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A HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
LORD KELVIN, P.C., O.M., G.C.V.O., LL.D., F.R.S.
Professor of Natural Philosophy, 1846-1899. Chancellor of the University, 1904-1907
Born 1824. Died 1907
A History
of the
University of Glasgow

From its Foundation in 1451 to 1909

By
James Coutts, M.A.
Formerly Registrar of the University

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PREFACE

When in the employment of the University of Glasgow, I was often tempted to wish for a History of that institution, to which one could refer in answering enquiries from the outside, or procuring information needed from time to time by administrators or officials. Besides this interest of a practical nature, I had a keen relish for the story of the University, and I saw that other institutions with no better claims had their Histories, and that the public received them not unkindly. Just before the Paris Exhibition of 1900, I was asked to put together a slight sketch of the University, to accompany some educational exhibits which were to be forwarded. This sketch was translated into French by the late Miss Galloway, but, from some accident or another, it was never sent to the Exhibition. From that time, however, I definitely made up my mind to bring out a History of the University.

It is not for lack of materials that a History has not previously appeared. The Munimenta of the Maitland Club embody the main part of the records, charters, and other documents, from the founding of the University to the Royal Commission of 1727, and the Reports of subsequent Commissions add considerably to the stock of information. For the greater part of the time since 1727, the manuscript records are tolerably full, and by the kind permission of the University authorities I have been allowed to peruse them down to about 1860, and to gather from them materials for my History. For a good part of the last half century, a summary of many events and transactions may be obtained from the Abstract of the Proceedings of the University Court, published in successive Calendars; and the Universities (Scotland) Acts of 1858 and 1889, and the Reports of the
Commissions under them, as well as a number of Ordinances made by the University Court, are important in reference to the recent development of the University.

The arrangement of the matter in the University Records, the Munimenta, the Reports of Commissions, and kindred sources from which one has to work, give little help in the framing of a narrative, and in many cases the accounts of persons and events require further light before their meaning and relations can be made clear. For the latter purpose I have laid under contribution many books on historical, biographical, and miscellaneous subjects, not only making use of the University Library, but also forming for myself a small collection of books likely to be helpful. From these various sources the framework of a narrative has been slowly put together, and many parts have been written and re-written, and sometimes written over again, before assuming their present form. I desire to add that I alone am responsible for the manner in which the evidence has been interpreted, and for any opinions or estimates expressed in the course of the work.

In the recent period it is natural that events should be more briefly related, and this explains why some aspects of University life noticed before 1858, are afterwards omitted or only mentioned in outline. Having provided a very full Index, I deemed it needless to insert a detailed Table of Contents, and have limited myself to a Plan of the Work, showing the chapters and periods into which it has been divided. There are occasional references to Medicine in the general narrative, but I judged it better to tell the story of the Medical School in a separate chapter. This arrangement obviates the need for too frequent transitions, and gives those interested in the Medical School a continuous and uninterrupted narrative of that department.

I have to record my thanks to the University authorities for permission to inspect the manuscript records during the period mentioned; to Professor Glaister for some helpful suggestions; to Professor Moir for information from the records of the Faculty of Procurators regarding the early teaching of Conveyancing; to Mr. Clapperton, secretary of
the University Court, for particulars respecting a number of subjects; to Mr. Galbraith, the Librarian, for the courteous and helpful manner in which access to works in the Library was afforded to me; and to Mr. Craig, Clerk to the General Council, for admitting me to a perusal of the Reports and Minutes of the Council. In a very special degree I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Addison, Registrar of the University, for reading the proofs and making many valuable suggestions while the work was passing through the press, and also furnishing information which few others could have supplied, and involving so much care and trouble that few others would have supplied it if they could.

JAMES COUTTS.

Perth, 30th September, 1909.