

Scottish universities, it is worthy of note that in ten successive years in his day they sent to Cambridge five men who gained the senior wranglership in the mathematical Tripos, which is the highest honour Cambridge could give her sons. Gill never became a trained mathematical astronomer, his career had given him no opportunity to cultivate pure mathematics, but he nevertheless possessed what was more valuable, that is mathematical intuition or "*vous*." If he had devoted himself to the worship of the "cross-grained Muses of the cube and square" he would doubtless have become an equally great high priest in that service as he became a most noted and successful conqueror of the skies in the realm of observation. There is no doubt that the facility he acquired in his earlier years in the use of his fingers, handling tools, and executing delicate construction, and experience in mechanical drawing were of untold value to him, and trained him for the construction of delicate instruments and complicated machinery by which he assailed celestial problems, and, with more success than the fabled giants of old, not only reached for but grasped the sovereignty of the stellar universe.

His biographer Professor Forbes divides his life into three periods:

- (1) 1843-1879—The growth of a real Astronomer.
- (2) 1879-1907—The work of a real Astronomer.
- (3) 1907-1914—The charm of a real Astronomer.

At the age of twenty or thereabouts Urania, the Muse of Astronomy, touched his imagination and then fired him into action. He formed the idea of securing an accurate time service at Aberdeen. He met Professor Piazzi Smith at Edinburgh Observatory and succeeded in interesting Professor David Thomson in his efforts. A portable transit instrument, long out of use, was discovered at King's College, Aberdeen, the sidereal clock was overhauled and fitted with an apparatus for the electrical control of other clocks and the young watchmaker had a novel occupation in his leisure evenings. He soon developed further ambitions, and mounted equatorially a second-hand silver-on-glass mirror of twelve inches aperture and ten feet focal length, making the driving clock with his own hands. With this he made many excellent photographs of the moon. At that time Lord Lindsay, son of the Earl of Crawford,