

HMI Report of the Edinburgh Free Church Normal College for 1858

Extracted from the report by HMI of Schools James Cumming Esq LLD:

“The whole number of students enrolled from October 1857 to December 1858 was 213, namely, 110 male students and 103 female.”

The staff employed were:

James Sime, Esq, MA, Rector (also taught Religious Knowledge)

Miss Femina Stevenson, Lady Superintendent

Rev. P Steele MA, Lecturer on Grammar and English Literature, and Teacher of Latin and Greek

Mr Gilbert Graham, Lecturer on History and Geography

Mr David Sime, Lecturer on Physical Science (Physical Geography and Astronomy) and Teacher of Mathematics

Mr Thomas G Dick, Lecturer on Method (including School Management)

Miss Mary M'Donald, Governess, Teacher of Domestic Economy

Miss Ellen Cooper, Governess, Teacher of Sewing

Mr D F Surene and Miss Ashworth, Teachers of Drawing

Mr W Strang, Teacher of Music

Mr Jules Kunz, Teacher of French

“...I may observe that the religious instruction of the senior male students has a special reference to the epistle indicated in the syllabus. It is read in the original Greek, three or four verses being prescribed for a lesson....”

I have heard specimens of lectures (by the Rector) both on Scripture and on ecclesiastical history, and while the former were characterized by an intelligent but reverent spirit of criticism, and the latter by an extensive knowledge of the subject, both were given with much perspicacity and animation, keeping up the interest of the hearers, and likely to be retained in their remembrance. Every lesson given by the students, ...is criticised, in the presence of others, by the rector or the master of method. The practice of allowing the students to make remarks on each other's teaching has been continued for several years.

For the purpose of training the students to draw up notes of lessons, a fortnightly exercise is prescribed to be done at home. Besides the object expressly in view, this serves at the same time as an exercise in English composition.

The principles both of pure and applied mathematics, are illustrated by many examples not contained [in the text books]. The students are also taught to work with the theodolite, the barometer, and other instruments. ... The principles of chemistry are taught practically in the laboratory.

On the whole, the institution seems to me to be in a state of great activity and health.”