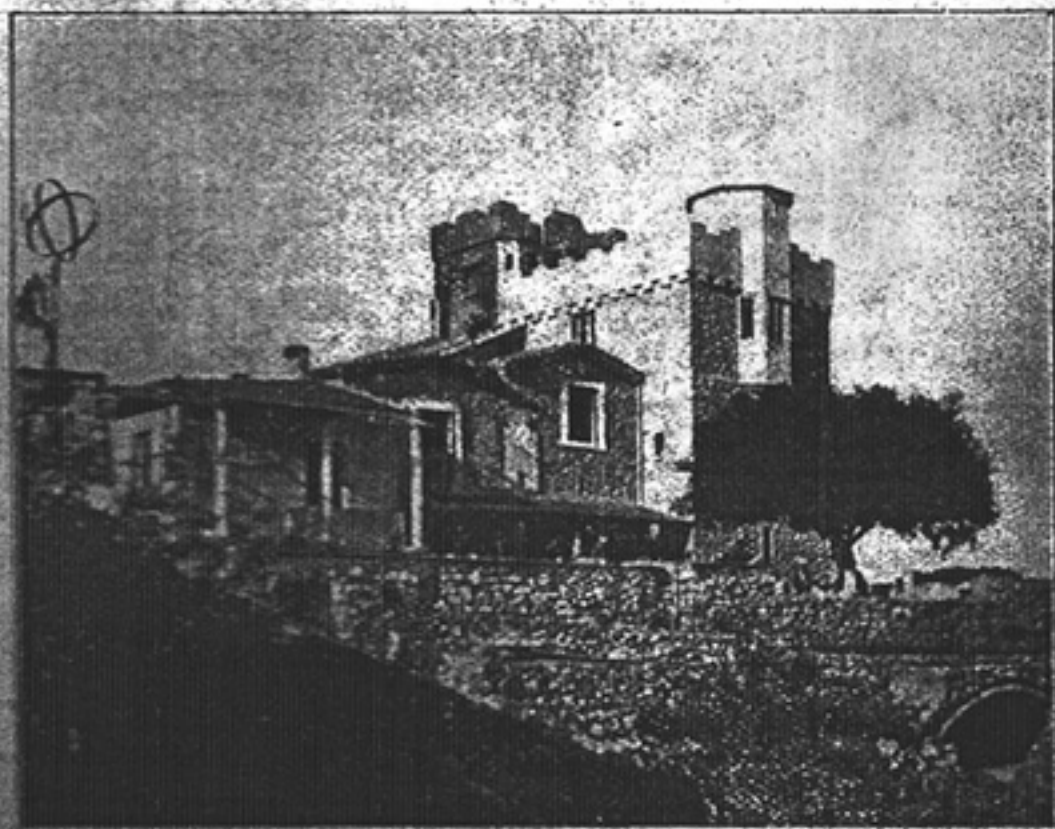




THE  
SCOTS COLLEGE  
MONTPELLIER



# THE SCOTS COLLEGE

AT

MONTPELLIER UNIVERSITY \*



**W**E begin to be asked why are we here, and what are we trying to do ? My wife and I first came to Montpellier nearly forty years ago, at first attracted by its famous tradition among all Universities as oftenest and longest the capital of botany. First in the middle ages, with the "Lily of Medicine", as that developed from herbalism and pharmacy ; then with the first of botanic gardens, in Western Europe at least ; and so on to Linnæus, who came here with the greatest respect, and called twenty-six plants *monspeliensis*. Of course he removed the capital of the science to Upsala ; but De Candolle brought it back again, as notably by planting here in 1810 the first botanic garden of the Natural System, still preserved as one of the main monuments of the progress of science. Here too at Montpellier is the foremost of Mediterranean Schools of Agriculture—and here too have been done the greatest of all the practical services of botany, save those through bacteriology—Planchon's arrest of the long ruinous ravages of the Phylloxera, which had cost France far more than the war of '70-71, with indemnity and all. The busts of the long line

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of Montpellier botanists surround De Candolle's garden, and among all these can have been no finer teacher than Flahault, whose sculptured portrait is also preparing, now that he has retired on age limit, yet to carry on his career of afforestation throughout Languedoc. He was my attraction here—after which I have kept up my friendship by returning from time to time. Through many years I have sent my best students and assistants, including Herbertson, Robert Smith and Dr. Hardy, Rudmose Brown, and others since efficient, even eminent, and my own sons and daughter as well. My wife also made friendships ; and these led to exchange of our respective young folks, those of three families coming to us in Scotland, as ours going to them, with excellent results all round. There is no better method or element in education : and it is the least costly too ; we should thus have far more of such exchanges, inter-academic and international.

One of my oldest dreams in France has always been the renewal of the Scots College in Paris ; but this has so far failed, and its present lease has many years to run. Yet Paris University is now overcrowded, and its teachers have no longer time for so many foreign students ; whereas in Montpellier, of all the many Universities I have come to know in different countries, they do best for them, alike in preparation in French language, literature and history, etc., and in general studies : so it is no wonder they have up to thirty-seven nations represented here.

Few Universities adequately realise the usefulness of collegiate residences, to which Oxford and Cambridge so largely owe their eminence : yet these admit of greater economy, and also of educative improvement in various ways. Hence long endeavours in Old Edinburgh, with halls of residence and Outlook Tower, and next in Chelsea with Crosby Hall. Indeed also at Paris ; for Mme. Chalamet's "Université Hall", continued till her death, and Mlle. Bonnet's "Maison des Étudiantes," now

grown to 150 residents, were both adapted from their Edinburgh experiences : so these have not been without influence as well as example to the present great scheme of the "Cité Universitaire," now growing so rapidly, and now with British University participation.

Still, France is not a mere circle with Paris at the centre : her advantage over other European countries is that while they are confined either to the North Sea and Atlantic, or to Mediterranean, she has both. Her hexagon figure on the map thus calls for liberation from the over-centralization of Paris : and in this regional movement the Mediterranean provinces—Provence and Languedoc—have naturally taken the lead in literature, as of old in learning, science, and medicine : and of these latter especially the centre has been Montpellier for many centuries past. So beyond circle and hexagon we need to think of France as a Nordic-Mediterranean ellipse, of which Paris of course occupies the major focus, but Montpellier the other : so here is the very best of centres, at once by nature and history, for that needed and growing movement towards the re-regionalization of France upon which her better future so plainly depends. Without meddling with politics, we foreign students come here for studies peculiarly well aided, and also for the delightful advantage of the sunny Mediterranean climate, so incomparably better for physical health and mental exhilaration alike than the grey winters of Northern cities. Here too, between sunshine and sea, the splendid curative record of Leysin has now been surpassed : and it is thus part of our present planning to arrange as soon as may be for a sanatorium for the convalescence of students from Northern Europe, who may thus also continue their studies without losing a term or year. Indeed why should not every great school of medicine thus begin its own "Epidauros?"

What results so far, both material and educational? Here on



the edge of the first moorland rise towards the foothills of the Cevennes, a little beyond the Montpellier suburban tram limit, a long-neglected and rocky croft of five acres is being reclaimed and planted into a varied range of gardens. The old cottage of four rooms has been quadrupled by building round it on three sides : and east above our quarry cliff now stands our Outlook Tower for this great landscape. Southward the fine skyline of Montpellier is seen projected against the sea, and to the north the striking Pic St. Loup and the great precipices of Mt. Hortus lead back into the Cevennes by the Aigoual, a larger and higher Ben Nevis. On clear mornings we see in the east the nearest Alpine peak and ridge, while in the west begin the magnificent snowy masses of the Pyrenees. Our main building has room only for eight students, pending erection of the needed wing of twice that number to complete it ; but we have enlarged a one-room cottage to six rooms and another of four to eight, while a third, of four rooms also, has been more than doubled, and a new one lately acquired. With these cottages are seven or eight more acres ; so no lack of further building sites ; and part of the fine moorland beside us is available too.

The very varied main site has lent itself to the making of all manner of gardens. First for fruit, vegetables, and flowers in good quantity, enough to give away as well as use. Next a long stretch and boundary of wild garden and nature-reserve for the local shrub and herbaceous flora (with a "*champ Fabre*" for insect observation too), also a rock garden, and quarry garden : and next year we trust a type botanic garden too—all helpful to the University botany studies. In the quarry, the geological student has before him a fine Jurassic section, with fold and fault ; also a small quaternary cavern deposit, which has yielded a fossil horse ; and near this a hot air spring, popularly known as "*le volcan de Montpellier*"—since on frosty winter mornings its moisture condenses to a flying wreath almost like

a locomotive's ; and the villagers say "*Ah ! le volcan est en éruption !*" It is rare and fortunate thus to find in one's garden so many of the essentials of geology, not only for stratification and paleontology, but even a touch of the earth's central heat, as in a mine.

Thus to one main idea of this place, as an experimental growth. Criticism of the University system abounds in all countries, yet can effect nothing, until it becomes constructive ; and thus expresses itself in more vital educational growth. In some ways then we have to be like the Benedictines, in others like the Franciscans, both of course in their beginnings, not only with ideals and with studies, but also in touch with nature, and active in rural labour and in building too, and all with something of example and impulse to the village around, and towards such further influences later as may be. In modern terms, we are in free growth, like Tagore's beginnings at Santeniketan : and so beside our little college there may soon start a school. For artists several studios are getting ready, and one indeed already occupied. Again, we are also at the beginning of a larger enterprise than those of University Hall at Edinburgh, or at Chelsea later ; for now the projectors of the Collège des Indiens and College des Américains have settled their sites, and are beginning to advance their schemes throughout these countries ; while for the Palestinian students of the School of Agriculture an appropriate home with a bit of land for cultivation is in use. All these again are elements of the "*Cité Universitaire*," needed for our many foreign groups ; and indeed for French students too ; which both city fathers and University authorities are beginning to consider seriously. Such an undertaking will not of course have the immense magnitude of that now arising at Paris : but it may be none the less useful as a type of that veritable League of Academic Nations which is now practicable in many—why not most—of the active Universities of

the world. While outside all ordinary political divisions and activities, these groupings are desirable, not only for general culture, but also in the cause of better international understanding and peace in the next generation. All countries have come to recognize in Herr Stresemann the most international and peace-loving of all the German statesmen they have had to do with since long before the war : and it is thus significant that his wanderings in student days included a period at Geneva, whence he learned to appreciate French as well as Swiss culture, and at their best. Our municipal fathers, among whom University professors are well represented, are rising admirably to their opportunity of developing the corresponding *Cité universitaire méditerranéenne* in the course of this opening generation, with a project estimated already at about a hundred million francs, and including comprehensive improvement of the University throughout its large quarter of the city. Besides this they are also improving our suburban quarter, as to roads, water-supply and electricity.

In each of our collegiate groups, its national students will naturally preponderate, yet no strict limitation need arise. Balliol is historically the Scots College in Oxford, but it is ages since Scotsmen were in majority there. Though Scots and English as yet come here in small number, my more recent years in India have brought some excellent students, from Bombay especially so far ; and we have had American and other visitors too. Frenchmen too are needed, since their genial presence helps with French conversation, and keeps French culture and University interests more in view, as also do our many guests on at home days from University and city.

What now of our educational purposes and uses? Our incipient colleges are primarily attractive to senior students, who desire not only the excellent initiation into French language, literature and history which the University Institute for Foreign Students

provides, but also training in the preparation of an original thesis. In this French Universities certainly excel, since insisting not only, as do those of other countries, on serious research and due documentation, but also upon that keenly logical development and critical treatment which is so characteristic of the French mind, and so educatively helpful to others. Thus in our first year three theses—one geographic and two on education— were presented for the Doctorate in the Faculty of Letters, since which three more are accepted, two with honours ; while four more are in preparation. At first it was not intended to have junior students, but the experiment of accepting a few bright youths fresh from school has turned out encouragingly to all concerned. An able adviser of studies was with us last year, Mr. George Sandeman, M. A. (Edin.), formerly editor of Nelson's and the American Encyclopaedia, and author of "Social Renewal" and other books ; and this year we have been fortunate in securing the active cooperation, towards direction of the Indian College, of Mr. E. B. Havell, so well known as a leading authority on Indian history, art and architecture.

With this dual group of graduate investigators, yet with freshmen too, a further element of the college scheme, and that a fundamental and distinctive one, will be best understood. University teaching is no longer as of old merely from lectures and reading ; but also by practical work in laboratories of science, and for humanistic studies by seminars and tutorial aid, with discussion accordingly. But even this is not enough : the student needs also residential conditions ; and these at the English Universities are healthy and beautiful, sociable and recreative, and with separate study and conversation by turns. So indeed are our beginnings at Edinburgh ; and all with better opportunities of contact with the University staff and with the cultivated society of the city than can easily fall to the lot of the student in his solitary lodging or ordinary board-



ding-house. But something more is needed, in fact a fuller and more varied environment than has been any heretofore ; richer for the senses, and more educative accordingly. Hence for the students of natural sciences our varied gardens and Champ Fabre, with open heath beyond ; thus also our geologic microcosm ; and our Tower with its outlook for geography, and its beginnings of astronomy, meteorology and more. So too for the humanists ; their gardens range from a quarry-cavern to a stone circle, and thence even to those of Olympian and Parnassian symbolisms, as to other mytho-poesies.

Then too a "philosopher's way"—indeed a variety of them—presenting main ideas of various historic systems, as from Pythagoras to Hegel ; and one graphically expressing Comte's and Spencer's scientific approaches and viewpoints. There are other distinctive ones, from Bergson's back to those of old India ; and forward also, even to that implicit in the social sciences, as from evolutionary geography, economics and anthropology, and carrying further their synthesis by Le Play. In short then, while our varied thesis-making gives the needed training for each student's special interests, here are also complementary introductions to the world of general ideas which every thoughtful mind also requires—in fact a variety of suggestive incitements to supplement the pursuit of analysis by the quest of synthesis. Here in fact are ever increasing endeavours towards that coordination of the various specialised scientific and humanistic studies to which our theses are primarily devoted, and all within that harmony and unity of the sciences and the humanities which have ever been the aim of philosophy. In a word the full educational aim of this college is towards "*Studia Synthetica*."

All the sciences and all the humanities are products of man's life and thought through history : so without this our experience and environment would remain sadly incomplete. The Uni-

versity Institute for foreign students here does much, with its lectures supplemented by museum and gallery visits, and by varied and well-guided excursions to the historic cities around. The Faculty of Letters, with its many courses of history, carries this further. But not even this is sufficient. Hence have been organised our Easter and September Vacation Courses of pre-historic archæology and regional geography in Dordogne. The former are conducted in the caverns and the museum of Les Eyzies by their eminent curator M. Peyrony ; and the latter by M. Paul Reclus in excursions of historic survey along the Dordogne valley. Yet such vacation experiences are still not enough : for a complete historic environment one should have opportunity of actually living and studying—if possible even dramatizing—in the very dwellings of the historic past, as far as far as these are obtainable ; that is from the middle ages onwards. Hence we have been fortunate beyond expectation in acquiring the historic and beautiful Chateau d'Assas within easy reach of Montpellier. Few castles anywhere show such characteristic development ; first as primitive hill-fort, or "Dun", with its surviving rampart lines enclosing the ancient village, then late medieval towers, and finally the main building, a spacious and stately example of the eighteenth-century chateau at its best, and with its fine old high-hedged "jardin français" on one side, and its free-growing "jardin anglais" on the other. Though we cannot of course furnish with treasures like those of the great museums, as at those of Cluny and Caranalet in Paris, these cannot be inhabited : whereas here the student has around him much of their respective atmosphere for life and studies together. So far then our studious environment, for analytic research and stimulus, yet synthetic appreciation and comprehension also.

Yet beyond all these resources of naturalistic and historic environment, there arises a further need—that of experience

and incentive to active life. The medical student finds this in the hospital ; often too the chemist and physicist in their laboratories ; but not easily the students of biological and social sciences : so here is one use of our land-reclamations and cultivations, even to beginnings of afforestation, and all these with skilled leadership and workmanship : and likewise from the repair of old buildings to the erection of new. Village contacts too are beginning : first with music and fête, with school garden and so on ; and even to sharing in that movement of village renewal so needed here, as in all countries more or less.

Thus we are on lines corresponding to those of many previous endeavours, as from University Settlements in the west, or of conservative town-planning endeavours, from Edinburgh to India, and, as yet on the whole fullest of all, those of Tagore's Santeniketan.

Thus too is arising a co-operative grouping, in which each element and individual is free, yet in general harmony of principles and ideas towards higher education ; and so with further incentive to the intermigration of students. These beginnings already range from the Outlook Tower and its active workers in Edinburgh, and from the kindred Le Play House in London, with its able leadership by Mr. Victor Branford, its home and widely European surveys and tours conducted by Mr. Farquharson and Miss Tatton. We are also in co-operation with M. Otlet's and La Fontaine's vast organization of International Bibliography and of International Associations, with notable beginnings of International University, and of relevant museums and library, in their great "Palais Mondial" at Brussels. Thence too to our above-named colleagues in Dordogne ; and so again here in Montpellier : whence also to Santeniketan ; and indeed with Tagore as president of our group of Synthetic Studies, as well as of the Indian College. Our Report on Bibliography will be found in the forthcoming volume of the World Federation of

Educational Associations. At the Congress of the National Union of Students held last Easter at Balliol College, Oxford, with its main question of "*Quo Vadis*," these college aims were more fully explained, and appreciatively discussed. In short then, here are beginnings of a varied and increasing cooperation of ideas and activities, at once synthetic, synergic, and sympathetic. Hence indeed the three doves upon our books and buildings these many years back ; and now preparing to carry further messages far and near. The time is thus approaching for a fuller cooperation, and not only throughout other universities and cities, but also with those active in constructive thought and social action, wherever they may be, and in whatever fields. To increase such world-cooperation in ideas and ideals, and in activities of application also ; and all this with increasing participation of English-speaking, French and other students as far as may be ; such are the active aims of the Scots College at Montpellier.

P. GEDDES.



MONTPELLIER  
IMPRIMERIE DE LA CHARITÉ  
1928