



10th MARCH 1924.



ARRIVAL OF LORD AND LADY WILLINGDON.



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FATHER BERTRAM READING THE ADDRESS AND GIVING
THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE.

History of the College

On the 10th March 1924, the fields lying between the Nungambakam Tank and the railway line witnessed a crowd the like of which they had probably never beheld since the day of creation.

They had for ages been lying undisturbed, save by a few ryots cultivating the plots of land along the foreshore of the tank, or a few bricklayers plying their trade along the railway line, or a few residents of the neighbourhood out on a morning ride. For ages, waters had come and gone over them, each successive flood depositing, as it went, on the underlying bed of sand, layer after layer of clay, which accumulated till they reached a depth of 6 to 10 ft. destined to make for future builders the work of laying foundations a difficult and expensive task.

The site, though apparently desolate and unattractive, was not without beauty when nature vouchsafed to touch it with her magic wand. Seen, for instance, from the east, at sunset, on a November evening, with the tank filled to the top of the embankment and submerging the adjoining fields, it glittered in the fading light; while heavy, dark clouds, fringed with crimson and gold hanging over the western horizon,

were mirrored in the still waters; and to the south arose a confused mass in which the eye could scarcely distinguish the sombre foliage of palm and casuarina trees from their image in the lake, the lengthening shadows of approaching night blurring colours and forms. Viewed on such occasions, amid the solemn stillness of the dying day, the sight was one which appealed to every lover of nature, and many were the visitors who loved to haunt this forlorn spot and spend a few quiet moments in silent contemplation before it.

But one day in 1918 two men appeared on the spot, not attracted by its charms but bent on something more prosaic. They wore a long white gown with a red sash. They surveyed the fields and they concluded they would make a splendid site for a college. As much land could be got as could be wished for, and probably cheap, a fine open place where the breeze had full play, away from the bustle and dangers of the city, yet within easy reach of it, near the railway line, midway between two stations scarcely one mile apart, with numberless kilns all round and an abundant supply of bricks assured. What more could be desired? It was an ideal site!

Yet opinion was not unanimous on that point. In the eyes of some the place was too far from the city, too far from the centre of business, of intellectual and social life, too far from the abodes of the respective students likely to come from Myslapore, from Vepery, from George-town, etc. Their view prevailed, and one of the men in white cassock alluded to before was asked to look for a better site within town.

He did so, and for many months he could be seen wheeling his weary way along the streets of Madras. The number of miles he covered and the amount of dust he swallowed are incalculable! It was soon known that he was looking for a site, and he got numberless offers of lands and houses. It may be said that there is scarcely a single compound in the whole of Madras measuring 15 acres, which did not come under his eye. The peaceful citizens of Madras never knew the danger they were in from that man, else they would have been horrified. But, peace to them! His was not an "evil eye."

His choice fell on a certain property in Royapettah. But that property was then under the Court of Wards, and he had to approach the Revenue Member in charge of that department. That gentleman was Mr. M. E. Couchman, I.C.S. As soon as he heard from the visitor what the land was wanted for he exclaimed, with a sort of "old—you—so" ring in his voice: "There you are! Oh, you will succeed, you will succeed!" The caller, somewhat taken aback by this unexpected reception, muttered something to the effect that they hoped to succeed, but there were difficulties

in the way, etc. But Mr. Couchman grew more emphatic still—"Oh, yes! you will succeed! when you put your hand to a thing you always succeed! You can do anything—" "Perhaps", said the visitor, "you allude to the fabulous wealth with which imagination credits the Jesuits, e.g., the silver mines of Potosi and similar tales!"—"No, I don't mean that. But it is a fact, when you want a thing, you put it through. Oh, you will succeed."—"Well, Sir, I wish you may be right, but I must say that I for one am not conscious of the extraordinary powers you so kindly credit us with."—"Oh! it is all right, you will succeed!"

Was it prophecy?

Well, prophecy or not, the attempt to get that property fell through, and we were once more left to roam through Madras in search of another site. Finally, towards the end of August 1919, we were told that the Nabob's Gardens could be got for a reasonable price. We set our agent going. On 8th September, the bargain was concluded and we were put in possession of what is now the Fathers' house. Yet we were not satisfied: a compound of 16 acres, with a bungalow right in the middle of the grounds, could scarcely be considered a satisfactory site for a college. There must be room in it for a college building, for hostels and dependencies, for playgrounds, for a residence for the Fathers, for a church, etc., and to make room for all that the bungalow would first have to be destroyed, as a preliminary step, which would mean a dead loss. How else to find room for so many houses? We have not yet tried our hand at sky-scrapers!

We at once decided to purchase more land in the immediate neighbourhood of Nabob's Gardens. Some were still averse to buying land beyond the tank, for, at that time, that land was outside the Corporation boundary (which then roughly followed the tank bund) and they feared it would be difficult to get electricity and water. We tried to buy the fields south of Sterling Road, but we found purchasers already operating in those parts, and our coming in would only create competition and result in forcing up prices. Thus it was that, finally, we were driven back to our first choice—the lands between the tank and the railway, in the Puliyur Shrotriam. Negotiations were at once set on foot, and, to make a long story short, within six months we had acquired about 50 acres from various landowners, at a cost of slightly under Rs. 60,000.

Sterling Road at the time was almost deserted. There were only five bungalows in it—Marble Hall at the eastern end, with Wheatcroft opposite, then Esk Bank west of Marble Hall, and Nabob's Gardens right away at the west end, and Sterling House nearly opposite. How changed since that time is Sterling Road!

Now that we had the land, there remained only to build the College. Only that! But in order to build, you want money. Now was the time to draw on the fabulous hoards said to be hidden somewhere in Jesuit houses! We looked for them but never found them. Or rather we never looked for them, because we very well knew they existed only in the imagination of certain fanciful people. Or, to be more correct still, they exist, but in the

treasury of Providence, and this treasury is no other than the pockets of charitable persons. The trouble is to get them out of this hiding place.

It was decided to send somebody to Europe and to America to gather funds, and, accordingly, on 27th February 1921, Fr. Bertram took the pilgrim staff and started for the West, on what he knew to be a very hard and delicate mission, the result of which, in view of the economic conditions of the world, appeared very problematic. He took with him the plans and estimates of the proposed College, for the plans and estimates were then already made—substantially what your eyes now behold as existing realities, although the full scheme has not yet been carried out.

The pilgrim, a regular Rip Van Winkle, returning home after 32 years spent in India, soon found he had not overrated the difficulties of his task. Everywhere money was scarce and the exchange low. In England there broke out the terrible coal strike of June 1921, which at the time seemed almost to threaten the very existence of the nation. There was sympathy enough, but not strong enough to find tangible expression in terms of £, s. d. A friend in London told the pilgrim that people who in normal times would have readily given him £10, could not then afford to give him £1. And then, who takes interest in a college in India? People would still give something in aid of a hospital, of a church, but a college was considered a luxury which no one felt called on to contribute to.

for admission to a course of study for a degree unless they have passed the Intermediate Examination of Madras.

What was the meaning of this clause?

A course of study for a degree is generally understood to be a college course under the control of the University. If then, the condition of admission to a course of study for a degree was the passing of the Intermediate Examination, it followed, or it seemed to follow, that the Intermediate course was to be outside the University course. Consequently, a new college seeking affiliation after the passing of the Act need not trouble itself about opening an Intermediate course. This view put a new complexion on our scheme, and considerably simplified the problem before us. The task would be immensely lightened if we had to provide only a B.A. course, even if that course was to be a three-year course.

We sat down to the problem as it now stood, put down figures and names, and found that, with the help of Providence, the new proposition was not unworkable. It was by no means an easy one; but it was at least not entirely prohibitive.

The result of our deliberations was placed before our Superior General in Rome, and he apparently came to the conclusion we had come to; the scheme was no longer unworkable. But he noted that the staff we could command for the new college was somewhat weak, and of his own accord, took the unusual step of asking the Provincial of the English Jesuits to send us two men. The news from Rome was received in October

1923. Loyola was not to be a still-born child after all. It was going to live.

But admire the ways of Providence. Section 36 (i) of the Act, on which we had built our plans, proved a broken reed. When the University took up the work of reconstruction to fall in with the new Act, Section 36 was proved by our vakil friends to mean the opposite of what we (and many others) had understood it to mean, and the University decided to retain the Intermediate course. That was in the second half of 1924.

In the meanwhile, our plans had been completed and building had been started in view of the B.A. course only, and when the decision to retain the Intermediate courses was taken, it was too late for us to make any change in them. So it was we began with the B.A. The procedure was not, therefore, the outcome of one of those inscrutable or deep-laid devices which are said to be the characteristic of the Jesuits, it was not due to a desire to astonish the world, performing the incredible feat of building the second floor of a house before building the first; it was the result of an honest mistake—a fortunate mistake. Let us admit: *PELIX CULPA*. Had we started with the Intermediate courses, what would have happened? In all probability, we would have exhausted our energies and our resources on the Intermediate; thus enfeebled we should have been unable to open the B.A. courses for some years, and we would have been a grovelling second-grade college. The institution at this time would be far from being what it is.

The pilgrim went to his own native place and there went begging from door to door. Had not the circumstances been so tragic, he could have laughed, at times, when, after long parleys to explain who he was and what his errand was, he was given the equivalent, in French money, of one rupee. On several occasions he had even to take two annas and say "Thank you." Still the people were generous enough, and had they been millionaires and given out of their millions in the proportion of what they actually gave, their donations would have gone far towards covering the building expenses of one year. As it was, they amounted to scarcely Rs. 2000.

America was still worse than Europe; not that money was scarce, but people, otherwise generous, were tired of beggars and begging. The pilgrim did not collect enough to pay his way, and returned to Europe a poorer man than he had left it.

On the whole, the net result of this trip to the West was a sum of about 250,000 French and Italian francs—an impressive-looking figure on paper, and certainly a respectable sum in Europe, but not so when expressed in terms of £. s. d. or R. A. P.

The exchange was then very low.

Pope Benedict XV contributed 100,000 lire (the lira is the Italian franc), a right royal donation in Europe. But, as the Pope himself said to the pilgrim when putting it into his hands, "It is Rupees you want, and 100,000 lire makes only Rs. 27,000, with the present exchange." People in Rome said: "Don't send it

out to India, now; the exchange is too bad, so bad indeed that it cannot keep on much longer as it is. Leave your money here; we shall send it on to you when exchange improves. In the meanwhile we will give you 4 per cent. interest on it."

The advice was certainly well meant, yet it had disastrous results. The exchange, instead of rallying, sank lower still, and when, at the end of 1924, we received capital and interest, we found ourselves with barely Rs. 15,000 in hand, instead of Rs. 27,000.

French francs were not much better. So, instead of about one lakh and a half which the collections made in Europe would have yielded, had the exchange been normal—which would almost have met the requirements of our building programme for one year—we found ourselves in possession of not even Rs. 40,000.

It may perhaps be a surprise (though it should not be a wonder) to our readers to learn that, in the face of such results it was decided at Rome, before the pilgrim returned to India, to give up the project of the Madras College or at least postpone it to better times, and this was the message which the pilgrim brought back with him when he returned to India in December 1922.

It looked as if Loyola was dead, a still-born child; yet it was about to revive.

The beginning of 1923 was marked by the passing of the Madras University Act. Section 36 (i) of the Act ran as follows: "Students shall not be eligible

Providence permitted the mistake, so as to make us do at once what it might otherwise have taken us years to do. In fact, the philosophical saying *qui potest plus potest minus*, he that can do more can do less, found in this case, an unlocked for application: when we had got ready for the B.A., we found we had room enough for the Intermediate also.

But let us not anticipate events. Let us go back to October 1923, the date at which we received the "plot" from Rome.

The site had been purchased, 50 good acres of land in an ideal situation, but there was nothing on it except a number of thorny trees. I am wrong. Father Sauthier, the Procurator, had, in the meanwhile, in his robust and unflinching hope, built the large well, which is now supplying the hostels with water.

But there was nothing else.

Father Sauthier, an ideal bursar, at once took measures for starting construction work, and, first of all, for laying the foundation stone of the future college. The plans had also to be somewhat modified.

They had been made on the supposition that they would be carried out in their entirety, at one more or less continuous stretch. In view of the scarcity of funds, however, the supposition had to be abandoned and it was decided to complete the college building in several stages.

The main feature of the facade of the college building was to have been column about 30 feet high, standing on a squat and squat first floor and rising in or stretch to the top of the second floor. Now, clearly, if we were going to build in several stages, this feature had to be modified. It already then appeared more than likely we were not going to construct the second floor at once, and therefore our fine big columns, which clearly could not be left to stand half-built for perhaps several years, had to be given up. A few modifications were therefore made in the facade and in the dimensions of the projected college building, and the result is what people now see—there is, however, a second floor yet to come.

Visitors are struck by the College, in complete as it is. Simple, chaste, almost severe in style, yet of fine effect and imposing; such are the expressions used by them to describe it. What is behind the facade is equally simple and none the less convenient. The shape of the building is a capital E, in which the central part is made up of large rooms and the two wings are made up of small rooms.

One of the things most wanted in colleges is small rooms. You want small rooms, for instance, for language classes and for subjects (like Honours) in which there are few students. The designers of the Loyola College building were keen on making provision for small rooms in their plans and they have succeeded.

Yet, the plan is, so to say, elastic. The building can easily be extended at the

wings; small rooms can be converted into fairly large rooms by removing a wall, or large rooms into smaller rooms by erecting one—the whole outside appearance remaining unchanged.

As for the hostels, it had from the first been laid down as a principle that they should consist of several small blocks of 25 or 30 rooms each, and that all the rooms should be single rooms of about 80 square feet each. With these two cardinal features in view, two hostels were planned on a uniform design, viz., the Aelen and the Willingdon blocks, each consisting of 36 single rooms.

Such were the plans submitted to Government for approval, and permission was requested to start work in anticipation of sanction.

Before construction work was started, however, a road had to be made connecting Sterling Road with the site. Till then there was no access to the grounds from the town. The bund, which was then the boundary of the Corporation, cut us off from the city, and, when there happened to be water in the tank, as was the case during the greater part of the year, there was no access except by the railway line, and even not always.

But, in 1920, the Government decided to suppress the ayacuts within the city, and the tanks from which these ayacuts were fed had to be breached. The P. W. D. which was to carry out the orders of Government took possession of the tank land. From this department

we obtained permission to build a causeway across the tank, leading from Sterling Road to the site. This was done early in 1924.

March 10, 1924, was fixed for the laying of foundation stone, and His Excellency Lord (now Viscount) Willingdon, Governor of Madras, kindly consented to perform the ceremony.

For an account of this ceremony, we cannot do better than copy the St. Joseph's College Magazine, of July 1924:

"His Excellency Lord Willingdon laid the foundation stone of the Loyola College on Monday 10th March at 4-15 p.m., on the College grounds, Sterling Road, Nungambakam, in the presence of Lady Willingdon and of a distinguished gathering of ladies and gentlemen.

"The band of St. Patrick's Orphanage, Adyar, was in attendance. The ground plan showing the location of the College, with the situation of the hostels and playgrounds and a drawing showing the front elevation of the proposed building, were exhibited for the inspection of the public.

His Grace Archbishop Aelen could not be present, as his health was causing grave anxiety and his medical attendant had ordered him complete rest. His Grace blessed the stone privately on Saturday, 8th March. The site was blessed by the



of St. Joseph's, now in Europe, will form the foundation of the staff, and lay professors will complete it.

"We have also decided to fall in with the requirements of the new University Act as regards residence. The new College will be residential. We propose to house the students in cottages containing each about 30 single rooms, and we intend to build a few of these cottages in the course of the next academic year.

"If all goes well we hope to seek recognition in groups (i), (v) and (vi) of the B.A. Degree course, and to open this course in July 1925.

The new Institution is to be known as the Loyola College, Loyola being our family name, and one we may be permitted to be proud of.*

"It is at present under the general management of the Society of St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly. Being the child of St. Joseph's College, it will endeavour to conform to the traditions of the parent institution. What these traditions are it is superfluous to say: they are known to all. But I may mention one point in particular, viz., that although primarily intended for Catho-

lics, the new College will be open to students of all races, castes and creeds.

"In conclusion, we beg to offer our sincere thanks to Lady Willingdon for honouring us with her presence this evening, and to Your Excellency for so kindly consenting to perform the function. The presence of Lady Willingdon and Your Excellency on this occasion is, to us, not only a powerful encouragement to proceed with the arduous work we are taking in hand, but also an earnest of its successful completion. Our joy will be complete if Your Excellency will be so kind as to permit us to associate your name with one of the buildings of the nascent institution. I am sure all will agree that "Willingdon House" will be a most fitting and auspicious name for one of the future hostels."

"His Excellency then laid the foundation stone, and declared it well and truly laid. The stone is 3½ feet high, 2½ feet long, and 1 foot broad. Inside the foundation stone is placed a sealed packet containing one eight-anna coin and one two-anna coin of 1924, which were obtained from the Bombay Mint through the kind services of Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai. There is also a scroll enclosed, with the following inscription:"

* Loyola was the family name of St. Ignatius, a Spanish Knight and the founder of the Society of Jesus. The family castle of Loyola still exists; it is situated on the southern slope of the Pyrenees and now serves as a training house for the young religious of the Order.



I. H. S.

In the year of Our Lord

One thousand nine hundred and twenty-four,

the Tenth Day of March,

His Holiness Pope Pius XI,

AND

His Majesty King George V,

Emperor of India,

gloriously reigning;

during the term of office of

His Paternity Włodimirus Ledochowski,

General of the Society of Jesus;

His Excellency the Right Honourable

Rufus Daniel Earl of Reading,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India;

THIS FOUNDATION STONE

of the

LOYOLA COLLEGE, MADRAS,

was blessed by

His Grace the Most Rev.- J. Helen,

Archbishop of Madras,

and laid by

His Excellency the Right Honourable

Sir freeman freeman-Thomas

Baron Willingdon of Ratton,

Governor of Madras,

in the presence of

The Lady Willingdon.

May God have them all in His safe keeping.

A. M. D. G.



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“His Excellency, before delivering his his speech, expressed on his own behalf and on behalf of all those present, deep regret at the absence of His Grace the Archbishop of Madras owing to ill-health, and hoped sincerely that he might be restored to complete health. His Excellency then said:”

“FATHER BERTRAM, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

“I deem it a great honour and privilege to have been invited by you, to take a principal part to-day in this important ceremony, and to lay the foundation stone of the Loyola College, which I hope may become in future years a very important addition to the constituent colleges under the University of Madras. Let me add that I much appreciate the suggestion you made, Father Bertram, in your speech, that my name should be associated with this great educational project by having one of your students' hostels called after me. I gratefully accept the compliment you wish to pay me, and am glad to feel that my name will be associated with the great work of your Mission, which has done such immense service towards the educational advance of our people both in our Presidency and throughout the country. (*Applause*).

“You will have listened, I am sure, Ladies and Gentlemen, with great interest to Father Bertram's account of the history of this project; and I warmly congratulate you on having acquired this fine site for the purposes of your College. It is perfectly true that the University Act which was passed last year will have far-reaching consequences throughout our

Presidency, consequences which I profoundly hope and believe may be of immense advantage to the education of our people. I look forward to the time, and I trust it is not far distant, when we shall have two or three other great University centres in other parts of his Presidency, and (this to my mind is an essential concomitant of progress in University life), a really comprehensive and consistent policy of development in our elementary, secondary, and higher education, in order to secure a co-ordination of all the branches of our educational system. I happen to know that my Hon'ble colleague, the Education Minister, is busily engaged in working out a policy on these lines; but our difficulty at present, as you tell me yours is with regard to this project, is largely a question of finance. Still I am always an optimist, and I believe that before long financial light will shine through the clouds, and that Government will be able to make a great advance in this all-important matter; and I think I may say that this optimism is shared by the members of your Mission to-day, and I wish to congratulate you very warmly on the fact, that notwithstanding your difficulties in regard to finance, you are readily undertaking this further responsibility by the institution of an entirely new college in Madras, besides continuing up to its high standard of work and learning your fine college at Trichinopoly (of my visit to which I have still a very keen and vivid recollection), and working towards its possible development in the future into a constituent college of a new University in that town.

“But I am convinced that if this advance is to come, particularly in regard

to the establishment of Universities, we must to some extent rely here as in other countries on generous endowments from private individuals, who wish to help forward the educational welfare of their fellow-countrymen. Even now the formation of an Andhra University is awaiting the promise of some generous endowments and an amicable settlement among those in authority as to the most suitable location of the first new University for the Telugus. I gratefully acknowledge such help as has been given in the past by generous donors in the cause of education, but I want to see more evidence of a sense of public spirit in our Presidency, a greater realisation by those who are placed in a position of authority and responsibility, either by the votes of their fellow-citizens which have placed them on any public body to represent them, or by the fact of their having a great hereditary tradition and prestige, or again by the fact of the possession of wealth, that Providence never intended any one of us only to look after our own selfish interests and advancement, but during the short time our lives last, to do all we can according to our opportunities to help forward the general benefit of the whole community among whom we live. It is only by getting rid of all personal jealousies and rivalries, by taking a larger view of our duties to the people, that public spirit will satisfactorily develop, and that, in the cause of education, Universities will be established largely through private benefactions in various parts of our Province, with constituent colleges thoroughly efficiently equipped so as to give the best educational advantages to

the students. My great regret is that it is this as in so many other great projects that are on the threshold of development I shall not be amongst you to help forward its satisfactory progress. But, believe me, my spirit will be with you in all you do, and perhaps before many years are passed I may appear again in the flesh, and have an opportunity of meeting the students of your College at Loyola and, I hope, of receiving an equally friendly welcome to that which I very vividly call to mind, when I met all your students in your great hall of St. Joseph's College at Trichinopoly'. (*Applause*).

“In once more thanking you for your courtesy in inviting me here to-day to take part in this ceremony, I trust that the Loyola College may in future years advance from strength to strength, and become of great value towards increasing the efficiency of our educational life under the Madras University.’ (*Applause*).

“Light refreshments were then served to the guests, and His Excellency and Lady Willingdon left the place amidst loud cheers.”

We were enjoying the sweet reminiscences of that glorious 10th March when, lo! a notice arrived from the Madras Corporation to the effect that we were to be included within the Madras City boundaries. Simultaneously we were presented with a building license bill for Rs. 887, a trifle, no doubt, for such a great honour.

Materials were at once ordered and collected on the grounds. In May in a gentle heat of 108° F, Father

and you get between alternative rooms a small recess which requires very little to be made into a balcony, and with these balconies you can do without verandahs. Instead of terraces, build small vaults, and you can do without teak joists. The problem was solved, and the result was the Balcony Hostel or Block No. 1, as it is now called, one admittedly not without its good points. In fact it is the most popular of all the blocks.

If so, why did we not build more hostels of that type?

For reasons which will appear later.

At the same time, the four mess-rooms, each with kitchen attached, the water tank with bathing rooms under it, and the latrines, were built; the football and the hockey fields, a tennis court and a badminton court were got ready. The water pipes were laid and the electric fittings were fixed up. We had to hurry up at the end of June; the thousand and one details required for starting College and hostels all pressed for attention at the same time, but Father Gross, who had succeeded Father Sauthier in August 1924, was able to face them all—one wondered how such energy could dwell in such a small body!

Worse than the material work and its manifold details was the anxiety about money. The funds ran out more than once, and more than once, during the last six months, the word went forth from Madras to Trichinopoly: 'No money! I stop work at the end of the week.' Money came, just the amount required,

no more, not in large sums but in dribbles. Almighty God did 'help us, but did not spoil us.

In spite of difficulties, the College and hostels were ready in time. They were blessed by His Grace the Archbishop on day 5th July and the next day the college was opened.

When last year on 10th March you announced the College would be opened in July 1925," said a District Medical Officer who had brought his nephew for admission." I said you could never do it in one year; you would take two or three years. You have done it."

The Staff of the new College had been constituted:—

Rev. G. Foreau, S.J., Rector, who was also to take Logic; Rev. F. Bertram, S.J., Principal; Professors of English: Father H. J. Quinn, S.J., the veteran from Trichinopoly, who had long expressed himself as more than ready to come to Madras, and Father L. D. Murphy, S.J., M.A. (Oxon), fresh from England; Professor of Mathematics, Mr. N. Sundaram Ayyar, M.A., from Trichinopoly; he was to do the work single-handed, pending the arrival of his old teacher, Father L. Vion, S.J.; Professor of Economics, Father Basenach, S.J., B.Sc., fresh from the School of Economics, London, but, before the war, Professor in St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly; Professor of Politics and Modern History, Father H. Burrows, S.J., M.A., (Cantab), fresh from England. Mr. T. S. Subramanya Ayyar, M.A. (Cantab) of St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, took up Indian History and Constitutional History

Sauthier could be seen on the site, with a surveyor, taking levels, measuring and tracing the buildings on the grounds.

It was decided to build first only the northern half of the College, with two floors and two hostels. The foundations were dug, and on the 5th August 1914, the first basketful of "jelly" was thrown into the gaping trenches, 8 feet deep and 4 feet broad. The work proceeded rapidly, save for a few heavy storms in September, which flooded the two trenches, corresponding to the eastern verandah and wall, along the present Library and Economics Room. But we had just bought a small motor pump; it was brought on to the spot and the flooded trenches were emptied in less than half an hour.

By December 1924, the College building had risen to the roof of the first floor; the columns of the upper verandah could be seen standing out against the sky. The masons, coming down from their scaffolding, would turn back, stand, and look at their work with evident feelings of satisfaction. Every day, after 4 p.m., there was a stream of visitors—a sign that the public were watching the growth of the building with keen interest.

The two tower-hostels were also well on way. But it then occurred to us that two blocks, with 72 rooms, might possibly not be enough for the first year. To be on the safe side, it was deemed wise to build another block, and a third house was accordingly designed and started in January 1925. This third block is the one near the railway line, known as the Balcony Hostel. It contains 28 rooms. Why was it built there? And why was such a design adopted?

The first block (or the Aelen Hostel) was built at a certain distance from the railway line because we already then knew that the railway track was to be doubled and the railway company would take a strip of land along our western boundary. What the breadth of the strip would be we did not know, and it was considered safe to leave a margin of about 150 feet on the west. But by January 1925, definite information was obtained that the strip required would not exceed 30 feet, and the railway engineer of the Madras Circle was even kind enough to have it demarcated at once. It was then found that there would remain about 120 feet of vacant land to the west of the Aelen Hostel. It was a pity not to utilize it.

On the other hand, the tower-hostels were found to be somewhat expensive, chiefly on account of the amount of teak they required. We were anxious to find a different type of building, compact enough to fit in the space available, and less expensive. The problem was—as far as possible, do without verandahs and without wood, except for the doors and windows. Another point was that the rooms in the tower-hostels were 10 x 8 ft. Now a comfortable room must be much longer than broad. Rooms with length and breadth in the proportion of 3 to 2 were considered preferable to rooms 10 x 8. Accordingly, and bearing in mind the fact that the Educational Rules require a floor space of 80 sq. ft. for a single room, we decided to adopt $11\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ for the dimensions of our new rooms.

Now arrange the rooms in one row alternately lengthwise and breadthwise

Father Saulière, S.J., was to teach French, and to be in charge of the Library and hostels.

Mr. A. Singarayar was to be in charge of the Office, a work for which he had been trained for two years in St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, by the model of head clerks, Mr. S. Mariasusai Pillai.

Seventy-five students were enrolled in the Junior B.A. class in July 1925. Some came, not without misgivings. One of them, poor Peddada Venkata Rao, when he came to the Principal for admission, asked: "Sir, can we trust this college?"

The question, in spite of the implications it contained, was so ingenuous, was put with such manifest candour and naïveté, that the Principal could not help laughing. "What do you mean?" he asked the questioner. "Well, Sir, you see, it is a new college. Will it go on?" "Don't fear. You will get through your course in it all right."

In fact he did not, but through no fault of the College. But there were perhaps some others who shared his doubts, though not his candour.

And a right good sort were our first batch of 75 (soon reduced to 70), the pioneers, the foundation stones of the College, and right conscious and proud were they of their importance, as foundation stones. For one year they formed a happy family, and they established in the College and in the hostels a tone, and started traditions which we hope to see perpetuated.

These sunny beginnings were suddenly clouded by a tragedy. On 28th July morning, a frightfully mangled body was found on the railway bridge over the Coom, near by, hanging between the sleepers. It was our poor Peddada Venkata Rao. This unhappy boy had, the previous night, with a cold deliberation and a courage which make one shudder, laid his body across the rails, to be crushed by a night train, and had thus put an end to his own life. And, lest there should be any doubt about his intention, or any suspicion of foul play, he had taken care to put in his breast pocket a paper written in his own hand and addressed to the Principal, explicitly stating his intention of taking away his own life, and giving his last instructions. The paper was found on his body after his death.

When the gloom of this sad event had been dispelled, we bethought ourselves of a formal and ceremonial opening of the College. We had just been recognized as a constituent college of the Madras University (September 1925), and, after protracted negotiations and discussions, the Government was about to place the College building with the two tower-hostels on the list of approved works, thus making it eligible for a half grant.

On Monday, 12th October, Sir. A. P. Patro, then Minister for Education, solemnly inaugurated the institution, at a function attended by a large and distinguished gathering of visitors, come in spite of the most forbidding weather.

Sir. A. P. Patro had, from the first, espoused the cause of the new College and

declared himself its uncompromising patron. And there was merit in his doing so; for, at that time, owing to financial stringency, retrenchment was the order of the day, and the Government were unwilling to accept fresh commitments. In spite of adverse circumstances, Sir. A. P. Patro stood by us, and finally obtained for us the long delayed approval. We wish to place on record our great obligation to him and our keen appreciation of all he did for us. It is no exaggeration to say that under Providence, the College owes its existence to Sir A. P. Patro.

The end of 1925 was marked by abnormally heavy rains. The grounds were flooded, not so much by the rain that fell on them, as by a torrential overflow of the waters accumulated on the west of the railway line. We had made some drains already, in advance of the season, but they were out of all proportion to a flood of such magnitude. Good will, however, and cheerfulness, were not damped by the weather. One could see at times the Warden with some boys, mattock in hand, digging drains, building embankments; and these extemporized pioneers could boast of having materially relieved the situation. But there was rain and still more rain. The residents were finally marooned in their hostels. There was nothing for it but close the College, which we did more than a week in advance of scheduled time. As usually happens in such cases, the boys were hardly gone when the rains ceased and fine weather set in.

We were yet with only half the College built, and we had to think of the coming year. The portion already constructed could accommodate two B.A.

classes, but what about the Intermediate? It was now beyond doubt that the Intermediate was to continue as a University course, as heretofore, and we could no longer think of confining ourselves to the B.A. classes. An application for recognition in Intermediate groups (i) and (iii) was accordingly put in at the end of 1925, and we had to bethink ourselves of completing the College building and of enlarging the hostels.

The Government very kindly consented to give us a part of the grant corresponding to the work already done and, with this assistance, building operations were resumed late in 1925. Jupiter Pluvius, however, seemed somehow to have fallen out with us, and he apparently took a malignant delight in thwarting the work. No sooner had we opened a trench to lay foundations than a storm was sure to break out which filled it with water and caused the mud walls to fall in. But our resolve was not going to be damped by the doings of Sir Jupiter. One by one, the water-logged trenches were cleared and properly filled in. With some delay, the building was ready at the beginning of the academic year 1926-27.

The College building was finished, but there was neither time nor funds to construct more hostels. The number of students was sure to increase in July 1926, probably up to something like 300. Where were they going to be accommodated? The situation was alarming. The only thing possible and imaginable was to put up temporary sheds. Accordingly, in June, four or five sheds were hurriedly put up.

In the meanwhile, Father L. Vion S.J. had returned from Europe with the degree of *Licencié-ès-Sciences Mathématiques* of the Paris University and the unique experience of having gone through the whole war. Father Foreau, S.J., the Rector and Professor of Logic, whose health had never been satisfactory, had to give up teaching, and his place was temporarily filled by Mr. C. L. Sebastian, B.A. Messrs. K. D. Joseph, B.A., and V. N. Ramaratnam, B.A., L.T., were added to the staff as English tutors, V. Somasundaram, M.A., as Physics Professor, with M. K. R. Rangachari, B.A., as Demonstrator, and Mr. R. Viraraghava Sarma, B.A., as Chemistry Lecturer, Mr. L. N. Govindarajan, B.A., (Hons.) as Economics Tutor.

The College reopened on 1st July. Boys came rolling in: "I want a room in the hostels." The words rang in our ears constantly for days—"A room in the hostels—a room in the hostels." But all the available rooms were soon filled and the words still went on ringing: "A room in the hostels." Every inch of room all over the place was requisitioned, and still the old demand came: "A room in the hostels." Finally, we had to say "No more room in the hostels." The demand stopped, and with it the candidates for admission. We had reached a total of 280, *viz.*, 102 in the I U.C., 104 in III U.C., and 74 in IV U.C.

But Providence just then smiled on us—one of those heavenly encouraging smiles which seemed to say: "Go on, It is all right; you will get through. Cheerio!"

Just at the reopening, we received from Rome a donation of Rs. 10,000,

and on 3rd July the first sod was cut in the place where was to rise the fourth hostel block. On 1st November the new hostel was occupied. The Catholic students, the Warden at their head, migrated into it and gave up the rooms they occupied in the three old blocks. The pressure was somewhat relieved, but not completely, and the mischief done by want of accommodation in July was not repaired.

The new block differs from the old ones in many respects, and these differences were dictated partly by the special object which it was to serve, partly by experience. First of all we wanted a special hostel for Catholics, in which there could be a chapel. Then it was thought desirable to have a few large rooms which could accommodate several students, either such as desired to live in company, or such as had reasons to cut down their expenses. Again, a few large rooms were required for the dispensary, the hostel office, the Warden, etc. To meet all these requirements, the new hostel was built with two wings, each 40 x 15. The Chapel occupies the whole length on the first floor of the eastern wing. The Warden occupies a room 25 x 15 on the first floor of the western wing. The rest of the space in the wings is divided into rooms 15 x 12 each.

The central part of the hostel consists of a single row of ten rooms, each $11\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. The three old hostels consist of two rows of rooms with a central corridor. Why this difference between the old and the new hostels? The old hostels had not been long in use before complaints were heard that one row of

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