Girard College

Girard College is an institution in the City of Philadelphia founded and endowed by Stephen Girard for the education of orphan boys.

The purpose of the institution is to sustain and educate as many poor white orphan boys between the ages of six and eighteen years as can be conveniently accommodated to provide plain wholesome food, plain but decent clothing, safe and comfortable lodging; to provide means for and to encourage a reasonable amount of exercise and
recreation: to instruct the boys in the various branches pertaining to a liberal education including reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, experimental philosophy and the French and Spanish languages; to inculcate and foster in their minds a strong attachment to the best republican institutions of their country and to the principle of the broadest liberty of conscience; to instill and impress their characters with the purest principles of morality.

The founder, Stephen Girard, stands high in
the rank of truly great phi-
lanthropists. His beneficent
deeds were performed with-
out thought of vanity. He
born in the City of Bordeaux
May 20th 1760. His mother
died while he was still
a small boy. His father
remarried. Strained do-
meric relations followed,
in consequence of which
Stephen at the age of four-
teen with his father's per-
mission went to sea. By
his industry and trust-
worthiness when only twen-
ty-three years of age, he
became the captain of
a merchant vessel. In
1776 in an attempt to
reached New York with a cargo of merchandise he was forced, on account of the war between Great Britain and the colonies, to enter the Delaware Bay and land his cargo in Philadelphia. From that time he made Philadelphia his home. By personal efforts and the good luck which usually comes to the deserving, he became the wealthiest man at that time in America. In his will he bequeathed two millions of dollars to be expended in erecting and maintaining, upon a piece of
Land belonging to this estate, consisting of forty-five acres lying in what is now northern Philadelphia at the corner of South College Avenue and Ridge Avenue, a college of sufficient capacity to accommodate at least three hundred scholars; the

purpose of the college to be as before stated. In
addition to the two millions of dollars, after making generous gifts to his relatives, to those in his service, to the corporations of the cities of Philadelphia and New Orleans, to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to various charitable institutions, he bequeathed the remainder of his entire estate, amounting at the time of his death to about seven millions of dollars, to the Corporation of the City of Philadelphia, the interests and rents thereof to be applied to the further in-
provision and maintenane of the college and to other specified purposes. He incorporated in his will the plans for the architecture of the main building. He died the twenty-sixth day of December in the year eighteen hundred and thirty one.
The construction of the marble building was begun May 6th, 1833 and completed in November 1841. Its design is similar to a Greek temple. Its style and solidity are not excelled by any modern building. The entire exterior is of white marble. It is approached from all points by eleven steps and a platform twenty-one feet in width. At the outer edge of the platform are thirty-four Corinthian columns supporting the massive marble roof. In the front part of the first story are two large
rooms, one a commodious reading-room containing a library of sixteen thousand volumes, the other a relic-room containing furniture which was formerly used by Stephen Girard. The back part of the first story and the second and third stories are fitted up for recitation rooms. Simultaneous with the erection of the main-building was that of four auxiliary buildings, two on each side. The grounds were surrounded by a stone wall ten feet in height consisting of forty-one
acres. With such accommodations as these buildings afforded the college opened Jan 1st, 1848 with one hundred pupils. Since then buildings have been erected upon all the available space of the grounds.
The expansion of the college is limited only by want of more room—there is no lack of students or of money. At the present time there are about six thousand students. There are now ten auxiliary buildings with school rooms, recitation rooms—used for study and for indoor games in bad weather—dormitories, lavatories, bathing pools, etc. Building No. 6 is used for an infirmary. Building No. 7 is devoted to the smallest boys and contains, beside all the conveniences of the other building, a small
dining-room which has a seating capacity for over three hundred. The large dining-room is in building No. 9, and has a seating capacity for twelve hundred and fifty. Opposite Nos. 5 and 6 is the chapel, a fine Gothic structure where services are held twice a day. Back of the row of auxiliary buildings are the electricity-plant, the bakery and the laundry. The play grounds are sufficiently large for any of the common games to be played on them. On the southwest corner of the grounds is a small pond for
swimming in summer
and skating in winter.

The management
of the college is under the
direction of a Board of di-
rectors of fifteen members,
twelve of whom are appoin-
ted by the Judges of the
Courts of Common Pleas of
the County of Philadelphia;
the other three are the Mayor
of the City and the respective
Presidents of the Select and
Common Councils.

Those admitted to the
college must be poor white
boys between the ages of
six and ten years who
have become orphans by
the death of their father.
Before admission a record is made of the applicant's name, birthplace, age, health, family relations, and other facts which may be of value. Admission is given in the order of application except that when the number of applicants exceeds the accommodations afforded preference is given first to those born in the (old) City of Philadelphia (the territory lying between the south side of Vine Street and the north side of South Street, and between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers); secondly, to those born
in other parts of Pennsylvania; thirdly, to those born in New York City, the first American port at which Stephen Girard arrived; lastly, to those born in New Orleans, the first American port at which he traded. The guardian must empower the college to care for and control the child by proper means without interference from relatives or other outside parties. At present there are about three hundred applications on file. One have been admitted from places outside of Pennsylvania except a few
from New York City between the years 1870 and 1880.

Once admitted, the daily routine of each student is as follows:

A. M.       P. M.
6. arise, lavatory 12.30 dinner
6.30 breakfast 1. to 2. play
7. to 7.30 play 2. to 4. school
7.30 to 8. study 4. evening chapel
8. morning chapel 4.15 to 6. play
8.15 to 10. school 6. supper
10. to 10.15 play 6.30 to 7. play
10.15 to 12. school 7. begin study
12. to 12.30 play 8.45 retire

The smallest boys retire at 7.30, while some of the oldest do not retire until 9.30 or 10. Saturday.after-
months and certain day in
the year are holidays, when
the student may go where
he chooses.

The oversight and con-
trol of the boys are intrust-
ed to governesses, for the
smaller boys, and to pre-
fects, for the larger. Each
governess has charge of
fifty boys, called a section.
Each prefect has charge
of seventy boys. The pre-
fects and governesses have
control of their sections
at all times and places
except during recitations.
The punishment inflicted
for misconduct is
the deprivation of priv-
ilages. One common mode is to put the guilty one in line and make him search about the grounds during playtime.

The course of instruction extends over eight years and includes work equivalent to that done in city graded and high schools together with manual training, military training, lessons in shorthand and typewriting, in business forms and principles and in morality and character building.

The work in the lower grades is about the same as in the public
schools. The teachers are all ladies—unmarried ladies.

The work which corresponds closely to high-school work covers three years and embraces the departments of English and History, Chemistry and Physics, French, Spanish, Natural History, Mathematics, Drawing and Vocal Expression. The following is a very brief outline of the work taken up in some of the departments: English, studies in rhetoric and composition, reading of a few standard works; History, general history with respect to its relation to present conditions; math-
ical history, constitution of the United States, civil government, natural law, French, grammar, translation, business forms, conversation, Spanish, grammar, translation, business forms.

Natural history, recitations illustrated by means of stuffed animals and birds, models, skeletons and drawings on the blackboard.

Elementary studies in physical geography, geology, physiology and hygiene. Physics, elementary principles and studies in the various forms of energy. Chemistry, elementary general chimiz
try, qualitative analysis of unknown solutions, also of a few minerals and alloys, quantitative estimation of a few simple substances, visits to several industrial establishments, as gas-works and glass works. Mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, surveying and navigation, calculus and graphical statics. The professors are all gentlemen.

In 1883, a technical building was erected on the mid end of the grounds and the We...
The Chemical Department was organized at once.

The purpose of the department is two-fold: first, to give the boys such preparation as will enable them upon leaving the college to care for themselves, for this they must do for they have no one else to depend upon; secondly, to ascertain the work each is best qualified to perform. It is not the intention to teach trades but rather to teach some of the principles which underlie good workmanship and to give skill in the handling of tools.
There are seven branches to the course of study, viz: Wood-working, Metal-working, Plumbing, Electrical Mechanics, Mechanical drawing, Foundry work and forging. Each boy spends five hours per week for five years in the Department changing branches each week, so that after working in any branch one week, it is six weeks before he returns to it. The total number of hours devoted by each boy to each branch is only one hundred and fifty, equivalent to about three weeks, still in this short time he makes wonderful advancement.
The Woodworking includes the use of the saw, hammer, bit, chisel, file, and other common tools in making straight edges, flat surfaces, joints, and wood-turnings. In Metalworking the beginners learn how to use common tools, such as the hammer, chisel, and file, in riveting, in chipping and in reducing flat surfaces to a smooth finish. Those advanced construct practical pieces of machinery, such as small steam-engines, steam-pumps and dynamos. In Electrical Me-
Chances the boys are taught the principles of batteries, dynamos and motors; the model of wiring; the use of electricity in lighting, telegraphy and motor work — as the running of street cars — and the making of small appliances, as electric bells.

For cripple boys, unable to do manual labor, a course is given in the art of printing. During the last eighteen months the pupils may elect any one branch of the Mechanical Department upon which he will concentrate his
entire attention. After graduation he may take a year in any line of postgraduate work.

In the whole course of instruction and particularly in the Mechanical Department, as much as possible, everything is illustrated by blackboard drawings, charts, and models, so that instruction by the eye is made of equal importance with that by lecture or recitation. In a sense the stone wall encloses a miniature world.

Of still greater importance than anything
yet mentioned are the ethical conditions and influences. From a clause in Stephen Girard's will which reads as follows: "I enjoin and require, that no ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatsoever, shall ever hold or exercise any station or duty whatever in said college; nor shall any such person ever be admitted for any purpose, or as a visitor within the premises appropriated to the purposes of said college," many have assumed that moral
and religious training were being neglected. This assumption is directly opposed to the actual conditions. Devotional services to which attendance is compulsory are held in the chapel each day, morning and evening. The order of service is singing, reading of a portion of the Scripture and prayers. On Sunday lectures or addresses are given on religious topics by members of the faculty or by some person not connected with the institution who does not represent any denom-
nination or exit. During the year a course of lectures by competent persons is given on such subjects as: "The Chain of Success," "Boys and Girls," "Egypt, the Sudan, and the Nile Sources." But what is of much greater importance is the teaching in the classroom. The following are examples of the subjects of the lessons in morality and character building: honesty, obedience, unselfishness, industry, cheerfulness, concentration, value of time, choice of reading, temperance, moral cour
age; self-control; gratitude and duties to benefactors; the expenditure of money; the importance of the Golden Rule. Further influence is brought to bear on the young minds by example and discipline. The use of profanity, of narcotics and of intoxicants by anyone on the grounds is strictly forbidden. The institution is pervaded by an atmosphere of morality and courtesy.
In the preparation of this article use was made of a "Hand Book of Girard College" by David Chat-tergood, and the annual reports and catalogue of Girard College.

R. D. Ellis

The illustrations are cut from "Illustrated Girard College" by Henry Atlee Ingram.

R. D. E.