

Alfred William Gibb, M.A., D.Sc.

FOR just over forty years Alfred William Gibb was associated with the teaching of geology in the University of Aberdeen, and the development of geology as an independent subject in that University, with a Department of its own, lay entirely in his hands. The Department, with its model museum, is a tribute to his comprehension of the various branches of his science and to his appreciation of educational methods.

Professor Gibb was educated at the Gymnasium in Old Aberdeen and at the University of Aberdeen, where he graduated M.A. in 1884. After spending several years partly in school-teaching and partly in business, he returned to the University on the institution of a Degree in Science and in 1897 graduated B.Sc. with Honours. In the meantime Professor H. Alleyne Nicholson, recognising his ability, had appointed Gibb (1895) to act as University assistant with the status of Lecturer in Geology, a subject which was then taught as part of Natural History. Further devolution followed upon the appointment to the Natural History Chair of Sir J. Arthur Thomson, and in 1900 Gibb was made Lecturer with sole charge of the teaching of geology, his experience having been added to by short courses of study with Rosenbusch at Heidelberg and with Judd at the Royal College of Science.

On the creation of the Kilgour Chair of Geology in 1922 the University Court made him, at the age of fifty-eight, the first professor, a recognition of his value as a teacher and his services in creating a Department of Geology in the new buildings of Marischal College opened in 1906.

Although his chief interest lay in the expounding of his subject, Professor Gibb carried on a series of investigations on varied subjects of local geology, such as the occurrence of pebbles of white chalk in Aberdeenshire clay, the structure of a felsite sill near Aberdeen, and the relation of the Don to the Avon at Inchrory, Banffshire. The results were communicated for the most part to the Geological Society of Edinburgh. But his most important work—a research upon which he concentrated for many years and for which he obtained the degree of D.Sc.—was a minute petrological analysis of *The Basic Igneous Rocks of Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire: a Study in Magmatic Differentiation*. It is regrettable that characteristic diffidence about his own thorough work prevented him from publishing this excellent thesis.

As a teacher he was outstanding; his lectures were models of clear

and direct exposition enlivened by gentle humour, and his unfailing interest in their progress gained him the devotion of a long succession of students of arts and science.

He was elected a Fellow of this Society in 1916, and died on July 12, 1937, aged seventy-three years.

J. R.