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GEORGE GOLDING KENNEDY.

EMILE F. WILLIAMS.

(With portrait).

DR. GEORGE GOLDING KENNEDY died at his home in Milton on Sunday, March 31, 1918. He was born in Roxbury, now a part of Boston, on October 16, 1841, and was the son of Donald and Ann Colgate Kennedy.

Donald Kennedy was born April 2, 1812, in Glen Moriston in the Scottish Highlands. He was the son of John and Isabella (Sinclair) Kennedy. In this rugged and unfruitful glen where he spent his early years Donald acquired the habits of industry and thrift which later enabled him to accumulate in this country a large fortune. Though the Kennedys, like most of their neighbours, were poor in a worldly sense, they were rich in energy and courage, and possessing, like most of their race, a great respect for learning and a craving to acquire it, they made many sacrifices in order to educate their children.

"Frugal living and high thinking," Dr. Kennedy often said had been the rule of life of his ancestors and he inherited and continued the family tradition to the end of his life. When Donald was still a youth his father and the rest of the family emigrated to Canada leaving the son under the care of an uncle in Scotland where he received a good education including a fair knowledge of the classics. In 1833 Donald came to Boston with no capital other than a clear head and a large stock of perseverance. On December 23, 1835, he was married by Father Taylor, the noted pastor of the Seamen's Bethel in Boston, to Ann, daughter of William and Celia (Golding) Colgate, born in Hastings, England. Of this union there were born

one son, the subject of this memoir, and four daughters. In 1843, Donald bought a small farm in Roxbury and established himself in the comfortable house on Warren Street which remained the family homestead until his death. The fields and pastures adjoining this farm have long ago been cut up into building lots which are now well covered with houses and stores, and it is difficult to realize that less than fifty years ago this was open country.

The son, George G. Kennedy, attended the Roxbury Latin School then under the able direction of Augustus H. Buck. In 1860 he entered Harvard College, graduated in 1864 with the degree of A. B. and in 1867, having completed the courses of the Harvard Medical School, he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

After practising his profession for only a short time, he retired and found ample occupation in managing his father's business and in the care and administration of a growing estate. He was now able also to devote a large part of his time to those scientific and literary pursuits which had taken a strong hold on his nature while he was yet a student at Harvard. While there he attended the courses in botany given by Dr. Asa Gray and the enthusiasm for nature, and particularly for plant life, which was Dr. Kennedy's ruling passion, was undoubtedly developed and nurtured by the inspiration of sitting in the classes of this gifted man. The earliest specimen in Dr. Kennedy's herbarium which he started while yet at college, is dated 1862. His herbarium remained during his life the object of his constant solicitude and attention. On January 21, 1864, Dr. Asa Gray writes to Charles Wright then in Cuba, "By the steamer of Saturday, which takes this, a good young fellow, Mr. Kennedy, a member of our Senior class, goes to Cuba to look after business of his father, and, when he can, to botanize, only four or five weeks. That is, in vacation. He is very fond of botany, and bids fair to be a botanist some day, if he does not take to money making instead."¹ Young Kennedy made money but he, nevertheless, became a botanist.

On February 28, 1865, Dr. Kennedy was married by the Rev. James Reed, pastor of the Bowdoin Street Church in Boston, to Harriet White Harris, daughter of Benjamin Clark Harris and Harriet (White) Harris. Their children were Edith Golding, Donald, who died in infancy, Harris, Sinclair and Mildred.

Mrs. Kennedy was a very remarkable woman. She combined in

¹ Letters of Asa Gray, edited by Jane Loring Gray. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893, Vol. 2, page 517.

an unusual degree a deeply religious nature, sweetness of disposition and a boundless sympathy for every one she met. She had clearness of vision, great discernment, judgment, and capacity for management. To these qualities were added a genius for hospitality. Every visitor at the Kennedy home was welcomed by her with such genuine cordiality and interest as instantly won his confidence and friendship. To know Mrs. Kennedy was to love her and with this congenial help-mate Dr. Kennedy spent a long and happy life. She died in 1910 and with her death the light went out of her husband's life.

In 1879, Dr. Kennedy purchased of Judge John Oakes Shaw the large estate in Milton, Massachusetts, known as "The Pines" and here he built a fine commodious house which gradually displaced the old family home in Roxbury and is now the residence of his eldest son Dr. Harris Kennedy. Situated on the high land at the foot of big Blue Hill, the house commands a noble view of the Neponset valley. Near by are the extensive woods and glades of the Blue Hills range which include every kind of natural feature favorable to the development of a rare and varied flora and it was in this beautiful home surrounded with every opportunity for indulging his taste for botany that Dr. Kennedy spent most of his time when he was not travelling.

He visited Europe in 1872, 1880, 1886, 1887 and in the spring of 1894 he went to Egypt, the Holy Land, Constantinople and Athens. In May, 1900, we find him at Virginia Beach with Charles E. Faxon to observe a total eclipse of the sun. In 1903 he spent the summer with his family in Devonshire, Scotland, and by the English Lakes. In 1905 he was in Europe for the last time.

His journeys in the eastern part of this country from Canada to Florida were frequent, and when, about 1896, the New England Botanical Club took up the study of the botany of New England, he was one of its most indefatigable explorers. Sometimes alone, but more often in the company of enthusiastic collectors like Edwin Faxon, Walter Deane, Charles E. Faxon, Joseph R. Churchill, Jesse M. Greenman, and many others including the writer, repeated trips were made to Mt. Washington, Mt. Mansfield, and Smuggler's Notch, Willoughby Notch, the Otter Creek valley in Vermont, Western Massachusetts and other localities. Most of these regions are now well known botanically and Dr. Kennedy contributed not a little to our knowledge of them through his extensive collections.

It was always his object to enrich the Gray Herbarium which he considered had the first claim to any of his specimens. Later under the inspiration of Merritt L. Fernald, Maine became a field of his active operations. Nor were the other New England States neglected. Many were the collecting trips in Vermont with Ezra Brainerd, and in Rhode Island with J. Franklin Collins and William Whitman Bailey.

An especially notable expedition was that to Mt. Katahdin in 1900. The mountain had never been systematically botanized. Dr. Kennedy had a log cabin built in the Basin, a great ravine in the heart of the massif at an elevation of over 3000 ft. and from this base for two weeks with Joseph R. Churchill, Merritt L. Fernald, J. Franklin Collins, Emile F. Williams and five guides, explored the mountain as thoroughly as weather and time permitted, many rarities being discovered.

It has been my privilege to read the botanical journals that Dr. Kennedy kept religiously from 1896 to 1915. There may have been earlier journals but these are not now available.

It is clear that plants were ever in Dr. Kennedy's thoughts. He noted with extreme minuteness everything he gathered and particularly any specimen that seemed to depart in any particular from the type. Also extraordinarily full were his memoranda as to locality. His journals of European travel are equally interesting and wherever he went the plant life was foremost in his observations. In 1900, as has been said before, he went to Virginia Beach with Charles E. Faxon to observe the total eclipse of the sun on May 28th. This phenomenon impressed him exceedingly and the European trip of 1905 was undertaken principally to see the eclipse of August 30th. This was total at Burgos in Spain and thither he went with his family, visiting Holland and France on the way. He writes on August 30th:

"We drove in an omnibus along the dusty and much frequented highway to the astronomical station we visited yesterday, on the high, wide plain about two miles south of the city. Mounted cavalry were scouring about the boundaries to keep people off the space reserved for the foreigners and the astronomers and we were soon installed as amateurs. . . . There were no trees except at the edge of the highway. Everywhere else extended the broad high plain with what little vegetation there was trampled down by horses and men.

"A small *Agrostis*, a minute *Plantago* with very narrow leaves and

woolly bases, a few Dipsaceous looking plants and a yellow composite and very small Leguminosae, a slender Hieracium with conduplicate recurved leaves and a purple Cuscuta on a gorse and a small bit of minute moss in patches over the ground. First contact at 11:46 not visible for rolling clouds which coming from the westward had been threatening for an hour but the sky was very blue and clear at 11:56 when the eclipse was well on.

“What an hour of hopes and fears! At 12:30 the sun was in bright blue sky though all about lie dark clouds. Three beautiful balloons, one a real black pearl, have gone up from near the citadel and a big elephant of another is fast by a cord though floating in the air.

“Ten minutes before the eclipse rain begins to fall and we all hasten to protect instruments by umbrellas. At six minutes before the clouds are breaking and at one minute before the sun is again in blue sky. We watch with eager happy eyes. The shadow sweeps across — the sun is a pale corona around a black disk — the darkness not so intense as in Virginia and the clouds at the horizon reflect the sunlight, making a beautiful spectacle. Even just before the totality when the clouds cleared away, one remained under and close to the sun and was a beautiful prism in color and in light. The length of the eclipse too seemed very great and I thought, “What if it should not end?” No such idea came to me in 1900.

“There was a purple color in the landscape rather than the iron gray of 1900.”

In passing through Paris on the way to Burgos Dr. Kennedy visited the Jardin des Plantes. It is interesting to read in the journal, “Saw the old and much supported acacia planted there in 1636, and then to the beautiful green hill under the Cedar of Lebanon, planted 1735, where the cool shade delighted me.

“The two forty foot palms set out in the warm sun to rejoice, like two centenarians, gave me a real thrill as if I had seen the *Grand Monarque* himself. The card showed that they were:

Chamaerops Humilis

Donné à Louis XIV par Charles III, margrave de
Bade Dourbach

“The small and feeble heads on the tall trunks were held by braces joined to four iron rods from the tub in which they were planted. Long may they enjoy the summer sun of the garden!”

Here it may be well to quote an interesting account in the 1903

Journal of a visit while in London on September 4th to the Nestor of English botanists, Sir Joseph Hooker. It will also show Dr. Kennedy's terse and direct style of writing, very particular and precise as to details which escape most of us.

"Fernald and I left Waterloo station at 11:05 and arrived at Sunningdale at 12:17. Sir Joseph Hooker's little victoria was at the station and we rode about a mile to the house, beautifully situated among pine trees in a moorland sort of district. Lady Hooker received us very kindly in a little hallway near the front door and Sir Joseph came in after we were seated in the parlor. He was dressed in a Scotch plaid of quiet pattern, a gray and purplish stripe. He is eighty-six years old and has yet the alertness that always characterized Asa Gray. His beard is worn in a large fringe about his face and I never before saw that way of trimming the beard suit the face; his eyebrows are enormously large and shaggy and as I have noticed that my own are growing perceptibly the past three years I wonder what reversion of type it may indicate. His manner and something about the face, a certain placid benignity, reminded me of Samuel H. Scudder, the writer on Butterflies. He is now getting rather deaf so that we all talked in a loud tone. He made us feel quite at home by showing much pleasure in our call.

"When Fernald gave him Mr. George Murray's message, that he had good news from Capt. Scott on the Discovery now in the Antarctic region, he quickly said, "How can that be? How can he have news of Capt. Scott who is locked in the ice?" As Fernald could not answer this question he laughingly added, "Well, tell Murray I thank him for the good news." Lady Hooker's mother, a dear and seemingly very old lady, came in with a younger lady and we all went out in the dining room at about 1:30. The meal was evidently dinner, for hot roast beef and vegetables and fine boiled rice served in one course were followed by.....and a cup of coffee. Very choice Asti wine was offered me, while Fernald and Hooker kept to the red wine or at least Fernald did. We were placed at table as follows:

	Lady Hooker	
	who carved the meat	
Fernald		G. G. K
Sir Joseph		Lady Hooker's mother
	The lady whose name	
	I do not recall	

Our talk was on American *children* and on botany only slightly.

“After dinner Sir Joseph proposed we should take a stroll about the place and after lighting very good cigars in his study we went forth. The study had a few bundles of plants as if he had not wholly given up his regular work and there hung near the outer door leading to the wooded hill a press and also a stout digger which he said Ward of Wardian Glass Case fame had given him. We walked through beautiful paths in these piney woods, Sir Joseph constantly showing us trees and shrubs which he had planted; he bought the place on leaving Kew twenty years ago and had done all the planting; all his own except the original pines and it was wonderful to see what twenty years will do in England. Sequoias and Douglas pines and Colorado spruces and New England oaks, the rubra and tinctoria and also what appeared imbricaria; two beautiful patches of Linnaea looked flourishing and very fine *pink* Daboecia, which we saw *white* in the Grasmere Garden. He took us to the edge of his land next the Golf course where we looked across to the Great Windsor Forest; all the land in the region belongs to St. John’s College, Cambridge, a gift from Henry VIII and just now is quite in the fashion, as many new wealthy people are coming out from London, which indeed is not to be wondered at, the situation is so beautiful. The paths lead in many directions in these perhaps twelve acre grounds and there is a beautiful vista from the house looking down a green turf avenue quite a distance. When I said I wished I had brought my camera to take such a pretty view Sir Joseph urged me to come again and bring the camera, thus being as gracious as was Lady Hooker when she expressed regret she had not known Mrs. Kennedy was in London that she might have had the pleasure of seeing her with us.

“The maid came to say that Lord Thring and his daughter had come to call but Sir Joseph did not hasten us from our interesting walk, but led us to the end of that path and then we returned to the house; in the parlor were several ladies and Lord Thring, a very old looking pale faced gentleman seated in a low armchair and not rising when shaking hands with Sir Joseph and us. He is a year younger than Sir Joseph but has pored over law books instead of much outdoor life. I had quite a chat with him on American law, which he has largely studied especially of Colonial or rather our Federalist period from 1790–1810. He has lately been at work on the Laws passed in the Commonwealth period which were almost wholly repealed when Charles II returned. He also said few people recognized the fact

that the English monarchy was elective, the Act of Succession being regulated by Parliament. Tea was served to all of us and soon Lady Hooker announced that the carriage was ready to take us back to the station, she and Sir Joseph both accompanying us out of doors to say good bye."

The temptation is great to quote extensively from these interesting diaries but it is not possible within the limits of this paper.

Dr. Kennedy had a very extensive acquaintance and his many friends belonged to every vocation. He had the faculty of adapting himself readily to his surroundings and he enjoyed impartially the society of professional men, of business men or of those engaged in the humbler occupations of life. Quick to perceive merit and sterling worth wherever he found it, he counted many of his warmest friends among those whom fortune had not favored and his truly democratic spirit endeared him to these and made him the recipient of their devoted services. A striking instance of the long enduring friendships which he established early in life was the monthly Dining Club which he and some of his classmates founded on their graduation from Harvard in 1864. This club included men who distinguished themselves in after life — Dr. William L. Richardson, George Glover Crocker, Henry H. Sprague, William A. Monroe, Frank W. Wildes and Prentiss Cummings — and except when abroad Dr. Kennedy never willingly missed a meeting and often travelled many miles in this country for the sole object of dining with the Club. His acquaintance among botanists was very large and for many years a visit to the Pines and its hospitable hosts was enjoyed by most of the botanists who came to the Gray Herbarium for work or study.

If it be true that a man's friends are an index to his character, it is no less true that a man's books are an index to his intellect and Dr. Kennedy's library was truly representative in this respect. The botanical works which were many he fittingly left to the Gray Herbarium. Several volumes were of great rarity, perhaps the most notable work, which Dr. Benjamin L. Robinson, the curator, had long coveted, was Sowerby's English Botany with the exceedingly rare five supplementary volumes. The Shakespeariana were extensive and well selected and included many very valuable editions. In forming this part of his library Dr. Kennedy had the invaluable help and advice of Edwin Faxon, a profound scholar no less ardent in hunting rare books than in collecting rare plants. From 1892 till

Mr. Faxon's death in 1898, except during the summer vacations, Dr. Kennedy and the writer spent every Tuesday evening at the house on Lamartine Street in Jamaica Plain where Edwin lived with his brother Charles. These frequent meetings, jestingly referred to by us as The Faxon Club, were at first entirely botanical in character but later were quite as often devoted to books and it was here that the great erudition of Edwin Faxon and the Doctor became known to me. Unlike many collectors these two book lovers read their books and knew them from end to end. It was a revelation to me to be initiated into the mysteries of judging the points of books in which these two bibliophiles were so deeply versed.

Another notable feature of the Kennedy library was the large number of volumes of classical literature. Dr. Kennedy read Latin easily and also Greek. A copy of the Greek Testament was his constant companion. There were numerous volumes of travel and exploration, some well selected volumes of poetry, of which Dr. Kennedy was very fond, an unusually good collection of Harvardiana and works relating to the history of New England, a fine set of works of reference, notable among which were ornithological books and full sets of the works of the standard authors. Another special department consisted of books relating to the Swedenborgian religion to which sect the Doctor belonged.

Dr. Kennedy was a member of the Union Club, the St. Botolph Club and the Art Club, the Harvard Clubs of Boston and New York, the New England Botanical Club, the Vermont Botanical Club and the Sullivant Moss Society of New York, the Boston Society of Natural History, the Bostonian Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Geographical Society of New York, and at the time of his death he was a Trustee of the Massachusetts Medical Benevolent Society, a highly prized honor which came to him entirely unsought and a striking testimonial to his worth and character.

Of these many associations the dearest and most highly valued was his membership in the New England Botanical Club, of which he was a charter member and to whose welfare and extension he devoted unstinted time and money. The many activities of the Club owe much to his generous and unfailing support which lasted until his death. For many years he was a regular attendant at its meetings, until a slight deafness and trouble with his eyesight, from which at

various times during his life he had suffered, compelled him to give up this pleasure.

In 1896 he became a member of the Committee to visit the Gray Herbarium. He never faltered in his zeal to work for this institution and he contributed very largely to its development. The fine library wing was erected solely through his generosity and every undertaking of the Herbarium requiring financial support was sure of a liberal contribution from the Doctor. Nor were the Gray Herbarium and the Botanical Club the sole recipients of his benefactions. Both he and Mrs. Kennedy were constant in their support of many public and private charities. Few persons were aware during his life of the extent of his gifts, for the Doctor was most averse to publicity and the consciousness that he had done the right thing was a sufficient reward to him.

Dr. Kennedy's herbarium was essentially personal. Started in his college days, its carefully directed growth was continued until the year before his death. It was his daily companion and was kept in his spacious study together with his most used books of reference. Although he might have purchased sets of rare plants from dealers and professional collectors more freely than most amateurs, he rarely did so, preferring to build up his collection by his own application, thereby gaining personal familiarity with the floras and groups in which he was particularly interested. When he subscribed for sets it was because he desired to aid some worthy piece of exploration rather than he might himself possess the specimens.

He was careful and painstaking in his methods and his beautifully mounted sheets of well made specimens would serve as models of their kind. He often lingered long over their identification, but having reached his decision wrote the label with businesslike dispatch in his clear round hand.

His moss collection he gave some years before his death to the Cryptogamic Herbarium of Harvard University together with many valuable works relating to the group. In November, 1917, he gave his flowering plants and ferns, amounting to 13,490 sheets, to the Gray Herbarium. By far the greater part of his plants were from New England. When traveling elsewhere he always observed and often collected plants but he made no serious attempt to secure for his herbarium plants from beyond the limits of New England and adjacent portions of Canada.

Noteworthy was his local collection of the flora of the Willoughby Lake region. This portion of his herbarium, including 1547 sheets, was given to the Gray Herbarium with the understanding, now carried into effect, that it might be transferred to the herbarium of the New England Botanical Club, which in recent years has become the recipient of similar collections in which the local element is more detailed than can be symmetrically introduced into a world collection like the Gray Herbarium. Many of Dr. Kennedy's plants have been cited in published work and his specimens are subject to frequent reference. There is a pleasant sentiment in their safe housing, ready accessibility, and promise of long-continued usefulness in the establishment for which Dr. Kennedy did so much.

Dr. Kennedy's name is commemorated in American Botany by *Carex vestita*, var. *Kennedyi* Fernald and by *Sabatia Kennedyana* Fernald; the latter beautiful species, whose identity was established by Mr. Fernald in 1917, is a fitting monument to the Doctor who devoted so much of his life to the study of plants. So far as I can learn he published only one species; this was in the days when his eyesight permitted him to work intensively on the mosses. His new species which is accepted by all bryologists is *Pottia Randii* Kennedy, published in RHODORA, i. 78, pl. 5, 1899.

Dr. Kennedy wrote a number of botanical articles for RHODORA and other publications, but his principal effort as an author was the publication in 1904 of a Flora of Willoughby, Vermont — a most excellent piece of work that may well serve as a model for publications of this character. He became acquainted with this interesting station for rare and unusual plants probably in the early eighties and he seldom after that let a year go by, without making at least one trip to Willoughby. When he began to get together his material for publication he visited the locality repeatedly at different seasons of the year for several years before finally issuing the Flora.

After all, the remarkable and striking characteristic of Dr. Kennedy's life was his personality. It is not so much what he did as what he was that endeared him to all his friends and associates. His unfailing good humour and quiet dignity, his vast and varied knowledge of books and of men, his large sympathy so freely given to all, impressed every one who came in contact with him and made one feel as if he were better and stronger for having known Dr. Kennedy. What he has done will remain to his lasting credit, and what he was will be lovingly remembered by all who knew him.



Williams, Emile Francis. 1919. "GEORGE GOLDING KENNEDY." *Rhodora* 21, 25–35.

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