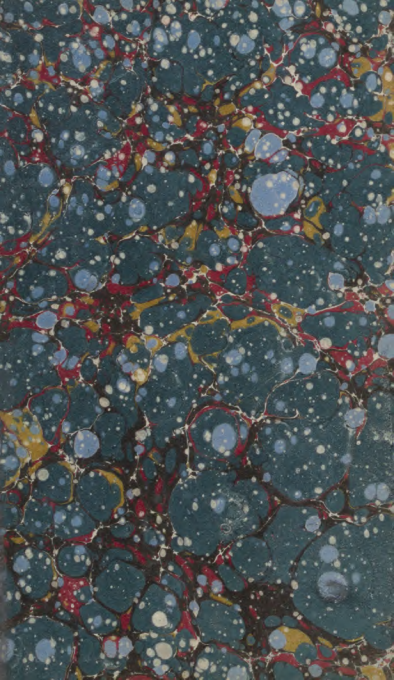




National Library of Scotland



\*B000148243\*



ABS. f. 84. 231 (1-14)

G









# ADDRESS

BY

DAVID DICKSON, Esq.,

MASTER OF THE MERCHANT COMPANY OF EDINBURGH,

AT THE

ANNUAL EXHIBITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES,

AT

George Watson's College for Boys,

ON TUESDAY, JULY 22, 1879.



EDINBURGH :

PRINTED BY LORIMER & GILLIES, 31 ST. ANDREW SQUARE.

1879.



## ADDRESS.

---

**I** CONGRATULATE the boys of George Watson's College on having come to the close of another laborious and successful session.

Some of you have gained distinguished honours; but what pleases me much more is, that all of you have made excellent progress. It is quite a mistake to think that the great results of a large school lie in the production of one or two Admirable Crichtons—respecting whom it might be said, as was done of the schoolmaster of Auburn,—

“Still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
How one small head could carry all he knew.”

The best achievement of a school is to bring *all* the boys to a high average, and this is the case with George Watson's College. Tested by the periodical examinations and daily markings, the work this year has been well done both by Teachers and Scholars.

Let me remind you of the great privileges you have enjoyed, and beseech you to make good use of your splendid education. I know of a rich man in England who got no education in his youth, for he said, "I was only at school *every other week, for a whole fortnight,*" and yet he is an effective and useful man. What kind of men should *you* become who have enjoyed the benefit of such an education as you have got, and are getting here? "It is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful;" not that he be very clever, or very successful, but that he be found *faithful*—that is, using well the talents of ability and education God has given him.

I lately met the boys of your six highest classes, and showed them the school exercises of some of the brightest boys at the High School ninety years ago and more. There were those of the great Henry Brougham, who became Lord Chancellor of England; Charles Hope, afterwards Lord President; Francis Jeffrey; Henry Cockburn; William Miller, of Glenlee; Robert Dundas, the King of Scotland in his time; and last, not least, of Walter Scott. These men became giants in their day. Let me tell you what all who have compared the past with the present will admit to be true, that you receive in George Watson's College for Boys a fuller, broader,

and, in every sense, a more liberal education than those distinguished men did, even under Dr. Adam, the renowned Rector of the High School of Edinburgh.

I congratulate this School on their winning this year the School Shooting Trophy in the late competition for it among the leading schools of Edinburgh. I hope many of you will become volunteers. Some think that volunteering only gratifies and satisfies two natural cravings in boys and young men—the liking for handling guns and powder, and the taste for a little soldiering. But what is far more important, it helps physical development, and trains to manly habits of exactness, self-denial, and strict discipline,—so useful in after life.

To my dear young friends here who are leaving school to enter on the business of life I would say a few words.

No happy examination day comes now to set me free for two months' play. But I remember well that examination day when I left the High School. Many thoughts rushed on my mind. "I am setting out in life's journey. What is my life to be? What was I made for?" Yes, dear lads, to *know thyself* should now be your desire. God your Maker and Saviour would have you to tell Him all your thoughts. Acquaint thyself

with Him and be at peace. What a grand start for life this would be for you !

Let me give you a word of warning. You are now getting near a time of great temptation, and I would hoist before your eyes the danger-signal. A poet has said—

“Vice is a monster of such hideous mean,  
That to be hated, needs but to be seen.”

*This is a great lie.* On the contrary, the great enemy will try to make vice to look very pleasant to you. New passions and feelings come into play, and Satan has a friend at court in the heart of youth. So I say to you—“If sinners entice you, consent you not.” Keep away from bad companions, bad books, bad ways, bad amusements. And remember that no temptation is so small but it may overcome you, and no temptation is so great but the grace of God can enable you to overcome it.

When a young man falls under the power of the devil, how difficult is his recovery ! I could tell you many sad stories of old schoolfellows of my own who through the lusts of the flesh fell down in life’s early journey. But I need not give details.

Bishop Burnet, the author of the History of the Reformation, had an ill-doing son, who said to him one day, “Father, I am engaged in a more difficult work than

your 'Reformation.' "What is it, my son?" "Well, *it is my own reformation.*" He was quite right.

Talking to a young man lately, who once seemed to have set out on the narrow way, but who had sadly fallen—"Ah, Mr. Dickson," said he, "I have terribly fallen, but I am still all right at heart." Poor fellow, it was a great mistake. The canker begins at the heart, and then shows itself in the life. Therefore, my dear lads, keep your *heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

As a great help to this, value your precious Sabbath-days. Labour on the six days, do all your work, and do it well; but do not on any pretext be cheated out of your Sabbath. Yes, *your* Sabbath, for it was made for man; not for Scotland or America, but for man all the world over; and man needs it more than ever. Some of us could tell you that to stand the tear and wear of our busy lives we could not want the sweet Day of Rest either for the higher or lower purposes for which the Giver gave it—and He gave it not as a day of *recreation*, but as a day of *rest*. We would give in at once but for our precious Sabbath-days.

Farewell, my dear lads. In the name of the Governors and Teachers, I wish you every blessing in life.

We have all before us our work to do, our race to run, our battle to fight, our victory to win. You are likely to live in anxious and eventful days. May you at the close have that word addressed to you—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."





