

## John Cowie

When John Cameron retired at the end 1873, he had been rector for forty years and, for thirty of them, John Cowie had been vice-rector. It was not at all unexpected, then, that, despite his reluctance, the bishops should choose Cowie to assume the administration, when the "*abuelo*" was permitted to resign.<sup>1</sup> By this time, Cowie was nearing his sixty-fifth birthday.

He was born at Fochabers on 14th February 1809 and entered the seminary at Aquhorties towards the end of 1821. He did his philosophy and theology courses at St.-Sulpice in Paris between July 1828 and July 1833. During these five years, he had to return to Scotland for a few months in mid-1830 because of the revolution in France. This short spell he spent at Blairs College, opened the previous year. When he had completed his studies in Paris, he returned to Scotland and was ordained priest in Edinburgh by Bishop Carruthers on 7th September 1833. He was placed in charge of the mission at Dalbeattie but, within two years, he was in Rome, sent as vice-rector to Abbé Paul Macpherson who had just resumed the rectorship of the Scots College there.

Cowie was in Rome for six years and then, on the pretext of misunderstandings with the rector (although he admitted later that his real motives were of a more personal nature and included the wish to return to his native land), he resigned and went back to Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Cowie spent two years teaching at Blairs and then was asked to go to Valladolid to be assistant to John Cameron. He arrived on 29th September 1843 and, during the next thirty years, carried out the duties of vice-rector with characteristic unobtrusiveness and dedication. For over twenty years, Cowie looked after the classics and

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1. Bishop John Macdonald, Aberdeen, to Cowie, 15th October 1873. (College archives 64/5/23.)  
2. Cowie to Bishop Kyle, 18th February 1853. (Preshome archives). While Cowie was still in Rome, Macpherson had let it be known that he did not favour him as his successor. (Cf. Bishop Scott to Bishop Kyle, 7th May 1839. Ibid.)

philosophy courses, sometimes teaching one, sometimes the other, sometimes both, depending on the needs of the students. In 1865, when David McDonald joined the staff, Cameron gave up teaching, so that Cowie handed over his classes to the newcomer and assumed the theology classes. In the spring of 1870 during the first Vatican Council, he paid a return visit to Rome and stayed there three months.

Cowie's rectorate lasted only a little more than five years and, at the beginning of this period at least, the country was in a state of near-anarchy. The ill-conceived scheme of importing Amadeo of Savoy to be king of Spain had ended, after two years, in his abdication and departure in February 1873. For the next two years, Spain was a republic with a succession of ministries all having, to a greater or less extent, the expected anticlerical outlook. But monarchism was still a very strong force and both the Bourbons and the Carlist claimant had many supporters. The second Carlist war broke out in July 1873 and, for a time, the Carlists had many successes and were in possession of much of the north. They tended to have the support of the clergy as being more absolutist and less anticlerical in their philosophy and policy.

Although the war did not affect Castile much, many suspected Carlists ("This means that they were persons noted for their piety"<sup>3</sup>) were imprisoned; in Valladolid, some took refuge in the English College. At the beginning of 1874, there was a change in government in the republic and this had its repercussions in the city:

"January 4. Sunday. Day of barricades, cannon and musket shot... the *voluntarios* have erected barriers in many parts. Our street... has a barricade at both ends. Firing going on until about six at night, when all is still and quiet as the grave, the forerunner of more mischief. We have prepared the flag in case of need. No bells ringing today. I suppose, very few Masses said, at least in public churches.

5. Monday. During last night all pretty quiet. About 12 or 1 this morning the *voluntarios* retired to their houses, leaving the barricades either from want of ammunition or because reinforcements had arrived. During day all tranquil. They have begun to throw down the barricades I took a stroll through some of them."<sup>4</sup>

Cowie mentioned that there had been "no close fighting but only distant firing at each other, which was kept up the most of the day in various parts of the town fortunately not in our immediate neighbourhood. A cannon ball discharged in the Campo Grande flew over the house and struck the front of the English church."<sup>5</sup>

3. John Cameron to Bishop Strain, 2nd October 1873. (St. Andrews and Edinburgh archives, C 7, p. 216.)

4. College archives 59/4: Diary of David McDonald.

5. Draft of letter to Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 18th January 1874. (Ibid., 64/6/9.)

The possibility of continued Carlist successes and the rapid disintegration of law and order in other parts of Spain, especially in the south, led many republicans and neutrals to fall in with, and give invaluable support to, the movement to restore the Bourbons. In fact, the sixteen years old son of Isabel II was proclaimed king in December 1874 as Alfonso XII. David McDonald had an early opportunity of seeing the new king, but he was not impressed.

"February 11th. Thursday. Don Alfonso XII arrived in Valladolid this afternoon. I saw him on his return from the cathedral. He is a fairish stripling. Enough of people. Not much enthusiasm. *Colgaduras*. [Balcony drapings] Illuminations.

12th. Friday. Don Alfonso left for Madrid today forenoon. He visited the *casa de locos*" [lunatic asylum].<sup>6</sup>

During his reign of eleven years, Alfonso was an unpopular figure, partly due to the scandals associated with his private life, but these years saw defeat of the Carlists in 1876, the return of peace to the country and some advance made towards conditions of comparative material prosperity.

Although conditions in Spain were not easy during his rectorate, especially at the beginning, Cowie had not to contend with hardships and problems comparable with those of some of his predecessors. One might say, with justification indeed, that the greatest obstacle to success in his administration came, not from outside difficulties, but from one of his own failings—his scrupulousness. This defect plagued him all his life. Twelve years after leaving Rome, he was still torturing himself and seeking advice about whether he was bound to make restitution of his travelling expenses to Scotland since he might not have explained properly his reasons for wanting to resign and so might have obtained the money under false pretences.<sup>7</sup> When John Cameron was about to retire as rector in Valladolid, he thought that Cowie was fitted to succeed him, except for his scruples and indecision; he had been to France several times in order to consult priests about his doubts.<sup>8</sup> One Scottish bishop, at least, thought that Cowie ought to be readier to take decisions himself more often and to accept responsibility for them, rather than asking the bishops for their decisions.<sup>9</sup>

And of course his scruples and over-conscientiousness meant that he did himself less than justice in the eyes of others in the community. At Boecillo one year, he instructed the housekeeper to stop giving little extras to the students and priests and instituted certain other minor measures, which led David McDonald to suggest to

6. *Ibid.*, 59/4: Diary of David McDonald.

7. To Bishop Kyle, 18th February 1853. (Preshome archives.)

8. To Bishop Macdonald, 2nd October 1873. (St. Andrews and Edinburgh archives, C 7, p. 216.)

9. Bishop Macdonald to Cowie, 17th July 1874. (Argyll archives.)

him that "his new economic arrangements" gave the impression of "stinginess."<sup>10</sup> But McDonald had no hopes that there would be an improvement and, in fact, the following year: "Venancia [the house-keeper], like the rest of the servants, complains of Mr. Cowie. Poor man, with his scrupulous economy, he is going too far and putting every body in a rage. Lord save us from scrupulous Rectors."<sup>11</sup> Many a time, a concession or permission might reasonably have been granted but was in fact refused, since Cowie had a dread of innovations that might lead to precedents.

Shortly after Cowie assumed office, a hallowed institution in the college was revived after a lapse of many years—the weekly "Academy". Dr. Munro, the former student and professor, while on a visit in 1872, had been very persuasive in his advocacy and had fired the students' interest and enthusiasm. After much discussion, the reinauguration took place on 6th November 1873, with the institution placed under the patronage of St. Charles Borromeo, whose life had been read during the retreat of the previous week. The aim of the Academy was to foster eloquence so that the students would later excel in the pulpit. "For is it not in preaching especially that Spaniards hold the preeminence above their brother priests in Scotland?... We have the means in our Academy of becoming good preachers and doing honour to our Alma Mater."<sup>12</sup>

The meetings, which were held on Thursday mornings in the old playroom in the upper corridor, lasted sixty and, soon, ninety minutes, and attracted the attendance of most of the students. There were, each week, one or more declamations of selected passages previously learned by heart, and one or more written essays read out; later, an original speech or lecture was added to the programme. Each of these items was followed by criticism from students nominated for the purpose, the critics of the written essays dealing with the offerings of the previous week. During the meeting, there were also remarks and comments on the standard of public reading in the reliquary and refectory during the previous week. In 1875, the system of having all the students in rotation take their turn as president was introduced.

A year after the revival of the Academy, a handwritten magazine called *The Academician* was founded. It appeared several times a year, but irregularly, for about a decade. "It was brought into existence on 5th of November 1874 by the members of the Academy of St. Charles, and is intended to be in a manner the organ of that institute. Wherefore it will contain a record of the Academy and its proceedings, papers read and speeches delivered before it, and likewise

10. College archives 59/4: Diary of David McDonald, 14th October 1874.

11. *Ibid.*, 1st September 1875.

12. *The Academician*, no. 1, p. 17.

any voluntary contributions its members may offer."<sup>13</sup> The contents are chiefly remarkable as evidence of the strong pro-Carlist leanings of the students, who did not hesitate to express their views about the republic and later about the Bourbon king in a manner that can only be described as defamatory.

A month after *The Academician* appeared for the first time, the students' enthusiasm for the Academy suggested a new item in its meetings: play readings. But before that could be introduced, someone asked why they should not produce a play properly, in costume and with an audience, as the English students did. So, on the last day of 1874, with only a fortnight for rehearsals and the construction of a makeshift stage in the playroom, the drama *Rob Roy* was presented. The parts had been allocated by lot, although some interchanging was later done; and the students were so pleased with themselves that they prevailed upon Cowie to have constructed, in the playroom, during the following summer, a much more permanent theatre. It was ready for the Christmas production that year, an event that lived up to the students' high expectations.

"...Before the curtain rose, the audience expressed their admiration of the Theatre and Stage by loud and reiterated cheers... The loud clapping that followed each scene gave proof of the interest taken by the audience... It is easier imagined than expressed what cheers and bursts of laughter... A numerous audience attended during the evening. Among the most remarkable visitors were the English Superiors and Students, some Spanish friends &c. &c. &c."<sup>14</sup>

But the euphoria was short-lived; Cowie's scrupulosity cast a blight on the rejoicing, as David McDonald, after recording his own appraisal of the evening, noted.

"31 December. Friday. Our students acted *Macbeth* in their new theatre, as also *Handy Andy*. The function was too long and the young English students did not certainly prove a very appreciating audience.

1876. 1 January. Saturday. ...Mr. Cowie, thinking his authority dragged in the mud by Lady Macbeth wearing a kirtle somewhat too long for his idea, deprived the students of their teanight as also on the Epiphany, making them study from 6 to 8..."<sup>15</sup>

Cowie thought the costume in question was really a female one and dismissed the college tailor who had made it; McDonald threatened to write to his bishop and resign, since the rector was so unreasonable. But three days later the rector agreed to remit the remainder of the punishment, provided the students apologised,

13. *Id.*, no. 1, p. 3. William Dawson was its founder and first editor.

14. College archives 59/8: History and Accounts of the Theatre Erected in the Scotch College, Valladolid, 1875; (handwritten).

15. *Ibid.*, 59/4: Diary of David McDonald.

which they did. "I rather lost my temper too much. Poor man, I pity him, and yet he makes me angry. If bishops were wise, they would never make a scrupulous man absolute superior."<sup>16</sup>

The unfortunate misunderstanding seems to have been forgotten by the following year, for then "the Students advanced a step in their Theatricals. Instead of one evening's entertainment, they, with the Rector's permission, gave two."<sup>17</sup> *Ali Baba*, an opera, and *Cramond Brig*, a drama, were presented on the first evening, with the inevitable and resounding success. "We sincerely avow that from beginning to end, there was not a single flaw in the singing, nor any stoppage whatsoever... The audience certainly received it with merited applause."<sup>18</sup> That production lasted only three and a half hours; three nights later, the entertainment, no doubt to McDonald's irritation, lasted an hour longer. In 1877, "following up the success of the preceding year, the Students again gave two evenings' entertainment." And this was the pattern in the years to come. Success followed success; of each production, "it is needless to say that it was well received;" and inevitably, at the end which always came too soon, "the audience departed highly delighted,"<sup>19</sup> except perhaps on the occasion (in 1878) when the newly-painted seats were not quite dry.

It was during Cowie's time that the students asked, and the bishops, presuming the agreement of the rector, consented to the long vacation beginning on the first day of September instead of towards the end of the month. During their stay at Boecillo, which now lasted eight weeks, they made occasional excursions on donkeys and mules to such places as Portillo and Simancas. On 27th October each year, the students returned to Valladolid, did a three days' retreat (usually under a Spanish Jesuit) before All Saints' and began classes on 2nd November. There were about ten days free of classes at Christmas time, although study periods continued unless a "tea-night" was specially granted.<sup>20</sup> Classes resumed on 2nd January but, in these winter months, the students were allowed to go skating in the afternoons on a canal or mill pond whenever the ice was holding. Before holy week, there were examinations, the philosophy examination consisting of an oral followed by a written theme chosen by lot and to be done in Latin, without the aid of Tongiorgi, the textbook. The first three days of holy week were occupied with another retreat and then, sometime between Easter and Pentecost, the students had

16. *Ibid.*, 1st January 1876.

17. *Ibid.*, 59/8.

18. *Ibid.*, 59/8.

19. *Ibid.*, 59/8.

20. This consisted in having a special tea with cakes and sweet things, followed by a social evening of songs, wine, sometimes speeches and toasts, and finally cards. Tea-nights also occurred at carnival time and, if there were a visitor kind enough to meet the expenses, during the time at Boecillo also. Very often, the evenings at Christmas and carnival time were occupied with the playing of "*Cucus*."

a fortnight's holiday in Boecillo.<sup>21</sup> During the summer, they enjoyed an occasional day out, either to Boecillo or to the riverside estate of the English College on the outskirts of the city. Examinations concluded the scholastic year before the long vacation.<sup>22</sup>

Another perennial feature of seminary life of course played its part in introducing variety into the routine: the liturgical and gastronomic observance of feast days. David McDonald's diary gives a description of St. Margaret's day, 1875:

"Day sunny but cool. High Mass at 8¼. English students over. At dinner the usual company. Began with slices of orange. Then two kinds of soup, *puchero* (*garbanzos—verdura—tocino—jamón—salchichas—breadstuff—pollo—carne*); then a dish of ham, eggs and green peas—partridges—salmon—veal and salad—*flan* and another pudding—*orejadas—guindas* and apricots—etc. After dinner coffee and sweets in Mr. Cameron's room. The company departed about three o'clock. At 4½ benediction—English students over."<sup>23</sup>

Although Cowie had been appointed to act as rector since Cameron's retirement in 1873, he was not officially so until after the old man's death. Cowie then notified the bishops that it was necessary to have a rector properly appointed, that he was "troubled with scruples on a variety of points" and so would not take it amiss if the bishops should decide on someone better qualified; but, if they wanted him, they should present a list of three names to the king of Spain and he, of course, would nominate as rector the first on the list.<sup>24</sup> This process was carried out and Cowie's royal appointment is dated 13th September 1876.<sup>25</sup>

In the same letter to Bishop Macdonald (Northern District) in which Cowie reluctantly agreed to his nomination as rector, he commented bitterly on the fact that Archbishop Eyre had withdrawn four students of the Western District in order to send them to the recently founded seminary in Partickhill, Glasgow. "The dismemberment of our theological class I consider a disastrous measure, unfair to the College in a financial view, subversive of the discipline of the house and injurious to the peace and contentment of students and superiors. I have yielded to authority and sent home the students..."<sup>26</sup> The order had come from Eyre earlier that month, a fortnight after one of the students, who had finished his studies but was not yet of age to be ordained, had written to the archbishop asking to be removed from Valladolid and sent to Partickhill; he was not in good health and sea bathing had been recommended,

21. This was ordered by the bishops in 1870. (Cf. college archives A/15.)

22. *Ibid.*, 59/4: Diary of David McDonald.

23. *Ibid.*, 59/4, 10th June 1875.

24. *Ibid.*, 64/6/12.

25. *Ibid.*, 67/9.

26. 25th July 1876. (St. Andrews and Edinburgh archives, C 7, p. 237.)

but there were only "the filthy lukewarm waters of the Pisuerga."<sup>27</sup> Eyre's response was to agree to this request and to remove the four other students also, with the idea of their acquiring, before ordination, a better appreciation of what life on the mission would be like. McDonald, like Cowie, was filled with dismay and indignation: "We of course protest against such a step, as putting additional expense on the College, making it a feeder for St. Peter's Seminary, breaking up classes, causing discontent amongst others etc."<sup>28</sup>

As well as Archbishop Eyre's attitude, Cowie also had financial worries. The Madrid rents were by far the most important source of income for the college, with the sale of the wine from Boecillo and the annual interest on investments providing a very variable supplementary revenue. The state had long ceased paying the ordained students' fares back to Scotland ("*viáticos*") and all the old ecclesiastical income, such as that from the bishopric of Cadiz, had also been long since abolished. In its Madrid and early Valladolid days, the college had possessed a number of *juros* or public debts in various places in Spain and, from these, it drew the annual interest. This interest was suspended, however, from 1824 until 1842; moreover, when it was paid in the latter year, the Madrid administrator (who later absconded) had said nothing about it to the rector and the college therefore lost several hundred thousand *reals*. In 1851, all the different types of *juros*, including those held by the college, were absorbed into the National or Public Debt, creditors of which were to receive a uniform three per cent per annum interest. In addition, at various times, especially between 1859 and 1870, the college invested further large sums in this national debt, to a nominal value of considerably more than one million *reals*. In the 1870s, however, a series of decrees made these investments a very unattractive proposition: first, only a proportion of the 3% interest was to be paid in cash, and the rest was to be in further shares in the public debt; then, because the exchequer was empty, IOUs were issued instead of the cash (and speculators would buy these from those who needed money—but at a very low rate); and finally, the annual rate of interest itself was declared reduced from three to one per cent.

The amount of money at Cowie's disposal had been further reduced by increases in taxation, by heavy death duties on the Boecillo house and lands (to avoid the constant threat of expropriation such as hung over the Madrid property, these were kept as the personal property of the rector) and by the bishops' decision that, in future, Valladolid should pay the complete fares of

27. William Davidson to Archbishop Eyre, 24th June 1876. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

The Pisuerga is the Duero tributary which flows through Valladolid.

28. College archives 59/4: Diary of David McDonald; 6th July 1876.

the students on their journey from Blairs to Spain.<sup>29</sup> In the fear that conditions in Spain, already bad, would become worse and that investments would fall even further in value, £2,000 had been sent, in 1873, to Dr. Munro in Glasgow as a loan for the building of St. Andrew's school. Cowie sent a further £500 in 1875; he was not sure if this belonged to the college or was John Cameron's own money, since he had found it "lying in a lumber room amid all sort of old trumpery"—but the question was unimportant since Cameron had left all his money, after bequests, to the college.<sup>30</sup>

The following year, however, after Cameron's death, Cowie was regretting that he had so little money at his disposal. He had been informed that the older part of the Madrid property (that part in the Calle de la Salud and occupied by the Marqués de San Isidro) was in such a ruinous condition that it would have to be rebuilt and not merely repaired.<sup>31</sup> Munro paid one of his not infrequent visits to Valladolid that autumn and he and Cowie went to Madrid to inspect the property. On his return to Scotland, he was asked by the bishops for his advice on the matter. Cowie certainly did not have sufficient money in Spain for the necessary rebuilding; but Munro's suggestion to the bishops that the money be obtained by offering Blairs as security for a loan in Scotland did not find favour.<sup>32</sup> The obvious course was for Cowie to raise a loan in Spain but he maintained that he could not pay more than 5% in interest, whereas the amount asked would be about 8%.<sup>33</sup> Cowie therefore reluctantly decided that he himself should personally go to Scotland in the hope of getting a loan there. As Munro had informed him: "You may write letters and send memorials and even architectural plans till the day of judgment; but you won't move Bishops from their armed neutrality by such artillery. You must come face to face with them and tell them plainly and determinedly that the thing is their affair—that they alone can get the means."<sup>34</sup>

Cowie was in Scotland from April until September 1877, but his journey was fruitless as the bishops had not been able to give him a loan and had refused to allow him to embark on another proposal—an appeal to the Catholics of Scotland—since the Rome college had recently made such an appeal.<sup>35</sup> Private approaches to various wealthy persons had also come to nothing.

In this impasse, help came unexpectedly but from a source which,

29. Cowie to Archbishop Eyre, 26th June 1876, and to Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 19th December 1876. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

30. Cowie to Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 13th March 1875. (Ibid.)

31. Cowie to Bishop Macdonald, 25th July 1876. (St. Andrews and Edinburgh archives, C. 7, p. 237.)  
Cowie to Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 25th July 1876. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

32. College archives 59/4: Diary of David McDonald, 14th December 1876.

33. Cowie to Bishop Macdonald, 20th January 1877. (St. Andrews and Edinburgh archives, C. 7, p. 238.) Cowie to Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 20th January 1877. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

34. 23rd January 1877. (College archives 64/5/11.)

35. To Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 4th October 1877. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

from time to time in the history of the college, has come to its aid at occasions of difficulty—from a bishop who had been a student in the college. The hierarchy of Scotland was restored in March 1878 and, as first Bishop of Dunkeld, was nominated George Rigg. To him, Cowie, in Valladolid, wrote for help. The rebuilding needed in Madrid was to cost £8,000; the college had now £4,000 on loan in Scotland; if that were called up, only another £4,000 would be required; would Rigg be willing to help his old Alma Mater by asking the bishops of the new hierarchy for a loan at 5%?<sup>36</sup> Bishop Rigg replied that he had put the Madrid matter on the agenda for the hierarchy's meeting and that he would do all he could for the college.<sup>37</sup> A few weeks later, he sent word that he himself would procure a loan of £1,000 for the work and, in October, Cowie heard that Bishop Strain had agreed to give £1,000 and Archbishop Eyre £500.<sup>38</sup> At the beginning of November, the rector was able to give further good news: he had been offered in Valladolid, and had accepted, a loan of £1,000 at 5%, with the house, wine-cellar and vineyards at Boecillo as security.<sup>39</sup> There was now enough money to allow work to begin and so notice to quit was given to the tenants involved.<sup>40</sup>

In December of that year, 1878, Cowie went to Madrid for consultation with the architect. The college administrator paid a visit to Valladolid in January and, when Cowie went back to Madrid again a week or two later, six reputable contractors were asked to submit estimates for the work, the stipulation being that it had to be completed within one year of its commencement. At the beginning of March, Cowie was in Madrid yet again. The contract for the work was signed on 5th March and the price fixed at 68,000 *reals* (about £7,000 and so £1,000 less than anticipated). Demolition began on 10th March and the work was due to be finished on 1st May 1880.

In an undated letter to Munro on his return to Valladolid, Cowie confessed to feeling very weary.<sup>41</sup> On 21st March, he drafted a letter to his brother which is uncannily prophetic:

"Thank you for your kind wishes on the occasion of my last birthday when I completed my 3 score and 10 years. Thank God, I am enjoying good health for that time of life. Yet though I have not to complain of the infirmities of old age, I feel that I am no longer young. And I see my relatives and friends dropping away one after the other. Of all the Cath. Clergymen in Scotland there

36. Cowie to Bishop Rigg, 19th June 1878. (St. Andrews and Edinburgh archives, G 9.) Cowie to Alexander Munro, 9th July 1878. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

37. Bishop Rigg to Cowie, 5th July 1878. (Argyll archives.)

38. Alexander Munro, Glasgow, to Cowie, 7th October 1878. (College archives 64/5/20.)

39. Cf. *ibid.*, 27/9.10. The "friend" who offered Cowie this loan was Dr. Charles Allen, rector of the English College in Valladolid. He gave a further loan of £1,000 in July 1879. (*Ibid.*, A/15.)

40. To Alexander Munro, Glasgow, 4th November 1878. (Glasgow archives, loc. cit.)

41. To *id.* (*Ibid.*)

are only three my Seniors. All my other contemporaries have gone to their account, which makes me think that my turn cannot be far distant."<sup>42</sup>

That same day, he was taken ill and found to be suffering from pneumonia. Due perhaps to his exhausted physical condition, he was unable to offer any resistance and, three days later, in the presence of the whole community, he received the last sacraments. The following morning, 25th March, aware that he was dying, he asked for the students to be assembled around his bed so that he might beg their forgiveness for any hurt or injury that he had ever caused them. His last words were a prayer to the Blessed Virgin and at 1.30 p.m., as the rosary was being recited at his bedside, he died.

The following morning, many Masses were offered at various altars in the church for his eternal rest. The rector of the English College celebrated the solemn Requiem and the funeral took place in the afternoon. At the cemetery, the mourners included fifteen priests and it is said that many people, unable to be present at the funeral in person, sent their carriages.

Sandwiched between the long and eventful rectorates of John Cameron and David McDonald, Cowie's may seem insignificant. Moreover, in his character, he was retiring, introverted, scrupulous—not qualities likely to make him stand out in the story of the college. Yet he worked there conscientiously for thirty-five years in his simple, unassuming, pious way, exerting a powerful, though quiet, influence on the seventy priests who, having been students in the college during those years, came from Valladolid to exercise their ministry in Scotland.

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42. College archives 64/6/16.