

John Geddes: Later Years as Rector

In contrast to the earlier contentment and harmony of the community, the year 1774 was a bitter and painful one for Geddes, due to the behaviour of John Gordon, who had come from Paris in 1770 to be one of the masters in Valladolid. The first definite hint of trouble to come occurred in October 1773 when Gordon announced that he was not well enough to take all his classes. Geddes helped out by taking over the geometry classes for him. But on 10th January 1774, he left the college abruptly, complaining of persistent headaches (which Geddes attributed to over-application and insufficient relaxation), saying that to remain in Valladolid would kill him and that, anyway, his uncle, the principal in Paris, was asking for him (though Geddes himself had heard nothing from Paris). He had not been frank with Geddes during his last few months in Valladolid and had not replied when Geddes asked him if he had any reasons for being displeased with things in the college. Geddes realised at once that there was something mysterious in his going, especially as he did not want to return to Scotland as a missionary.¹ Some weeks later, a cold note was received from Principal Gordon stating that the Valladolid college was liable for his nephew's travelling expenses to Paris.²

Gordon junior himself bombarded Geddes with a series of letters, some of them showing an apparent lack of stability, others quite offensive in tone. He informed Geddes,³ and Hay also,⁴ that he was willing to return to Valladolid on condition that he (Geddes) would draw up a formal set of rules for the college; (at this time, Geddes was following the rules of the English College, but not slavishly and often allowing custom to take the place of written regulations—nor had Gordon objected to this while at Valladolid);

1. To Bishop Grant, 7th February 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

2. 15th March 1774. (College archives 52/3/12.)

3. 18th June 1774. (Ibid., 52/3/30.)

4. 16th June 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

before these new rules were imposed, Gordon stipulated that they would have to be submitted to the masters for their comments, any disputes being referred to Geddes' superiors in Spain and Scotland. Geddes actually accepted this offer, provided the Scottish bishops agreed and provided that there would be no disharmony between them, as boys are very quick to notice such things.⁵ Gordon soon wrote to say that his uncle was not in favour of his returning to Valladolid at all and, a little later, that Bishop Hay was also against it.⁶

John Gordon's attitude was not the only source of anxiety at this time. Geddes applied to Scotland for a replacement because both he and Allan Macdonald were very overworked,⁷ but his request was refused⁸ and, as a result, Allan Macdonald said that he also wanted to leave.⁹ He had no complaints against Geddes but felt himself overwhelmed by work; a very good person but too diffident about his own abilities, was Geddes' verdict.¹⁰ In the event, Macdonald was induced to stay on until 1776.

But there was even greater anxiety regarding the students. Early in 1774, no less than four left, three of them going because they had no inclination "to go on in our way."¹¹ As there were now only ten boys remaining, he asked for more to be sent from Scotland; in particular, "little Angus [Macdonald] importunes me to desire you would examine his younger Brother to see whether or not he would be to our Purpose."¹² But soon he was asking Hay to give a thorough scrutiny to boys being sent to the colleges abroad since the travelling expenses were high and departures gave a bad impression to the Spaniards. He was obviously worried by the four recent defections but hoped to be able to bear the cross patiently as a penance for his faults.¹³ And he wrote humbly to his friend: "If you hear of anything particular that these Boys who are gone home say of this House or of any Objections that they may have to it, I beg you will acquaint me, if you think it worth the while."¹⁴

Among the four boys who left was a nephew of Gordon, the former master, and, on 16th October 1774, the latter wrote vituperatively: "It is your business to comfort my sister ... whose child you mismanaged; the only way of comforting her is to take the blame on yourself who alone are to be blamed;"¹⁵ and even more

5. To Bishop Hay, 8th July 1774. (Ibid., 6-C.)

6. 29th July 1774. (College archives 52/3/32.)

7. To Bishop Grant, 7th February 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

8. Bishop Hay to Geddes, 9th March 1774. (*Scotichronicon*, p. 128.)

9. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 6th May 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

10. To Bishop Hay, 25th July 1774. (Ibid., 6-C.)

11. Geddes to Bishop Grant, 7th February 1774. (Ibid., 6-C.)

12. Id. (Ibid., 6-C.)

13. 4th April 1774. (Ibid., 6-C.)

14. 8th July 1774. (Ibid., 6-C.)

15. College archives 52/3/36.

cruelly two months later: "For several months before I left that College I gave over speaking to you on those methods of yours both towards myself and others which I disapproved of ... I love you in Christ but hate your defects on account of the prejudice they have done yourself and others. Expect nothing more from me on these matters."¹⁶

Gordon's recriminations were not only for Geddes' ear. Accounts of his former rector's faults had been spread to Douai and to Scotland itself. Hay had already written to console Geddes on the loss of the four students¹⁷ and, later on that year, he informed him that the bishops, meeting at Scalán, had completely exonerated him of the charges laid against him by Gordon.¹⁸

The former master had informed Hay¹⁹ that even the students "complained of the method of government that Mr. Geddes followed; that is to say, of artifices, intrigues and plots...;" that it was not true, as the rector claimed, that he (Gordon) was souring the students against him; and that the real reason why Geddes refused to have fixed rules was that he wanted to have absolute authority, with everyone wholly dependent on him, as had been the case in Scalán. And again, "One complaint that was made to me [by students in Valladolid] against Mr. Geddes was that of dissimulation, treachery, artifice and lies were common in the house, and that Mr. Geddes was the cause of these faults by his example ... for, if he does not tell lies, he does not often tell pure truth."²⁰

According to Gordon, he and Robert Grant, the rector at Douai, agreed that Geddes ought to be removed from Valladolid and that the most suitable man to be rector was Grant himself.²¹ Be this as it may, the latter wrote to sympathise with Geddes but added bluntly that the chief complaint against him was that he ran the college arbitrarily and without set rules.²² Geddes had already written to Hay about the widespread rumours that he "would soon ruin this House by unreasonable Behaviour etc."²³ and, on 1st February 1775, he frankly told Peter Grant in Rome that he was being vilified in Paris, Douai and Scotland as having become "vain, imperious,

16. 10th December 1774. (*Ibid.*, 52/3/38.)

17. 6th May 1774. (*Scotichronicon*, p. 129.)

18. 6th September and 14th October 1774. (*Ibid.*, p. 130.)

In a letter to Joseph Shepherd, now rector of the English College in Valladolid, Bishop Hay thanked him for a letter defending Geddes against the accusations and added, "With regard to Mr. Geddes, we were thoroughly persuaded from the very beginning that passion and melancholy were the chief grounds of the accusation against him... and at last the proof of his innocence, from the very hand of his adversary itself, though unsigned, was sent to me in the most convincing manner." (21st January 1775. English College, Valladolid, archives E.1^o; transcript 3/6.)

19. 25th July 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

20. To Bishop Hay, 26th September 1774. (*Ibid.*, 6-C.)

21. *Id.* (*Ibid.*, 6-C.)

22. 7th December 1774. (College archives 52/4/11.)

23. 21st November 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

unreasonable and that it is necessary to remove me hence."²⁴ He knew that his accuser was Gordon but, though he could not understand, much less accept, the charges, he placed himself at the disposal of the Scottish bishops.²⁵

Early in 1775, Gordon addressed another, and very revealing, letter to Hay. Because of the rector's attitude, he claimed that he had become "the object of an almost general disregard and aversion" in the college. "I had sometimes difficulty to get one to serve my Mass ... only three or four assisted at it even when I said the Community Mass ... I spent the time of recreation alone..." Not only was Geddes alleged to have been mentally cruel to him, but he was also accused, at great length, of slowly and deliberately starving him: "Mr. Geddes and Allan [Macdonald, the other master] left remarkably little for me in the dish at dinner, after taking to themselves plenteous portions and the worst bits of the flesh were my share."²⁶

Nevertheless, a couple of months after that letter, the irrepressible Gordon wrote to Valladolid from Paris to say that he was much improved in health²⁷ and, that summer, he announced to Geddes the news that he was leaving for Scotland.²⁸ He was missionary in the Cabrach for a few years but, in 1779, Geddes heard that he was retiring because of his being subject to certain weaknesses "of which you saw some specimens."²⁹ He went to Paris where the new principal was his brother but, from about 1781, he was living in an Augustinian house in Flanders. In 1784, he attacked the prior with a knife, stabbed him in many places and murdered him, as a result of which he was put in the hands of the authorities, who ordered him to be confined for life.³⁰

The bishops had sent two new students to Valladolid from Scalan in the summer of 1774 but the staff shortage was still unsolved and Macdonald remained anxious to get away. John Paterson, the priest at Scalan, wrote to say that Geddes' old friend, John Ker, a Presbyterian tailor from Keith, was finding trade slack at home and wanted to know if Geddes would give him work, as a tailor and steward, in the college if he moved with his family to Valladolid.³¹ This would not have been particularly helpful and no doubt Geddes managed to dissuade his friend from undertaking the journey. John Roy, a Scots Benedictine from Würzburg, wrote from Marseilles

24. 1st January 1775. (Ibid., 6-D.)

25. Geddes to Bishop Grant, 12th February 1775, (Ibid., 6-D.)

26. 20th February 1775. (Ibid., 6-D.)

27. 29th April 1775. (College archives 52/3/13.)

28. 25th July 1775. (Ibid., 52/3/14.)

29. John Thomson, Edinburgh, to Geddes, 25th October 1779. (Ibid., 51/1/10.)

30. James Young, Douai, to Alexander Cameron, Valladolid, 24th June 1784. (Ibid., 60/7/2.)

31. 6th July 1774. (Ibid., 51/6/30.)

offering himself as a master,³² but no more is heard of this either. There was some talk of William Innes, then in his second year of divinity at Douai, going as a master to Valladolid,³³ but it came to nothing. Nor did Geddes relish the suggestion of sending him someone without much experience; he, the rector, ought to be able to leave the college from time to time—even now his presence was required in Madrid—but at present he had hardly time even to do the accounts.³⁴ At that time, and indeed until 1910, all classes were given to the students in the college itself by members of the staff, and one obvious remedy would have been to send his students to Spanish schools and the local university. To this suggestion made by Hay, Geddes replied:

“As to what you say of our Boys going to the public Schools, I have to answer that, when I came first to Spain, I was not only desirous of it but thought it might answer; and had several conversations with Dr. Perry to that purpose, whilst he maintained that, though he would be glad it could be done, yet it would be Imprudence to try it as things are at present and probably will be for a long time hence. Now and indeed long since, all of us, both in St. Alban’s and in this House, are convinced that our only Way is to teach our Boys at home; because to send them to the public Schools, as they are, would be a meer Loss of Time, which would answer very little End, excepting to dissipate their Minds and fill their Heads with worldly Notions. In so far as I know, there is not a Master of Latin in Valladolid who knows so much of that Language as little Angus McDonald here. Their Philosophy is the old Peripatetic Jargon, very ill taught. There are some Professors of Divinity, learned men, but they frequently throw the Burden of their Schools on young, inexperienced Substitutes, to whom they allow some part of the Salaries, and the best you get in the University of Theology is some scattered Articles of St. Thomas explained, which a young lad could study better by himself... The Jesuites seem to have been the only Teachers here and since their Expulsion the Schools seem to have been on a poor footing... In what I have said their is nothing exaggerated.”³⁵

To make 1774 even more unfortunate for him, death in that year removed two of Geddes’ most steadfast friends: D. Angel Bustamante, the governor of the city, died suddenly in April and Dr. Perry, the English rector, died in Madrid in September, aged 54; “Mr. Geddes had great Reason to regret this learned and pious man, in whom he was deprived of a most valuable Friend, or rather of an affectionate and beneficent Father.”³⁶

32. 16th November 1774. (Ibid., 51/2/28.) Cf. *The Innes Review*, vol. XV (1964), p. 180, fn. 23.

33. Robert Grant, Douai, to Geddes, 22nd February 1775. (Ibid., 52/4/13.)

34. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 2nd June 1775. (Columba House 6-D.)

35. 26th August 1774. (Ibid., 6-C.)

36. *Memoirs*, no. 240.

Despite his misfortunes, Geddes maintained, at this time as at all others, a regular correspondence with a wide and varied circle of friends. His principal correspondents in Scotland were Bishop Hay³⁷ and, to some extent, Bishop Grant, vicar apostolic of the Lowland District and his own ordinary. In addition to the college and its problems, another topic frequently discussed with the two bishops was their anxiety, and his efforts, to receive some financial help for the poor Scottish mission from the king or the Spanish church. Before Geddes had ever gone to Spain, the bishops had hoped to sell their property there and bring the money home, instead of reopening the seminary; but when this was seen to be out of the question since the Spanish authorities would not countenance it, the bishops did not abandon hope of receiving financial assistance from the comparatively wealthy Spanish. Already at the end of 1771, Hay had been musing, in a letter to Geddes, on the absence of any response so far³⁸ and Geddes replied on 3rd February 1772 repeating earlier apologies for being unable to do much as yet, since he felt that he was still something of a newcomer and did not wish to ask too many favours of the Spanish authorities.³⁹ But in the same letter, he enclosed a gift of £59.12.0 to the Scottish mission, half of the sum coming from the salaries of the three superiors. Early the following year, he assured Hay that he was continuing his efforts to obtain a grant and, if possible, an annual allowance for the Scottish mission from the king or even from individual bishops.⁴⁰ That year he received a letter in Latin from Hay to circulate among possible benefactors⁴¹ and, both in 1773 and in later years, he composed several memorials himself.⁴² Moreover he reported to Hay (on 16th October 1775) that he had petitioned for assistance for the college in the form, for example, of a pension from the next bishopric to fall vacant, but that the Minister of Grace and Justice had been discouraging since the Spanish exchequer had many expenses at the time including a punitive expedition against Algiers (which ended in disaster) and since the Scots had not even a full complement of students for their existing revenues. "*Vedremo*", added Geddes.⁴³

As far as the Scottish mission was concerned, he never succeeded in being able to report anything more than promises of help.⁴⁴ The

37. Bishop Hay's letters to Geddes were, at some time, removed from the college archives in Valladolid and are now in Columba House.

38. 19th December 1771. (*Scotichronicon*, p. 97.)

39. Columba House 5-R.

40. 15th March 1773. (*Ibid.*, 6-B.)

41. College archives 19/28.

42. *Ibid.*, 19/30-35.

43. Columba House 6-D.

44. For example, on 15th October 1773 (*ibid.*, 6-B); on 13th February 1775, reporting promises and good will from the Archbishops of Toledo, Valencia and Compostela (*ibid.*, 6-D); and on 6th December 1776, saying that one of the main objects of his next visit to Madrid was to solicit alms for the Scottish mission from the royal exchequer (*ibid.*, 6-E). Nor did further visits to the capital during the winter of 1777-78 and in the following summer

king seemed willing enough to assist, and even ordered pensions to be granted to the Scottish mission (and to the college also); but Sr. de Roda, the Minister of Grace and Justice, maintained that the giving of such help was, at least for the time being, an impossibility. When Geddes spoke about the necessitous Catholics of Scotland to Spanish statesmen, the latter sometimes countered his pleas for financial assistance with the suggestion that, since Spain was underpopulated, the Scottish Catholics should come and settle there, where they could practise their religion unmolested.⁴⁵

Despite these disappointments, Geddes probably continued to send small amounts of money from his own salary;⁴⁶ he certainly sent £17 in 1775 when he heard that two horses were needed at Scalán.⁴⁷ Moreover, he discovered that the Madrid college had made three loans, totalling about £200, in Savarna, near Ravenna. With Peter Grant's help, he eventually had these loans reacknowledged and he made over the annual income (about £5) to the vicars apostolic.⁴⁸

John Geddes is known to have been a man of very wide interests and, when he returned to Scotland, Bishop Hay was to complain of the dissipation and waste of time to which indulgence in such interests led. What, therefore, can he have thought when he received a letter from Geddes, written on 4th April 1774 (soon after Gordon's departure and just about the time that the four students left together) and telling him the bizarre news that a young Englishman named Thomas Hammond had been at the college to perform feats of horsemanship in the courtyard? To watch the exhibition, Geddes had invited the bishop's chaplain and pages; these he had placed at one window; at another, were "the President of Castile's Lady and daughters, but no other women."⁴⁹

Geddes also kept up a fairly regular correspondence with the two brothers Grant at Douai and Rome, besides exchanging letters very frequently with Alexander Munro, the consul general,⁵⁰ with Mother Campbell of the Visitation convent,⁵¹ and, of course, with the college administrator in Madrid.⁵²

One of Geddes' most interesting correspondents was Arthur

produce any better results for his efforts; cf. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 10th January 1778 and — November 1778. (Ibid., 6-G.)

45. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 26th April 1779. (Ibid., 6-I.)

46. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 2nd June 1775. (Ibid., 6-D.)

47. *Scotichronicon*, p. 131.

48. *Memoirs*, no. 305; and Geddes to Peter Grant, Rome, 1st March 1777. (Columba House 6-F.)

49. Ibid., 6-C.

50. Cf. chapter 4, footnote 22.

51. The college archives (51/7/1-41) have forty-one letters to Geddes from Mother Campbell, all written in Spanish.

52. About three hundred and fifty received by Geddes in ten years. (College archives 53/1/1-103; 53/3/1-69; 53/4/1-89; 53/5/1-76.)

Gordon, a Banffshire Catholic and the younger brother of the laird of Beldorney in the Cabrach. When Geddes first became acquainted with him in October 1770, he was a merchant in the small British community in Cadiz. Two years later, Gordon was thanking him for his help in getting him naturalised, to protect his business against "a sudden rupture" in the strained relations between Britain and Spain.⁵³ The letters of 1774 announce a change of interests: "Mr. Dalrymple [William Dalrymple of North Berwick] and I have bought some wines in Xeres and are resolved to invest our money in that article as soon and as fast as it comes to hand"; "W[illiam] D[alrymple] and I are now turned *bona fide* wine merchants. We have purchased cellars of wine well stocked in Xeres and have no reason to complain hitherto. Our orders from England of late are pretty numerous and we expect to do better in this branch than any other."⁵⁴ Each year, Geddes sent a hogshead of Gordon's sherry to Hay; "I think I may give you that bribe that you may allow me to remain to domineer here and to command as I please."⁵⁵ Britain and France being at war, the ship on which Hay's 1779 hogshead was travelling was captured by the French. Later the same year, Spain also declared war on Britain and all British (even if naturalised Spaniards) who lived in Cadiz or Malaga were ordered to leave Spain or at least to move to an inland town. Thus, the last letters which Geddes received from Gordon are written from Carmona, twenty miles from Seville.⁵⁶

An unlikely connection between the Valladolid college and the Carron Ironworks near Falkirk was begun in the summer of 1774. One of the Carron directors, Captain William Lowes, passing through Valladolid, told Geddes that his company had a contract to supply guns to Spain and that consequently they would have a ship coming every two or three months from the Forth to El Ferrol in north-west Spain. Lowes had offered to see that books and such like be carried for the college in the company's ships, but Geddes, writing to Hay, suggested that "perhaps even the Boys for us might be sent from Carron to Ferrol."⁵⁷

Geddes and Lowes seem to have become good friends due to their meeting because, immediately after having left Valladolid, the latter wrote to Geddes from Astorga:

"I am thus far without any material Incident, tho' I have suffered

53. *Ibid.*, 51/3/8.

54. *Ibid.*, 51/3/11.13.

55. 21st November 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

56. In 1794, Bishop Hay made a journey to meet Gordon, since he had made a proposal of settling some money on the Scottish mission. (*Scotchchronicon*, p. 369.) Gordon died in Cadiz in 1815 and, among many bequests, he left 1,000 *pesos* to the college; the amount paid was almost 9,000 *reals*. (College archives 1/23; cf. *ibid.*, 22/6/6.7; and Alexander Cameron II to Bishop Cameron, 24th November 1816 (Columba House 10-L) and 22nd May 1816 (Freshome archives).)

57. 25th July 1774. (Columba House 6-C.)

a considerable Persecution from those inseparable Concomitants of a Spanish Journey, the Bugs etc. Notwithstanding I carried my Bed, they made forced Marches in the Night and from the Vivacity of their Attacks I should conclude either that heretic Blood is sweet or that, animated by the Presence of so many Saints, they sallied forth in the great Cause."⁵⁸ And from El Ferrol:

"Your Account of the Introduction of Bugs into Spain is a notable Addition to the natural History of these Animals; your reprobating their Alliance and Assistance in *Propaganda Fide* is, I dare say, orthodox; your Arguments are those of a sound Logician and those especially derived from your own Sufferings are irrefragable. These insidious Animals, it seems, like Corsairs, attack all indiscriminately. I have not time at present to touch upon my journey from Astorga to this Place, and will only say that the Wretchedness of it beggars all Description."⁵⁹

Geddes used the Carron-Ferrol service a great deal between 1774 and 1778, despatching and receiving a variety of articles, mainly boxes of books. He sent Hay a breviary and six missals in 1774 and, the following year, some books that he had picked up very cheaply at a sale of Jesuit property. Among items that he imported into Spain were three stoves for the masters' rooms, a teapot, a coffeepot and a backgammon table. In addition, all nine students sent from Scotland in the four years from 1775 to 1778 travelled on the company's ships to El Ferrol.⁶⁰ The group which arrived in 1777 came on a ship "mounted with 18 guns and 50 men against the American privateers from one of which, near this port, he retook and brought in here a rich English ship belonging to Bristol that was bound to the West Indies."⁶¹ During the years 1775-80, Geddes also made frequent use of Bilbao, and the firm there of Lynch, Killikelly and Morony, for the transit of books and other goods and, latterly, of students also, to and from Britain.

Early in 1775, Mr. Munro, upset by the lack of affluence of his friend in Valladolid, offered to try to secure for him a more lucrative post than rector of the Scots College. He thought that he would be able to get him accepted by Count O'Reilly, governor of Madrid and inspector general of the Spanish infantry, as preceptor to his children. Geddes, of course, refused the kind offer as being completely unthinkable⁶²—and perhaps even from the point of view of self-interest it was a wise refusal, since O'Reilly was about to lead a Spanish expedition to Algiers and to ignominious defeat and had to flee for his life when he returned to Madrid.

58. 21st July 1774. (College archives 52/6/1.)

59. 10th August 1774. (Ibid., 52/6/2.)

60. Ibid., 52/7/8.11.23.32.35.

61. From John Goold, Carron agent at El Ferrol, to Geddes, 26th July 1777. (Ibid., 52/7/32.)

62. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 13th March 1775. (Columba House 6-D.)

Shortage of staff continued to preoccupy Geddes, although for the meantime Allan Macdonald was reluctantly staying on. He himself was well enough, although he had to report a recurrence of his old chest pains and of spitting blood.⁶³

The boys were another worry. "One of the most dangerous times for youth," he confided to Hay, "is when they begin, or they think, to be able to direct themselves ... advices are then often lost upon them and those who have the care of them are obliged to feel the most sensible Pain. What one must do in such cases is to have an invincible Patience, to pray much and wait untill the Grace of God, Experience and Counsel have at last the desired effect ... here lies one of the principal difficulties of one in my situation, to see when it is necessary, when it is proper, when not, to dismiss some Boys."⁶⁴

Geddes thought that most of his problems with the students could be traced to the two who had come from Douai, Ogilvy and Tyrie, especially the former who, though honest enough and without malice, had, before he left, done a lot of harm by his "imprudent discourses."⁶⁵ Adam Tyrie, despite several appeals by Geddes to Hay for co-operation, had not received a single letter from home during his nine or ten years abroad, even though he had heard from others that his father and one of his brothers had died; whether this continued disappointment was a cause of his unsatisfactory conduct or not, one cannot tell. At all events, Geddes decided that he would have to go, since he was "wavering and inconstant" and so weak-minded that he seemed to be almost insane.⁶⁶ He left at the end of April 1776, settled in London for some years where he was "tyrannically used" by his cousin and "in a most miserable condition;"⁶⁷ later, he was reported to have emigrated to Canada.⁶⁸ The same letter from Geddes to Hay carried news of another student in trouble. Angus Macdonald, one of the six Highlanders who came in 1771, had been exemplary at first but for the past year had been very remiss: he set out for home on 24th February but, on reaching Burgos, turned back and asked for readmittance, to which Geddes agreed after having given him a lecture *coram omnibus*.

About this time, Geddes finally received news of a replacement for Allan Macdonald. It was to be a cousin of the brothers Grant of Rome and Douai and yet another John Gordon; (two of the students of that time, as well as the former master, were all called John Gordon). Born in Clashnare in Morayshire in 1747, ordained in Rome in the Lateran Basilica on 5th June 1773⁶⁹ and, on his return to

63. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 2nd June 1775. (Ibid., 6-D.)

64. 24th March 1775. (Ibid., 6-D.)

65. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 2nd June 1775. (Ibid., 6-D.)

66. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 4th March 1776. (Ibid., 6-E.)

67. Allan Macdonald, London, to Geddes, 26th July 1776. (College archives 51/6/3.)

68. John Farquharson, Douai, to Geddes, 5th May 1779. (Ibid., 51/9/18.)

69. Ibid., 39/64.

Scotland the following year, sent to Aberdeen, he was eventually to become rector in Valladolid in 1798; but, at the time, Geddes regretted that he was not being sent someone older and with more experience. Nevertheless, with Gordon and if he were allowed to retain one of the two students nearly ready for ordination, Geddes saw a solution in sight to the problem of staff shortage.⁷⁰ The difficulty was aggravated by the fact that the students were at so many different stages. Geddes was teaching theology to the two senior students (his textbook was Collet's *Divinity*) and, in addition, coping with eight students in the two different philosophy classes; (for these, he used *Jacquier's Philosophy*). He was teaching for six hours each day, while Macdonald had been taking the four youngest boys in the two classes of grammar.⁷¹

In spite of his own preoccupations, Geddes still found interest in giving Hay occasional titbits of outside information.

"At Madrid, some who had been venturing to speak against the Immortality of the Soul and such points have been taken up by the Inquisition and exposed to public Shame, having got a proper Exhortation from the Grand Inquisitor; one of them, a lawyer, was sent to a Convent in Toledo to learn his Christian Doctrine, with orders to have always a Catechism hanging at his Neck. I hear he is dead of Shame and Vexation."⁷²

Gordon's arrival was delayed and Allan Macdonald finally lost patience waiting for him and left at the beginning of June 1776. Geddes and he parted as they had always been: good friends; and he kept him informed of the progress of his journey. From Bilbao on 17th June 1776: "The *Calasero* [coachman] behaved very well, except that he and his son ate and drank heartily at our expense, especially the last days";⁷³ from London on 26th July: having arrived off Bristol on 5th inst., "we were forced to remain there five days that the sailors might smuggle on shore my prohibited books, which cost me many a pot of beer and many four-hours; however they cost me much less than his books did Mr. Hollywell and his companion [newly ordained priests from the English College]. Neither did I scruple so much to smuggle them as he did."⁷⁴ On arrival in Scotland, he was sent to the island of Eigg.⁷⁵

* * *

Geddes, now alone, confessed in a letter to Hay that he was more melancholy than he had ever been in his life, mainly because

70. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 4th March 1776. (Columba House 6-E.)

71. Geddes to Peter Grant, Rome, 14th February 1776. (Ibid., 6-E.)

72. 10th May 1776. (Ibid., 6-E.)

73. College archives 51/6/2.

74. Ibid., 51/6/3.

75. Ibid., 51/6/15.

so many of the boys had left.⁷⁶ Angus Macdonald, readmitted earlier in the year, had behaved even more badly than before and so had been expelled; (he finally succeeded in enlisting in the Spanish army). And Donald Macdonald, a nephew of Allan Macdonald the vice-rector, had also left; (he was killed in 1812 at the battle of Badajoz where he commanded a battalion of Portuguese troops). Of the fifteen students who had re-established the college in 1771, only seven now remained. To Geddes' despondent letter, Hay replied by return of post, to console his friend and counsel submission to the Will of God.⁷⁷ In fact, Gordon finally arrived, along with two new students, on 22nd August.⁷⁸ They had travelled via El Ferrol. His arrival coincided with the beginning of the summer vacation but, once classes were resumed early in October, he was given the philosophy courses to teach, Geddes taking a new theology class and getting the two senior students to study on their own and to take the two lower classes in grammar.

He had once again (this time to Bishop Grant in Aberdeen) to justify his decision to give all classes in the college. At first he had hoped to send the boys to the local university since this was the custom in the college in Rome, and it gave the boys more experience while requiring fewer masters; but he soon saw that this would be unwise because the Spanish students were a disreputable lot by and large and the standard of teaching was abysmal; the theology course, for example, "consists in learning by heart a great deal of St. Thomas and the parts consigned to be learned are the most speculative, which would be least to our purpose."⁷⁹ Grant, in reply, conceded the force of these arguments but suggested that fewer students would have left if they had not been kept so confined within the college.⁸⁰ Geddes' letter had been sent via Cadiz, accompanying a gift to Grant of £25 worth of best quality chocolate. "Warn him," Geddes wrote to Hay, so that when the "Peggy" arrives at Aberdeen "all precautions may be taken to get it ashore quietly."⁸¹

It is pleasant to be able to record, in connection with Geddes' worries about the students, that John Gordon, the new vice-rector, in a letter to William Reid, his former fellow-priest in Aberdeen, reported that "they are all fond of Mr. Geddes and appear to place the greatest confidence in him".⁸² At a later date, however, Gordon, writing to Geddes while the latter was on a visit to Madrid, suggested that one of the reasons why there had been trouble among the students in previous years might well have been the fact that he,

76. 5th July 1776. (Columba House 6-E.)

77. 2nd August 1776. (*Scotichronicon*, p. 134.)

78. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 26th August 1776. (Columba House 6-E.)

79. 6th November 1776. (*Ibid.*, 6-E.)

80. 24th May 1777. (College archives 51/6/24.)

81. 6th December 1776. (Columba House 6-E.)

82. 6th November 1776. (*Ibid.*, 6-E.)

Geddes, was too frequently with them at times of recreation. This over-familiarity, if it had not bred contempt, had in all probability lessened the respect which the students ought to have for a rector. At the same time, he allowed that, "by what some of the boys have told me of late, you have had some strange fellows to manage since your arrival in Spain... Your goodness, I am persuaded, has been more abused than you yourself know."⁸³

In the second half of 1776, the first two students were ordained priests: Alexander MacDonell (or Macdonald), who had come from Paris in 1770, and John Macdonald, one of the six Highland District boys of 1771. The former returned to Scotland but the latter remained in Valladolid until 1784 as classics master.

A few glimpses of the less serious side of the life of the community are available from the correspondence of the time. The students received a monthly allowance of pocket money—elevenpence for the younger boys, sixteen pence for the philosophers and twenty-one for those in theology. In the face of Hay's misgivings, Geddes defended his introduction of the practice, which he had copied from the English College; some of the boys bought books, others bought canaries or pigeons, carpentry tools, snuff, or even plants and manure for the college garden.⁸⁴

Apropos of this last, "we have here a little Garden and some of our Youngsters are great Florists;" they would be glad to receive some roots and seeds and "another Garden Spade or two are desired as, of the three sent already, Mr. Goold [the Carron agent at El Ferrol] petitioned for one, the English College got another, and one is rather insufficient for a Dozen of Gardiners. [sic] A Book upon gardening is likewise wished for. I am also petitioned to commission for a Collection of Scotch Songs; but if you send them, you must see that they be good, or cut out the exceptionable ones..."⁸⁵ Music, however, was regarded as more than a mere pastime, for Geddes engaged a Spaniard to teach the boys singing; in addition, "he gives half an hour apart to Messrs. Gordon, Macdonald and me; and even I hope to be able to sing a Preface, a *Pater Noster* etc."⁸⁶

By now, with the community fairly firmly established, Geddes wanted to modify one or two of the ways in which the college was still dependent on the Spanish authorities. The English College in 1774 had already got free of the system whereby the city governor as well as the rector had a key to the box where the money was kept; and in 1776 Geddes took advantage of the death of Sr. Bus-tamante's successor to petition the Cámara for the same concession.

83. 4th August 1778. (College archives 61/19/3.)

84. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 5th February 1783. (Columba House 6-P.)

85. Geddes to Bishop Hay, 29th April 1777. (Ibid., 6-F.)

86. Geddes to George Mathison, 21st December 1778. (Ibid., 6-G.)

This was granted⁸⁷ so that, for the remainder of Geddes' rectorship, he had merely to submit an annual balance sheet to a local official (the Fiscal of Criminal Affairs in the High Court of Valladolid), the money box being in the custody of an administrator appointed by the rector himself.⁸⁸

Again, when various documents relating to the foundation of the college had been released by the Extraordinary Council in 1773 and sent to Valladolid, some of the most important, including the original deed of foundation, had been retained in Madrid. Geddes' efforts, from Valladolid, to have these also sent to him had been unsuccessful and he realised that the only way to get them was to go to Madrid in person. But, due to the unwillingness of John Gordon I and Allan Macdonald to be left in charge of the college and in spite of constant reminders from Munro about being "out of sight, out of mind", he was unable to make the journey until December 1776, after the arrival of John Gordon II. When he got to Madrid, he renewed his friendship with Campomanes (whom Geddes recognised as his best and most faithful friend at court), was frequently in his house in the evenings and was fortunate enough to meet there Count Floridablanca, newly appointed to succeed Grimaldo as the chief minister of Spain. (Geddes' social graces also enabled him to become acquainted in Madrid with the Nuncio, then Cardinal Valenti who, on one of his journeys from Madrid to Italy, spent a night in the college.)⁸⁹

In Madrid, Geddes found that the Cámara indeed had an inventory of the papers which he wanted but that, to their embarrassment, the clerks could not find them. They were located, forty to fifty bundles of them, by Geddes himself, in the house of an official. Through the good offices of Campomanes, the Cámara decreed that all of these documents, with the exception of a few which had nothing to do with the college, be released, and so Geddes took delivery of them on 19th March 1777.⁹⁰ He left the following day and returned to Valladolid via Segovia, where he made the acquaintance of the bishop of that city. While in Madrid, he had taken the opportunity of acquiring permission⁹¹ to use a papal indult he had obtained in 1773 which allowed the rector himself to dispense the students from certain impediments to ordination and to present them for orders without seeking dimissorial letters.⁹² (These faculties the rectors of the college continued to renew from time to time and to possess until 1914.)

87. College archives 19/103.

88. *Memoirs*, nos. 282-286.

89. Geddes to Peter Grant, Rome, 1st March 1777. (Columba House 6F.)

90. *Memoirs*, nos. 235-248.

91. College archives 23/8.

92. *Ibid.*, 23/4.

Early in 1777, the college's Madrid administrator, Sobrevilla, had discovered that, over the previous thirty years, the college had not received payments totalling 53,809 *reals* on various government "juros" or bonds which it held. The Ministerio de Hacienda (or Treasury) admitted the claim but said that settlement would have to await more propitious times, since the recent expedition to put an end to Portuguese influence and interference at the River Plate in South America had been costly, as also would be the forthcoming visit which the queen-mother of Portugal was about to make to her brother, Charles III, and which was to usher in a period of friendship between the two countries. Geddes set off for Madrid in December 1777 and, with Munro, dined several times with Sr. Musquiz, the Minister of Finance, who promised to do what he could to help. After more lobbying, during which he had several meetings with Sr. de Roda, the Minister of Grace and Justice, at the El Pardo palace outside of Madrid, Geddes succeeded in having the Dean of Valladolid commissioned to investigate the college's financial circumstances. This official reported that the college could well do with 30,000 *reals* in order that the building might be put in good condition. With the encouragement of Geddes, the Minister of Finance obtained the royal permission to pay the Scots this sum at once and the remainder of the debt the following year. Geddes returned to Valladolid early in April 1778, well pleased with the results of his visit to Madrid.⁹³

In addition to four students who arrived from Scotland on a Carron ship in 1777, a fifth arrived in December of that year, a week before Geddes left for Madrid. This was Paul Macpherson, twenty-one years old, whom Geddes, when he was at Scalán, had known, admired and taught until he went to Preshome. Macpherson had been sent to Rome in 1769, but his health broke down in 1776. When word of this reached Geddes, he invited his former *protégé* to Valladolid. Macpherson, after trying in vain to be admitted to the colleges at Paris and Douai, sailed from Genoa to Alicante, had a terrible journey to Madrid, travelling in a conveyance that was part-coach and part-wagon and putting up at inns where there was no distinction made between the accommodation for humans and that for cattle. He stayed a week in Madrid "to see its curiosities," then went on to Valladolid, where it was not long before he seemed to have recovered his health.

At the beginning of June 1778, only a couple of months after his previous visit, Geddes was back in Madrid or, rather, in Aranjuez, where the court then was. This time, he had two aims. He wanted to follow up a remark that he had been told the king had made when he had ordered the 30,000 *reals* to be paid to the college;

93. *Memoirs*, nos. 213-222.

this was to the effect that the Scots also should be kept in mind, when conferring benefices that had fallen vacant. When Geddes in June told the Minister of Grace and Justice about this remark, the latter

"...seemed to think that enough of Favour had been shown to the Scotch for the present and appeared little inclined to concur in granting them anything further. Yet he promised to think of it; and when the Court removed to Madrid, Mr. Geddes presented to him a long Memorial wherein, from the above-mentioned Papers of the College, he made it appear that the Scotch Catholics had suffered much and still continued to suffer on account of their Attachment to Spain; he also described the present necessitous Condition of their Missionaries and begged that his Excellency would favour them with some Help. Sr. De Roda [the minister] read this Paper, owned to Mr. Geddes that it was strong, and promised to procure some Relief to the Missions of Scotland: but whether this was a meer offput or not, time will show."⁹⁴

Geddes' other purpose in returning to Madrid was to have all the most important documents referring to the foundation and re-establishment of the college collected, confirmed and clarified in one single royal *cédula*. With Campomanes' help, the necessary memorial was presented to, and considered by, the Cámara more quickly than usual and, although Geddes had to return to Valladolid towards the end of August, the new *cédula* was prepared and the king signed it in the Escorial on 18th October 1778.⁹⁵ The document begins with a brief account of the college's history, particularly in the times of William Semple and John Geddes; this is followed by the Deed of Foundation (1627), the authorisations of the king and the primate of Spain for the foundation (1639), and the *cédula* of 5th December 1771 which re-established the college in Valladolid; finally the document lists twelve points about the status of the college which, until then, had not been perfectly clear. (Appendix IIB). These include a declaration that the king conferred on the college the ownership of the part of San Ambrosio which it occupied, as well as of the chapel of the Immaculate Conception, the garden and the courtyard; that the college was a continuation of the Madrid establishment, with the same rights, privileges and properties; "that the King... has been pleased to take this College under his Royal Protection, making it a part of his Royal Patronage and honouring [it] with the Title of 'Royal';" that the king will appoint the rector, choosing him from a list of three names presented by the Scottish bishops; and "that the Bishops in Scotland name those that are to be Collegians and send them when the Rector advises them there is Place for them and that the Rector, with the

94. *Ibid.*, no. 250.

95. College archives 30/9 and *Memoirs*, nos. 251-260.

Advice of the Masters, can dismiss those Students who, after a sufficient Trial, should not seem fit for the End of the College."⁹⁶

For some years past, Geddes had been anxious to sell the estate near the village of Pinto, twelve miles south of the centre of Madrid, which the college had acquired in 1759, in lieu of loans not repaid. The last tenant had left in 1773 and it proved impossible to find another. Moreover, the estate was burdened with a "*censo*" or debt, which imposed on the college a yearly payment of 2,200 *reals*. The property "consisted of some bad Vineyard-Ground, Cornlands, and two old Houses with a Wine-Cave and several Wine-Butts."⁹⁷ After some delays in getting permission for the transaction from the *Cámara*,⁹⁸ the estate was sold in 1779 to the Fathers of St. John of God for a total of 120,000 *reals*. Of this sum, 88,000 were used to pay off the debt which had been incurred in 1773 when the remaining part of the college in Madrid was being made into houses, and with the rest Geddes hoped one day to be able to buy a house and some land in the country near Valladolid. As early as 1771, he had mentioned to Hay that the English in Valladolid had bought lands that had belonged to the Jesuits, including "a fine Vineyard not far out of Town, which Dr. Perry offers to us in Lease for a Country-house and Place of Diversion. I believe we will accept of it, as some such place will be necessary."⁹⁹ The Scots did not take up this offer and, in fact, it was not until Geddes was back in Scotland that land for a country house was acquired. In the meantime, a royal order early in 1780 commanded all communities who had money for investing to lend it to the king's treasury at interest of three per cent, and the 32,000 *reals* of the Pinto deal were subject to this order.

It will be recalled that the mission oath had been introduced into the college in 1773, the form taken being that used in the English College. Geddes was dissatisfied with its wording on several counts, mainly because it seemed to have been designed for the use of converts and because it did not make explicit enough that the obligation assumed was unconditional and permanent. So he composed a revised form and this was introduced at Christmas 1778; it continued to be taken by students until the college closed during the civil war of 1936-39. Its later wording, differing only slightly from Geddes' composition, was as follows:

"Ego, N. N., Regii Vallisoletani Scotorum Collegii alumnus, Dei gloria et civium meorum aeternae salutis, iuxta huius Collegii finem,

96. *Memoirs*, no. 258. Several of the twelve points were proposed because Geddes wanted the college to be as dependent on the Scottish bishops and as independent of the Spanish authorities as possible. (Geddes to Bishop Hay, — November 1778. Columba House 6-G.)

97. *Memoirs*, no. 224. The vineyards had an area of almost forty hectares (with 50,000 vines); the "cornlands" an area of thirty-six hectares. The total extent of the estate, therefore, was about one hundred and seventy acres.

98. College archives 10/35 and 30/11.

99. 2nd April 1771. (Columba House 5-Q.) During 1771, the Scots went several times to the English country-estate for picnics. (College archives A/12, p. 39.)

inservire cupiens, post diligentem considerationem et divino fretus auxilio, spondeo et sub iuramento polliceor, me omnes sacros etiam presbyteratus ordines, quando eiusdem Collegii Superioribus visum fuerit, suscepturum atque ad missiones Scotiae quum iidem iusserint reversurum, ut per totius vitae spatium missionarii munere, quemadmodum Episcopus Episcopatus N. eiusque successores bono eiusdem Episcopatus utilius iudicaverint, perfungar. Spondeo pariter ac iuro me nullam unquam Religionem, Societatem aut Congregationem regularem sine expresso Sedis Apostolicae permissu ingressurum. Sic me Deus adiuvet et haec sancta Evangelia. Interim vero, dum in hoc Collegio permansero, promitto me quiete ac pacifice victurum et operam daturum ut ipsius Collegii regulis et institutionibus obediam."¹⁰⁰

Also in 1778, Geddes at last managed to give serious consideration to drawing up rules for the students. Until then he had used the rules of the English College, but only as a basis, adapting them as he thought wise and allowing custom to supply the place of a written document. He felt that such an important matter as the formulation of a book of rules should not be rushed and, besides, he had been so very busy in teaching, doing the administrative work and negotiating in Madrid, that he had little time to devote to thinking about the matter. It has already been noted that one of the complaints that Gordon made about Geddes when he got to Paris was his refusal to lay down rules. As time went on, the bishops urged him to produce a book of rules and even the students themselves "likewise had been for some time calling for them, that they might know the more precisely what they had to do."¹⁰¹ Eventually he did compose a rule-book, submitted it to the comments of the two masters and then provisionally promulgated the rules in the reliquary towards the end of 1778. "The Boys seemed to be very well pleased with them, as they had not much in them but what they had before practised, and they saw clearly that their real Good was sincerely aimed at in them."¹⁰²

This book of rules¹⁰³ consists of eighty-one quarto pages written in Geddes' own hand. After four pages of introduction, there are nine chapters devoted in turn to the entrance of students into the college, the purpose of the college, discipline in general, the horarium, piety, studies, particular points of discipline, ordinations and departures, and a conclusion.

As may be judged from its length, the book is somewhat prolix

100. College archives 21/1. The oath was administered when the superiors judged that a student had been sufficiently long in the college and was old enough for the oath to be taken. Later rectors followed the same custom, despite Bishop Hay's wish that it should be required from all students who had been a year in the college and were fifteen years of age. (Ibid., 49/33.)

101. *Memoirs*, no. 289.

102. Ibid., no. 289; and Geddes to George Mathison, 21st December 1778. (Columba House 6-G.)

103. College archives 49/32.

and, as well as containing rules in the strict sense, it is suffused with frequent and detailed explanations of the reasons for various rules being imposed and exhortations on the need for them to be obeyed. The tone is already established in the Introduction, in which Geddes expresses the need to avoid "cruel indulgence and too great condescension" on the one hand, and "a Rigour that might terrify young Persons" on the other.¹⁰⁴ He emphasises that, if the rules are to be observed in the proper spirit, the grace of God is required and he expresses the hope that "there shall always, by the blessing of the same God, reign a mutual Confidence between the Superiours and the Collegians; such as there should be between tenderly affectionate Parents and dutiful, loving Children."¹⁰⁵

The first chapter, on the rules governing the arrival of new students, gives some information on the procedure followed: the newcomers were allowed three days in which to rest from the fatigue of the journey, then, for the next three days, they were instructed in the rules and customs of the college, after which they made a public profession of faith, followed, not long afterwards, by a general confession. All money in their possession on arrival was to be handed over to the rector, who then made them an allowance from time to time, as he saw fit.

The horarium of the college followed normal customs: the students were to rise at 5 a.m. (6 a.m. in winter) and, after thirty minutes for "puting on their Clothes, combing and, if they have time, washing themselves," there were morning prayers, meditation, litany of the Holy Name, and Mass. Meals were at 8 a.m., 12 noon and 8 p.m., the other hours being occupied with classes, private study, various spiritual exercises, recreation and walks. At 9.30, the litany of Loreto, an examination of conscience and the points for the following morning's meditation concluded the day.¹⁰⁶

The improvement hoped for in Paul Macpherson's health (he suffered from headaches—a kind of vertigo) did not materialise and Geddes informed Hay that, in consequence, he would have to be ordained soon and sent home.¹⁰⁷ Accompanied by John Gordon, the vice-rector, he went to Segovia to receive the priesthood, since the Bishop of Valladolid was old and infirm. He was ordained in the chapel of the episcopal palace in Segovia on Easter Tuesday, 6th April 1779, by the bishop of the city, D. Alonso (or Ildefonso) Marcos de Llanes y Argüelles.¹⁰⁸ Macpherson left the college on 21st April, carrying a copy of the new rules to be presented to the Scottish bishops for their correction and approval. He sailed from Bilbao on

104. Para. 3.

105. Para. 4.

106. Chap. IV.

107. 11th January 1779. (Columba House 6-f.)

108. Scots College, Rome, archives, 7/31.

the ship "Nuestra Señora de la Antigua" on 10th May¹⁰⁹ and, at London, met Bishop Hay who was at that time trying to get some compensation for the losses sustained by the Catholic community in Edinburgh during the riots of the previous winter. They left London for Scotland together on 24th June; on arrival there, he was sent to the Cabrach to succeed John Gordon of unhappy memory. It was not until September 1780 that the rules, amended by the bishops, were brought back to Valladolid, their bearer being Alexander Cameron, come to succeed Geddes as rector.

From time to time in his letters, Hay had advice for Geddes on the subject of training boys for the priesthood; he must insist on a knowledge of ascetical matters and the study of what will be of practical use to them in their work as priests.¹¹⁰ But much more mortifying letters were coming, at this time, from another of the bishops, John Macdonald of the Highland District. Already he had said that he felt it unwise that boys so young should have been sent to Valladolid,¹¹¹ but his next letter¹¹² must have hurt its recipient greatly and yet it reveals quite a lot about Geddes' outlook and indeed about life in the college. Referring to the troubles there had been, he blamed Geddes on three counts. Firstly, he had been over-indulgent to the students "in caressing them more than is consistent with your authority, in suffering them to entertain notions of conceitedness and a persuasion that they must be fine gentlemen, and allowing them liberties which we old folks always thought dangerous. The chief heads of this last are giving them free liberty of visiting where they please, making many acquaintances and giving free access to strangers to visit them in their chambers, and all this without your special permission." Secondly, he was not firm enough in dismissing doubtful students; and lastly, he had allowed some to gain his particular esteem so that the other students, though envious, asked the favourites to seek permissions which they suspected would be refused to them.

In one of the minor ironies of history, Geddes was asked to intervene to try to settle the troubles in the two Irish Colleges in Alcalá and Salamanca. Already in 1775, Joseph Shepherd, Perry's successor as rector of the English College, Valladolid, had written to Geddes during a visit to Madrid: "The Irish of the two Colleges have lost all reputation and are looked upon as the scum of earth."¹¹³

109. Lynch, Killikelly and Morony, Bilbao, to Geddes, 14th May 1779. (College archives 51/5/30.)

110. 3rd April 1778. (*Scotichronicon*, p. 141.)

The recipient of this advice would probably have considered Hay's ideas too narrow. The college archives contain (uncatalogued) a bound volume of about twenty papers (in MS) which Geddes composed, and read to the students, while he was rector of the college. They range over a wide variety of subjects, some of an academic nature and others on aspects of Scottish Catholic history.

111. 6th December 1777. (College archives 51/6/16.)

112. 20th July 1778. (*Ibid.*, 51/6/17.)

113. *Ibid.*, 51/7/43.



JOHN GEDDES

First Rector in Valladolid, 1770-1780

(This portrait, which hangs in the college refectory in Valladolid, shows Geddes as a bishop and was, therefore, presumably painted in 1780.)

Para despacho de officio que es mto.



SELLO GUARDIA, AÑO DE MIL
SEPECENTOS Y SETENTA Y
OCHO.

*Carta por la Gracia de Dios Rey de Casti-
lla, de León, de Aragón, de las dos Sicilias, de Jerusalen,
de Navarra, de Granada, de Toledo, de Valencia, de
Galicia, de Mallorca, de Sevilla, de Caceres, de Cordova, de
Corcega, de Murcia, de Jaen, de los Algarbes, de Algezira,
de Gibraltar, de las Islas de Canaria, de las Indias Orien-
tales, y Occidentales, Islas, y Tierra firme del Mar Occano.
Archiduque de Austria: Duque de Borgoña de Brabant,
y Milan: Conde de Arspourg, de Flandes, Tirol, y Barcelo-
na: Señor de Vizcaya, y de Molina &c. Governador, y los del
mi Consejo, Presidentes, y Oydores de mis R. Audiencias, y Char-
cillerias, Asistentes, y Governadores, Alcaldes mayores, y Ordinarios
ya otros qualquiera Jueces, y Jurisdiçion, así Eclesiasticas, co-
mo Seculares, a quienes tocare el cumplimiento de lo que
en esta R. Cedula se contenerá. Sabed que por d. Juan*

THE COLLEGE'S ROYAL CHARTER OF 1778

(see Appendix II B)

This first page begins the narration of the many titles held by King Charles III, who issued the Charter.



ALEXANDER CAMERON
Rector of the College, 1780-1798

(This portrait, preserved in the college, is probably the one which was painted in Madrid, when Cameron went there in October 1798 to be ordained a bishop.)

For some time prior to 1778, the Irish colleges were without rectors and Geddes seems to have been advising William O'Brien, one of the students at Salamanca, on how to run that college. This William O'Brien had visited Geddes in 1775 and had expressed a wish to work in Scotland when ordained.¹¹⁴ William Bermingham was sent in 1777 by the Irish bishops to try to settle the troubles in Alcalá and, as he thought that the main cause of the difficulties was the lack of rules, he wrote to Geddes, on Campomanes' suggestion, to ask for a copy of the Scots College rules. (At the time, no such thing existed.) Bermingham actually was appointed rector of the two colleges and he continued to write letters to Geddes from time to time, seeking his counsel and advice.

Shepherd was scathing about "that oddity of a Bermingham"¹¹⁵ and informed Geddes, from Madrid, that the Bishop of Salamanca had a royal decree to deprive the Irish of their house there, that Campomanes had therefore suggested settling them in Valladolid, but that he (Shepherd) had "told that gentleman today that this will ruin us all and that, if he asked my advice, he should not think of it; and all I could get of him was a promise of hindering it at least as long as any of the present generation remained."¹¹⁶ Geddes was alarmed and equally hostile to the suggestion.

"I hasten to give You my Thoughts on the Project You mention of our getting certain Neighbours in this Town. The first Reflection I made upon reading your Letter was that, it is lucky You are there to put a Stop, which I hope is possible, to a Scheme which, if put in Execution, would certainly be very troublesome and pernicious to us ... we would be obliged to prohibit our Students from having the least Communication with them ... I think You might also signify to Mr. Bermingham the greater Dearness of Provisions here than at Salamanca. You will know whether or not the Mists may be alleged, and the Agues..."¹¹⁷ The last word on the subject came in the postscript of Geddes' next letter: "It seems You say nothing in this last Post of our getting Neighbours. I hope You have got the Danger warded off."¹¹⁸

114. William O'Brien, Salamanca, to Geddes, 2nd January 1776. (Ibid., 51/4/1.)

115. 2nd December 1778. (Ibid., 51/7/61.)

116. 25th November 1778. (Ibid., 51/7/60.)

117. 29th November 1778. (English College, Valladolid, archives, E 3^o; transcript 3/67. Quoted in *Registers of the English College at Valladolid*, pp. lvi-lviii.)

118. 12th December 1778. (Ibid., E. 3^o; transcript 3/69.)