

CHAPTER XXII.

PARISH BENEFACTORS.

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.”—PROVERBS.

“For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat. I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me.”—ST. MATTHEW.

SIXTY years ago the material condition of the people of Aberlour was very different to what it is at the present time.

Lord Fife owned a large portion of the parish. His agent drew the rents, but not a penny was expended by his Lordship for the furtherance of any means to improve the mental or social condition of the inhabitants. There was only one school and one church, no Sunday school, and no institution of any kind where young men or boys could meet to spend the evening in mental improvement or social enjoyment. It is hardly possible for the younger portion of the inhabitants to fully realise the changed conditions that they are now enjoying. These changed conditions have been mainly brought about by the liberality of men who, by the wise disposal of their means, have benefited the parish, and laid the inhabitants under an everlasting debt of gratitude to its benefactors. One of them was the late lamented Mr. Fleming, whose benefactions to the place and to the people are wisely bestowed on objects that will be of lasting and real benefit to the parish. The hospital that has been built and endowed by his liberality will always remain a memorial of his Christian philanthropy. I can well remember more than one epidemic that devastated many a home in the village. Had there been at the time such an institution in the place many lives might have been saved. There can now be little doubt that the undrained state of the village and the bad water were the causes of the frequent occurrence of typhoid and scarlet fever, but happily all this is changed for the better. In the Fleming Hall the parish now possesses a centre where the old and young can meet together

to interchange their opinions upon the social and political topics of the day. A library and a reading-room is a priceless boon to any parish, and the young people of Aberlour are evidently fully alive to the benefits to be derived from them. When the foot bridge is thrown across the Spey, the objects that the late Mr. Fleming had projected for the benefit of the parish will have been completed. But valuable as these benefactions are, they are only a tithe of what he gave to other benevolent objects. It is truly said of him by those who knew him best that "he gave to the poor," and he has freely bestowed his substance for their benefit. He was in the fullest sense of the word a humble man. When prosperity rewarded his wise industry, he was never "lifted up" above his fellows, and his memory will be held in everlasting remembrance in the priceless gifts that he has bestowed upon the parish of Aberlour.

Among the many social and material changes that have taken place in the parish during the last sixty years, the establishment of an Orphanage is the most remarkable and interesting in its results. Every schoolboy in the village knew that Campbell's park was forbidden ground, but that was a greater incitement for them to trespass within its boundary, although Captain Campbell was well known to them as a kindly man. He had a habit of absently shaking his head from side to side. It was said the habit was due to a fracture in his skull that he received in battle, and the fracture was held together by gold clasps. Whether there was any truth in the report or not the writer is unable to say. The fishing pool behind the village was known as "Campbell's Peel." Being related to the Elchies family, he had many privileges that other tenants had not. The only enclosed land on their estate of Allachie was "Campbell's Park." We are glad to see that his house at the east end of the village is still standing, little changed. It was the only white-washed house in it. The garden was well stocked with fruit trees and bushes, but "the park" was in all respects "a barren heritage," and we believe that it was very little improved when the Rev. Mr. Jupp took up his residence in the parish in a small cottage in 1875, with four little boys—truly a small beginning, when we look at the extent of the establishment and its surroundings at the present day. Mr. Jupp has by his own energy, self-denial, and indefatigable industry personally

supervised the work, and transformed "Campbell's Park" into a very Garden of Eden. Where thistles and dockens struggled into leaf, roses, lilies, and all the varied flowers of summer grow and bloom to perfection.

I was fortunate in being able to visit the beautiful church connected with the Orphanage on the day set apart as a floral festival or thanksgiving. The beauty of the flowers and the taste shown in the decoration of the church surprised me. The roses were equal to any that I have seen on a show table. It is hardly possible to describe the beauty and fine proportions of the interior of the church. It is as near perfect as a sacred edifice can be made, and it is pleasant to reflect that it owes its inception to the late Miss Grant of Aberlour, who contributed £2000 towards its erection. It was completed at a cost of £4000 by the Rector, the Rev. Mr. Jupp. The church is dedicated to St. Margaret of Scotland. It is to the munificence of the late William Grant of Elchies that it owes its endowment.

Beautiful as the church and its surroundings are, we turn with a feeling of wonder and admiration to the Orphanage and the work that is carried on within it. Twenty-six years ago, the embryo institution consisted of four boys. The small seed has expanded in a marvellous degree, until it now numbers 300 boys and girls. As the number of children multiplied the buildings necessary to house them have increased to the size of a small village. All the separate buildings are replete with every educational and domestic appliance. More than £100,000 has been expended by the Warden since he began his great and glorious work in a cottage, and all this enormous sum of money has been voluntarily contributed to the institution. It has all passed through the hands of the Warden and been wisely expended. Every department of the institution bears testimony to the great business qualities of Canon Jupp. To this must be added the spiritual and moral influence that he exerts over the minds of his numerous family. He has been, we may say without irreverence, "a father to the fatherless," and who can estimate the record of such a man's work? Many an orphan boy and girl will have reason to bless and revere his name, and carry throughout their lives a grateful and pleasant memory of the happy time that they spent in the Aberlour Orphanage.

Notwithstanding his multifarious duties as Warden of the Orphanage, Canon Jupp has found time to take a real interest in municipal and social movements connected with the place, and he now worthily fills the office of Provost, so long and honourably held by his predecessor, Major M'Gowan, who during the many years he filled the office did so much to make the village of Aberlour what it is. He, too, will always remain in the front rank of its benefactors.