



Scottish Church College

GLIMPSES OF COLLEGE HISTORY

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The Foundation

The inception of what is now known as “*Scottish Church College*” is interlaced with the life of Dr. Alexander Duff, DD, LLD (1806-1878), the first overseas missionary of the Church of Scotland to India. Initially known as the General Assembly’s Institution, it was founded on the 13th July, 1830.

Alexander Duff was born in Moulin, Perthshire, the very centre of Scotland on 25th April, 1806. He came of a highland Stock, his father James Duff spoke English and Gallic. From the country school the lad passed to the University of St. Andrews where he cut a most brilliant career and, of still more importance, came under the influence of Dr. Chalmers. Subsequently he undertook his mission to India. After a most adventurous voyage during which he was twice shipwrecked, Alexander Duff arrived in Calcutta on 27th May, 1830. People of his time saw in his survival in successive shipwrecks evidence of the Divine Will to utilize the favourite of the god’s for some notable work in India.

After much consultation and careful thought, the Rev. Alexander Duff opened his institution in Feringhi Kamal Bose’s house, upper Chitpur Road, Jorasanko. Dr. Duff expressing his desire that the school be opened daily with prayer, Raja Rammohan Roy suggested that the Lord’s Prayer be so used. In 1836 the institution was moved to Gorachand Basak’s house in Garanhata and in 1836 the present building was begun.

Effects of the introduction of English Education

William Adam in his report on the state of education in Bengal (1835 and 1838) made the following remark. “My recollections of the village schools of Scotland do not enable me to pronounce that the instructions given in them have a more direct bearing upon the daily interests of life than that which I find given or professed to be given in the humbler village schools of Bengal.” Yet lack of knowledge in materialistic science, poverty and negligence had weakened the basis of the learning, imparted either through vernacular language or Sanskrit, Persian and

Arabic. The East India Company did not at first favour either the spread of English education or Missionary activities in India. The change effected in the Charter of East India Company however, opened the flood gate of Christian missions in India. They founded several schools. The Baptist's Mission College at Serampore was established in 1818. Private individuals also took a hand in matter. David Hare, Raja Rammohan Roy and G. H. Turnbull each established a school. The Hindu College and the Calcutta School Book Society, both founded in 1817, did pioneering work this direction. Among those in this country who favoured the spread of higher education by the introduction of English, the name of Raja Rammohan Roy stands out foremost. In December 1823, the Raja addressed a letter to Lord Amherst giving the most lucid exposition of the liberal ideas which prompted the advocates of western education to plead for the introduction of English as medium of higher education. Even the Orientalists led by Prinsep never advocated for the introduction of vernacular as the medium of instruction. The question was whether English or Persian and Arabic should be the vehicle for higher education. Dr. Duff had played a significant role in the introduction of western education in India, through the medium of English. In the Anglicist-Classicist controversy which was at its height during this period, Duff and Rammohan Roy strongly supported the former view. Thus the ground was already prepared for the introduction of English. The historical process of the entire movement had been in operation for a long time and nothing caused or moved this process more than the Evangelical and Utilitarian ideas. Macaulay's famous Minutes gave a final seal to this controversy and confirmed Bentinck's opinions, who issued his Resolution of the 7th March 1835 which stated that 'the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone.'

The effects of this decision were far reaching. Western ideas, western literature and language, western science philosophy, western manners, western style of living, western standard worked as lever in bringing about political, social and economic transformation of India. At the same time it created a new caste barrier between the English educated few and the uneducated millions. The precise pattern of 'learning from the west' depended on the degree of political independence. In Japan and to a much more limited extent in Ottoman, Turkey and the Egypt of Muhammad Ali modernizing efforts were first made in the army, in the administration and economic activities. It is tempting to speculate on the kind of western learning, India would have borrowed had she been independent.

In the meanwhile, however, the demand for western education in the country in early nineteenth century was in the increase and there were only few institutions to cater western education to Indian students. According to Dr. Duff, 600 boys on the lowest calculation daily attended English schools conducted under the vigilant supervision of missionaries in Calcutta and its neighbourhood.

The popularity of English education in the early part of the nineteenth century was largely owing to their desire for liberal education and participation in administration. Macaulay's aim in his own words was "to form a class who may be interpreters between us with the millions whom we govern, a class of persons English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect". The Christian missionaries saw in the multiplication of English schools means for propagating Gospel. Dr. Duff with Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of Modern India, had played significant role in supporting Macaulay. Hurdles therefore were placed in the way of the young savant when he opened his school and the air was rent with the cry of 'Hinduism in danger'. In this crisis, Rammohan stood by the side of the young missionary because he saw in him a young dedicated soul devoted to the cause of the spread of education. In his judgement the Raja proved to be absolutely justified. Duff no doubt was inspired by evangelical motives but at the same time his love for India was next only to that of his own country and his solicitude for India's welfare and the upliftment of its people through the spread of learning earned the gratitude of all Christians and non-Christians alike in this country. It is tempting to quote a few words from his farewell address to reveal the depth of love he entertained for this country and its well-being; "wherever I wander, wherever I roam, wherever I labour, wherever I rest my heart will be still in India." Dr. Duff was by profession, "a missionary"; but his life and labours, the true and constant friend of India.

The first examination

The infectious eagerness of the people was "greater than the most sanguine could at all have anticipated". The General Assembly's Institution was started with only 5 boys. But in no time owing to lack of accommodation it was found necessary to chose further admission. Yet new candidates were still pressing forward.

Dr. Duff described their eagerness in the following words: "They pursued us along the streets. They threw open the very doors of our palanquin; and poured in their application with a pitiful earnestness of countenance that might have softened a heart of stone." And even after the final choice was made "such was the continued press of the new candidates, that it was found absolutely necessary to issue small written tickets for those who had succeeded; and to station two men at the outer door to admit only those who were of the selected number." Successful candidates were divided into four categories, viz., those who could spell and read words of two syllables, those who could spell and read words of one syllable, the third of those who had simply mastered the alphabet and all the rest to commence with A, B, C. Later four more classes were added so that the school had eight classes. The plan or mode of tuition adopted was what has been termed 'the intellectual system', which has been brought to such perfection by those distinguished educational philanthropists, Mr. Wood of Edinburgh and Mr. Stow of Glasgow; subject, of course, to such peculiar modifications in the arrangements and details as the change of circumstances obviously demanded.

And what was the result? After a year, Dr. Duff arranged to hold a public examination of his pupils in the hall of the Freemason's Lodge at 118 Dhurmutollah on 12th August, 1831. Dr. Bryced presided at the examination which was conducted publicly. Candidates were to appear mainly in oral question, and answer tests. Questions were asked from English Reader published by the School Book Society, Pearson's Dialogue on Geography, Astronomy, outlines of Ancient History, from the creation to the Augustine Age by Archdeacon Corrie, and the leading part of early Sacred History as detailed in Genesis and parts of the Gospels. The Joan Bull after some introductory remarks thus testified to the success of Dr. Duff's experiment. "The examination on Friday was altogether gratifying and the progress of the pupils, considering how short has been their attendance at the institution, we may say without exaggeration, wonderful."

Dr. Duff in his "India and India Missions" spoke of the results of the system followed by him in the following words; "The great and unexpected success wherewith Divine providence was pleased to accompany this examination gave a mighty impulse to all our future labours. The favourable opinion so decidedly expressed by influential members of the British community reacted powerfully on the native mind at large, in the way of conciliating prejudices, inspiring confidence and securing a more hearty and general co-operation. The interest manifested on the part of so many magnates of the ruling caste in the progress and welfare of the pupils poured ferns animation and vigour into all their onward endeavours after the attainment of the English language and the incalculable wealth of knowledge, human and divine, that is treasured up in it." On the reopening of the seminary, the number of new applications for admission was more than trebled. Additional accommodation was provided in the course of little more than a year. 'Elementary tuition', says Dr. Duff, 'was gradually advanced into an academical or collegiate course some what similar to that pursued at one of our Scottish Universities. The five who entered on the day of its first commencement have since swollen into an average attendance of eight hundred. And the Governor-General, the fort of all power, honour and influences at length did homage to it by publicly proclaiming in the face of all India that it had produced "unparalleled result."

Collegiate Education

On June 7, 1831, a meeting of different denominations of the Christians held at the Union Chapel House with Rev. W. Yates in the chair it was unanimously resolved to request Rev. Duff to draw a plan for the future of the institution in Calcutta, adopted to carry on the literary and Christian education of promising natives to a higher degree than has been hitherto attempted. It was subsequently decided to appoint the General Committee and the Book Committee for the purpose of starting an institution to secure the progress of general science. Dr. Duff was made the Secretary for both the committees.

The General Committees appointed by the missionaries of the different denominations to consider and determine various particulars relating to the Central Institution or College proposed

to be established vested all property right relating to such an institution to General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and promised all possible cooperation on behalf of different missionaries with the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for the purpose of founding such an institution.

The third resolution of the committee states “as the proposed institution is entirely of a charitable nature, Rupees 5.00 per month for each boy be deemed a reasonable fee till number amounts 10, from 10 to 20, Rupees 4.50 each; for 20 or any number exceeding it Rupees 4.00 each, which may be reckoned the permanent fee of the Institution.”

The General Committee also made an enquiry into the condition and number of Bengali and English schools as well as into the future probable extension of these as preparatory to a higher institution. The following was the number of boys attending Mission English schools in July, 1831 - 400 boys including 150 boys of the General Assembly’s School. The committee also took into consideration a possibility of increase of 240 boys in different English schools in near future. “Now taking the lowest possible average let us suppose that only 1/10th of this number should be found qualified and willing to enter higher institution, at the end of two or three years then would be 60 boys, a number amply sufficient to justify the opening of any institution. And every future year would lend to increase the number almost in arithmetical progression.

“Further in order to introduce harmony into the whole associated system, the committee strongly recommended the same class books to be adopted in all the English schools connected with the different missionary bodies. As necessary for the establishing of a standard of proficiency, they beg to suggest that the books afterwards fixed on for adoption, may be made to supply this standard and that whatever other books any teacher may think proper to introduce into his school a thorough acquaintance with those prepared or recommended by the Book Committee, and adopted by the Brethren at their general meeting be considered as absolutely indispensable to all admission into higher institution or College.”

The Book Committee appointed by the missionaries of different denominations was guided by the consideration that the English schools provided the indispensable qualification for admission to a higher institution. Therefore, the committee provided for good initiating books for spread of the knowledge of English among school students. The Committee however did not forget to announce distinctly the principles that guided its work. The object was to inculcate Christian religious and moral principles in the minds of the native youth. “On this account” thus runs the minute of the Book Committee dated the 13th of July 1831, “it is intended that each reading book consists of two parts, one, to unfold the moral and religious principles and facts and one, to comprehend general or ordinary copies of discourse of useful knowledge.” The members regretted that in the grammar department they can find nothing exactly suited to the wants of the natives. They accordingly proposed to provide two new works one of an elementary nature, to contain only leading or general rules and principles accompanied with numerous exercises and a

translation in Bengali, Mr. Pearson's English and Bengali Grammar to form the basis of the work; another of a higher order to illustrate the rules given in the former.

The Present Buildings

It was not till 1840 that the Institution could be divided into School and College departments. Dr. Duff's General Assembly was first located at Chitpore in a building of Feringi Kamal Bose. His first colleagues were W. S. Mackay and David Ewart.

In 1836, the General Assembly's Institution was moved to Gorachand Basak's House at Garanhata. The construction of the present buildings began in 1837. The foundation stone was laid by Mr. Macfarlon, the Chief Magistrate of Calcutta on 23rd February, 1837 with prayer by Rev. Charles. The building was designed by Mr. John Gray, constructed by Messrs. Burn & Co. and supervised by Mr. John Thompson, East India Company Engineer. The construction of the building was completed in 1839 at a cost of about Rs. 60,000.00. The institution was shifted to its new building in 1839. The dwelling house of Dr. Duff where he met all his contemporaries and where the Minutes of Lord Macaulay were written still stands in the premises of the College.

The Partition and the Reunion

The College in its history has seen many great changes. There was a breach in 1843 between the Established Church and the Free Church of Scotland. This historical disruption drove Dr. Duff and many of his colleagues to cast their lot with the Free Church. Dr. Duff and those of his colleagues who agreed to join him started another institution. The Free Church Institution commenced its work on 4th March, 1843 (as informed by Dr. Duff in a committee meeting of Free Church held on 21st June, 1843). The following communication of the Bengal Mission of the Free Church of Scotland attached in the minutes of the same meeting tells us the story of the Free Church and its new institution during the first phase of the partition.

“The committee beg leave thankfully to acknowledge the liberal manner in which they have hitherto assisted, and at the same time to place before the public a statement of their present circumstances. The Home Committee of the Established Church, having finally resolved to retain the former premises in Cornwallis Square, the Missionary Agents of the Free Church decided to hire new premises suited to their purpose. Such premises they happily succeeded in obtaining, in Nimitola Street, in the very heart of native population. Into these which are in many respects larger and more commodious, than the former, the entire educational operations of the Mission were transferred on the 4th March last.”

“The New or Free Church Institution, like its predecessor, consists of a College and Normal and Preparatory School in which all branches of useful knowledge are taught from the lowest and the highest - whether literary, scientific or theological. The number of pupils, including the whole of those who attended the former or General Assembly's Institution now enrolled in the monthly

corrected registers, in upward of a thousand, and there are nearly four hundred others, in the branch schools at Baranagar at Ghaspara and Culna.”

“The system of education hitherto pursued is unchanged. The Missionaries, Assistant Teachers and Monitors employed are those who were the Missionaries, Assistant Teachers and Monitors in the General Assembly’s Institution, prior to the disruption of the Scottish establishment. The benefits acknowledge; and now precisely the same beneficial agencies are at work while the number of youths under instruction has considerably increased.”

“In abandoning the former Mission premises, the valuable library and philosophical apparatus attached to them were left behind. Through the kindness and liberality of funds the nucleus of a new library has been formed which already comprise upwards of fifteen hundred volumes - two or three valuable philosophical instruments have also been contributed;” but the requisite materials for higher instruction, in many departments were as yet nearly a total blank.

To meet, therefore, the additional expenses incurred by the change of premises and the loss of library and apparatus, together with the heavy current expenditure necessarily involved in the vigorous prosecution of educational operations on so extensive a scale, the committee earnestly solicited the continued aid of all who were desirous to promote the welfare of the native community.

As a result of this appeal and the exertions of the Missionaries who under the able leadership of Dr. Duff batted for the existence and extension of the varied efforts of the Free Church, the new institution at Nimtolah surveyed in the struggle for existence ultimately had its own building. This building was constructed at a site purchased with Rs.18,000.00. This building is now the seat of Jorabagan Police Station.

Tribute and appreciation

The Free Church Institution and the General Assembly’s Institution ran side by side. The Rev. Dr. Duff continued as the Principal of the Free Church Institution till his final departure from India (1863) owing to ill health. This institution was later named Duff College. Dr. James Ogilvie took charge of the General Assembly’s Institution in 1845. In him General Assembly’s Institution had a sagacious and scholarly Principal. In 1845, he started his quarter Century’s work with the General Assembly’s Institution. In 1914 one of our college hostels was named after him to associate his sacred memory with the college. Dr. Duff had able colleagues. He was joined by the Rev. D. Ewart towards the close of 1834; and laboured with unwearied zeal and untiring energy, the Rev. Messrs. Macdonald Smith and Mackay also discharged their office with promptitude and power. (See “India and Indian Mission” by Dr. Duff)

During Duff’s absence from India men like Mackay, Ewart Macdonald and Smith were doing the routine work and doing it most thoroughly. Dr. Thomas Smith, for instance, was known as a

scholar of scholars, ‘the sahib who knew mathematics and never combed his Hair.’ He sometimes came to the college with a shoe on one foot and slipper on the other. He was also a thorough Greek scholar. He was connected with the establishment of two schemes of practical value, the Christian Family Pension Fund and the Zenana Mission. In 1842 he converted Lal Behare De to Christianity. He started in 1840 a periodical called “Telescope” which is the predecessor of the College Magazine of 1910.

“While we would not forget the colleagues of Alexander Duff, they are over-shadowed by their chief. Intellectually he was great; morally and spiritually he was still greater. His pupils feared and revered him and he had great gifts of being able to draw out the very best in them. He was a born teacher” (See SCC Magazine 1910). He recognized the place of science in education. His enthusiasms for female education and emancipation, social reforms such as widow re-marriage, his love for oriental studies and enthusiasm for English education and his efforts at inducing his caste Hindu pupils to dissect dead bodies to learn human anatomy (See Smith, “*Life of Alexander Duff*”, Vol. I, pp 214-216) are well known. The public of Calcutta, Indian and European, knew that they had a great man in their midst, ‘The valedictory addresses which poured in upon him and his replies in the last day of 1863 would fill a volume. ‘Almost every class and creed was represented’, says George Smith in his ‘*Life of Alexander Duff, DD, LLD*’ (Smith Vol. II p. 3 & 6). He came to India as a missionary but the teacher in him more than often was a dominant factor. Many young people were attracted towards his dynamic personality. We can name a few well-known among these - Dakshinaranjan, Bhudev, Kishor Chand. Only the last was converted; others remained his admirers without being asked to embrace Christianity. During the last four years of his life in India Alexander Duff served as the President of the Bethune Society which he re-vitalised.

There are many such instances where Duff took an active interest in those aspects of Indian life that had nothing to do with the spread of Gospel. He did not remain indifferent to physical needs around him. He was associated with Agro-Horticulture Society to improve food situation and worked for the opening of girls’ schools. He felt the need for spreading knowledge among the masses through the press. He shouldered the responsibility of the control and management of the Calcutta Review between 1845 and 1949. Though nominally, it was vested in Duff, Marshman and Thomas Smith, the last two discharged their part only by contributing articles. (See Alok Roy, ‘*Alexander Duff and some of his followers*’, pp 44-53 for detailed discussion on some of these points.)

As a missionary the Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff showed keen interest in the spiritual uplift of the people of India. But it would be a travesty of truth to say that he was quite indifferent to the temporal affairs of the missions around him and never dabbled in matters political. He strongly sympathized with the movement to support the Ilbert Bill (1883) which proposed that henceforth Europeans offenders be tried in the court of native judges or magistrates also and be not allowed

the privilege as before of enjoying the right of trial only before a white coloured judge or magistrate. Ilbert Bill was supported by another member of the Free Church Institution who joined the teaching staff long after Dr. Duff's departure, Kenth S Macdonald (1862-80). During the Indigo rebellion that came as a result of the inhuman exploitation of the European Indigo planters of Bengal in the middle of the 19th century, Dr. Duff supported the cause of the peasantry and agreed to serve as a member of the committee of enquiry regarding the extent of exploitation and oppression of the white coloured Indigo planters with Long. When however, the great upheaval of 1857 aimed at uprooting the British Raj in India stock and barrel, Alexander Duff naturally went against it. In this he has disappointed those that are eager to expect outright support from him of native uprisings against Britannia because they are apt to forget that men, great or small, are always time and space bound. Yet Dr. Duff gave unmistakable evidence of his love for India and her people to the last days of his life. To quote his own words in this connection would be worthwhile.

“So long as I am in this tabernacle of clay I shall never cease if permitted by a gracious Providence to labour for the good of India; my latest breath will be spent in imploring blessings on India and its people.” He desired the following words to be in his epitaph - ‘By profession, a missionary, by his life and labours, the true and constant friend of India’ (see Smith Vol. II p. 392). None can deny that he left after him a remembrance of him in good works to be cherished in the memory of the people of India for generations to come.

Scottish Principals of the Institution

The Rev. Alexander Duff breathed his last in 1878. His counterpart in the General Assembly's Institution the Rev. James Ogilvie died in 1871. It is interesting in this connection to note the name of successive Principals of the two colleges:

General Assembly's Institution

(1830-1908)

Rev. Alexander Duff (1830-34)

Rev. W. S. Mackay & Rev. D. Ewart (1834-39)

Rev. Alexander Duff ((1840-43)

Rev. James Ogilvie (1845-71)

Rev. William Hastie (1878-84)

Rev. W. Smith (1884-89)

Rev. John Morrison (1889-1904)

Rev. A. B. Wann (1904-1908)

Free Church Institution

Rev. Alexander Duff (1843-63)

Duff College

Rev. W. C. Fyffe (1863-80)

Rev. James Robertson (1881-83)

Rev. John Hector (1883-1902)

Between 1903 and 1908 Duff College had no permanent Principal. Dr. H. Stephen, Rev. Dr. J. Watt, Rev. Alexander Tomory and Mr. Alexander Thompson, Rev. Scrimgeor among themselves shared the supervision of the college while negotiations for the union were going on. The union of the Church in 1908 resulted also in the union of the two parallel institutions which henceforth came to be known as Scottish Churches College. Its principals were Rev. A.B. Wann (1908-09), Rev. John Lamb (1909-11) and Rev. Alexander Tomory (1910). The College Magazine (July, 1910) records the feeling of the staff and student at the sudden demise of Rev. Alexander Tomory, the Principal-designate.

“We publish our first number under the deep shadow of loss. We have lost one of the most brilliant members of our college staff, the Rev. Alexander Tomory. What he was to some of his colleagues it is impossible to put into words. By his students he was beloved and revered for the high tone of his character and the efficiency of his teaching. At the time of his death, he was the principal-designate of our college and we looked forward for a brilliant future for it under his guidance.” One of the college hostels has been named after him in 1913. The last principal of the Scottish Churches College was Rev. Dr. James Watt (1911-1928).

In 1929, with the reunion of the Churches in Scotland, Scottish Churches College became Scottish Church College. Rev. Dr. W. S. Urquhart (1928-37) became the first Principal of Scottish Church College. Three surviving ex-principals Rev. Hector, Rev. Morrison, and Rev. Lamb sent their greetings along with many others during the centenary celebration held in Dr. Urquhart’s regime in 1930. The significant messages of the three ex-principals bear out the aim of the founder of the institution and clearly bring out the principles which the college fostered in successive generations.

“We rejoice to think that two of Dr. Duff’s fundamental principles in founding his college – the necessity of modern knowledge alongside in India’s ancient lore and the necessity of true religious knowledge and earnest conviction in any education which is to issue in the highest type of manhood and citizenship - has proved themselves in the century that has gone and continued to be fundamental educational principles in the Scottish Church College of today.”

The Centenary

The centenary of the college fell due during the principalship of Dr. Urquhart. Rev. William Spencer Urquhart joined the college in 1902 and for 35 years lived and moved amongst the young people of Bengal - ‘giving them help, guidance and advice, and holding a very ideal of service.’ An outstanding teacher of philosophy and a prolific writer he constantly endeavoured to foster a spirit of comradeship amongst the students of the college through its seminars and societies. During this period the achievements of the college, largely owing to his efforts, have been multifarious. The original Men’s hostels - Duff and Lady Jane Dundas (constructed out of a gift of \$2000.00 of Lady Jane Dundas) – now had changed character. The first was expended

with additions and alternations and the second was converted into a Women's Hostel. Other Hostels such as the Ogilvie, the Tomory and the Wann (opened in 1911 in memory of Principal A. B. Wann) were properly equipped. Dr. Urquhart had a very great share in building these hostels. There were also a number of students messes in different times and one of them now at Hari Ghose Street (Lala Gopal Prosad of the Physics Department first organized this mess) is now called the Students' Residence and managed by the college authorities. He added a large new block of class rooms, the hall was transferred into a bright, cheerful and airy structure and the library was housed in its present site out of funds raised by Dr. Urquhart; who celebrated the centenary of the college in 1930. Already in 1929 with the reunion of the Churches in Scotland the plural ending of the college was dropped.

Co-education in Scottish Church College

A notable achievement of the Scottish Church College was the introduction of systematic undergraduate co-education. Although girl students were admitted in one or two men's college in Calcutta the Scottish Church College adopted co-ed as a definite policy. The first woman graduate from this college was Miss. A. Alton. Dr. Duff played a significant role in the spread of women's education and long after he left India, Miss. Chandramukhi Basu passed the F.A. of the Calcutta University in 1880 and in 1884, she passed M.A. in English - the first woman student of the Calcutta University to gain this honour - from the Free Church Institution (see Alok Roy – *'Duff and some of his followers'*, pp 37-72). It was largely due to the efforts of Dr. and Mrs. Urquhart that co-education attained great popularity and magnitude in the Scottish Church College. Dr. Urquhart added the Zoology Department to the College and opened B.T. Department for women.

Dr. Urquhart had also rendered the greatest assistance possible in the acquisition of the playing field on long term lease from the government at Manicktala (1918) under the principalship of Dr. Watt. Before this acquisition games and sports were held in the Marcus Square.

In 1928 Dr. Urquhart was called upon to assume the office of the Vice Chancellor of the University. The work of reorganization of the University that was initiated and accomplished during his tenure of office has been considered as being his most signal service. His service was recognized by his colleagues, students, innumerable admirers, the different universities like Patna and Madras where he lectured as also by his friends and well wishers here and abroad as is evident from the message sent by men from different walks of life in the commemoration volume published by the Dr. Urquhart Farewell Committee. This volume reprinted the writings and speeches of Dr. and Mrs. Urquhart. The name of the street where the college building is situated has been changed from Cornwallis Square to Urquhart Square in recognition of the unique service rendered by him to this institution and to the cause of education in India.

The other Scottish Principals who followed Dr. Urquhart were Rev. Allen Cameron (1937-44), Rev. John Kellas (1944-54) and Dr. H. J. Taylor (1954-60). After Dr. Taylor no other Principal came from Scotland. It was during the principalship of Dr. Taylor that the College entered into an agreement with the Government of West Bengal in 1965. Under this agreement the College agreed to appoint some Missionary teachers while under certain mutually accepted terms the government agreed to meet the revenue deficit of the College. This agreement lasted till the coming of the Pay Packet Scheme in recent years under West Bengal Government's Salaries Act for college teachers.

Indian Principals

Meanwhile, since 1960 after the departure of Dr. Taylor Indian Principals were appointed. Dr. N. K. Mundle (1960-70) succeeded Dr. Taylor. He was followed by (Sri. Jyotsna Pyne 1.3.70 and Sri. B. Das 1.10.70-1.7.71). The next Principal, Sri. S. K. Mitra (1971-75) was the senior most member of the teaching staff and Vice-Principal. He was promoted to the post of Principal. He was followed by Sri. K. D. Bhatt (1973-75). The next Principal, Sri. S. K. Mukherjee (1975-76) was also a member of teaching staff and Vice-Principal. His principalship was marked by much turmoil being the outcome of the determined and successful effort of the members of the staff to eliminate mass copying. In this attempt, the Scottish Church College set an example to all others in West Bengal and in this some members of the teaching staff braved threats and physical violence. After the retirement of Sri. S. K. Mukherjee, Sri. A. K. Sen, (1976-78), the senior most member of the teaching staff and Vice-Principal succeeded him to the office of the Principal. The next principal to step into the shoes of Sri. Sen was Sri. A. K. Kisku (1978-81). The 150th year of the celebration of the foundation of the College fell in his regime. On the 27th of September 1980, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi graced the institution by her presence on the occasion of this celebration and declared open the Ter-Jubilee Annexe and laid the foundation of a building. Sri. Aparesh Bhattacharyya stepped into the shoes of Sri. Kisku on 1st July 1981. Sri. Bhattacharyya has been promoted to the chair from the post of Vice-Principal. Much to the delight of all concerned, he has eliminated much financial commitments of the celebration and restored discipline to the desired level.

The Role of Scottish Church College in the dissemination of learning

Dr. Alexander Duff had founded model institution to bring about a measure of modernization through the 'engraftment' of Western learning upon oriental culture. Meanwhile in the General Committee of Public Instruction a fierce controversy was raging between the 'Orientalists' who saw value in oriental learning and were not prepared to forgo it in favour of European culture, although they agreed to borrow its plus points with caution. Another group the 'Anglicist' who wanted to force the change opposed the 'Orientalists' and desired the introduction of Western education in which they saw a multitude of benefits. Dr. Duff was a staunch supporter of the idea that the promotion of European learning through the medium of English rather than by translation

was the best way of spreading enlightenment in India. The final seal to this controversy was given in Lord Macaulay's famous Minute and the resolution adopted by the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck regarding the future educational policy of the Government and the decision to introduce English as the medium of instruction on March 7, 1835. But the endorsement of the resolution did not win over everyone in favour of a programme of reform and although the successors of Lord William Bentinck, Charles Metcalfe and Lord Auckland were not unsympathetic to reform the decision was challenged both in India and in Britain by Orientalist sympathizers. Much depended upon the Anglocists. In his devotion to the cause Dr. Duff played a very important role during the period and ably supported Charles Edward Trevelyan who as a member of the General Committee had influenced the educational policy of the Government of India in favour of the Anglicist before and after March 7, 1835 (see J. Hilliker: '*Charles Edward Trevelyan as an educational Reformer 1827-38*'; Canadian Journal of History). Finally he influenced the drafting of the Wood Despatch of 1854 which sketched the outline of educational system in India (see George Smith "*The life of Alexander Duff*" - Vol. II, p. 295).

Dr. Alexander Duff was nominated by the Governor General in 1856 to be one of those who drew up the constitution of the university. His constant presence at the meetings of the Senate is shown by the minutes. He led the party, in the early governing body of the University, consisting of Bishop Cotton, Archdeacon Pratt, Dr. Kay, Dr. Ogilvie, Dr. Cowell, Dr. Mullens, Dr. K. M. Banerjee, Sri. H. Durand, Bishop Start, Mr. C. M. Aitchison, Mr. Samuel Lang, Sri. C. Trevelyan and Mr. George Smith, the biographer of Dr. Duff (Ibid Vol. II p. 383). In the Syndicate and the Senate Dr. Duff always opposed the attempt to patronize a particular institution in preference to other institutions specially those that are situated in the Mofussil. Here is what Prof. Nihar Roy has to say about Dr. Duff's opinion in this particular matter - "Duff always maintained and upheld the view that all educational institutions should be equalized and state patronage should not be the monopoly of any one or any group." He was in favour of de-provincialisation or de-governmentation of education (see "*The formative years 1857-1882; Hundred years of the University of Calcutta*"). Dr. Duff was requested to shoulder the responsibility of the office of the Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University. 'It is yours by right' wrote Charles Trevelyan in his letter to Dr. Duff dated 22nd March, 1863. It was only the failure of his health which drove him finally from Calcutta that prevented his being made the Vice Chancellor in 1863.

Dr. Urquhart who followed in the footsteps of the founder in playing an important role in the dissemination of Western learning was called upon in the year 1928 to assume the office of the Vice Chancellor of the University at a time which was full of anxiety to all those had the true interests of education at heart (see *Biographical sketch, Dr. Urquhart commemoration volume* – p. xiv). He was regarded as one of the leaders of the general policy of the Calcutta University. He also served as the Chairman of the Inter-university Board and moulded the secondary

education to restore equilibrium between the control of the University and the Education Department.

Another Principal of this college Dr. H. J. Taylor shouldered the responsibility of the Vice Chancellorship of the Gauhati University. Some of the distinguished students of this college including Sri. Gurudas Banerjee, Prof. Nirmal Kumar Sidhanta and Dr. R. K. Poddar the present Vice Chancellor have been called upon on different occasions to grace this chair of the Calcutta University. Dr. Roma Chowdhuri, a former student, became the Vice Chancellor of the Rabindra Bharati University.

In many other fields of education the Scottish Church College upturned a virgin soil. The Scottish Church College was one of the pioneers in the field of coeducation. In the first phase of coeducation the college had to overcome entrenched superstition and stiff opposition of which we get glimpses in the College Magazine. Here is what the College Magazine of September 1925 has mentioned with reference to the attitude of the Allahabad University regarding co-education.

“The authorities of Allahabad University will be shocked to hear that we have **five lady students** in the College. Recently, the Executive Council of that august institution passed a resolution against female students attending the same B.A. classes as the men except with the permission of the Vice-chancellor. It looks”, continued the 1925-Number of the Magazine, “as if the antievolution tendencies ‘way-down in Tenessey’ has been affecting the nerves of the old men of Allahabad.” The efforts of the Scottish Church College in popularizing female education had been crowned with victory and coeducation has become popular everywhere.

The Students and the Teachers

Among all the students who entered the portals of this College two most outstanding personalities are decidedly those of Swami Vivekananda and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The former graduated from the General Assembly’s Institution in 1883 and the latter from the Scottish Church College in 1919. In spite of the distance and difference between these two great sons of Mother India in space and time they had certain ties that linked them in ideal. Both of them were fired with the zeal of uplifting the downtrodden masses of India and Subhas Chandra the most valiant fighter for freedom, was inspired by the message of strength and dynamism in the writing of Swami Vivekananda. “My vision”, said Swamiji, “is not Ramkrishna’s nor Vedanta’s nor anything but simply to bring manhood to my propel” (see ‘*Sister Nivedita*’ by Pravrajika Atmaprana, Adivata Ashrami, 2nd Ed. P. 141). “I will help you” Nivedita had sworn. In the 20th century this vow was taken by many freedom fighters also foremost among whom was India’s leading revolutionary Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

During his collegiate days it was Principal William Hastie who, while explaining Wordsworth’s glimpse of trance in the beauties of nature, directed his students to see Sri. Ramkrishna if they desired to understand what it meant. Thus Naren heard of his future Master. In college the talent

and power of his personality attracted the attention of both Indian and Western teachers and Principal Hastie had no hesitation in calling him 'a genius'. He was equally popular with his collegiate friends and helped them in their trouble. It was so delightful to listen to him because "His voice", said one of Naren's friends "was like music to us. We would often open a subject for discussion just for the pleasure of hearing him speak. He was so interesting and above all, so original". (see *'The Life of Swami Vivekananda'* by His Eastern and Western Disciples, Advita Ashram Sixty Edn. pp 24-27).

Subhas Chandra was expelled from the Presidency College by Principal James consequent on a clash with a European Professor involving a question of national prestige. He was welcomed in the Scottish Church College by Dr. Urquhart. In a letter addressed to the Secretary, Philosophical Society, Scottish Church College in 1934, Subhas Chandra acknowledges his debt of gratitude to this institution and states - "I can never forget my association with the Scottish Church College, where I received a warm hospitality at a time when the doors of other institutions had been banged on me. Nor can I be sufficiently grateful to Dr. Urquhart who was responsible for welcoming me as a student in the College." Sri Bose also stated that his two years of study of Philosophy in this institution "helped me to discipline my intellect and heart and sharpen my judgement and thereby prepare myself for the subsequent struggle which has been in store in me". He had also a preliminary training in military science from the Scottish Church College where he was one among the other 31 cadets enrolled in the University Volunteer Corps in 1917. This training for College students as future soldiers has been renamed from 1948 as National Cadet Corps of which Prof. R. N. Mukherjee is at present in-charge. Thus two architects of modern India had enrolled themselves in this institution as students. Swamiji was proud of his 'Scotch Master' Mr. Hastie as was Netaji grateful to Dr. Urquhart. Both in the dawn of their career received their preliminary training as students of the Scottish Church College.

The centenary volume of the Scottish Church College in its forward has rightly pointed out that "during its long history of nearly a hundred years the College has sent forth thousands of students, and it is not too much to say that they have exercised a marked influence upon the country". In every aspect of human life the former students of this great institution have left a permanent mark in the sands of time that guide the future generation. In arts and letters, in philosophy and politics, in law and religion, in drama and poetry, in games and sports, in short, in all aspects of human life and culture, the Scottish Church College has made valuable contribution through its teachers and taught.

Athletics

In games and sports the Scottish Church College took special care to encourage the boys and girls to excel. The College had no ground in the beginning and games such as football and cricket were played in the Marcus square. The football club was started in the session (1909-10) and in 1909 the 'B' team won Moon Cup and 'H' team Elloit Shield. Gymnastic began from 1910.

The College acquired its own playing field in Canal East Road, Manicktala from the government in 1918 on a long term lease. The playground was used since 1919 being reclaimed at a considerable expense from what was largely a stagnant tank. The Watt Pavillion in the playing field was opened by Sri. J. N. Sarkar on 24th January, 1928. The Hector Shield awarded to the best athletic of the year from 1930 was instituted in memory of Rev. John Hector, Principal Duff College (1883-1902).

The St. John's Ambulance Brigade (12th Scottish Church Division)

The St. John's Ambulance of the Scottish Church College had its origin in the growing demand for the same. In August 1923 a proposal for starting a division of St. John's Ambulance Brigade was accepted by the authorities of the College and Prof. Kellas agreed to shoulder the responsibility of undertaking the formation of the proposed division. This division survived long and rendered useful service till recent times.

How the College is run

The Foreign Missions committee of Scotland was responsible for managing the college. In the first half of the 20th century the mission council felt the need of greater association of the Indian members with the administration and for that purpose formed a College Advisory Board. All European members of the college staff, one member of each faculty and two members from Indian members of the teaching staff as also two selected by the Senatus formed the advisory to the Senatus. Under certain restrictions it was entrusted with college routine, appointment of representatives to the Selection Committee, library committee, athletics committee etc. The committee appointed by the Advisory Board to recommend how best the Indian members of the teaching staff of the college be associated with the administration met on 5th September, 1928, 1st October, 1928 and 8th January, 1929. Many of their recommendation were embodied in the constitution of 1953.

In 1956 Dr. H. J. Taylor, the Principal signed an agreement with the Government of West Bengal. Under the agreement the Government agreed to pay the revenue deficit of the College under certain conditions applicable to a specially sponsored college. Presently the Government has agreed to include the college in the West Bengal Colleges (payment of salaries) Act under special conditions. Being a Minority Institution the College has been kept outside the purview of Service Security Act, the College Service Commission Act and University Expenditure Control Act. All the Minority Institutions have been asked to formulate rules analogous to those envisaged by the Acts mentioned above. By 1972 the Collegiate School was separated from the College and is at present under a different Managing Committee. The Church of North India has inherited the rights and privileges of the Foreign Mission Committee and exercise a general control over the College through the Synodical Board of Christian Higher Education.

The 150th year Celebration in 1980

In 1980 during Sri. Kisku's tenure the 150th year Jubilee was celebrated and in September that year Sm. Indira Gahdhi, India's then Prime-Minister laid the foundation stone of the Annexe. Sri. Aparesh Bhattacharya assumed charge in 1981 and retired in 1983.

Recent History

In the next twelve years (1983-95) the College saw a period of stability under the stewardship of Prof. Kalyan Chandra Dutt. He was succeeded by Dr. Kalyan Kumar Mandi (1996-2002).

In the last year of Dr. Mandi, the new Millennium Building was constructed solely through donations from alumni and well-wishers, chiefly Dr. M. L. Bhaumik. A sum of Rs. 70 lakhs was raised, largely through the dedicated efforts of the then Vice Principal, Sri. C. N. Chatterjee.

The College gratefully acknowledges the substantial financial assistance provided by the Government of West Bengal for major renovations in the College during this period. We are also grateful to the Lutheran World Service for assistance in repairs to the B.Ed. building.

The present Principal, Dr. John Abraham took over on 17 December 2002.

Under Dr. Abraham, the College has been completely renovated, a large air-conditioned seminar hall (formerly Room No. 12) with state-of-the-art equipment has been built and the office and library have been fully computerized. Much of this work has been made possible by generous donations from former students like Sri. Ajit Panja and Sri. Mrinal Sen from MPLAD funds. Other important donors who have contributed to our development fund include Sri. Pranab Mukherjee, Gen. Shankar Roy Chowdhury and Sri. Biplab Dasgupta. The College gratefully acknowledges their generous assistance.

New Honours courses with a professional orientation have also been introduced in Microbiology, Computer Science and Business Administration. The College started post-graduate courses in Botany and Chemistry with **Autonomous Status** in collaboration with Calcutta University, from the 2005-'06 academic session.

The College presently has 19 departments offering undergraduate courses in the Arts and Sciences (15 at Honours level) and a Teacher Education Department offering B.Ed. course to women students. Departments of Botany and Chemistry run post-graduate courses (Autonomous) as well. The college has an enrolment of well over 2000 students and faculty strength of over 90. Admissions to the various courses are done on-line through the college website: www.scottishchurch.ac.in. The College gets excellent results in the University examinations with a number of students in nearly all departments securing First Classes every year.

Other innovations effected recently include the setting up of a Career Guidance Cell, a Redressal Cell, a free College Clinic, an NSS Unit and a Vocational Section that offers a course in Communicative English.

In January 2004, the College started publishing an international refereed journal, “*journal of humanities and social sciences*” which was officially released by Prof. Asis Kumar Banerjee, Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University. The journal is brought out annually and contributors include eminent scholars and academicians from India and abroad.

A newsletter **The Scottish Herald** is published half yearly.

The College organizes UGC-sponsored state and national level seminars from time to time, apart from a large number of departmental and student seminars. Interdepartmental seminars for teachers are another recent innovation. Several UGC-funded minor research programmes are also undertaken by several teachers of the college. Many staff members avail the UGC facility of Faculty Improvement Programme (FIP) to pursue their research leading to PhD.

The college initiated its association with several international agencies like United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA), Colleges and Universities of Anglican Communion (CUAC). UBCHEA sponsors substantially several projects and faculty enrichment programmes. The college is also a member of the All India Association of Christian Higher Education (AIACHE) which provides scholarships for several students of the college.

In April, 2004 the College was given accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) under the UGC and awarded **Grade A** ranking.

In 2005 the College was the foremost of six colleges recommended by Calcutta University to the UGC for recognition as a “**College with Potential for Excellence**”. In February 2006, the college was included in the unique category of CPE colleges in India, making it one of only four Colleges in West Bengal to enjoy this ranking. Accordingly, the college has been granted the UGC a sum of Rs. sixty lakhs for research and other infrastructure development of the college.

Being a CPE college, the college received an additional grant of Rs. sixty-five lakhs for the seven lab-based departments for the modernisation of its laboratories.

The college owns and administers five hostels - three for boys and two for girls; named Duff, Wann, Ogilvie, Lady Jane Dundas and Students’ Residence. These hostels accept students of both this and other states, chiefly those of the North-East. The infrastructure facilities have been improved considerably in the recent years. In 2006 the UGC sanctioned Rs. Two Crores for the construction of a new, multi-storeyed Women’s Hostel of international standard in place of Lady Jane Dundas Hostel. The work is in progress and is expected to be completed within a year or two.

The Aims and Objectives

Our mission and goal of the college is to impart liberal education that is pervaded by the spiritual and moral values of the Christian faith; to produce intellectually sound, morally upright, socially concerned and spiritually oriented men and women who will be of service to society and to the nation; finally, to prepare young people to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world and to equip them to take their rightful place there with confidence based on an efficient and pragmatic training for the demands of the twenty-first century.

Classes on religious (Christian) instruction are held as a regular part of the work of the college. Prayers are held daily in the College Assembly Hall at 9.40 am before the commencement of classes. The Student Christian Movement (SCM) is also very active in the College.

The administrative control over the college was exercised by the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland till 1953 and was then vested in a local Council consisting of representatives of the Church of Scotland and the United Church of North India which merged with the Church of North India when it was founded in 1970.

The College is now owned and administered by the Church of North India. The Governing Body or Council is headed by the Rt. Rev. Samuel Raju, former Bishop of Calcutta. He succeeded the Rt. Revd. D. C. Gorai, former Bishop of Calcutta in 2000 as Council President.

175th Year Celebration of the College

Scottish Church College completed 175 years on 13th July, 2005. The year-long celebrations of the 175th year began with a grand but solemn thanks-giving service on Foundation Day, 13th July, 2004 at which the Chief Guest was his Excellency, Sri. Viren J. Shah, the then-Governor of West Bengal. The service, attended by many distinguished persons and heads of educational institutions was presided over by the Rt. Rev. Samuel Raju, Bishop of Calcutta and President of the College Council.

A special joint service organized by the College and Scottish Church Collegiate School was held on 25th July at St. Paul's Cathedral, also to celebrate the start of the 175th year of both institutions. A number of special events were organized during the year as part of the anniversary celebrations.

A Commemorative Volume to mark the 175th Anniversary of the College was released in April 2008 by Sri. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, the Governor of West Bengal.

Plans for the future

The College operates in seven buildings and plans are in place for the construction of the Jubilee Complex in the near future. The structure will house post-graduate departments of Physics and Chemistry that are to be started shortly, besides a refectory and a Guest-house.

The College also has plans to set up an Annexe for post-graduate studies and research on land to be provided by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation in the next few years.

This will ensure both horizontal and vertical academic expansion and enable the College to meet the challenges of the fast emerging era of globalization which is already radically transforming the face of education world wide.

The College Logo

The College Logo in Latin reads: “**Nec Tamen Consumebatur**”. Translated, this means “The bush burns but is not consumed”.

This is an allusion to the story to the experience of Moses when he ascended “the mountain of God”, Mount Horeb and found himself in the presence of the Divine.

Exodus 3:2 in the Old Testament reads thus: “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

When Moses approached to investigate this phenomenon, “God called unto him out of the midst of the bush” and said, “Draw not hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

God manifested himself to Moses in the form of a dazzling light that made the bush burn without scorching it. This is symbolic of the power of Divine Light which is the Ultimate Truth, the source of all knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge does not destroy or corrode; rather it enlightens the mind irradiates one’s entire being, sublimates the soul, illuminates one’s life changing it forever. Moses’ life was radically altered by his encounter with this light. So can ours be when we approach the burning bush. It is that light which it is the enduring mission of this College to reflect.

(Updated in September 2008)

J. Abraham
Principal