

ART. IX.—*The education of an 18th-century gentleman : George Edward Stanley of Dalegarth and Ponsonby.* By F. J. G. ROBINSON, M.A.

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DURING the 18th century the pattern of education adopted by the upper classes in England changed. In the previous century, despite the growth of forms of private education, the local grammar school was the pre-eminent establishment in the upbringing of young gentlemen after their earliest years. By the 19th century the development of great public schools, which had been mostly local grammar schools themselves, and the growth of private academies, had taken the support of the gentry away from the grammar schools.¹

In the north this change came later than in the rest of England, but such school numbers as are extant make it clear that the local grammar schools were in decline by 1800.² Because of the scarcity of school records, especially registers, this process can rarely be observed except in a very general way; the accumulated records of a family can sometimes provide a more detailed picture of the change in operation, and the reasons for it.³

George Edward Stanley was the son of Edward Stanley of Dalegarth and Mildred, née Fleming, daughter of Sir George Fleming, Bishop of Carlisle. He was born on the 21 March 1748. His father had been educated solely at the grammar school of St Bees,⁴ but his influence upon his son's education can

¹ Cf. N. Hans, *New Trends in Education in the eighteenth century* (1951), chap. 1 *passim*.

² CW2 lxix 174 f.

³ See also the records of the Senhouse family's education in E. Hughes, *North-Country Life in the eighteenth century*, ii, chap. ix.

⁴ *The Story of St Bees, 1583-1930*. St Beghians' Club issue (1939).

have been but slight as he died in 1751, long before George was of school age. Tuition of George and of his sister Dorothy was granted to their mother on 18 April 1752, as Edward Stanley had died intestate.⁵ On 7 April 1755 he entered Carlisle Grammar School. This school offered most of the advantages of a good northern grammar school in this period. The curriculum was based upon study of the classical languages, but provision was made for instruction in writing, arithmetic, geography, mathematics, navigation and astronomy.⁶ The close and competitive supervision of both Carlisle Corporation and the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, who were jointly responsible for the headmaster's salary, ensured that there would be a capable teacher.

The school was free to all-comers and attempts by previous headmasters to restrict this privilege to natives of Carlisle had been quashed by the Dean and Chapter.⁷ The cost of education at this school must therefore have been small; apparently Mrs Stanley kept no separate account of such expenses as she was to do for her son's later education. Unlike most similar schools in the north-west, Carlisle Grammar School did not then possess any links in the form of scholarships or exhibitions with the English universities. This did not prevent an able pupil continuing his education at one of these universities,⁸ but may well have been one of the reasons that induced Mildred Stanley to take her son away from Carlisle in 1757, for George does not appear to have been endowed with great academic ability.⁹

⁵ Admon. Archdeaconry of Richmond, Deanery of Copeland. Information kindly supplied by the Editor.

⁶ Carlisle Grammar School Register, MS. Dean and Chapter Library, Carlisle. Orders and Rules, 1698.

⁷ Dean and Chapter Order Books. Dean and Chapter Library, Carlisle. See, for example, 1710-14.

⁸ Numerous examples in *Carlisle Grammar School Memorial Register, 1264-1924*, by G. B. Routledge (1924).

⁹ See below, Appendix II. Uncatalogued letter from the Senhouse papers. D/Sen. in the Record Office, Carlisle.

On 23 June 1757 he left for his new school at Cheam in Surrey. This private school already had a record of a century of success,¹⁰ and was entering its most outstanding period. In 1752 the usher, William Gilpin, became headmaster. The originality of his teaching methods and his approach towards children has been fully appreciated only in this century.¹¹ Among his numerous innovations perhaps the most profound for the age he taught in was the treatment of boys as boys rather than little men.

It was, however, probably Gilpin's local connections rather than his teaching that induced Mildred Stanley to choose his school. He was a Cumbrian and had been educated himself partly at Carlisle Grammar School. The expense of education at a private boarding-school was sufficient to encourage Mrs Stanley to keep regular accounts of the costs.¹² Although Gilpin's basic charge was only £25 a year¹³ his extra charges and the normal wear and tear of life away from home brought the bill to an average of £50 a year during George's three years at Cheam. The education offered at this school under Gilpin was designed to fit his pupils for their future positions in society. Whilst providing the classical teaching necessary for entrance to university the school also prepared its scholars for a business and professional career.

It is not likely that Gilpin had fully developed the original methods of discipline and organisation which were the outstanding features of his practice by 1757, but his concentration upon personality development

¹⁰ See Hans, *op. cit.*, 121-127.

¹¹ The main accounts of Gilpin are: W. D. Templeman, *The Life and Work of William Gilpin* (Urbana, Ill., 1939); *An Account of the Rev. Mr Gilpin* in W. Gilpin's *Memoirs of Dr Richard Gilpin* (1879); W.H.G., *A Memoir of the late Rev. William Gilpin, M.A.* (1851); Dictionary of Natural Biography; and a briefer account in W. A. C. Stewart and W. P. McCann, *The Educational Innovators*, i (1967).

¹² See below. Appendix I. Uncatalogued account book from the Stanley papers. D/Stan. in the Record Office, Carlisle.

¹³ *A Cheam School Bill in 1766*, Surrey A. Trans., xxv (1924) 80-84. Also Surrey A. Collection, xxxvi. Sir H. Lambert.

and the needs of the individual pupil were evidently present. In late 1760 Mrs Stanley informed the headmaster that she intended to move her son to Eton. Gilpin's reply¹⁴ made plain that he already considered the education offered by the great public schools of little benefit to the majority of boys. He emphasised the physical and moral dangers which these schools notoriously presented,¹⁵ and contrasted the close personal care taken of each pupil at his own school. He pointed out that the boy was not an academic, and therefore unlikely to gain from the narrower classical curriculum of Eton. This advice, couched though it was in a forthright and convincing manner, failed to change Mrs Stanley's resolve. George entered Eton in January 1761.

It seems probable that Mrs Stanley intended the years at Cheam to provide the training now offered by a preparatory school. Cheam had provided this training during the headships of the Sanxays,¹⁶ but Gilpin appears to have preferred to offer a complete education to the end of the secondary stage. Compared with the local grammar schools this form of education offered experience in living away from home, an essential preparation for public school life, and the close supervision of a financially interested headmaster. This provided the closest approximation to the personal tutor which was then a popular mode of education with the nobility.¹⁷ George Stanley was the more fortunate in that his private schoolmaster was a man of outstanding ability and likely to take a real interest in his pupil because of their common birthplace.

George stayed at Eton for five and a half years before going on to Cambridge. Whatever the moral

¹⁴ Appendix II.

¹⁵ See R. A. Austen-Leigh, *Eton under Barnard* (1754-65).

¹⁶ See Hans., *op. cit.*, 122. There appears to have been a relationship through the Briscos between the Sanxays and Gilpin. Susanna Brisco, niece of Susanna Richmond of Highhead Castle, married — Sanxay.

¹⁷ See Hans., *op. cit.*, 23 *et seq.*

and physical effects of this education, its cost was certainly greater than that at Cheam, averaging about £100 a year, and the expense of his training at Cambridge must have been far higher.¹⁸ He stayed at Christ's College, Cambridge, for five years as a fellow-commoner and left in 1771 without taking a degree.¹⁹ This was not unusual amongst upper-class alumni of the English universities and cannot be taken as an indication of lack of academic progress. The "good natured boy" who had "no turn for school learning" became High Sheriff of Cumberland in 1774, and remained an important and influential local figure until his death in 1806.

APPENDIX 1.

The Day George left Carlisle June the 23 1757

To Cloths gott gott for George	10	0	0
To a Chase to London	3	7	6
George's Expencc to London	}	1	7
To Mr Wilson's Man my Share of			
his Expences from London	0	18	7
Given to Mr Wilson's Man for his	}	0	18
Trouble he had with George			
To Entrance at Chool	5	5	0
To Board and Washin	12	10	0
To Writing	1	0	0
To Paper	0	3	0
To Coals	0	3	0
To Staying the X ^{mas} Hol	2	2	0
To the ushers and Servants	1	1	0
Lade out in severall things	1	18	2
^{c)} Lade out this Half Year	30	13	11
^{a)} Jan ^y 2 1757			
To Board and Washin	12	10	0
To Writing	1	0	0
To Paper	0	3	0
To Coals	0	3	0
Lade out in severall things	5	0	5

¹⁸ See Appendix I.

¹⁹ Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Pt. ii.

To Cloth for Shirts	1	1	0
To 4 Hankerchifs	0	3	0
To Cambrick	0	7	0
July the 2 1758 Lade out the whole Year	51	1	4
George's accompts July the 2 1758 to July the 2 1759			
Mr Gilpin's Bill	37	7	5
The Taler's Bill	3	13	10
To two Hats	1	1	0
Muney sent to George	1	1	0
To a pese of Cloth for Shirts	2	15	0
To Cambrick for the Same	0	8	0
Lade out this Year	46	6	3
George's Acoumpts from July the 2 1759 to July 1760			
Mr Gilpin's Bill	40	4	9
The Taler's Bill	8	6	11
To two pr of Stockings Wo and c	0	2	8
To Muney sent George	1	1	0
Lade out this Year	49	15	4
George's Acoumpts from July the 2 1760 to Jan ^{ry} the 2 1761			
Mr Gilpin's Bill	23	1	3
To Cloth for Shirst	2	15	0
To Muney given George	0	10	6
Lade out this Half Year	26	6	9
George's Acoumpts } upon goin to Eton } Jan ^{ry} the 20 1761			
b) To M ^{rs} Hird Entrance	5	5	0
To the two Masters	4	4	0
To Cloths gott at that time	8	0	0
To a pare of Sturop Stockings	0	2	4
To Hankchifs	0	4	0
To Making a Sute of Close	0	5	0
To M ^r Hodgin's Bill for Cloth and c	0	18	0
c) To Stockings — 2-9 Buckels — 1-5	0	4	4
To Ribbin — 0-6	0	0	6
To a Horss from Burrow Bridg	0	12	0
To the Expences from Burrow Bridg	1	9	2
To a pare of Stockings	0	3	0
Givin George at his goin away	0	13	0
the Study Coach from London	2	5	0
To a Lether Male	0	15	0
Expences from London to Burrow Bridg	1	7	6
M ^r Hodgin's Bill for a Riding Coat and c	3	7	0

Milbourn's Bill the Tayler	0	9	0
To Worstid — 2-6 To a Horse to York — 15-0	0	17	6
To George's Expences to London	5	6	6
Expences to M ^{rs} Hird for Half a Year	35	9	3
To Worstid — 4-4 Sent to George — 5-0	0	9	4
To a Watch and Chain	4	6	0
To a pare of Breaches	0	9	6
To a Hatt — 9-0 Coach to Eton	0	11	6
To Close gott at X ^{mas}	7	4	6
To M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for Half a Year	27	0	8
e) Lade out this Year for George	109	18	7
George's Accounts from Jan ^{ry} to July 1762			
To a peas of Cloth for Shirts	2	9	8
To Silk and Worstid — 6-6 To Cambrick — 4-0	0	10	6
M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for Half a Year	33	5	3
Sent to M ^r Tatham for things gott in London for George	5	0	0
M ^{rs} Hird's Bill from July 1762 to the } 16 of Jan ^{ry} 1763 }	31	11	10
To John Preistman's Bill	13	14	0
Lade out this Year	86	11	3
George's Acoumpts from the 16 of Jan ^{ry} to the 16 of July 1763			
M ^{rs} Hird's Bills for Half a Year	42	18	8
M ^r Tatham's Bill	13	4	0
To John Preistman's Bill	2	12	0
M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for Half a Year from the 16 of July to the 16 of Jan ^{ry} 1763	32	8	10
	91	13	6
George's Accounts from the 16 1764 to the 16 of July 1764			
To Cloth for Nine Shirts	3	13	3
To Cambrick for Brests and Ruffels	0	9	8
To five Crevetts	1	1	9
To Weeffing two pare of Stockings	0	4	0
M ^r Tatham's Bill att Easter	2	8	9
M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for Half a Year	42	16	11
M ^r Tatham's Bill Sep ^r the 15 1764	6	14	4
To John Preistman's Bill	10	11	4
To M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for Half a Year	30	3	6
M ^r Tatham's Bill at X ^{mas} and } January the 16 1765 }	13	18	1
e) Lade out this Year	111	1	7

George's Accounts from the 16 of Jan ^{ry} to the 16 of July 1765		
To Cloth for the Lining of a Wastcoat	0	4 8
To Cambrick Yard and Quarter for 4 Stocks	0	8 9
To Weefing Seven pare of Stockings	0	10 6
To Making a Wastcoat	0	2 0
Given to the Barber	0	4 6
Given George when he came Home	2	2 0
To George when he went back to Eton	7	17 6
To a Horss to Netherhall and Brough	1	1 0
given at York for goin to London } in the Study Coach }	1	5 0
To Half the Expences for a Horss to Brough	0	5 5
To M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for Half a Year	66	6 5
To M ^{rs} Hird's Bill for the other Half Year	36	3 0
To M ^r Tatham's Bill at X ^{mas} and Feb ^{ry} 17 1766	21	2 7
Lade out this Year	137	13 4
George's Accounts from Jan ^{ry} 1766 to the 16 of July 1766		
To M ^{rs} Hird's Half Year's Bill	70	10 2
To M ^r Tatham's Bill	12	16 0
To two pare of Shows from Michall (Breck?)	0	11 6
To a pare of Silk Stockings	0	9 0
To Horss hier when at Carlisle	1	12 0
To a pare of Gloves	0	3 6
To Hair Dresing in Carlisle	0	9 0
To Cambrick for Stocks and Ruffells	2	3 9
To Diper for Towels	0	8 10
To a Purple Corded Tabby Wastcote	1	11 0
To making the Wastcote	0	2 6
To Cloth for Shirts	5	15 0
Given to George when at Carlisle	2	7 0
To a pare of Brechess	0	6 0
To Cloth for 2 Pillows (trours)	0	3 6
To two Hankerchifs	0	7 0
To 3 pare of Kendle Silk Stockings	0	19 0
George's Accounts beginig Oc ^{br} the 20 1766		
Givning him in his pockett when } he went to Cambridge }	10	10 0
My Sons first Quarter's Bill	138	8 11
His second Quarter's Bill endin at Lady Day 1767		
His third Quarter's Bill endin Mic ^s 1767		
his fourth Quarter's Bill endin X ^{mas} 1767		
Sent him at two differend times 25 pd	30	0 0

^a Unitary modifications were apparently just as difficult in the 18th century; the old-style dating had gone out of use in 1752.

^b For the organisation of Eton's boarders see R. A. Austen-Leigh, *op. cit.*

^c Slight errors are to be found in the accounts in 1757, 1761 and 1764.

APPENDIX 2.

Cheam Nov 30 1760

Madam

I am truly sorry for the occasion of your journey to town, and sincerely hope it will answer the end proposed. I beg my compliments to (*) Capt Dacre and his lady, and would be glad to pay them to you all in person; but it is not in my power.—— With regard to the subject of your last letter, as you obligingly, Madam, rank me among those friends whose approbation you would be glad to have in every step you take in the education of your son, I will take the opportunity of giving you my opinion of the step you are at present about to take —— I think it is not improbable that at Eaton boys in general may get more of what is called *school-learning*, than they may with me. To that chiefly attention is there paid. But if boys have no turn for *such* improvements, they leave that school as ignorant as they came. It is impossible in these great schools to make particular applications to boys. Where such applications can be made, boys, if they have good natural sense, may be acquainted with many parts of useful knowledge, tho they have no turn for the learned languages. I think, Madam, I have at all times occasionally given you my opinion of master Stanley, with a freedom, which I never had reason to think you took amiss. I have always said, he had good-sense, good-nature, and (as far as I had yet observed) a good disposition: but at the same time, I have always told you, Madam, that he had no turn for school-learning. He is therefore one of those boys, who are by no means suited to the manner of a public school, where, I am afraid, he would get nothing, but what he would be better without. Four years ago, a young man went from me to Eaton. I knew he had no turn for school-learning; and I thought on that occasion, as I do on this. He hath now finished his education, and did me the favour, not long ago, of spending two days with me. He is a good-natured young fellow; but I am sorry to say, he strongly exemplifies the observations I have just made. He is heir to three thousand a year; but I am afraid his fortune will give him his only consideration: and yet I cannot help thinking, he would have made a better figure, if he had been put upon such studies, as were more suitable to him —— It is often used, as an argument, in favour of a public school, that it introduces a young fellow earlier into the world; and gives him address, and assurance. I believe indeed it does: but I am very doubtful, whether this should not be considered among the disadvantages of those places. I cannot

say, I think turning a boy into a man, before his time, has the happiest consequences. This early introduction into the world may in some instances succeed; but I am satisfied, that in nine instances out of ten, it will tend rather to give a youth a taste for expence, ostentation, and the diversions of the town, than to qualify him properly for any useful station in life. A becoming assurance, I think, generally comes *naturally* in its *proper* time. — In two points, I think, Madam, without the least vanity, I may suppose an education here to have the preference; in point of *morals*, and in point of *health*. From the nature of the institution, it is not possible, that either of these can be so well attended to, in a public school, as in a private one. The greater licence, which unavoidably prevails in public schools (with regard to the *foundationers* indeed at Eaton the masters are much stricter) hath of course bad effects both on the minds and constitutions of children. (b) Sir Robert Hildyard sent two sons from hence to Eaton; and hath since told me, oftener than once, that he heartily repented it. He soon found the excesses, which boys could not there be restrained from, had a bad effect upon their health. He lost one of them in a fever occasioned by a surfeit; and scarce saved the other, but of four, whom I have sent to Eaton, two have dyed: whereas, out of the number who have remained with me, I have not lost one; except my poor brother, who was scarce ever well alive. — In a word, Madam, my opinion is, that when a boy is intended, and discovers talents naturally suited for acting in a public station, a public school is the most natural and proper introduction; and in those circumstances one would venture to run some risks, which must necessarily be run at public schools. I am now preparing a young gentleman for Eaton, whose going there I heartily approve: but he hath such talents, I mean talents for acting in some public station, as I think no boy in the school hath but himself; and it is for such only, that, in my opinion, public schools are proper. — I will only add, Madam, that upon a supposition you are still inclined to send master Stanley to Eaton, this *sudden* removal of him is improper. There are some parts of grammar, on which the masters at Eaton lay a stress, which to me appear of less importance. I take care however to have every boy instructed in them, who is intended for Eaton; otherwise he must enter there with great disadvantage; as I have already seen in some instances, before I was aware of it. I have not therefore yet informed master Stanley at all of your intention. — Thus, Madam, I have, with great sincerity, given you my opinion of a step, which I cannot but

think ill-judged. I hope you will consider it as an act of friendship: I am sure I mean it as such. Tho I have seen many things, which I have thought wrong, yet I can safely say, this is the very first instance in which I have ever interfered with a parent in the disposal of a child. How disinterested I am, on the present occasion, I think, Madam, you can hardly doubt, when I assure you, that, as far as I am concerned myself, I would rather wish, as you seem to wish it yourself, that master Stanley should be removed. Though I have often pleased myself with the thought of breeding up a young gentleman to be a credit to my own country, yet intrusted as he is so entirely to me, he hath been much more my anxiety, than any boy besides himself; and if, through my persuasions, you should still keep him here, and anything but good should happen to him, that anxiety would return fourfold upon me.

I am,

Madam,

Your obliged, and most obed^t serv^t.

Will: Gilpin

(c) I beg my compliments to M^{rs} Thompson,

(d) M^r and M^{rs} Gale. — My wife, and sisters join with me in compliments.

Notes.

^a Joseph Dacre had married Dorothy Stanley on the 22nd of September 1760. The marriage was to be brief as Dorothy died on the 25th of February 1761, aged 20. It was probably her illness that Gilpin referred to in his opening sentence.

^b Robert Darcy Hildyard, elder son of Sir Robert of Winestead, Yorks. B. 1743. Educated at Eton and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, 1761. High Sheriff of Yorks. 1783. Venn, *op. cit.* *Burke's Landed Gentry* does not mention another son.

^c Probably Mrs Joanna Thompson, née Senhouse.

^d Robert Gale and his wife Mary, née Senhouse.

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