

The Parish School is another institution that has been singularly blessed in elevating the characters of Scotchmen, and fitting them to fill with honour and success, offices of the highest trust, and importance in every part of the world.

Brethren I have detained you long, too long, not to have imposed on your patience, but I make no apology for detaining you a little longer, for I hold you by an irresistible charm, have you spell-bound by the very utterance of the words "Parish Schools of Scotland." I speak now to your sense of gratitude and virtuous pride, as well as of tender remembrances. The mere enunciation of the name is replete with beautiful scenes, with stirring incidents and impassioned feelings. It brings us back to the days of "Auld Lang Syne," to that most joyous period of our lives—our School boy days when we luxuriated in pleasures which we can ne'er enjoy again, and met with friends we may ne'er see again. It carries us back farther still,—to days when our fathers struggled for the liberty which Scotchmen enjoy, and know how to appreciate—when the fathers of our Church struggled, and struggled perseveringly, to wrench from the hands of rapacious spoilers a portion of the Church's patrimony! For what purpose? To feed and clothe their own wasted and worn bodies; for their generous and patriotic aims had reduced them to the utmost indigence? No Brethren! but to bequeath to posterity the Parish schools! to give a sound, wholesome education to the children of the poorest in the land at an easy price. These generous and patriotic spirits, cared for "the godly upbringing of children" before they cared for their own secular wants. These schools are not mere appendages to the Church. They are an essential part and portion of the ecclesiastical establishment of the land. Originating in the forethought of the Church—they have been endowed chiefly from her patrimony—have been watched over by her office-bearers with paternal affection, and are still under her supervision and guardian care. Yes, Brethren! The Parish Schools of Scotland are associated with a crowd of the tenderest and most endearing associations, with our earliest and happiest days, our homes and our parents, the scenes, the friends, and joys of youth, and with the most interesting period of our nation's history. But they are not only associated with the past—they are identified with all that is great and good in the present condition of Scotchmen. To these seminaries they owe directly