

## OBITUARY NOTICES.

---

Dr Charles Henry Gatty, M.A. By W. C. M'Intosh.

(Read June 6, 1904.)

The subject of this memoir was born on the 6th March 1836, the son of George Gatty, Esq., one of the six clerks in Chancery (an office now abolished), and of Frances, daughter of Henry Jenkinson Sayer, Esq., a solicitor, and Auditor of the Charterhouse. He was educated at Eton, but for a short time only, as he was a delicate boy, unfitted for the rough life of a public school in those days. He was therefore removed and educated by a private tutor till he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated as B.A. in 1859, and as M.A. in 1862.

Of an earnest and studious frame of mind, he greatly enjoyed his life at college, where he made some valued friends. He always looked back with pleasure to this part of his career.

After taking the B.A. degree he remained at Cambridge about a year studying medicine—not with a view to practising, but simply from his interest in the study of it in connection with zoology and comparative anatomy, as well as botany.

After leaving Cambridge he travelled for a few months in the United States of America, a country in which he always felt a great interest, especially in the work of the elder and the younger Agassiz, in that connected with the scientific treatment of the fisheries of their vast shores, and in the general arrangements for the increase and spread of scientific knowledge.

He spent the rest of his life for the most part at Felbridge Place, a beautiful estate near East Grinstead in Sussex. His father died in 1862, but his mother, to whom he was deeply attached, and whose remembrances were a source of delight and solace to him to the last, lived till 1876. Her portraits and all that pertained to her seemed ever to awaken fresh interest—just

as she herself for so many years had shed a kindly light in his home, had fostered those studies to which by nature he was inclined, and had aided and encouraged him in all his philanthropic work on the estate and in the neighbourhood.

To a somewhat delicate physique and sensitive nature such sympathy and support—as could only have been given by his mother—were invaluable, and her death was keenly felt for a long time, whilst everything that reminded him of her was carefully cherished.

The property (about 2000 acres) which he inherited is a most charming one—even in the beautiful county of Sussex. Within an easy distance of East Grinstead,\* the fine mansion-house (about two hundred years old) is surrounded by fine old oaks, Spanish chestnuts, sycamores, maples, groups of rare pines and shrubs. From the terrace in front of the house the eye wanders over the extensive park and level landscape to the more distant parts of the estate, where Hedgecourt (half a mile) and Wire Mill (a mile) ponds are, while all around the rich fields are variegated with woods and clusters of trees. The prolific garden, so nicely sheltered, teemed with rare perennial and other plants, and choice collections of foreign plants occurred in the conservatories. Everything around, indeed, indicated the methodical and orderly habits of the owner, and his love for both plant and animal. In summer, groups of turtledoves, which lived and bred in the oaks near the house, flew from cover to cover and from one tree to another, and their cooing in the early morning, mingled occasionally with that of the cushat and with the notes of the nightingale in the copses and hedgerows, was one of the features most novel to a visitor from the north. In the quiet evenings the shrill note and the tapping sounds of the pied or greater spotted woodpeckers resounded on the terrace. Pheasants abounded in the woods, and from the tufts of grass in the enclosures near the terrace the heads of the leverets now and then were raised. The air indeed was laden with the sounds of life, chiefly from bird and insect, and the whole scene was an ideal one for a naturalist such as Dr Gatty was. Besides, the larger pond

\* The property was originally acquired by Dr Gatty's father from one of the daughters and co-heiresses of the last Earl of Liverpool, but formerly belonged to the Evelyn family.

(Hedgecourt pond, or "Lake Winnipeg" as its owner humorously called it) and the smaller pond gave excellent fishing, and were the resorts of many ducks and other wild-fowl, of which he was very fond, and would never permit to be shot. In the ponds were the usual fishes of the district, viz., pike, perch, tench and bream, and he preferred to retain these rather than introduce more profitable occupants.

While thus enjoying the fascinating and peaceful surroundings of his country home—loved and esteemed by all connected with it—he conscientiously fulfilled all the duties of a Magistrate for the counties of Surrey and Sussex, and for several years was Chairman of the East Grinstead bench of Magistrates, where he took his seat for the last time about three weeks before his death. He was also for some years a member of the East Grinstead Urban District Council. He was patron of the church at Felbridge—which was built and endowed by his father, in place of a private chapel which formerly stood in the grounds of Felbridge Place. He maintained the schools at Felbridge entirely at his own expense, and also to a great extent bore the expenses of the maintenance of divine service—making up whatever the offertories (to which he was the principal contributor) were insufficient to supply. Such, however, was but one phase of his useful and beneficent life.

From his college days he kept in touch with scientific life in London, and he always recalled with satisfaction his visits to the Royal Society—as the guest of an old friend; and probably his last appearance at a scientific society was at an afternoon meeting of the same body with the writer. He was a Fellow of the Linnean, Geological, Geographical, and Ray Societies (occasionally serving on the council of each), and a member of the Astronomical and Meteorological Societies. He was especially interested in the Ray Society, and it was probably his connection with this body which more particularly drew him to St Andrews, where the early Marine Laboratory had attracted his notice. Nor was this interest in Nature new in his family. His cousin Mrs Alfred Gatty was the charming authoress of the *Parables of Nature*, and a lady whose love of the subject often brought her to the British Museum in the days of John and Robert Gray, of William Baird and

J. Bowerbank (who occasionally worked there). She was the wife of Dr Alfred Gatty, for many years Vicar of Ecclesfield in Yorkshire. Her daughter, the late Mrs Ewing, was likewise an authoress, having written *The Story of a Short Life* and other interesting works.

Having, after various communications with Principal Donaldson, decided to give £1000 to encourage marine zoology at St Andrews, Dr Gatty carried out his views in a manner peculiarly his own. Everything about the old wooden laboratory under the Fishery Board for Scotland was carefully examined and the capabilities of the situation understood. He joined the excursion from the Edinburgh meeting (1892) of the British Association next day; and apparently having thought over what he had seen and heard, he, while examining the marine collection in St Leonards Girls' School in the afternoon, quietly asked the writer the question, "Will £1000 suffice for the Marine Laboratory?" It was explained that it would greatly help in its erection. He then asked how much would be necessary for the whole? A sum of £2000 was mentioned. At once he replied, "I shall give it." Thus the intimation which was made public at the luncheon by the University (the cost of which was generously borne by the late Provost Paterson, of Kinburn and Langraw), was correctly entered in the evening papers. In writing about his gift shortly after he returned home he says, "I cannot tell you what a pleasure it is to me to be able to do something towards the advancement of Zoology, which has always been my favourite study, and this pleasure has been increased tenfold by the fact that it has brought me into connection with the University of St Andrews."

In the plans of the Laboratory he took a deep interest, and made some improvements, at the suggestion of the writer and the Rev. A. D. Sloan (who had worked at Naples), in regard to increasing space (with additional cost). During the progress of the building, and while sitting on the sand-dunes near it with Prof. Pettigrew and the writer, he thoughtfully said, "I have given what is required for the erection of the Laboratory, but I have given nothing for the furnishing of it. Can you tell me the sum necessary for this?" A sum of £500 was indicated, and he at once assented—

guaranteeing any excess over this sum should it be requisite, as indeed it eventually was.

Thus, in an unostentatious and most kindly way, an Institution—unique of its kind—was erected, fitted by Dr Gatty, and handed over to the University. In his quiet modesty no one thought less of the action than himself. He was satisfied if the study of marine animals and the work of the fisheries could in any way be promoted, and his favourite science generally advanced.

Dr Gatty was present at the opening of the Marine Laboratory by Lord Reay, along with a notable band of zoologists and men of science, the Senate of the University, and the public, on the 30th October 1896. Lord Reay, a former Rector of the University, commenced his address by observing, "It is a pleasant duty which devolves on me to tender to Dr Gatty the sincere thanks not only of the rulers of this ancient seat of learning, but of all men of science, and of all Scotsmen, for this munificent gift . . . . Dr Gatty must have felt some difficulty in adjudicating on the multitude of claims which confronted him. There are so many scientific wants, that great discernment is needed in those who wish to benefit their generation. We are doubly grateful to Dr Gatty that he has given a decision in our favour. And I think no assurance is called for that everything will be done by the University to show that it is worthy of so generous a donor. I feel sure that as time goes on the value of this foundation will be enhanced in the eyes of future generations, and that many scientific men from all parts of the world will set out on a pilgrimage to this station, and that their homage to the pious founder will take the form of research." "Now I have no doubt that the best investment for superfluous capital is that chosen by Dr Gatty—the endowment of the Scottish Universities." "Dr Gatty has set an example which ought to stimulate those who are in search of employment for capital." The enthusiasm with which the great assembly received the tribute paid by Lord Reay to Dr Gatty was so great that the occasion must have been a pleasant one for the modest donor, who in subsequent years never ceased to be deeply interested in the work of the Laboratory. Even when in search of health in the coast towns of the south, *e.g.* in

Cornwall, the marine fauna and the fisheries of each were carefully contrasted with those of St Andrews, and many interesting observations made.

The city in which his generous gift was made was not slow to recognise his high purposes and liberality, for it conferred, in 1896, its freedom on him along with Lord Bute and General Robert Low of Clatto, the former the talented Rector of the University, the latter the distinguished Indian soldier, as indeed his father likewise was. Dr Gatty also received the degree of LL.D. from the University for his lifelong labours in promoting science, and his special interest in Zoology.

For some years his failing health prevented him journeying northward, but he attended the meetings of various societies in London, and kept himself abreast of all that was doing in Zoology. He also took great interest in Meteorology, especially towards the close of his life, when his eyes failed for microscopic work. Every morning he took the readings of his thermometers in the garden, registered the rainfall, read his barometers, and entered all methodically in a weather-chart, which was kept with the greatest accuracy and neatness; indeed, his caligraphy was at all times a model of exactness.

Lately the affection of the heart under which he laboured gave his friends some anxiety, and the end came somewhat suddenly on the 12th December 1903. The University Court, on receipt of the intelligence, entered the following resolution, prepared by Principal Donaldson, in their minutes of date 6th February 1904:—  
“The University Court record their great regret at the decease of Dr Gatty, their sense of the great loss the University has sustained thereby, and their high appreciation of Dr Gatty’s acquaintance with and interest in Science, and of the great contribution which he munificently made to the study of it by the establishment of the Gatty Marine Laboratory in this University. The Court desire also to assure his executors that his name will ever be held in affectionate remembrance in St Andrews.”

Personally, Dr Gatty was one of the most kindly and considerate men, courteous and self-possessed, ever ready to anticipate the wants of others, and though of a retiring and modest disposition, yet tenacious in his purposes of well-doing. Quiet, studious, and

thoughtful, he had many of the habits of Gilbert White in his love and close scrutiny of Nature. He, moreover, was filled with a desire to see its scientific study advancing along modern lines. For this purpose he chose a field in which he himself was deeply interested, and in which he believed that not only the purely scientific aspects of Marine Zoology would make progress, but also that an important branch, viz., the sea-fisheries, so intimately associated with the welfare of the country at large, and of the fishing population in particular, would be advanced.\*

\* I am indebted to C. L. Sayer, Esq., and G. W. Seymour, Esq., especially the former, for much information concerning Dr Gatty.