaries. In 1855 there was a motion, which does not seem to have been put into effect, to have the school inspected by Dr. Cumming, H.M. Inspector, as was the case with Watson's. Instead the Education Committee made a very full report on the state of education in the Hospital.¹

The report, which reviewed the whole curriculum, and suggested that an inspector was not required if the Committee visited more often, was accepted and was followed by a motion by Dr. Nisbet

'that as the girls are denied the instruction of a mother in the domestic arts and in nursing sick members of a family, the Matron should take the elder girls round when she inspects household operations, explaining the practice of housekeeping and the manner in which cooking is required of a mistress to be performed, and seeing that the girls are able to prepare the drinks and little delicacies any sick members of a family require, and should generally do for them in regard to Household matters of every kind that which a mother in the middle classes considers it a duty to do for her own children.'

In 1858 it was reported that of the last 61 girls leaving, 47 had become governesses. It was agreed to have more music teaching, and one of the senior girls was to remain, assisting with different duties and eating with the schoolmistresses. In 1859 Mr. Johnstone resigned owing to ill-health, and a slight alteration was made in the teaching arrangements. In place of a chaplain, the matron herself was to undertake family

¹ See Appendix VII.

worship and the remainder of Mr. Johnstone's duties was to be divided between two male visiting teachers. This arrangement did not work very well and in a year they

'considered appointing a person of higher attainments as Senior English Teacher, as most girls go as governesses and need the highest standard of female education.'

The person appointed, they add, should be a married man. In May 1861 Mr. David Pryde was appointed, and when in November he received the offer of Senior English Teacher in Watson's Hospital, the governors made arrangements in their classes to allow him to hold both positions. Two years later we hear that he applied for a lectureship in the new School of Arts, and that he was teacher of English in another ladies' institution; he was also the author of a volume entitled *English Literature*. The governors allowed him to introduce *Macbeth*, divested of all objectionable passages, into the senior class.¹

In 1864 the girls began to take the Middle Class University Examination, the title of which presumably referred to academic attainment and not to social status. Among the applicants at this time were teachers from the Ladies' Institution in Park Place and the Ministers' Daughters' College—the Hospital was on a level with the best seminaries for young ladies.

In the following year, 1868, the governors invited Mr. Simon S. Laurie to report on the system of education in the Hospital. The subsequent events, leading up to the closure of the Hospital within two years, are dealt with in the following concluding section.

The Laurie Report and the Last Days at Lauriston

'The Preses stated that the Governors of other Hospitals under the charge of the Merchant Company had recently resolved to request

¹ Mr. Pryde remained to become the first Headmaster of the school when it was reorganised as a day college.

Mr. Simon S. Laurie, secretary of the Education Committee, to visit these hospitals and report on the system of education conducted in each of them, on hearing which statement the Governors unanimously resolved that Mr. Laurie should be requested to visit the Merchant Maiden Hospital and report whether any suggestions occurred to him in reference to the present course of study in the Hospital.'

This minute, dated 20th April 1868, marks the beginning of the end of the old Hospital. Down the years the Merchant Company had left the Governors a completely free hand in managing the Hospital, and the most important decisions had been taken without reference to the parent body. The only recorded instance in the minutes of interference by the Company was in 1817, when the general meeting requested that a copy of the governors' minute of censure on Mrs. Campbell, the Governess, be furnished to them, and this was refused. Now, however, the Company itself is evidently concerned about the continuance of the hospital system and the Governors of the Merchant Maidens tend to fall in with a common policy for all the Company's hospitals. The final decisions to change the system are made not by the Governors but by the Company and by joint meetings of all the hospitals. Without any record in the minutes and without any formal delegation, or diminution of their powers, the Governors accepted the final decisions which ended the old system. This makes the last two years of the minutes unsatisfactory as a record, and the end comes as something of an anticlimax, when they concern themselves only with the handful of foundationer boarders sent out to Saxe-Coburg Place under the aging Miss Bathgate.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of complete reorganisation of the Scottish educational system. Political and religious considerations caused the arguments on administration to take on a bitter tone, while in the schools themselves content and method were both revolutionised. Much of the controversy was irrelevant to the hospital schools,

but criticism did not pass them by. They were expensive to maintain and could provide for a very limited number of children. In three Merchant Company Hospitals, with a total annual income of over £12,000, it was estimated that the actual sum spent on education was just over £2000. The old distinction of burgh citizen had gone and made many of the original terms of the presentations meaningless. The wider curriculum necessary for the senior classes made it increasingly difficult for the institutions to remain efficient when judged by the new standards. The hospitals themselves had changed and they were more like boarding schools for the middle-class than, as the donors had envisaged, places of charity for sons and daughters of the needy.

In addition, there was a growing distrust of institutional life, of which the Victorians seemed to see only the worst side. They were conscious that the hospital children were deprived of the very full home life which was a feature of their age (cf. Dr. Nisbet's motion of 1856). They did not realise that, at least south of the Border, wealthy parents were paying dearly to obtain the advantages which institutional life had to offer. In their zeal for education they were perhaps too ready to forget that the original bequests had regarded education as secondary to maintenance, and that the monies had been left for relief rather than for schooling.

Although as yet they had no intention of abandoning the hospital system altogether, the governors were influenced by the many criticisms which were gathering weight, and to which no satisfactory reply seemed to be forthcoming. No educationist seemed to be found to put in a good word for the old system, and the governors were practical men, swayed by the prevailing ideas of their times.

In April 1868 they commissioned Mr. Laurie¹ to report;

¹ Born in Edinburgh in 1829, Simon Somerville Laurie has been described by Alexander Morgan as 'the most outstanding educationist in Scotland during the latter half of the nineteenth century.' For many years he was secretary to

without waiting for his reply they discussed, in May, the possibility of adopting the system introduced twenty years earlier in Watson's, of admitting fee-paying day-pupils along with the foundationers. They admit that

'for some years attention in the city has been drawn to the large sum spent on hospital education.'

which they estimate at £50,000 annually. After discussion they resolved to admit day-girls

'providing it in no way interferes with the establishment of resident girls or affects the rights of patrons.'

The incomers were not to be under 12 years of age and were to possess the same qualifications as required by Statute XI of their regulations. They would remain until 17, paying ten guineas per annum, which would include the cost of dinner and music.

The admittance of fee-paying girls was not entirely novel to the Merchant Maiden Hospital; in 1702 a meeting of contributors had passed a resolution that

'female children may be educated if they pay 200 merks of donation and the charges of maintenance and clothes.'

Such children were to form part of the family, but were to be privileged by sitting and dining with the Governess. While there is no note in the minutes of any girl being admitted under this rule, it is probable that in the early days many parents only obtained a presentation by reimbursing the patrons. In addition, there was an entry fee of 20 pounds

the Church of Scotland Committee on Education which controlled all the parish schools; later he was also the first holder of the Bell Chair of Education in Edinburgh University. He was an outspoken critic of the old hospital system, and as secretary of the Endowed Schools (Scotland) Commission played a leading part in the reformation which turned the hospitals into day-schools. He it was who advised the Merchant Company to obtain the private Act of Parliament in 1869 which turned the hospitals into day-schools.

Scots. In 1770 there was a memorial presented to the governors

'that the present practice of the girls paying 20 pounds Scots on admission be dispensed with, the same bearing hard upon such of them as are the greatest objects of charity.'

Six years later there was a motion to raise the fees of presentations as

'the prices of the necessities of life had become almost double what they were when these funds were fixed in 1718.'

Next year it was revealed that two girls elected six months previously had not yet been received into the Hospital because the indigency of their friends was so great that they could not advance the necessary twenty pounds. In this case the fee was dispensed with and it was agreed to abolish it altogether for all Merchant Company and limited presentations—that is, girls who were nearest to the original terms of the bequest, daughters of granddaughters of burgesses, would in future be admitted without entrance fee, while others, being objects of charity outwith the limited class, would continue to pay.

Since these resolutions a century had passed. The school was now offering an excellent education for which there was considerable demand. Any fee they might charge would be considerably below those of the numerous 'academies' which offered for girls the only alternative. Approving the motion, the governors called a meeting of Donors and Contributors to secure powers to put it into effect. In September 1868 the governors met to elect 'day-boarders,' of which they had resolved to take in twenty-five.

Unfortunately, the demand was not as great as they had expected. In July of the following year, the Treasurer, Mr. Robert Walker, handed in a report on the situation, with suggestions for the future. Of 21 applicants as 'day-boarders,' 20 had been admitted, of whom four withdrew half-way through the session. There were two resident fee-payers, and

one foundationer had become a fee-paying day-scholar. Mr. Walker states—

'As a rule, the day pupils are not equal to the resident girls. The latter in general prepare their lessons better and take a higher position in class.'

He calculated that if the present rate of fees was continued £50 would be added to the expenditure, but the benefits would be worth it, and when the school became better known the fee might be raised. He suggested an establishment of 30 day-pupils. For the residents the entry age should be 10 to 14, so that the institution would compare with English boarding schools. This scheme would cut costs, as the girls would be less time in the hospital, and would offset the increased cost of education. He recommended an entrance examination which would give preference to merit. He mentioned that since Mr. Johnstone had left there was less of the atmosphere of a 'normal' school, less monitorial teaching as the masters, attending only part of the time, did not know the girls so well. He suggested that it would be an advantage if those going out as teachers were sent, on completing their time in Hospital, to the normal school for a session.

This report by the Treasurer was received in July 1869, but by this time two matters of considerable importance were before the governors, which were to lead to changes even more fundamental. One was the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Bill. The inspirer of this measure was none other than Mr. Simon Laurie who had reported on their Hospital. It proposed granting powers to governing bodies to alter the management of their institutions, but also envisaged government direction to compel governors to make alterations. At a special meeting in May 1869 the governors gave general approval to the Bill and sent a deputation to London to recommend certain changes to the Lord Advocate.

The other matter of importance was the reception of the Laurie report, which was laid before the governors on 20th

July 1868, just three months after the Preses had recommended them to ask Mr. Laurie to inspect the school.

The Laurie report to the governors of the Merchant Maiden Hospital begins by surveying the whole field of female education—

‘The truth is that the intellect of women is a very difficult growth and that it is interwoven with her imagination, her affection and her moral emotions much more intimately than in man.’

What the world wants is not two men, a big one in trousers and a little one in petticoats, but a man and a woman.’

He protests against giving girls the same type of education as boys, and suggests more practical household subjects and music. Then he continues with a review of life in the hospital—

‘The 75 girls are well-clothed, well housed and in all respects well cared for. . . . The girls are evidently quite happy, that is to say, with that negative kind of happiness which seems to be characteristic of hospital existence. . . . The girls seem to me to be over-governessed, and over superintended. I should think it impossible for them even to move without the consciousness of some eye being upon them.’

Turning to their education, he analyses the figures of the past ten years; 23 girls have left for home duties, 10 for dressmaking, 81 for teaching, 22 to marriage, 6 have died. Therefore, he reasonably concludes, the education should be directed mainly to teaching.

In the practical subjects, he is satisfied with the sewing, except that every girl should be able to cut out. He notes that they are not allowed to do laundry work lest they come into contact with the laundry-maids, and comments that what is good enough for girls in a higher sphere is good enough for those in the Hospital. He suggests a course in cookery for the last year. For all subjects he suggests dividing the girls into four classes, each with two sections.

The English department comes in for severe criticism, particularly in the advanced section. Reading from Dickens and from newspapers he considers good, the grasp of Shake-

spearean grammar poor, and ‘of literary appreciation there was not a glimmer. . . . I suspect,’ he adds rather illogically, ‘we must attribute (the defects in English) to the influences of hospital life.’

His criticism of this department ends with the complaint that

‘the highest class is utterly unfit for any reading more advanced than Goldsmith or Scott.’

On the whole, there must be few English departments of secondary schools to-day which would reach the standard he expected, and his complaint of their lack of grasp of Shakespearean grammar contrasts strangely with his previous emphasis on the uselessness of many of the subjects then taught to girls.

Their arithmetic he dismisses with the comment that ‘some might be fitted to become bookkeepers.’ History and geography, art and singing are good. The piano classes are well organised and well taught. French is good in the junior classes, but the seniors are backward. Of only one class does he speak highly—

‘The most intellectual class in the school is unquestionably the German. . . . Mr. Weisse possesses the art of educating through instruction in the highest perfection.’

This, of course, was the most exclusive class in the hospital, only the best girls being allowed to take it. In summing up he suggests—

‘The analytic powers of the female mind would be much strengthened by a deeper and stricter grammatical training.’

While of girls’ education in general he states—

‘It is so much a thing of unconnected facts, dead words and superficial accomplishments, and fails to reach and vitalise the intelligent soul.’

He speaks of the ‘moral evil influences of Hospital life,

and the depressing weight of the system from which there seems no escape.'

He gives no revolutionary suggestions for improvement, suggesting pocket money for the older girls, dolls and more playtime for the younger and allowing each girl to select her own clothes.

The report, which is signed from his home at Brunstane, Portobello, is a clever if not unbiased document. Nowhere does he suggest the end of the hospital as an institution, but the implications are clear, and coming with all the authority and experience of the foremost educationist of his day, was bound to carry great weight.

On 4th August 1869 the Education Committee presented to the governors their recommendations as a result of the Laurie report. Their only suggestions were for greater diversity in dress and an intake of up to 30 day-girls; to these, however, was appended a much longer list of suggestions by their Convener, Mr. Dickson. The Convener noted that one of the teachers, Mr. Taylor, was much hurt by the adverse criticism and the slight on his teaching; he had shown his results to experts and they had been approved. Mr. Schneider blamed domestic reasons for any deficiencies in his teaching. It was suggested that they be both called in and improvements in their classes discussed. The Convener's other recommendations were

'1. That uniform be discontinued and the girls allowed to choose a pattern from similar fabrics.

2. That the matron and governesses dine and breakfast with the girls. That they should not be always present in the classes and accordingly that one mistress might be dispensed with.

3. That 30 outdoor pupils (aged 10 to 15 on admission) should be taken.

4. That resident pupils be admitted from 10 to 14 years.

5. That the resident girls above 11 be allowed to go home alone if their parents are in town.

6. That the elder girls be allowed training in teaching.

7. That there should be more outdoor recreation (such as croquet) for the older girls.

8. That time for revising be limited.

9. That time for arithmetic be increased.

10. That time for map drawing be given to the older classes.'

This scheme, if adopted, might have given a new lease of life to the old Hospital while retaining much of its original character. In the meantime, however, the Master of the Company, Thomas J. Boyd, had been preparing a fuller and more revolutionary scheme to cover the four Hospitals. While the Merchant Company had turned to Simon Laurie for a full report on the system working within their Hospitals, they themselves, under the guidance of their Master, designed the new pattern which was to supplant the old. In July 1869 Mr. Laurie had, indeed, made suggestions in a supplementary report to the governors¹ and claimed—

'If these suggestions are carried out it might become a model Primary and Secondary School for Girls and accomplish much for female education in Scotland without damage to the interests of the legitimate beneficiaries.'

On 28th February 1870, Mr. Boyd presented his report to a joint meeting of the governors of the four Hospitals. His suggestions were

'1. To erect or lease one or more establishments for the use of children belonging to Watson's, the Merchant Maidens and Stewart's hospitals, if necessary in different localities from the Hospital buildings, so that these buildings may be converted into Institutions for education only, or Day Schools.

2. To allow selected children to reside in their family with approved

¹ Laurie's suggestions in his supplementary report of July 1869 included separate primary and secondary courses, with examinations, and any girls failing to reach the standard to be removed, whether day-girl or foundationer: that the name 'Collegiate School for Girls' be adopted, and that a new entrance be substituted, as Lauriston Lane 'is full of squalid paupers on certain days.'

persons, paying a sum of money for maintenance in place of maintaining them in the hospitals.

3. The claims of children to be placed on the foundation to remain as at present, but the Governors to have power to refuse to admit any if it would be prejudicial to the interests of the others, and to remove any whose continued connection would have a bad effect.

4. To admit as day scholars any deemed suitable, but the privileged classes to have a preference if answering to the description in the Statute respecting poverty.

Note: The admission to day schools on payment of fees is in accord with Mr Forster's English Endowed Schools Act, and works well in the Merchant Maiden Hospital, while the admission of boys to Watson's Day School gratuitously has not realised the anticipations which were formed, few boys having been sent to it; in Gillespie's education was formerly given free, but when fees were charged attendance increased.

5. To carry education in Stewart's to a more advanced stage than that of Gillespie's School, and that of Watson's Hospital further on than Stewart's. The education in Stewart's and Watson's to have a Commercial and a Classical side. Power to be obtained for giving technical Education in both Hospitals.

6. Power to select privileged boys and girls of merit whose circumstances require it and to place them on foundation, also to transfer boys from Watson's to Stewart's foundations and vice versa.

7. To provide apprentice fees, university bursaries etc to boys of promise at Watson's and Stewart's and allowances to Merchant Maiden girls for educational advancement.

8. To endow a class in the University for teaching the Theory and Practice of Commerce, Finance and Mercantile Law.

9. To have qualified inspectors.

10. To sell Gillespie's Hospital and erect another less expensive in a different locality, and to use the surplus revenues in outdoor pensions, or to do away with a Hospital House altogether and apply the funds to the distribution of pensions.

11. To extend the usefulness of James Gillespie's free school either by enlarging the present building or selling it and erecting another.

12. To establish an Industrial School in the city for neglected boys and girls.'

The meeting agreed generally with these suggestions, and appointed a committee to confer with the governors of other Hospitals near Edinburgh, to take advice and prepare separate schemes for each Hospital. The final scheme which was adopted was generally the same as Mr. Boyd's proposals except that the Industrial School never came to pass, and a new girls' day school, George Watson's Ladies' College, was set up in George Square.

From this point the minutes of the governors lose the thread of the new developments, which were put into operation with remarkable rapidity. On 8th April 1870 the Education Committee minute records that—

'The Committee considered the present state of teaching in the Hospital and looking to the important changes proposed to be introduced under the Endowed Institutions (Scotland) Act and to Mr. Simon S. Laurie's report, they unanimously agreed to dispense with Mr. Taylor's services as teacher and to report what changes they consider necessary.'

Without any formal change recorded the hospital is now mentioned as the 'Edinburgh Educational Institution,' and there is an enigmatic entry where the governors agreed to increase the salary of 'Miss Kay, the Lady Superintendent of the Institution' from 100 to 150 guineas. Miss Bathgate is only mentioned as in charge of the boarding-houses which were taken in Saxe-Coburg Place. At the governors' meeting on 30th May the heading 'Merchant Maiden Hospital' is crossed out, and from that date the meetings were headed from the Company Offices in Hanover Street. On 28th November the governors appointed a standing committee to 'carry out the remaining purposes of the provisional order relating to the changes.' In July 1871—

'It was resolved to sell the Hospital to Watson's as it was found desirable to remove the Educational Institution to the new town.'

At the same time it was resolved to move the boarding-houses from Saxe-Coburg Place to Royal Crescent, and there was a complaint from householders in the Hopetoun Rooms that the alterations to the building in making the new school had resulted in a loss of profit from lodgers. In October 1870 Mr. Pryde, the Headmaster, is mentioned; in November 1872 a complaint by a parent against his actions is not received, and from this time quarterly reports from the Headmaster and from the boarding-house matron, Miss Bathgate, are received. As the number of resident foundationers was decreasing it was agreed that one Governess with Miss Bathgate would suffice. When the last of the girls who had been received into the old Hospital left, the history of the Merchant Maidens as a Hospital may be said to have ended. In its place was the 'Edinburgh Educational Institution for Young Ladies,' housed in the Hopetoun Rooms at the west end of Queen Street, which was to fulfil its promise and become one of the foremost girls' schools of the country.

At the same time Mary Erskine's other institution, the Trades Maiden Hospital, had dealt with the new challenge in quite a different way. The governors opposed the alterations which would be imposed in them by the new Act, and in the end retained their Hospital; in view of the increasing difficulties in educating the girls, however, they gave up the educational side and sent the girls out to the new Watson's College for their schooling. Thus arose the strange position of one Hospital giving up its boarders while retaining its school, and the other giving up its school but retaining its boarders, and in that form they both continue to-day.

The Minutes of the Merchant Maiden Hospital, contained in twenty-two volumes, are in the possession of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh, to whom the author makes grateful acknowledgement for permission to consult the volumes and to publish extracts; it is perhaps unnecessary to state that he alone is responsible for any comments or expressions of opinion on matters of policy. He records his indebtedness to the Secretary of the Company,

Harvey M. Jamieson, Esq., B.L., W.S., for much helpful advice and patient interest during the several years when the material was being collected, and for making available blocks for illustration: and to the Headmistress, Miss Muriel Jennings, M.A., for her co-operation and for help in selecting and permission to use certain illustrations. His thanks are due also to the Company's Officer, John Thomson, for making easy the consultation of the volumes.

Of the 22 volumes of minutes, only the first 13 are necessary for a study of the old Hospital up to the point of its transformation into a day school in 1870. The volume numbered One begins in 1733 and there is no indication as to whether previous books were lost (as was the case with Trades' Maiden records up to 1739) or whether they were then for the first time kept separately from the records of the Company.

There are a few miscellaneous papers of considerable interest, also in possession of the Company, and relevant material from these has been included in these pages. The matrons' books and visitors' records, which would have thrown much valuable light on the day-to-day life of the Hospital have unfortunately not been preserved; nor do there appear to be any articles of historic interest left except the great 'tapestry.'

APPENDIX I

Letter of James Erskine, Lord Grange, dated 10th September 1707, in Miscellaneous Papers of the Merchant Company.

'I give you this trouble at the desire of severals of your own Number and some of the Reverend Ministers of this City. The late Mr. Orr having left many poor Children behind him altogether unprovided, will, (I assure myself) engage your Charity to take in to your Hospital, Isobel Orr his Eldest Daughter, and when you have finally ended the Bargain with Mrs. Hair, so that there will be some persons who shall have right to present Girls to your Hospital by vertue of Mrs Hair's Mortification to it. I assure I shall use my utmost endeavours with these Persons to continue this Girl Isobel Orr in the Hospital on Mrs Hair's account. I hope I may prevail with them, and in the mean time if you please to anticipate a little and take the child as soon as you can, the hazard to the Hospital can not be great; and it will be a great favour to,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Most Obedient Servant,
JAMES ERSKINE.

To The Governors,
Of the Maiden Hospital
Founded by the Merchant
Company of Edr. &c.'

APPENDIX II

Preface to 'Rules and Constitutions for Governing and Managing the Maiden Hospital Founded by the Company of Merchants and Mary Erskine in Anno 1695'.

A small printed booklet dated 1731 among Miscellaneous Papers of the Company.

CHARITABLE READER,

As there is no Duty more frequently commanded and commended in the holy Scriptures than Charity and Bounty, and Liberal Giving

to the Poor; So no Charity is more Pleasing to God, and Profitable to mankind than the Erecting and Providing Hospitals for the maintenance of the Aged and Young, who can do nothing for themselves, being most Diffusive, Extensive and Lasting and so most Honourable to the Giver.

This Honourable City of Edinburgh had Divers Hospitals for Aged Men and Women and the famous Hospital founded by George Heriot for Boys, which are for the relief of Many. But there was found wanting one for the Relief of Girls; for the supply of which there was a Design set on Foot a few years ago, by some Persons of a truly Publick Spirit, especially of the Merchant Company of this City, who themselves liberally contributed, and solicited for contributions from others, to so pious and charitable a Work being much encouraged therein by the Worthy and Charitable Mary Erskine, relict of James Hair, druggist, who not only purchased convenient Lodgings, with large and pleasant Gardens, and other accomodations every Way fit for that Design, to the value of 12000 merks but also a little before her Death, added a considerable to her former bounty.

(The preface goes on to encourage giving and legacies and is signed 'Your Soul's Well-Wisher').

APPENDIX III

Early Petition to the Governors, from Miscellaneous Papers of the Company; undated.

Unto the Rt Hon. the Lords and Others, Managers of the Merchants Maiden Hospital.

The Petition of Margaret Laing, Relict of the Deceased Archibald Row, Merchant in Edinburgh.

HUMBLETH SHEWETH—

That when your poor Petitioner did in May last present a petition to your Lordships and Honours, holding forth her Miserable and poor condition, her husband being Dead; and that she being left with two poor Fatherless Orphans had no mean of Subsistance for them,

Therefore craving your Lordships and Honours would be pleased to Receive Marjory Row one of the two Poor Children abovementioned

into the said Hospital, as the said Petition bears. Upon which Ye were pleased to cause Book her; but as yet she is not received in. And Your Poor Petitioner having already sold all her Cloaths, for the saids Children their Maintenance, and having now no Means of Subsistence for the said Marjory,

May it therefore please yr Lordships and Honours now to receive the said Marjory into the said Maiden Hospital,

And yr Petitioner shall ever pray.

APPENDIX IV

Resolutions of the Governors anent Discipline, 1761.

'The Preses acquainted the Governors that the Governess and Mistresses of the Hospital had made mutual complaints of one another and of the Girles and that he and the auditors had made some inquiry into the affair . . . and that it appears to them that there had not been that unanimity and Freindship that ought to subsist among the Mistresses nor that regaird that is due by them to the Governess, and the Girles had failed in that respect and obedience which is due . . . and that they had been so careless of their work that it was represented by several good judges as frequently insufficient and had occasioned many complaints from the Employers; whereupon the Governors came to the following resolutions—

1. That the Governess has the supreme authority and is to be obeyed by all within the House, as well mistresses as girles and servants.

2. That the Mistresses are to have the more immediate inspection of the girles, both as to their behaviour and learning, and therefore are to be respected and obeyed by them. That the Mistresses are to take particular care that all the Work given into the House be neatly and sufficiently done, and before it be carried home, are to show it to the Governess for her approbation.

3. That as the profite of the Girles' work is divided among them at their going out, therefore the Governess shall keep a Book for recording their Dilligence and Behaviour that due regard may be had in distributing the profites to the application and discreet behaviour of each girl while in the House.

4. That the Governess and Mistresses be regular in attending family worship in the Hospital and along with the Girles and servants attend publick worship and take particular inspection of their behaviour in Church.

5. That the Governess and Mistresses be enjoined to live in freindship with one another and concurr in promoting the interest of the Hospital and shewing a good example to the Girles. That if at any time the Girles are disobedient or continue in any bad practice after having been reprov'd for it, they are to acquaint the Governors that such Girl may be turned out of the Hospital.'

APPENDIX V

'The Case of Campbell Grant'—1796.

'On Sunday se'night the governors discovered that Campbell Grant, one of the girls, had left the family on their way to Church and afterward absented herself from the House. On enquiring the cause of this, she at first declined to give any reasons for it. But afterwards some suspicions arose which made it necessary to make a more particular investigation into her conduct, and the company she associated with upon the Monday afternoons when she and the other girls are permitted to visit their Parents and friends. This was followed by a confession of her being several times of late in a low House in company with a person whose name she says is Church, and alone with him, and there is good reason to think that a sister of her own who resides in Town and who is of bad character has been the means of introducing her to this company, or at least has countenanced the meetings. She declared that while in company on the street with her sister, a person of the name of Church, as she believed, made up to her, and pretending to have some acquaintance with her Father, offered some civilities to her sister and her and prevailed on them to go with him and drink Tea in a house which she described; that in company with her sister she, upon another evening, met and drank Tea with the same person, and at both times got money from him. That upon another occasion, Church again made up to her when she was alone, and persuaded her to accompany him to the same house, and she having gone with him accordingly, he had on that occasion used some very improper practices with her, and again gave her money. That on

another day on the street she had fallen in with him, but shunned him and had not upon any after occasion gone with him to any house.'

The girl was immediately put into solitary confinement, and would have been expelled, but that 'she is a real orphan and her sister a bad character,' so she was continued in confinement until 'a situation however menial, be found for her at a distance from Edinburgh.' The affair had a happy ending, for a year later there is a letter from her employer at Stanley Mills notifying them—'That she was to be married to a very industrious, creditable Tradesman, and he (the employer) had been much satisfied with the girl's conduct and behaviour.'

—whereupon the governors resolved to pay her a sum from the profits of the girls' work towards the furnishing of her home.

APPENDIX VI

Report by the Education Committee to the Governors, 1844.

'... while the Committee feel that they have it in their power to report very favourably of the Education of the Hospital, as at present conducted, yet it has appeared to a majority of them, that a change in some of the departments might be very beneficially introduced. To enable the Governors to judge of this, however, it may be necessary to bring under their notice the system pursued under the present arrangements.

The system embraces English in all its branches, including History, and Geography, with Writing and Arithmetic, French, Drawing, Music and Dancing, with Knitting and Sewing, that very necessary element in the education and training of a young Female.

The English Department is under the exclusive charge of Mr Johnstone, who also teaches Writing and Arithmetic, and who is employed in the Hospital from 8 to 9 hours daily, excepting on Saturday when he leaves the Hospital at 11. Mr. Johnstone's salary is £180, and his department, in the opinion of the Committee, is most efficiently conducted. If the Committee were to suggest any alteration, it would perhaps be some little change in the class hours during the day and the giving to the younger Girls, through the medium of Monitors but under Mr. Johnstone's eye, an additional hour at their English lessons, which at present occupy them during two hours only daily. This additional hour may be taken from the time occupied in Knitting and

Sewing at present $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and which appears to your Committee to be too long.

The teaching of French is at present entrusted to Mr. Surene, who has a class of 25 girls for an hour on three days of each week, the class being divided into four sections. In this Department your Committee are unanimously of opinion, that some improvement is required, the opportunity at present afforded the Girls of acquiring a knowledge of the French Language being much too limited. The Committee would recommend, therefore, that the attendance of the French Teacher should be extended to six instead of three, hours weekly, and that he should give two hours of teaching on each alternate day, while the Scholars to be taught by him should include every Girl who has completed her 13th year. . . . Under this arrangement the amount of instruction in French will be nearly doubled, and the Teacher will have a better opportunity of properly classifying his Pupils, while it will ensure to Girls of fair talent such an amount of instruction as ought to perfect them in this Branch of Education.

The Drawing is taught by Mr. D. F. Surene . . . who attends two days weekly for two hours each day and he has generally about 19 or 20 pupils under his charge. Your Committee do not propose any alteration in this Branch, which, in their opinion is extremely well taught.

The Music, excepting the Vocal department of it, is taught by Miss Dewar, the Music and Musical Instruments being provided by the Hospital, but the Hospital does not contribute anything towards the Teacher's allowance. That is paid for by the Relations and Friends of the Girls who choose to avail themselves of this Teacher's attendance at the rate of 21/- for each sixteen lessons. In this Branch it has appeared to a majority of your Committee that a change might be introduced. . . .

Vocal Music is taught by Mr Ebsworth who attends for one hour on two days of each week, and Dancing has been taught by Mr Dunn for some years past during the three Winter months, the attendance being two days during each week and two hours each day. The allowances made these Masters are paid exclusively by the Hospital.

The different Teachers above alluded to, embrace the whole of those who come into the Hospital and give their attendance for limited periods of the day. Besides them there are resident a Mistress, or Governess as she is styled in the Statutes, at present Miss Leechman, and three Female Teachers—the Salary of the former is Fifty Guineas

and each of the latter has Thirty Guineas while all of them have board and washing in the Hospital. The employment of the three Female Teachers and the duties incumbent on them have engaged much of the attention of your Committee and have caused some difference of opinion.

Their combined duty at present is to instruct the Girls in Knitting and Sewing and, with the assistance of the more advanced pupils, to make and keep in repair all the Girls' clothes, while one of the three alternately is present with the Girls for one hour in the evening superintending the preparation of their lessons for the following day. The time allotted for teaching Sewing etc. is six hours daily with one quarter of an hour in Scripture reading in the morning, besides which, one of the three attends the Girls at their meals and in their walks and exercise within the Hospital Grounds.

The Establishment is divided into three Sections of about 32 Girls each. The first section . . . is composed of the younger Girls who are taught Knitting and Sewing, and all, or nearly all, are employed during $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours daily. The Second Section is composed of Girls from about 11 to 14 years of age. . . . It is while they are in this division that the Girls are taught White-Seam, make the under-garments etc worn in the House, and do any Sewing Work which may be sent into the Hospital. The time occupied in this way averages about 4 hours daily. The third or Senior Section is composed of Girls of 14 and upwards . . . and by them the Upper dresses are made. Miss Leechman takes a general superintendence of the whole Establishment, but does not herself teach any Branch, while by the Rules of the Institution she is required frequently to visit the School Rooms and observe the care and diligence of the Mistresses and Masters, and the behaviour, application and progress of the Girls.'

(After making three recommendations—that the music teaching be extended, that the Governess visit the 'schools' more often, and that a female Mistress be present during the lessons taken by visiting Masters—the report continues—)

' . . . Another suggestion which has also occurred to some Members . . . is whether a wider range might not be afforded to the Girls in making choice of their future occupation on leaving the House. At present the great majority turn their attention to the Situation of Governesses, and the facility with which many of them obtain places affords evidence perhaps of the present effective state of the system of

education pursued. It must be obvious, however, that among so many Girls . . . it is nearly impossible that all can be fitted to take the place of an Instructress of youth . . . and yet there is some reason to fear that any situation short of this is frequently looked upon as a degradation, or at all events, beneath the notice of the Girls. . . . It has been thought therefore, that the business of a Milliner or a Shop-keeper's Assistant would better suit the tastes and acquirements of some of the Girls, while it would be to them, in many respects, a very desirable and useful line of life. In that case liberty might be given to them to leave the Institution at an earlier age than they do at present, say at 15, and then to enter upon an apprenticeship with some . . . parties . . . who would become bound to instruct them in business and would look after their moral welfare.'

APPENDIX VII

Report by the Education Committee to the Governors, 1855.

1. French Class (Mons. Schneider) The Committee not only heard the business of the junior and senior divisions conducted in the usual manner by the Teacher, but subjected the pupils to a minute and searching examination on their power of reciting passages at sight and expressing themselves with facility in the language. The result was creditable to all concerned . . . but care should be taken by the governors that no class book should be introduced by the teacher without an express sanction to do so having been obtained from the Education Committee, a course which had not been followed in regard to a Phrase-book at present in use.

2. Departments of English, reciting, composition, Instruction in Scripture Truth, Geography, History, writing and arithmetic . . . these must always form the staple classes of the Institution . . . Mr. Johnstone, their excellent teacher, has brought them to great proficiency in ability to appreciate the sense and merits of what they read, and in the power of expressing themselves in composition with fluency, accuracy and spirit. But the Committee would recommend that in addition to a considerable portion of time being occupied by the elder girls in the composing of themes, all of whom who can write should be frequently exercised in writing on the slate to dictation.

3. With the specimens of penmanship submitted and the proof of proficiency in arithmetical operations, the Committee were satisfied. Especially were they gratified by the acquaintance exhibited with the Holy Scriptures and Catechism, and with the doctrines and facts embraced in them. The governors are not only taught by the highest authority that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy, understanding,' but are charged by the terms of their trust to see that education is based on and imbued with the spirit and knowledge of religion. While they feel that it is only by divine power that the knowledge thus given can be elevated to a rule of life, the committee rejoiced to find that it was full and accurate, received with interest and given with earnestness and affection, in preparing those of the girls who wished to join the Communion of the Church. In that important step in their life, Dr. Nisbet, the present minister, had reported that they were usually well informed when they presented themselves for examination, and that, while on the evenings of every Lord's Day they are instructed diligently by the various teachers and examined on the Sermons they have heard at Church, he has for many years devoted to these objects a portion of the afternoons of that Day and it is believed, with advantage.

4. German, under Mr. Noa, was good, but the time needed extending.

5. The course on Physical Science, introduced some years ago by Mr. Anderson, continues to be attended with interest, and from their comparative seclusion from the world of nature, is one which is much required by them. This course, extending from February to April, should be extended to July, with excursions.

APPENDIX VIII

The following list of Governesses, mistresses and Teachers is not complete, but contains such names as are mentioned in the Minutes.

GOVERNESSES OR MATRONS

—	Mrs. Wenson	
1765	Miss Margaret Montgomery	died 1774
1774	Mrs. Hog or Hogg	died 1793
1793	Mrs. (Miss) Grizel Mountford	retired 1813

MERCHANT MAIDEN HOSPITAL

1813	Mrs. Isabella Campbell	retired 1817
1818	Miss Geddes	retired 1832, died 1859
1832	Miss Jess Leechman	retired 1857
1857	Miss Katharine C. Bathgate	

MISTRESSES

—	Miss Syme	dismissed 1786
—	Miss Jack	dismissed 1785
—	Mrs. Gairden	
—	Miss Cockburn	retired
—	Miss Stobie	left 1817
1805	Miss McColl	dismissed 1809
1809	Miss Eliz. Richmond	
—	Miss Rankine	dismissed 1817
—	Miss Saunders	dismissed 1817
1817	Miss Jessie Zeigler	
1817	Miss Hogarth	
1819	Miss Jane Deans	resigned 1822
1822	Miss Ramsay (1817 ?)	
1822	Miss Duncan	
1836	Miss Snodgrass	died 1843
1836	Miss Moreham	resigned 1836
1836	Miss Mollison	resigned 1844
1839	Miss Lyon	Appointed Matron, John Watson's 1849
c. 1844	Miss Walker	
1844	Miss Sarah Weddell	
1849	Miss Ann Taylor	Married 1851
1851	Miss Mary Smith	

TEACHERS

1775	Mr. Walker	Chaplain	died 1779
1780	Mr. Miller	Chaplain	
1784	Mr. Mowat	English	retired 1799
1795	Mr. Aitken	Assist. singing	
1801	Mr. Porteous	Chaplain	
1807	Mr. McDonald	Singing	
—	Mr. Stanhope Wilson	Singing	retired 1814

92 MINUTES OF MERCHANT MAIDEN HOSPITAL

1814	Madame Rossignoli	Dancing	retired 1831
—	Mr. Lyon	French	retired 1829
1818	Mrs. Philips	Assist. music	resigned 1838
1830	Rev. Wm. Johnstone	English etc. and Chaplain.	retired 1859 died 1869
1830	Mons. Gabriel Surene	French	retired 1851
—	Mr. Forbes	Drawing	died 1839
1839	Mr. Surene	Drawing	died 1861
1839	Mr. Dunn	Dancing	resigned 1844
1844	Mr. and Mrs. Lowe	Dancing	
1851	Mr. Anderson	Senior Class	
1851	Chs. Schneider	French	
1851	Leopold Noa	German	Removed to London 1856
1858	Wm. Anderson	Assist. English, etc.	
1858	Miss Agnes Watson	Assist. music	
1859	David Pryde, M.A., LL.D.	English	First Headmaster of the day school
—	Mr. Taylor		resigned 1870

THE TRON CHURCH

ABOVE the entrance to the Tron Church is the inscription *ÆDEM HANC CHRISTO ET ECCLESIE SACRARUNT CIVES EDINBURGEN. ANNO DOM MDCXLI.* Who was responsible for the wording and why that particular date was chosen remains so far a mystery. The date cannot refer to the completion of the building, for, as will be shown later in this narrative, the building was not ready for roofing till 1643. The only possibility is that in 1641 the north front of the church was finished.

If it were not for the history of the construction the inscription might be taken at its face value, as the commemoration of a pious impulse on the part of the Edinburgh inhabitants. As it stands, the dedication is nothing if not ironic, implying a voluntary effort made to the Glory of God, while in reality the building began as an attempt to avoid the penalty due by many for breaking the law of the land. It was financed partly by a so-called voluntary contribution, made under the alternative of an assessment if the contribution were not commensurate with the wealth of the offerer, partly by a few pious testators and completed only with money in some cases diverted from other purposes. There was nothing spontaneous about it and it ended with the Town Council's attempt to finish it as cheaply as possible.

So the story of the building of the church must be taken in conjunction with the contemporary history of Edinburgh, which gives the reason for its erection and the difficulties, financial and structural, encountered. It began in a time of comparative peace, continued through the wars of the Covenant, the English invasion and occupation, and was not finished until late in the reign of Charles II. The plan was mooted first at a difficult time for the capital. Charles I had required from the Town the building of the Parliament House,