

21. Administration and Divisions.

Renfrew was originally included with Lanark as an administrative unit, the separation having been made by King Robert III at the beginning of the fifteenth century. At first the position of sheriff was a hereditary one, and was held by one of the powerful families of the county. The first sheriff that we know of was John Semple of Eliotstoun, who held office in 1426 soon after Renfrew and Lanark were separated. The office remained in the Semple family till it was transferred to the Earl of Eglinton in 1648. Until the Reformation the lands belonging to the Abbey of Paisley were not under the jurisdiction of the sheriff. The abbot was supreme, and had his gallows for hanging men, and his pit for drowning women

malefactors. The sheriffdom was held by the Eglinton family for a hundred years, since when appointments to the office have been made by the crown.



Court House, Greenock

The county is divided into two wards, an upper and a lower, the chief towns of which are Paisley and Greenock respectively. The upper ward contains the parishes of

Abbey Paisley, Cathcart, Eaglesham, Eastwood, Erskine, Houston, Inchinnan, Kilbarchan, Lochwinnoch, Mearns, Neilston, and Renfrew. The lower ward contains the parishes of Greenock, Inverkip, Kilmacolm, and Port Glasgow. The county possesses a lord-lieutenant, a vice-lieutenant, and a large number of deputy lieutenants and justices of the peace. The administration of the law is carried out chiefly by sheriff-courts held at Paisley and Greenock. The police force is a county constabulary, except in the large burghs, which have their own separate forces. For parliamentary purposes the county is separated into two divisions, East Renfrew and West Renfrew, each of which returns one member. In addition Paisley returns a member, Greenock another, and Port Glasgow and Renfrew have a share in a third.

County Councils were established in 1889, and look after the finances, roads and bridges, water supply, public health, and the general administration. The unit of poor law organisation is the parish, and the poor laws are administered by the parish council. The control of the insane is vested primarily in the Commissioners of Lunacy, and for each county there is a Lunacy Board. There are in addition a number of burghs largely independent of the county council. The burghs of Renfrewshire are Renfrew, Paisley, Greenock, Port Glasgow, Barrhead, Gourock, Johnstone, and Pollokshaws. Renfrew is the only royal burgh. The burghs are managed by town councils, which administer the property of the burghs, impose the rates necessary for upkeep, and make bye-laws for the regulation of the trade of the town and the conduct

of the inhabitants. Town councillors are elected for three years, and one-third of the council retires annually. The councillors elect among themselves magistrates, who besides performing other duties, act as judges in the cases that come before the ordinary police courts.

It must not be forgotten that there is still a considerable amount of overlapping and confusion in the adminis-



Hairst Street and Town Hall, Renfrew

trative divisions, not only of Renfrew but of all the counties of Scotland. The registration county is not the same as the civil county; the ecclesiastical parish differs from the civil parish; the district under municipal authority has no fixed relation to any of these other areas. In 1889 under a Local Government Act the Boundary Commissioners rectified some of the most glaring anomalies, and transferred

certain areas from one parish to another, and in certain cases from one county to another. The ecclesiastical divisions, however, in many cases still fail to harmonise with the civil divisions.

Since the Education Act of 1872 the management of education in Scotland has been entrusted mainly to School Boards, of which Renfrew has twenty-one. Education is compulsory for children between the ages of five and fourteen years, and is free to all. Above the Primary schools there are two classes of Higher schools called Intermediate and Secondary. The former schools provide a three years' course, and the latter at least a five years' course of education after the elementary stages. Pupils who have passed through a Secondary school with credit are quite able to go with profit direct to the University.

Secondary and technical education is financed largely by a County Committee, which is empowered to give grants to schools, and to assist pupils by bursaries or otherwise. The pupil teacher system is to a great extent abolished. On passing the examinations after three years in an Intermediate school, young people who wish to become teachers may be accepted as Junior Students. They take the usual curriculum of a Secondary school with some training in the art and science of teaching in addition. They then pass to the Training Colleges as students in full training, where they spend two years, after which they are recognised as certificated teachers, although two years of probation must be passed before final recognition is obtained.