

## CHAPTER VI.—APPOINTMENT OF MASTERS.

§ 1. VACANT OFFICES ADVERTISED.—§ 2. MASTERS ELECTED ON EXAMINATION.—§ 3. APPOINTED ON RECOMMENDATION.—§ 4. ADMITTED AFTER PROBATION.—§ 5. VOTING BY THE ELECTORS.—§ 6. MISCELLANEOUS: DEPUTATIONS; CORRESPONDENCE; TRAVELLING EXPENSES; INDUCTION.

§ 1. THE town councils, patrons of the schools and guardians of the educational interests of the youth, exercised, as far as we can judge—and there is no lack of materials for enabling us to form an opinion in the matter—their responsible trust with solicitude and intelligence. Before we proceed to show how the patrons appointed masters to vacant offices in the schools during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is important to direct attention for a little to the precaution taken from an early period, to invite candidates to apply for the situation, by advertising it as publicly as the times allowed. An early instance of advertising occurs in 1636, when the council of Aberdeen ordain a public edict to be served at both the kirk doors, and at the college gate, ‘inviting all young scholars who are fit to teach grammar, and desirous to be admitted one of the doctors of the grammar school, to compear within the session to underly trial of their learning, good life, and conversation, to the effect the best and most qualified may be admitted to the vacant office;’<sup>1</sup> in 1706, the council of Kirkcaldy, considering how advantageous it would be to have a fit person to supply the vacant office of schoolmaster, make public the vacancy by putting it in the newspapers;<sup>2</sup> in 1727, the town of Ayr being resolved to have a ‘doctor of superior qualifications for instructing the youth,’ advertise for one, after taking counsel of the

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Aberdeen.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcaldy.

minister and chief burgesses;<sup>1</sup> in 1762, the council of Banff having resolved to establish three new schools in the burgh, advertise for teachers in the Edinburgh and Aberdeen papers, 'in order that proper qualified candidates may appear for the office';<sup>2</sup> in 1776, the council of Dumbarton being 'determined to have a proper schoolmaster'—one qualified to teach classics, English, and mathematics—advertise to this effect in the *Edinburgh Courant* and the *Glasgow Journal* on three different times;<sup>3</sup> on 16th November 1778, the town council and kirk session of Crail, for supplying the vacant rectorship in the grammar school, resolve to advertise in the *Courant* and *Advertiser* every week until the middle of January next;<sup>4</sup> in 1797, the council of Rothesay, considering that 'providing properly for the instruction of the rising generation is one of the most necessary and patriotic acts to which those entrusted with the administration of public affairs can apply themselves,' order repeated advertisements to be made in the newspapers, holding out encouragements to a teacher adequately qualified.<sup>5</sup> The practice of advertising scholastic situations has, it need hardly be added, become now very general.

The town councils, after giving public intimation of the vacant office, proceeded to fill it in one or other of three ways: 1st, By subjecting the candidate to a test examination, or to competition by examination; 2d, By determining the merits of candidates by testimonials, or on recommendations usually made by officers of academical standing, or other trustworthy persons; 3d, By appointing the candidate after a period of probation, during which he taught in the school. The early system of advertising the vacancy, combined with competitive examinations, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, secured, let us not doubt, a high class of teachers for the burgh schools. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Banff.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Dumbarton.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Crail.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Rothesay. The burgh records abound with such entries.

classics and some knowledge of *belles-lettres* were the necessary qualifications for teachers of burgh schools of note, but early in the eighteenth century other important studies were added to the curriculum of the school, including mathematics, natural philosophy, geography, and civil history.

§ 2. The following extracts throw light on the subjects on which the teachers were examined, who the examiners were, and how the examination was conducted: An early example of the test examination of a teacher occurs in 1594, when Andrew Dishington was not admitted schoolmaster of Dunbar until it was ascertained 'whether he was able to teach a grammar school or not,' which was done by requiring him to teach a 'piece of the first book of the Georgics of Virgil.'<sup>1</sup> Some years later, there was a searching examination by competition between two scholars, not unworthy of one another, who were candidates for the office of rector of the grammar school of Aberdeen—an examination which resulted in a 'tie:' on 6th February 1602, we read that the old and new councils of the burgh of Aberdeen, after trial and examination—conducted in audience of the bailies, council, and learned men of Old and New Aberdeen, for the space of four days—of Mr David Wedderburne and Mr Thomas Reid, in public teaching, oratory, poesy, and composition in prose and verse, find them 'co-equal,' and accordingly admit them 'conjunct' masters of the grammar school for the instruction of the youth in the art of grammar, good letters, and manners.<sup>2</sup> Take another description of a later date of a competitive examination between two candidates of high scholarship for the office of master of the high school of Edinburgh in 1626: the examiners ordained, we are told, that the 'tryal' should consist chiefly of examination in Latin and Greek authors *ad aperturam libri*; on Monday, 27th March 1626, the day fixed by the programme, Mr John Armour and Mr Thomas Crawford compeared at two o'clock in the high hall of the college, before the six judges, the primar and regents, with a 'frequent

<sup>1</sup> Presbytery Records of Haddington.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Aberdeen.

number of learned men.' The lot to speak first fell to Mr Thomas Crawford, the other in the meantime being removed; the author's cast up being Plautus, some parts of Ovid, Horace, Lucian, Juvenal, Virgil, Hesiod, and Orphei Thymista; both being heard (so long as the judges thought fit), election was made of Mr Thomas, who was appointed to make an inaugural lesson upon the fourteenth Ode of the second book of Horace, Ad Postumum, to-morrow, at two o'clock, it being eight o'clock before it was prescribed.<sup>1</sup>

When several persons applied for the same office, an 'open competition' became absolutely necessary, unless indeed the situation was given by influence or by testimonials, neither of which appeared satisfactory to the patrons of the grammar schools of Aberdeen in 1602, of Edinburgh in 1626, or of Leith in 1684. There being, says the record, a great desire in the town of Leith in 1684, that the grammar school should be planted with a qualified person for the education of children, and several having been recommended for the office—as Mr Whyte, schoolmaster in Douglas, who is backed by my Lord Chancellor (Earl of Perth), Mr William Rowe, and Mr William Blair, doctor of the grammar school of Edinburgh—the session order a dispute to be held on a certain day, and appoint for examination the third Satire of the first book of Horace, of which the candidates shall be required to give a grammatical analysis.<sup>2</sup>

The test examination, or limited competition for an office, does not always work quite satisfactorily: an illustration of this point is furnished by an entry in the records of Dunfermline from which we learn that the council of that burgh rejected as unqualified the person nominated for the office of master of the grammar school by my Lord Yester, to whom belonged the patronage of the school; on 8th March 1705, we read that Mr James Bayne, schoolmaster of Musselburgh, Mr John M'Dougall, brother of the laird of Logan, and Charles Stewart, having, in presence of the town council, examined Mr Ker, presented to the office of schoolmaster by

<sup>1</sup> Steven's High School, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Session Records of Leith.

the patron, report that the presentee having been tried in the fundamentals of grammar, gave no proof of his abilities to convey a clear notion of them to boys, and having also been examined in the most common places of Terence, Juvenal, Cicero's Orations, Livy, and the Odes of Horace, he was found considerably defective in the reading, construction, and exposition of the Latin; and withal he acknowledged his ignorance in mythology, Roman antiquity, Roman calendar, geography, chronology, and scanning of verse; and having been 'put' to making a theme and a version, he acquitted himself indifferently in the former, and made nothing in the latter.<sup>1</sup> The justice of the decision having been called into question—no doubt by the rejected candidate and his friends—the council request the examiners to present a report on the matter; accordingly, on 23d June the committee present a report, in which one of the examiners declares before God and a good conscience that the candidate is qualified, and the other two examiners declare before God and a good conscience that he is not qualified; in these circumstances the council resolve that the candidate shall in the meantime teach the school by way of trial till Whitsunday next, when, for the satisfaction of all parties, he must undergo a second impartial trial, and either be continued in the school or not, according to his carriage at his second examination.<sup>2</sup>

The aid sought for by the town councils to determine the respective merits of candidates was not always graciously given by the persons to whom they applied: thus in 1707, several candidates having appeared for the situation of master of the grammar school of Kirkcaldy, the council resolve that there shall be a public dispute for the office; but the board, not being 'altogether skilful of the Latin and Greek languages,' they apply to the presbytery to appoint a committee of their number to witness the dispute; it is, however, reported that the presbytery refused to attend the disputation, whereupon the council depart from the kind of trial proposed to be held, in respect it would take up some

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Dunfermline.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

time and bring the candidates to unnecessary expenses.<sup>1</sup> Other conditions, such as character, etc., were taken into consideration by the town councils in filling situations, as well as scholastic attainments: thus, in March 1708, the master of the grammar school of Dundee having, on request of the council, prepared a theme for the candidates who were to 'dispute' for the office of doctor of the grammar school, the three candidates are appointed to make their themes in the council house; the master of the grammar school, after dictating the same, is ordered to leave them 'dictionars and other books necessar,' and, as soon as their themes are ready, they shall deliver them to the master, who shall examine them in the old church at two o'clock, before such of the council and ministers as choose to attend. The judges—Mr Robert Whyte, Mr George Peirce, and Mr John Hodge—on 4th March unanimously preferred Mr Harry Dewar, who is admitted to the 'hail fees and emoluments,' on producing a sufficient testimonial of character.<sup>2</sup>

Provision is from this time made for examining teachers in other subjects than classical literature; thus, on 21st March 1709, the council of Peebles, finding that the 'most knowing' part of the inhabitants desire a 'scient' master of arts as school doctor, recommend the provost to write to their agent in Edinburgh to try for one;<sup>3</sup> on 28th April following, William Simpson, schoolmaster in Potterrow, having been tried as to his knowledge of writing, arithmetic, and Latin, in presence of the magistrates, and found qualified, the council appoint him.<sup>4</sup> In the same way, on 4th November 1721, a candidate for the office of English master of the burgh of Selkirk, after having been examined by the council, is found qualified to teach English, 'accompting,' and writing.<sup>5</sup> A more comprehensive and important trial was held at Ayr six years later, when the candidates were examined in commercial subjects and natural science, as well as in classics. In June

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcaldy.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Peebles.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Selkirk.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. .

1727, two young men, viz., Mr John Mair, student at St Andrews, and Mr John Hall, student at Edinburgh, came to Ayr—offering their services as doctor in the school; the provost, bailies, dean of guild, and the treasurer, the two ministers, and the master of the grammar school, and one of the schoolmasters of Irvine, or any five of them, were appointed examiners, who took trial of the students on the 16th, 17th, and 19th June, between whom in writing, there was, it appears, no competition, Mr Hall being preferable. The two seemed to be equal in their skill in Greek and Latin, but Mr Hall's English version was the easiest; in bookkeeping and arithmetic they were equal; but in navigation, Mr Mair was more fully confirmed, and understood the principles better. It was decided by five to four, that Mr Mair was best qualified for the office, but Mr Hall was elected by the casting vote of the provost. Mr Hall, however, declined the appointment; and Mr Mair, having improved in his writing, in which he was thought deficient, was appointed.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to know that in a place so far north, and of so little note, as the poor little town of Dingwall, the teacher was not appointed in the way of influence—not selected to gratify some one or other—but that he had to undergo a test examination. On 14th November 1730, the master of the grammar school having demitted his office, the council 'recommend the several members present to think of a proper person for the office;'<sup>2</sup> three days later they recommend to the minister to write to Mr William M'Bean, Kiltearn, to attend the next diet of council, that they 'may converse with him;'<sup>3</sup> on 30th November, Mr M'Bean having compeared, the council, after discoursing with him, recommend the minister to examine him as to his knowledge in Latin, 'by converting some passages of the classic authors into English, in presence

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr. Mr Mair was the author of the well-known Latin 'Introduction,' and of books on mathematics. In 1760 he was appointed rector of the Perth academy.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Dingwall.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

of the council;' the candidate having been examined and removed, the minister of the parish, and the last schoolmaster of the burgh, now student in divinity, with the members of the council, having 'considered the particular passages upon which he was examined, together with the translation of the same, find him sufficiently qualified to officiate as schoolmaster of this burgh.'<sup>1</sup>

The town council of Dunfermline, on 8th August 1748, appointed a heterogeneous body, consisting of a minister, preacher, beadle, and tobacconist, to examine in English, Latin, and writing, a candidate for the office of doctor in the grammar school of the burgh;<sup>2</sup> on 19th September, the candidate presented 'four testimonials of his moral character,' which, with the report of the examiners, was approved by the council, who accordingly admitted him as usher.<sup>3</sup> In the same year the council of Ayr having advertised for a 'person well skilled in the Greek and Roman languages,' to fill the vacancy in the grammar school, appointed, after trial, Alexander Paterson of Tranent.<sup>4</sup>

The test examination at Kirkcudbright for an usher was not very high in 1760, when a candidate for the office of assistant-schoolmaster 'having read the Bible and some other books,' to the satisfaction of the council, was appointed.<sup>5</sup> In June 1761, the town council of St Andrews resolved that the appointment of an English master of the burgh should be by comparative trial; they nominate Lord Cardross, Principals Tullideph and Morrison, and the two ministers, any three to be a quorum, as judges of the trial, and further resolve that an advertisement be inserted in both the Scots newspapers, acquainting the public of the comparative trial, which shall take place fourteen days from the last advertisement.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Dingwall. The councillors do not seem to have been so distrustful of their own qualifications as those of Kirkcaldy.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Dunfermline.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcudbright.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews. Cf. also minutes of 16th June 1766, 2d June 1770, and 31st July 1770.



From Ayr we obtain a valuable insight into the nature and extent of those examinations. In February 1771, the master of the grammar school there having resigned, a committee was appointed to examine candidates, according to the following regulations: One person to be chosen as examiner, who shall hear each of the candidates translate, literally, certain passages in Cæsar, Virgil, Sallust, and Horace—asking them, at the same time, an accurate account of the parts of speech, allusions to ancient customs, etc.; the council have pitched on the following passages: In Cæsar, cap. 1, lib. 2, De bello Gallico; cap. 32, lib. 2, De bello civili, et ab initio belli Alexandrini; in Virgil, Georg., lib. 2, O fortunatos nimium, etc., Æneid, lib. 7, Talibus Ilionei dictis; in Sallust, cap. 51; in Horace, lib. 3d. O. e. [*sic*] 3, lib. Sat. 3d.; in Greek: Act. Apost., ab initio; lib. 11, Iliad, ab initio, et ab initio Tal. Cib [*sic*]; if any of the candidates be of equal merit in the books above mentioned, they shall be examined in Liv., cap. 3, lib. 2; and the one who best acquits himself in this last book, shall have the preference; they shall make a version of a piece of English into Latin; the examination shall be concluded by the candidates giving a free translation of the above passages to show their knowledge of the English language.<sup>1</sup> The committee report in favour of Mr John Inglis as having given the most satisfactory specimens of his knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages.<sup>2</sup>

The year 1790 affords the following interesting description of an examination conducted in presence and by members of the town council of Kirkcaldy. There being a vacancy in the grammar school, several candidates appear before the council: Mr William Millar, from Kincardine, produced a letter and sundry certificates, which were read to the meeting; and, in the hearing of the meeting, read a page of English from Milton. Mr John Paterson, from Ayr, also produced sundry certificates, read a passage from Milton and the *Spectator*, and sang a tune of music. A letter was also read from Mr Malcolm Bowden, schoolmaster of the united parishes of

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Fossoway and Tullibole, in whose favour several letters were read, one from Dr Blacklock, in Edinburgh; one from Mr Graham, minister of Fossoway; and one from Sir Harry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart., all recommending him amply. Mr Bowden then read in the hearing of the meeting a passage from Milton and the *Spectator*, and sang a tune of music. The meeting, after considering the different letters and the exhibitions made by the respective applicants, unanimously prefer Mr Bowden as second teacher in the grammar school.<sup>1</sup>

The incompetency of the candidates who applied for the office of master in the grammar school of Forfar in 1793 argues that the inducement held out was not high. In that year the magistrates and council advertise twice in the three Edinburgh newspapers, for a master of the grammar school, to be preferred after a comparative trial; none need apply, it is added, but those who have a college education, and who can produce satisfactory evidence of their good character, diligence, and other necessary qualifications;<sup>2</sup> the council having considered the report of the ministers, whom they invited to examine candidates, find that none of the four are qualified to teach Latin grammar, and accordingly do not think it proper to admit any one of the candidates; but on account of their trouble and expense in attending the competition, they allow each of them a guinea for defraying his expenses.<sup>3</sup>

Take one other illustration of a more recent case as to the subjects on which a teacher was examined: On 15th July 1815, the council of Elgin advertise for a teacher to instruct the youth in Latin, Greek, and French languages; and being resolved to prefer merit, have fixed Tuesday, 1st August, next for a competition,<sup>4</sup> the council agreeing to appoint the candidate certified by the presbytery to be the best qualified. The ministers resolve that the specimens of trial shall consist in translating passages of a prose and verse Latin classic, of the Greek New Testament, or of the Aberdeen

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcaldy.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Forfar.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Session Papers, No. 541, p. 70.

Greek Delectus, of Hallard's Extracts from French Authors, —analysing any word of the same; his skill in grammar shall be tried by turning English into Latin; and the candidate shall also be required to condescend on his plan or course in teaching Latin from the rudiments to the end of the course.<sup>1</sup>

The burgh registers do not always indicate the subjects on which candidates were examined, or how the examination was conducted—only recording the fact of examination; but as it is of importance to the educationist to know that teachers, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were not admitted in the way of influence, it may not be out of place to refer to other instances of entrance examinations or competitions by examinations. In 1595 a master of the grammar school of Ayr was appointed after giving 'proof of his literature to the presbytery of Ayr.'<sup>2</sup> On 9th January 1632, the town council of Perth nominate a 'leet' of five for the office of master of the grammar school, and on 14th May one of the number is chosen;<sup>3</sup> in 1653 another master was appointed under similar circumstances,<sup>4</sup> and in the neighbouring burgh of Stirling, we also read that, in 1673, the council have chosen from a 'leet' a master of their grammar school.<sup>5</sup> In 1663 the master of the grammar school of Stirling having 'tryed out a Latin doctor for the school and found him both able and willing to embrace the charge,' the council appoint him to the office.<sup>6</sup> In 1666, there being a candidate for the office of doctor of the grammar school of Aberdeen, the council remitted him to a professor of divinity and to a minister of the burgh to be 'tried;' the examiners after the trial declare before God, in presence of the council, that they have found him qualified.<sup>7</sup> Four years later, a master of the grammar school is admitted upon report of his qualification by the principal and regents of Marischal college, and one or two of the ministers.<sup>8</sup> In 1668, two young

<sup>1</sup> Session Papers, No. 541, pp. 67, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Perth.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Aberdeen.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

men having applied for the office of Latin doctor of Stirling, the council order the master of the grammar school to take 'tryall of the qualifications of both, that soe the ablest be admitted.'<sup>1</sup> In 1674 the council of Dundee ordain that, from henceforth, no doctor or janitor shall be installed in their schools until their qualifications and conversations be first tried.<sup>2</sup> In 1689 the council of Peebles apply for the assistance of five ministers to 'take trial of the qualifications and literature of the candidates for teaching the grammar school, and declare that the best qualified shall be preferred, without fear or favour;'<sup>3</sup> in 1693, a candidate having been tried by the presbytery of Peebles and found qualified for teaching any grammar school, is admitted to the charge of the grammar school.<sup>4</sup> In June 1698, the provost of Ayr speaks to Mr James Ferguson, with the view of fixing his 'trial' for being doctor of the grammar school.<sup>5</sup> On 11th August 1702, the council of Dundee appoint 15th September next for trying the qualifications of candidates for the office of doctor of the grammar school, so that the office may be given to the best deserving, they bringing with them 'testimonials from whom they came;'<sup>6</sup> in 1715 a vacancy in the office of doctor of the grammar school of Dundee is ordered to be intimated in the *Courant*; candidates shall be tried on 21st March at two P.M., in the Old Church, where the ministers are invited to attend.<sup>7</sup> The council of Forfar, in May 1717, being anxious to have

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Peebles.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr. In September 1708, the council, considering that Mr Ferguson has served the town for twelve years—to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants—and had been found well qualified after examination at his entry, appoint him head-master.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee. On 19th September the master of the grammar school reports to the council that the 'dispute' for the office is gained by Mr James Brown, schoolmaster at Dunbar.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee. On 1st May 1716, the office again fell vacant, and the council wrote to a certain person 'to come to be tried before the magistrates, by any they shall appoint.' *Cf.* also the minute dated 27th July 1727, when two candidates were examined.

the office of schoolmaster of the burgh planted with all diligence, appoint an advertisement to be put in the public prints 'in most ample form, and the same is to be carried by way of dispute.'<sup>1</sup> In 1719 the council of Fortrose resolve to accept no schoolmaster who shall not, at the sight of the presbytery, satisfy as to his capacity of teaching humanity.<sup>2</sup>

A teacher was admitted to the grammar school of Kinghorn, in 1725, after having been examined before a committee of the town council and kirk session;<sup>3</sup> in 1736 four ministers were appointed to examine candidates for the office.<sup>4</sup> In 1726, the council of Dunbar resolve that an advertisement shall invite candidates for the vacant offices in their school to repair to Dunbar, where they shall be tested 'by a public dispute or other trial,' before the magistrates, or such persons as they shall appoint; the offices shall be given to those who give the best specimen of their qualifications.<sup>5</sup> In December 1728, the town council of St Andrews resolve that the schoolmasters of the burgh shall be chosen by comparative trial of the candidates, reserving power to elect otherwise if the council think proper: the provost, dean of guild, four bailies, convener and treasurer of the city, the rector, professors of Greek and humanity, and the two ministers of the parish, to be judges.<sup>6</sup>

In 1733, a schoolmaster of Kirkcudbright being 'amply recommended,' and his 'conversation having pleased,' is appointed.<sup>7</sup> Three years later, three candidates for the office of master of the grammar school having been found, on examination, equally qualified for the office, the council, after voting, elect one of their number.<sup>8</sup> In 1741, an advertisement was ordered to be inserted in the *Courant* for a writing-master

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Forfar. The advertisement was inserted, but only one candidate appeared, whom the council, knowing his fitness, appoint.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Fortrose.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Kinghorn.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Dunbar.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews. The 'major part' of them might elect, but the two professors were always to be of the number.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcudbright.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

of Stirling; the council appoint John Burn, after 'having had a trial of several persons;'<sup>1</sup> in 1752, the council having taken trial of several candidates for the office of music-master, prefer William Gordon;<sup>2</sup> on the report of Mr Callendar of Craighforth, and other examiners of candidates for office of rector of the grammar school in 1755, John Livie is preferred.<sup>3</sup>

In 1746, two candidates having applied for the doctorship of the grammar school of Dunfermline, the patrons allow them from 17th March to the second Tuesday of April, in order to produce their credentials, and to prepare for a comparative trial.<sup>4</sup> In the following year, the council of Irvine appoint an English teacher, of whose ability and qualifications they 'took trial by a skilful person.'<sup>5</sup> In 1746, the patrons of the school of Pittenweem, being anxious that the vacant office of schoolmaster should be supplied in 'an agreeable way,' fix on two schoolmasters, who shall have to 'undergo a comparative tryal, before proper and competent judges.'<sup>6</sup>

In 1758, the schoolmaster of Renfrew having been asked by the council of Dumbarton, whether he would stand a 'tryall single, or comparatively with others, before the presbytery,' for the office of rector of the grammar school of Dumbarton, refuses to compete.<sup>7</sup> On 25th April 1761, the council of Dundee advertise for a doctor in the grammar school; but on 8th June, it was found, after trial of several applicants, that none of them was qualified for the place.<sup>8</sup> On 3d February 1762, the applicants for the vacant offices in the schools of Banff are requested to appear at the burgh with proper recommendations of their moral character, on Thursday 15th April, in order to a 'trial of their qualification for supplying

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling. The schoolmasters of Stirling were hitherto appointed on recommendation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Dunfermline.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Irvine.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Pittenweem. The competition did not take place—the candidates having refused to accept the situation.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Dumbarton.

<sup>8</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee. Cf. under 23d August 1763, when a similar advertisement was ordered.

the situations they claim'—certifying that they will be preferred according to their merit.<sup>1</sup> A comparative 'tryale' of the different candidates who may apply for the office of teacher of Lochmaben, according to an advertisement in the newspapers, was fixed to take place on 1st May 1766; some of the heritors of the parish and three ministers of the presbytery are appointed judges for the heritors, and the council of the burgh, sensible that their minister is the most proper person to represent them 'in that tryale,' nominate him—exclusive of his other right in law.<sup>2</sup>

In 1772, the council of Greenock having advertised for a teacher of English, elect one of the applicants, after examination of his abilities, method of teaching, and of the certificates of his moral character;<sup>3</sup> seven years later (19th October 1779), the council advertise again for an English teacher,<sup>4</sup> and on 9th November, there were laid before the council several letters from candidates, who are informed that the person found best qualified should be preferred; the council recommend the magistrates to ask the ministers, and any other of the inhabitants thought proper, to attend the examination, and to procure, if necessary, some person from Glasgow, who understands the method of teaching the English language; accordingly, Mr Burns was summoned to examine fifteen candidates, who are called in and examined, one after another, in presence of the council, the ministers, and many of the principal inhabitants of the town; five of the candidates are found equal, but a Mr Mitchell, preacher, having a better 'utterance,' is preferred.<sup>5</sup>

The town council of Dumbarton advertise that, on the second Tuesday of April 1776, a comparative trial shall take place, before the presbytery and other learned gentlemen, for the office of rector of the grammar school.<sup>6</sup> On 21st December 1778, in answer to letters from several candidates asking

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Banff.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Lochmaben. The school was burgh and parochial.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Greenock.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Dumbarton.

for particulars of the vacancy in the grammar school of Crail, the council acquaint them, that they who 'intend to stand trial are expected to meet at St Andrews, on 20th January next, in Bailie Glass's house, at eleven forenoon.'<sup>1</sup> In 1780, on the report of 'learned examiners,' two schoolmasters are appointed for the burgh of Wigtown.<sup>2</sup> The council of St Andrews, on 16th August 1782, remitted to a committee to take trial with regard to the qualifications and moral character of certain candidates for the office of English master of the burgh.<sup>3</sup> In 1822, four candidates having applied for the office of the grammar school of Dunbar, they were examined by Professor Pillans, who recommended Mr David Lyon.<sup>4</sup> In 1825, the town council of St Andrews advertise for an English schoolmaster, and appoint a committee to examine candidates.<sup>5</sup> In 1835, the commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the Scottish burghs reported, that the teachers in certain burghs—Banff, Linlithgow, Stirling, etc.—were generally appointed after a comparative trial of the candidates, usually conducted in presence of the council.<sup>6</sup>

The teachers no longer compete by examination for vacant offices, which are now invariably given, after a comparison of the different certificates—confidential and public—to the candidates most favourably recommended. We conclude our notice of the examination of masters by referring to the important provision made by the Education Act for protecting the public against incompetent teachers, by ordaining that the principal teacher<sup>7</sup> in every public school must be the

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Crail.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Wigtown.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews. James Smith was preferred.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Dunbar.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews.

<sup>6</sup> Municipal Corporations Report, i., 109, ii., 228, 408.

<sup>7</sup> 34 & 35 Vict., c. 62, §§ 56, 59. But any one who, at the passing of the Act, is principal teacher of a parish school, side, parliamentary, or heritors' girl school, or the principal teacher of a burgh school, or subordinate teacher of a burgh school, if member of council of a Scotch university, or holder of a certificate from, or registered as a certificated teacher by, the Committee of Council of Education, shall be deemed a holder of a certificate of competency: § 56 (sub. 1, 2, 3).



holder of a certificate of competency, to be obtained by passing an examination.<sup>1</sup>

§ 3. A common way of appointing teachers was on recommendation, or by testimonials. From the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, a number of entries in the records show that corporations, who adopted not 'contestation' for determining the merits of candidates, did not depend on their own judgment in the selection of masters for the schools. References were sometimes made to the universities, or to distinguished scholars, or to trustworthy persons, to recommend fit men for the office; and generally, recommendations obtained from those sources decided as between the claims of rival candidates. We quote minutes of town councils with the view of showing the manner of procedure in selecting candidates recommended to the patrons. In 1635 Mr John Irvine was appointed schoolmaster of Burntisland, 'at the earnest recommendation of the chancellor, archbishop of St Andrews.'<sup>2</sup> In 1684 the council of St Andrews, 'being fully informed of the qualifications and ability' of Mr Patrick Lindesay, schoolmaster at Pittenweem, nominate him to the office of master of the grammar school of the city.<sup>3</sup> In 1709 the magistrates of Montrose entreat the professors of philosophy in Marischal college and King's college, Aberdeen, 'to inform the council of persons qualified to be master and doctors of their gram-

<sup>1</sup> If a candidate has taken a degree in arts or science in any university of England, Scotland, or Ireland, the examiners may dispense with his examination in any subject comprised in his degree examination; but he must satisfy them of his skill in the theory and practice of music: § 59. Act 24 & 25 Vict., c. 107, passed in 1861, provided that the persons entitled to elect a teacher might, instead of electing one person to the vacant office, nominate two or three persons to be tried by the examiners appointed to take the place of the presbytery, the certificate by the examiners and the minute of nomination completing the right of the candidate. If the magistrates remitted any candidate for examination, they were required to pay to each of the examiners a fee of £1, 1s. should there be only one, and a fee of 10s. for each additional candidate: 24 & 25 Vict., c. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Burntisland.      <sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews.

mar school.<sup>1</sup> In 1713 the council of Crail 'being informed of the fitness and qualifications of Mr Robert Graham' for the office of master of the grammar school, ordain the magistrates to contract with him.<sup>2</sup> In 1716 the council of Kirkcudbright, considering a 'certificate by the presbytery as to the fitness of a son of the late Bailie Campbell for being master of the grammar school, and being inclined to encourage any of their own inhabitants capable for the trust before any extraneous person, though equally fit,' nominate Mr Campbell to the office.<sup>3</sup> In 1720 Mr Scott having given sufficient proof of his fitness to be master of the music school of Dundee by the certificates he has produced, the council appoint him to the office.<sup>4</sup> In 1722 the council of Forres, considering that the ministers of Inverness recommend a qualified young man for teaching the grammar school of the burgh, unanimously accept him to be their schoolmaster.<sup>5</sup> In 1728, Mr Alexander M'Queen being specially recommended to the council of Kirkcudbright as a fit person for the office of schoolmaster, and having produced before the council several certificates of his capacity and behaviour, the council having the 'universall consent of the parents present, and of the minister,' appoint him to the office.<sup>6</sup> The council of Fortrose, two years later, being 'sufficiently informed of the literature and good character' of Mr George M'Culloch for teaching English and Latin, appoint him schoolmaster of the burgh.<sup>7</sup> In 1742 the provost of Banff laid before the council many recommendations in behalf of several candidates for the office of master of the grammar school, and particularly one by Mr Thomas Ruddiman at Edinburgh in favour of George Robertson; the council having particular regard to the recommendation of Mr Ruddiman as being in every way a competent judge of the qualifications of any person fit to serve as school-

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Montrose.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Crail.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcudbright.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Forres.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Kirkcudbright.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Fortrose.

master of this burgh, appoint Mr Robertson schoolmaster.<sup>1</sup> In 1746 the council of Irvine appoint a teacher of English, he having got a 'sufficient certificate from a skilled person, that he is qualified to teach English after the modern way.'<sup>2</sup> In 1747 the professor of humanity in Edinburgh having given a 'very ample character with regard to the ability and knowledge in the languages,' of a candidate for the office of master of the grammar school of Dumbarton, and likewise 'a fair character as to his morals,' the council accordingly appoint him to the office.<sup>3</sup> In the following year the council of Rothesay being informed of, and fully satisfied with, the learning and abilities of Mr Thomas Smith, preacher of the Gospel, appoint him master of the grammar school;<sup>4</sup> in 1750 his successor was appointed, the council being well informed of his learning, and other good qualifications. In 1754 the council of St Andrews 'being informed of the qualifications, fitness, and capacity of the master of the grammar school at Falkland for the office of first doctor of the grammar school of the city, appoint him to that office.'<sup>5</sup> The council of Dumbarton, 'having nothing more at heart than appointing a properly qualified schoolmaster,' order, in 1758, an inquiry to be made as to the 'character and skill in the Latin and Greek languages, in writing and arithmetic,' of Mr M'Farlane at Callander.<sup>6</sup> In 1764 the council of Stirling having read the recommendations in favour of seven candidates for the office of English teacher, prefer Andrew Dow.<sup>7</sup> The council of Greenock advertised in the Glasgow papers in 1767 for a master of the grammar school; three candidates having presented themselves with testimonials of their moral character and abilities as teachers, the council, after examining their credentials, select one of them.<sup>8</sup> In 1773 the council

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Banff. Mr Ruddiman was a native of the parish of Boyndie, which is within three miles of Banff.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Irvine.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Dumbarton.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Rothesay.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Dumbarton.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>8</sup> Burgh Records of Greenock.

of Banff appoint a master of the grammar school, who is recommended by 'several letters as a person well qualified for the situation, and being of a moral good character;'<sup>1</sup> in 1782 the council, considering that Mr James Morris, Portsoy, has been recommended in the 'strongest terms as a proper person for being master of the grammar school,' appoint him to that office.<sup>2</sup> In 1786 the council of St Andrews take 'steps for procuring characters and recommendations in favour of persons fitted for the important office of master of their grammar school.'<sup>3</sup> In 1789 several candidates having applied for two vacant offices in the grammar school of Dumbarton, a committee selected two out of a great many applicants as the most preferable, and the council being entirely satisfied with the choice, elect them as masters.<sup>4</sup> In 1831 the council of Campbeltown, 'after inquiry made as to the qualifications and character of a candidate for the office of rector of the grammar school,' unanimously appoint him to that office, remitting him to the presbytery of Kintyre for examination.<sup>5</sup> The general practice at present is to appoint the candidate who has qualified himself for the office and is the most highly recommended by competent persons—gentlemen connected with education.

§ 4. Sometimes appointments were only made after the candidates had served a short period of probation; a few cases from the records of four burghs will illustrate this point: In February 1712, Alexander M'Colme of Maybole is allowed to enter as teacher of the English school of Ayr, in order to a trial of his qualifications.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, Mr John Muir, chaplain to Glenlee, is admitted to 'trial as English school-master of Cupar, in presence of the magistrates, and appointed to give a specimen of his skill in music, by precenting publicly in the church of Ayr, on the 11th instant.'<sup>7</sup> On 3d August 1717, Mr George Reid having taught the grammar school of

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Banff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of St Andrews.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Dumbarton.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Campbeltown. The grammar school was a parochial school, though managed by the town council.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Ayr.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Banff for some time, and given sufficient proof of his integrity, ability, and qualifications, as ascertained by an examination of the school, the council appoint him master thereof;<sup>1</sup> again, in 1742, the council 'assure' a candidate for the office of master that if, 'after a trial of his conduct and behaviour for a few months,' both parties shall be satisfied with one another, he shall receive the appointment.<sup>2</sup> In 1725 a schoolmaster in St Monance 'being most willing to serve as doctor of the grammar school of Crail, the council—*nemine contradicente*—are content that he should enter the school for ane tryall;<sup>3</sup> in the following year the council, 'all in one voice, statute that a schoolmaster be taken in trial for half a year;<sup>4</sup> in 1736 the council, after having considered a letter by the professor of Greek in St Leonard's college, St Andrews, recommending a doctor for the grammar school, 'condescend that he shall enter for ane tryall;<sup>5</sup> in 1756 an usher was not appointed till a 'trial be made of his care, diligence, and qualifications for discharging that duty.'<sup>6</sup>

§ 5. When the town council agreed to appoint the master on recommendation, the merits of candidates—when more than one applied for the same situation—were usually disposed of by 'plurality of votes;' and there are instances of some warm differences of opinion among the electors as to the candidate who was best qualified for the office. In 1634 the council of Jedburgh being convened in the Tolbooth for electing a schoolmaster, 'be moniest voitts electit and choysit Mr Harie Elliot.'<sup>7</sup> On the occasion of a subsequent appointment the power of election was delegated to the minister of the parish, in order to avoid disputes: in 1662 the council, seriously remembering the 'great divisions, quarrelling, controversies, and debates formerly among the inhabitants of the burgh, anent the placing and displacing' of the late schoolmaster—a division tending to the burgh's great prejudice—and being now anxious that the vacant office in the grammar school

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Banff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Crail.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Jedburgh.

shall be supplied with an able schoolmaster, and that 'all controversy and debate may be fully extinguished and taken away, all, in one voice—*nemine contradicente*—nominate Mr Peter Blair, minister of the burgh, to give a call to a qualified schoolmaster, for whom he shall be answerable.' The minister accepted the power conferred on him, but the provost, for his exoneration, protests that this temporary arrangement shall not be prejudicial to him and the burgh, either by law or otherwise, concerning the appointment of a schoolmaster.<sup>1</sup> In 1704, it being put to the vote of the council of Montrose, convened for appointing a master of the grammar school, 'who should be master,' it was carried in favour of Mr Robert Strachan.<sup>2</sup> On 18th July 1710, there being three applicants for the office of master of the grammar school of Dundee, the provost is informed 'of one Mr Rudieman, who is of a very good character, and promised to write (by the post) his mind in that affair;' on a vote, the council elected Mr Patrick Lyon.<sup>3</sup> In 1749, there being two candidates for the office of master of the grammar school of Crail, both recommended by several persons, the council, after voting, elect Mr William Don, usher of the grammar school of Perth, 'an able and sufficient teacher of youth, under whose hands the scholars prosper well, and of a good, blameless, and modest character, well affected to the present government.'<sup>4</sup> The merits of candidates are in our own day usually disposed of by the votes of the electors, on whom are brought to bear in favour of the applicants all kinds of pressure, especially for important offices—a pressure which, in political elections, might go far to invalidate the nomination.

§ 6. Appointments were sometimes made by a committee deputed to wait on the master recommended; and we find

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Jedburgh.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Montrose.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee. The grammarian was at this time assistant librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, who, on 15th July, considering his extraordinary care of the library, settled on him £363, 6s. 8d. Scots (£30, 6s. 8d. stg.), in lieu of all fees: Chalmers' Life of Ruddiman, 52.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Crail.

entries in the treasurers' accounts for payments of the expenses of these deputations—not unlike bills paid to deputations in our own day, perhaps less heavy, but more justifiable. Take the following extracts as specimens of deputations in quest of schoolmasters: In 1600 the town of Dysart sends two commissioners to St Andrews to employ a qualified master for the grammar school;<sup>1</sup> in 1642 the council of Glasgow ordain John Anderson to 'ryd to Stirling to try the quality and present condition of the schoolmaster' there, and whether he be willing to 'transport' himself;<sup>2</sup> in 1649 the council of Stirling ordain John Short, the old provost, and Christopher Russel, deacon, to 'ryd' to Glasgow for choosing a schoolmaster;<sup>3</sup> in 1664 the council of Forfar authorised the minister, who is 'going south,' to get a qualified man to be master of the grammar school—either at Edinburgh, St Andrews, or at any other place;<sup>4</sup> the minister having not succeeded in his mission, the council, on 7th January, determine that Bailie Guthrie shall go to Dundee with the minister 'for trying' for a schoolmaster;<sup>5</sup> and on 16th January 1665, the doctor of the grammar school of Dundee having accepted the situation,<sup>6</sup> he was on 20th January admitted to his office, and made a burgess;<sup>7</sup> in 1666 the provost and a bailie of Peebles were authorised to go to Edinburgh to 'spear out' a schoolmaster;<sup>8</sup> in 1673 the council of Stirling having nominated the teacher of Culross as master of their school, ordain a committee to wait on him and communicate the appointment;<sup>9</sup> in 1683 the council of Paisley ordain their clerk to 'goe to Glasgow to use his endeavour for a scholar to be doctor' of the grammar school;<sup>10</sup> in 1690 the council of Irvine ordain the provost and minister to go to

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Dysart.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Glasgow. This entry occurs in the 'Comptaris Descharge:' 'Item, To John Anderson, for his charges in going to Stirling for the grammar school master, £15, 18s.'

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Forfar.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Burgh Records of Peebles.

<sup>9</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>10</sup> Burgh Records of Paisley.

Glasgow and 'deal for a transportation of Mathew Couper, schoolmaster at Ocheltree,' to be master at Irvine;<sup>1</sup> the council of Stirling, in 1727, appoint two bailies and the dean of guild to go to Greenock, and, in a prudent manner, inform themselves of the moral character of Mr Erskine, who is recommended for the office of master of the grammar school of Stirling;<sup>2</sup> in 1738 the provost of Dundee reports to the council that he and others had waited on Mr Young, schoolmaster at Haddington, and proposed to him to be master of the Latin school in Dundee.<sup>3</sup>

Rarely was a master appointed, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, like the schoolmasters of Paisley and Stirling, through correspondence: in 1648 the council of Paisley conclude that Mr Alexander Dunlop<sup>4</sup> and Bailie Alexander 'sall wryt to Dowglas to Mr Alexander Park, now pedagogue to the Marquis of Douglas' bairns, to see if he will come pedagogue here;<sup>5</sup> in 1665 the council of Stirling 'write to Mr William Papley that he may come here and be settled with' as Latin doctor of the grammar school.<sup>6</sup>

There are innumerable entries in the records showing that the town councils paid the travelling expenses of the master when he 'transported himself;' thus, on 8th December 1702, the town council of Dundee pay to a doctor of the grammar school £40 Scots for 'transporting him and his family from Dunbar to this place;'<sup>7</sup> on 1st August 1713, they appoint a 'gratification for his transportation' to be paid to a master come from Aberdeen to set up a music school;<sup>8</sup> and on 16th September 1773, they grant to Mr Watson, rector of the grammar school, ten guineas for 'transporting his furniture' from Campbeltown to this place.<sup>9</sup>

The schoolmaster, after presentation, and before admis-

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records of Irvine.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>3</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee. 20th September, declines the offer.

<sup>4</sup> One of the Abbey ministers.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Mr Park agreed to become schoolmaster of Paisley.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Stirling.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Dundee.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



sion to his office, took invariably, like the Officers of State, his oath *de fidei administratione* 'as vse is' in presence of the patrons.<sup>1</sup> The master having run all the gantlets—satisfied the patrons as to his abilities and character, the church and state as to his orthodoxy and loyalty,<sup>2</sup> he was introduced into his office with some formality: thus, in 1606, the grammarian Mr Alexander Home having been presented master of the school of the Pans, the whole parishioners, on 8th July, being asked how they approved of him as schoolmaster, they, in token of their approbation, took him by the hand, faithfully promising to concur for the furtherance of the work yet to be done, and keep the schoolmaster and scholars skaitless; finally, it was thought meet that the whole visitors and parishioners present should enter him into the school, and there hear him teach—which also was done.<sup>3</sup> On 28th September 1727, new masters of the schools of Dunbar having been appointed, the magistrates order the schools to be opened with the usual solemnities for their installation, and that intimation thereof be made through the town by a drummer.<sup>4</sup> The patrons generally invested the newly-appointed schoolmaster with a symbol of his possession and authority; thus, in 1602 the provost and bailies, and divers of the council, of Aberdeen passed to the grammar school, and gave to the masters whom they had appointed institution of the office by delivering to them a grammar.<sup>5</sup> In 1658 a schoolmaster of Perth having been appointed, he takes his patrons by the hand, who thereafter went with him to the school, and delivered to him a grammar, the key of the school door, and a pair of 'tawes.'<sup>6</sup> In 1670 the town council of Cupar put their master in possession of the school by giving him the key of the door and tawse.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burgh Records, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, under Removal of Masters from Office.

<sup>3</sup> Presbytery Records of Haddington.

<sup>4</sup> Burgh Records of Dunbar.

<sup>5</sup> Burgh Records of Aberdeen.

<sup>6</sup> Burgh Records of Perth. The same formality was repeated in 1704.

<sup>7</sup> Burgh Records of Cupar.