

MEMORIES OF THE PAST

by the HON. MRS. FRANKLIN, C.B.E.

'The old order changeth yielding place to new,' yet the spirit and the inspiration of the Founder are still there.

'Scale How,' 'The House of Education,' 'Charlotte Mason College': one year's training, two years training, three years training: a young governess in the home, teaching one, two or three children; the principal of a training college, the director of the largest school in the world, the headmistress of large public schools, and of schools in Asia, Australia, yea, in almost every part of the world!

What a story of change could these sixty years tell. What a vindication of our Founder's originality of thought and true understanding of children's needs. I was privileged to visit Charlotte Mason in 1893 at Springfield and in 1894 to go over to Scale How and discuss with her its possibilities. I can still remember as if it were yesterday the criticism lessons given then in the premises of the Y.M.C.A. in the village. 'You will see' she said, 'the best and worst students teach today'; and how wonderful the worst on 'Newts' and the best on 'The Speaking of Verse' (from the *Pied Piper*) seemed to me as a very young mother!

I had the inestimable joy of her friendship and visited her from then on two or three times each year, whilst she and Miss Kitching gave me the great happiness of staying at Porchester Terrace when she came for Conferences and on her way to and from the continent. Scale How welcomed my children too, all of them in turn. Michael, the youngest, very often.

One beautiful memory is of Mrs. Dallas Yorke—lady visitor to the College and dear friend of Miss Mason—talking to the students who were gathered round her under the beech-tree on a lovely Trinity Sunday. The voice and countenance of this great and gracious lady, and her words

[p 122]

of encouragement and friendship, dwell with me as part of what Scale How stood for in all our lives.

In the early days the students had the opportunity of Art talks with Mrs. Firth and Mr. Yates when he came up to paint the portrait of Miss Mason which is so well known now in reproduction. He eventually fell in love with the district and settled at Rydal with his wife and daughter, and was thus able to give many a delightful talk on Millet in 'St. George's', afterwards the 'Millet Room.'

'Drawing-room evenings,' which I first heard in Scale How, became a happy addition to our holiday pursuits, and I believe if those college walls could speak they would tell us how the plays and the jokes and the skits vary but little as generation succeeds generation. The young student inherits the light-heartedness and gaiety of spirit from the days when Charlotte Mason gave to those students of long ago, now grey-haired Charlotte Mason Teachers, the secret of perpetual youth. The walls also echo to Thompson Seton's talks, which I heard, and Mademoiselle Duriac's [sic] lectures when she first introduced the living method of language teaching (Couin) [sic] and Charlotte Mason felt her students must know this reform.

Nothing but the best would fit into the way of life of the College; even cracked cups must not be used but destroyed. 'We cannot have spoilt articles nor spoilt children, we must

see to it that they are not spoiled, our students must learn to produce a human being at *his best*—physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.’

My diaries tell me that when in January 1923 I was summoned to her bedside, I heard that Charlotte Mason had during her last weeks been carried all over the College to see for herself the various structural alterations she had had made. She had looked through and signed the P.U.S. examination papers. She had corrected the current proofs of the *Parents’ Review*. With this example of service she answered God’s call and laid aside her work for others to carry on: and others *have* carried on.

Charlotte Mason College still strives after her ideals and we believe that, in spite of the changes to which every living organism must be subject, women will continue to receive here a training which will help them to answer the question, ‘How shall we order the child,’ guided by a sound knowledge of Charlotte Mason’s Philosophy of Education.