

MADRAS COLLEGE. ST ANDREWS.

MEMORIES

By Rev. Robert Forgan, D.D.

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My recollections of the Madras College may be said to date from its foundation a hundred years ago, for both my father and my mother, being natives of St Andrews, were among the earliest pupils of the College, and the name of the first English Master, the Rev. David Crichton, L.L.D., was a household word in our home. Mr Crichton had studied at Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities and had been licensed by the Presbytery of St Andrews; but, as was common in those days, while waiting for a Church, he gave himself for a number of years to the teaching profession. He was ordained to the ministry at Arbroath in 1838 and at the Disruption in 1843 he cast in his lot with the Free Church. A man of high character, he stamped the impress of his personality so deeply on his pupils that long years afterwards my father and mother still revered his memory and held him up to their children not only as a model teacher but as a pattern of all that was noble and upright.

From 1866 to 1876 I myself was a pupil of the College, and my recollections of these years are for the most part bright and happy. Doubtless among teachers and scholars alike there were blemishes and faults. A school is a little world, and, like the greater world outside its walls, it comprises a mingling of the good and the evil; but in "the Madras", as we familiarly called it, the good was predominant, and in the retrospect I find it easy to pass over the sad

III.

I come now to the Teachers. In my time there was no one entitled to be called the Headmaster or Principal of the whole College. Instead, we had no fewer than seven Headmasters, each, however, being Head in his own Department only. Here is the list:-

English	Robert Armstrong, L.L.D.
Classics	David Fogo, L.L.D.
French and German	Schaefer, Ph.D.
Mathematics.....	Ochterlonie, L.L.D.
Arithmetic.....	Reid, M.A.
Writing.....	Andrew Bell Morrison, M.A.
Drawing and Painting.....	Paterson.

By an alternating arrangement each of these Headmasters in turn acted as Head of the School for one week at a time. He was called the Convener, and before him during his week of office any culprits who misbehaved outside the class-room were haled by the Janitor for punishment. It was also to the Convener for the week we had to apply for those "skating holidays" of which by long tradition we were entitled to three each winter, if and when the frost favoured us.

Of the numerous assistant teachers in the various departments I have no special recollections to record. There was one extra ~~TE~~ Teacher, however, of whom mention should be made, if only to indicate the surprisingly small place given to the teaching of Music in the school in those days. ^{From} among the private teachers of Music in the city

one, Mr Salter by name, was selected and given the position of Singing Master for the School. For an hour or two on one or

things, to disperse the shadows, and to dwell with grateful affection on the finer influences which, though one scarcely realised it at the time, were being steadily brought to bear upon the shaping of one's life and character.

I.

Beginning from the outside, I would set down, as among my most vivid recollections, the gravel play-ground in front of the College where, during the hourly ten-minutes intervals between our various classes, we engaged in the usual games of "marbles", "leap-frog", "cat and dog", "tig", and, best of all, the thrilling game called "Cave" in which the two sides vied with each other in making swift rushes from point to point. The paved quadrangle and corridors within the centre of the school-buildings served also for various games though in these we were hampered a little by the phalanx of teachers who during the aforesaid intervals promenaded to and fro in the quadrangle and did not always welcome the collisions with their ~~XXXX~~ dashing pupils which would now and then occur. The large grass-park, too, at the back of the College was furnished with several sets of swings and gave opportunity for foot-ball and cricket of sorts, but was opened for our use only during part of the Session. Golf was played on Saturdays, but athletics generally counted for less in my time than in these modern days.

II.

Turning to the school itself, I recall, as perhaps the most curious feature of my day, the caste system under which the College was divided into what almost amounted to four different schools. Social distinctions were then more readily acquiesced in, and to-day

it sounds almost incredibly odd to be told of the "West Room" for the children of the poorest classes, the "East Room" for the children of the middle classes, the "Privates" for those of the upper classes, and the "Private-Privates" for girls only and these still more select with a suite of class-rooms for their exclusive use.

Among the pupils of these different divisions there was almost no social intercourse, not because the boys and girls themselves put on snobbish airs but rather because the parents willed to have it so, and public opinion offered no serious objection. It ought to be explained, however, that it was quite permissible for pupils to pass up from the humbler to the higher grades if the parents chose to pay the increased fees. So far as my memory serves, this passing up was

comparatively common as from the "East Room" to the "Privates", for *that the "East Room" classes were the only preparatory classes available for pupils too young for the "Privates" and also* the sufficient reason that it was only by *this means* that any "lad o' pairts" who aspired to the University could obtain the necessary

tuition in such subjects as Latin, Greek, French, German and Mathematics. It is *further* a matter of interest to note that a very large number of the boy-pupils in the so-called "Private" classes were not natives of St Andrews but came from all parts of Scotland and England and the Colonies. Of these boys in my time there would be as many as 150 every Session. They lived in special Boarding-Houses of which there were five in different parts of the ancient city. The presence of these boy-boarders in such large numbers is clear evidence of the high reputation of the College and of the almost unique position which it then held as an educational Institution.

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one, Mr Salter by name, was selected and given the position of Singing Master for the School. For an hour or two on one or

two days a week Mr Salter gathered together the scholars of the "East" and "West" Rooms only in the large West Room, at one end of which there was an organ. Seated at this instrument, by alternately playing and shouting he endeavoured to teach singing to some two hundred pupils with an enthusiasm which very few of these pupils seemed to share. It was an impossible task, though the teacher did his best.

These memories would, I fear, become unduly prolonged if I attempted here to outline the characteristics of all the seven Headmasters whose names I have recorded. I shall content myself, therefore, with some notes about three of them.

1. Dr ARMSTRONG.- By the community in general Dr Armstrong was usually regarded as the real Principal of the College. And rightly so, for he had by far the heaviest task and the largest responsibility. It fell to him to supervise all the education given in the "West Room" and "East Room". For this he required a large staff of assistants. And in addition, he himself taught English to most of the classes in the "Privates" and "Private-Privates". And he was a most efficient teacher, full of energy and enthusiasm. In his prime he was one of the outstanding educationists of Scotland, the author of Grammars and other Text-books, a leader in his profession.

He was old-fashioned enough to believe in and practise corporal punishment more freely than would now meet with the approval of a softer generation; but his hatred of idleness and sloth was a healthy thing and his own example of untiring diligence did not fail to impress even the most sluggish of the boys whose hands he often blistered with his "tawse" or his cane.

~~2. Dr FOGO. Our Classical Headmaster was in many respects a complete contrast to Dr Armstrong. Quiet, gentle, forbearing, always a teacher to whom it was an obvious pain to have to find fault or punish. To his pupils he strove to impart a share in that high sense of honour which distinguished him, and in return he was by them~~
~~loathed and revered.~~ Quite vain was every attempt to invent a

nick-name for Dr Fogo. The nearest we got to one was to call him "Pius Aeneas"; and that was more than half a compliment. His remarkable success as a teacher of Latin and Greek was shown in the long succession of his pupils who figured in the Bursary list and the Classical Honours list of the University. One convincing proof of this may here be mentioned. On one occasion he set four of his pupils to tackle the Latin and Greek papers which had recently been prescribed for the M.A. degree; and the result showed that all four were already sufficiently advanced to make a creditable pass for that degree even before they had entered the University.

3. Dr OCHTERLONIE.- Among all the Headmasters Dr Lonie, as for short we always called him, occupied a place by himself. He was something of a genius, and as such he was erratic alike in his temper and in his teaching. When his wrath was roused, it blazed; yet withal he was a man of a large and loving heart. One day he would have us singing or chanting the propositions in Euclid; another day, instead of our proper lesson, we would get a lecture on some subject that interested him at the moment. For some reason he was entrusted for a time at least with the teaching of Geography as well as of Mathematics, and he was wont, one hour a week, to relieve the dulness and dryness of this subject by a method of his own. He conducted

us on imaginary excursions which would start at St Andrews from the Pends or the West Port. Thence we were led along one or other of the roads of Fife and were called upon to name the different towns through which we passed. Another day we would cross from Fife to the Lothians or proceed northward to the counties of Angus or Aberdeen. Gradually in imagination we travelled in this way over a large part of Scotland and even made occasional expeditions into England, Dr Lenie supplying us en route with much interesting information concerning the history or the industrial activities of the principal towns we were supposed to visit.

It was under his inspiration that the dramatic talent latent among the boys was discovered. For many years the Christmas season in St Andrews was enlivened by what was known as "Dr Lenie's Merric Meeting" - the popular name given to the dramatic entertainment provided night after night in the large West Room of the College by boys carefully selected and trained.

But it is time to bring these random memories to a close. To-day it would be hard to set down in order of merit the Boys' Academies and all the other secondary schools in Scotland. ~~NUMER~~ Their name is legion. But in my youth they were few, and beyond all question the Madras College stood in the front rank. As I have already mentioned, it attracted pupils not only from all parts of Scotland but from England, from India and from the Colonies. Conditions have now changed and the school can no longer expect to maintain the exceptional position it once occupied. None the less it has still

a place all its own to fill among the educational institutions of the country in a city possessed of educational advantages and facilities of incomparable excellence. After a hundred years of high and honourable service, the Madras College is well entitled to celebrate its Centenary. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

" F L O R E A T A C A D E M I A " !