

## ***Sir Fred Clarke: a Reappraisal of his early years 1880-1911***

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### ***Abstract***

*Frank Mitchell's biography of Sir Fred Clarke, one of the most influential British educationists of the first half of the twentieth century, was published in 1967. This article by Claudia Clarke draws upon previously unknown material and her own recollections to provide new insights into her father's personal and professional lives and to modify Mitchell's account. Clarke's early career is examined from his education in Oxford through posts at York and Southampton to his appointment as Professor of Education in Cape Town in 1911.*

### ***The Limitations of Mitchell's Biography***

In the 1960s Professor Frank Mitchell, an Australian and former Carnegie Fellow at the London Institute of Education, was commissioned to write a biography of Sir Fred Clarke. He arrived in England on sabbatical leave from the University of Otago and contacted the Clarke family as part of his research. He mentions frequently the lack of information about the early life of his subject; though he consulted much published material from the South African years onwards. Edith Clarke, Fred's wife, was still alive. She was 85, her health was deteriorating and she did not want the details of their early life unearthed. In the circumstances we all had to respect her wishes. The reason for her reticence was probably on account of our convict ancestor.<sup>1</sup> Fred's great uncle, William Clarke, of Weston-on-the-Green, Oxfordshire, was transported to Australia in 1843 for a crime he did not commit. His mother, Sarah Clarke, was too poor to travel the 9 miles into Oxford to get him out of jail. He was clearly literate as letters from him asking for books to be sent for the voyage have survived. Other relatives followed him to Australia on assisted passages. In 1935, during a tour of Australia sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Fred 'met a large gathering of Clarke relatives at Kyogle' and stayed the night at Bean Tree Grove, a farm of the descendants of his uncle

George, who had emigrated in 1859 at the age of 12.<sup>2</sup> Mitchell's work contains a few errors of fact but its most important deficiency is the dependence on published material. His assessment of Fred Clarke might well have been different if he had had access to the large archive of private papers which have since come to light.

For a full assessment of Fred Clarke the personal letters are important in two ways. The weekly chronicle of events that he maintained about political, social, ecclesiastical and educational events complements the published material which was Mitchell's main source. Copious letters to my mother during his frequent absences from home about our upbringing reveal a man who knew a lot about children, who was a devoted and understanding father of his own children and a man of deep sensitivity. For example, in 1914 he set up a group of teachers for 'Child Study' and he inveighed against adults who demanded 'obedience' the whole time.<sup>3</sup> His ideal teacher was 'a trained ambassador to the kingdom of childhood'. He wanted children to be free to be themselves, though they were not to be discipline free. In 1914 he included a carefully printed letter to 'Daddy's Little Rogue' with each one to his wife. As a child I remember receiving little rhymes about the doings of my dolls. The innumerable articles written for different journals provided the fees for our education.<sup>4</sup> In South Africa the family was educated at a state school, Good Hope Seminary, which my father used as a practising school. He did not think much of the independent girls' school run by the Church though he worked closely with the headmaster of Bishops, the Anglican boys' school, who was a personal friend. In England and Canada we were all educated in independent schools. He knew too much about the state of the maintained schools to risk sending us to them. This side of my father's character is not at all apparent in Mitchell's account of the professor who lectured on the philosophy of education and struggled with the problems of educational administration.

### *The Family Trunk*

In the summer of 1964 my mother asked me to go through a large wooden box, full of letters and papers packed in the newspapers of September 1939. We called it 'the camp box' because it had been used to transport provisions for the riverside camping holidays my parents enjoyed in their youth. I found hundreds of letters as well as passenger lists of Union Castle liners and other papers relating to our lives. My mother had kept everything my father ever wrote to her including the

envelopes, so I was able to classify the letters according to where she was when she received them.<sup>5</sup> Even at this time she told me little of her early life, though I questioned her about it. For instance, when I went to teach in Tottenham in 1948 she never told me she had lived there herself. I learnt that from my uncle. When Professor Mitchell arrived in 1965 I was sometimes able to find the answers to his questions in my father's handwriting. Most of these questions referred to the later years in South Africa. I was not able to initiate my own research because at the time I was a very busy senior lecturer in music at Goldsmiths College in London.

Edith Clarke died in 1968, a few months after Mitchell's biography was published. I did not touch the letters again until the late 1990s when Professor Richard Aldrich contacted the family in connection with his work on the centenary history of the London Institute of Education. He sent me an article by Peter Kallaway,<sup>6</sup> which spurred me to think more about the letters and realise that there was still an interest in my father's work. Kallaway hosted a trip that I made to South Africa in 2002 and introduced me to the history and education professors at Cape Town University. I was also able to consult the university archives. My sister Anna asked if I was 'going to produce the definitive biography of Daddy'. That seemed impossible, given my age, but Howard Phillips, the historian of Cape Town University, suggested that I edit my father's letters and that task is now complete.

### *An Oxford Education*

The young Fred Clarke was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. Census records of 1891 reveal that the Clarke family were always on the move. The oldest children were born either at Weston or at Bicester, the nearby town where his mother was born. Another was born at Nuneham while my father was born at High Cogges farm near Witney. The records show that the family moved to Oxford when he was about six years old.<sup>7</sup> He attended St. Ebbe's School located in the poorest and most unhealthy part of the city<sup>8</sup>.

In June 1891, a sub-committee of the Technical Instruction Committee of the Oxford City Council, recommended the establishment of a school to promote 'artistic, scientific, commercial and industrial subjects', with the secretary to the Committee, Mr.A.F.Kerry, as headmaster.<sup>9</sup> The school was duly established and the number of students grew rapidly. An entry in a handwritten notebook records that

Fred Clarke, of 21 Paradise Square, was enrolled in 1893 in a class for 'Elementary French'.<sup>10</sup> In 1895 he gained a prize for 'Perspective, Elementary'. In 1894 he became the pupil teacher at St. Ebbe's Boys School and met Edith Gillams, the pupil teacher in the Girls' School. The earliest written record in the large archive of private papers is a piece of paper dated October 1894. Algebraic calculations in Fred's handwriting and lists of literary works to be read in Edith's show the start of a co-operation that was to last until his death in 1952.<sup>11</sup> The pupil teachers taught all day and then had special lessons at the Central School in the late afternoon and for three hours on Saturdays.<sup>12</sup> A tattered history book called '*For Students preparing for local Examinations*' contains comments in the handwriting of both my parents. In 1895, 1896 and 1897 he gained first class certificates in Religious Knowledge for Pupil Teachers. The religious knowledge work was factual and intensive. Copies of *Helps to the Study of the Bible and Bible Illustrations prepared by the Senior Antiquities Staff at the British Museum* have survived. Fred must have gained his knowledge of Latin and Greek, essential at that time for entry to Oxford University, from the local Anglican clergy. Both subjects were certainly not part of the pupil teacher curriculum. Is it any wonder that he remained a devout High Church Anglican all his life?<sup>13</sup>

Fred and Edith both sat the scholarship examination for entry to training college in December 1898. The log book of the Girls' School records that Edith was given one week's leave of absence to prepare for it. The log book of the Boys' school has not survived. Edith's work improved and by 1897 she had moved from second to first class in Religious Knowledge. The inspectors' records of her teaching showed steady improvement. It might be argued that she was Fred's first student.

### ***Oxford Day Training College and Oxford University***

At the same time as the Oxford City Council was planning a technical school, Oxford University was planning a day training college for elementary school teachers. The leading spirit was the Rev. Canon H.S. Barnett of Wadham, the rector of a parish in Whitechapel and the founder of Toynbee Hall, the first university settlement in the East End of London.<sup>14</sup> During the 1880s he persuaded his colleagues to run a vacation course for elementary school teachers 'to foster communication between the cultured and the ignorant'. Dr. Pope, the Censor of St.

Catherine's Society, is reported to have said 'Dear me! The teachers do want to be sent on the quest of the Holy Grail. They are so cocky and ignorant'. Giving evidence to the Royal Commission in 1894 he said he had heard 'lectures on the art of teaching given to elementary schoolmasters that consisted of a mass of commonplaces expressed in very elaborate language'. Until the 1890s the main providers of training for elementary school teachers were the churches and their colleges were mostly residential.

The Oxford Day Training College was established in 1892 and governed by a Delegacy of College principals and the Censor of St. Catherine's Society. Dr Pope was its first tutor and secretary. 'The men selected from the First Class Queen's Scholars, who were the cream of the pupil teachers, were all matriculated members of the university and members of the colleges or non-collegiate society.'<sup>15</sup> Fred entered the College and the University of Oxford as a non-collegiate student in 1899. He was given an extension to three and later to four years in his studies. He was able to live at home and, as his fees were covered entirely by scholarships, he did not have to ask his mother for money.<sup>16</sup> His attitudes towards financial matters are revealed in a letter to Edith written in June 1921:

Janitor Browne's child Kathleen, I discovered had left school after St. VI much as her mother wanted to keep her on. So the child was sent to the Gardens evening school in every way unsuitable. I tried to push the School Board into giving a free concession at one of the new Secondary Schools (I had got Mrs Browne to send the child there pending a decision) Now although Browne has but £20 a month and a house, 9 children (only one earning) and Mrs. Browne has to work away at sewing for other folk to get enough to feed and clothe them all, the Board refused. So I just sent a stiff letter and told them that as a protest against legalized waste of precious years I would take responsibility for the fees myself and I have sent a cheque straight away. I fancy it will tickle 'em up and there may be a row, which I shall welcome. What attracts me to that family is its startling resemblance to my own. The same dreamy easygoing unbusinesslike father. The same size of family. The same sort of mother, the real business manager running the show and sitting up sewing to the small hours in order to supplement the resources. The fee is only £1.7.6 a term for the next three terms and it may not even be that if I catch the Board on the raw as I hope I have done. But it is because of my mother that I felt tempted to do it. I see her and her task all over again in Mrs Browne. Poor woman, she nearly broke down and they are such well behaved, well-fed and well dressed kiddies. <sup>17</sup>

Realising that the financial position of the students would be difficult, Barnett formed a Pupil Teachers' University Scholarship Committee which awarded a Toynbee Scholarship of £25 to supplement the Queen's Scholarship. The Government gave a grant of £10 per student per annum to the Delegacy and Oxford City Council gave an annual grant of £50. Nevertheless, the H. M. I. report for 1899 noted that

It is not easy to smooth the way of this college, for expenses are not light and the university contributes nothing at all, its general interest being rather tepid...On the other hand the interests of those who are closely connected with its administration, including the headmasters of the practising schools, cannot be too warmly acknowledged, and it may be said to be in a healthy condition.<sup>18</sup>

Fred was fortunate that his tutor in the University School of Modern History was Ernest Barker, who was only six years older than his student. Barker had come up through a similar route having won a scholarship to Manchester Grammar School and then another to Balliol College to read Greats. He was born in a village in Cheshire and his family had made sacrifices to help him study in Manchester.

My Non- Collegiate students were, for the most part of a steady tenacity of purpose and more than ordinary ability. Poorer generally in worldly goods than the men who belonged to colleges they showed a great passion for work and less diffusion of interest and if they had less gaiety they had also greater solidarity. It was early in my teaching, about the year 1903, when I was surprised and delighted – knowing their quality but hardly daring to hope – by the success of two of my non-collegiate pupils who were placed in the first class. One of these, afterwards Sir Fred Clarke, had a varied and notable career, starting in a little Oxfordshire village and passing through a training course for elementary teachers he became a professor at Cape Town, afterwards at Montreal and finally returned to England to become professor and Director of the Institute of Education at the University of London.<sup>19</sup>

Fred kept in touch with Barker until his death. It was probably Fred's Oxford tutors who showed him the advertisement for the South African post for which he applied in 1910.

Edith gained her teacher's certificate in 1901 and left Oxford to teach in Snowfields School in Bermondsey. Fred wrote to her almost every day. Some of her letters have survived and present a vivid and amusing account of the work of a young teacher in such a school. Mitchell only had access to Fred's timetables. The personal letters, which recorded Fred's daily activities both in the world of popular and upper class education, are essential for a full understanding of his later career.<sup>20</sup> In

the day training college he gained first class certificates at each stage of his work but he was clearly relieved when he had completed his final year at college.<sup>21</sup> He spent that summer vacation reading in the Radcliffe Camera for his modern history university course.<sup>22</sup> He considered taking the new diploma for secondary school teachers but decided against it. When the university term began in October he felt free to criticise the elementary school teacher curriculum:

It seems queer not to have to go back again to DTC work. Fancy... a free and independent student not chained down by a cast iron system nor subject to the whims and fancies of a Method Master. I do not want to waste this year and I want to enjoy it for I know I shall never get another like it <sup>23</sup>

When he began to prepare a paper on the early history of Oxford for the Historical Society, of which he was now secretary, he reflected on the time of year when the city was looking most beautiful.<sup>24</sup> Barker also encouraged him to read the novels of Balzac and in the spring of 1903 he and Edith had a short trip to Paris, chaperoned by Edith's uncle. A letter written that spring is interesting in view of his future career

And I too had yesterday what was practically an offer of a post £120 a year, with board, lodging and laundry etc all found. It sounds well doesn't it? Only it was for the Boys High School at Capetown. Rather a drawback that. South Africa is too far away and too doubtful a country to tempt me very much. They would hardly make such good offers if men were prepared to go in any numbers. Had it been Canada perhaps I might have given it a second thought, but I do not fancy South Africa. <sup>25</sup>

A few days later he wrote 'I have already told you some of the reasons that influenced me. I did not tell you all for you discovered them without my telling'.<sup>26</sup> During his final university examinations he and Edith wrote to each other daily. His letters to her detailed the examination questions and the ones he had answered.

You will probably think that I am purposely arranging these papers of questions in an ascending scale of incomprehensibility...I will probably go and see Barker one day this week and may go to see F. Benson tomorrow night in 'She stoops to Conquer'. <sup>27</sup>

Two days later, after admitting how much her letters had helped him he wrote '*I have joined the ranks of the unemployed.*'<sup>28</sup> That did not last for long. He spent the next few weeks at Sandford, a village east of Oxford, from where his brother Harry was moving to the headship of a new school. Fred and his sister Nell ran the school till the end of the summer

term. On 17 July he had a day off from Sandford to attend his *viva* in Oxford. He began yet another letter with this verbatim account.

Well Mr Clarke, the examiners wish to congratulate you on your papers. They consider that no other papers in the Schools show such a high general level of goodness...the examiners remark must mean I suppose that if I do not get a First none will be given and that of course is out of the question. Single papers may have been better than corresponding ones of mine but, taken together mine seem to have equalled – or more than any in the 168 sets’.

When the examiners’ beamed at him he began to feel ‘uncomfortably good boyish’ and after answering a few questions he was released. He then went straight to see his tutor who

was delighted and after a talk he made a suggestion to me which at first took my breath away. But soon I saw something in it. I walked down to the Delegacy thinking about it, saw the Censor. He then spoke about the same thing that Barker had suggested taking practically the same vein. Now what this suggestion is you shall know when we meet. But beyond official and Varsity people you alone will know what it is. For I want it to be kept a profound secret.<sup>29</sup>

What his secret was will never be known, but it is likely that it was the offer of a teaching post at York.

### *St John’s Diocesan Training College, York.*<sup>30</sup>

St John’s was an old established Church of England training college which had recently had unsatisfactory reports from government inspectors. The Rev. E.T. Nottingham, appointed principal in 1898 at the age of 31, had been given the task of reforming it and setting higher standards. He was a classical scholar from Cambridge and fully aware of the need to use the Model School attached to the college, as part of the process of reform. When the highly efficient Master of Method left in 1903, Nottingham needed a new member of staff who was both a competent and trained elementary school teacher, a university graduate who could raise the standard of academic work among the students and who could also give demonstration lessons in the Model School. He probably contacted relevant departments in both Oxford and Cambridge to look for a suitable person. Fred did not apply formally for the post.

He arrived in York on the evening of 28 September 1903, and promptly established himself as a trainer of teachers. Living away from home for the first time he felt the separation from Edith and his family



deeply, but he was so busy that he had little time to reflect on it. A letter of 7 October lists his daily timetable which started at 7 am and finished with lights out at 10.30 pm. Saturdays were also busy as he was on duty throughout the evening. Sunday afternoon was the best time for writing letters.

There is quite enough work in the Normal Department for two, if the work is to be done thoroughly. And I am told that the inspectors have more than once pressed the committee to appoint an assistant. Sooner or later they will be compelled to do so, but meanwhile I must do what I can to supervise as closely as I am able. Thanks to a good Master and assistants in the Model School, the school practice goes on very well, even though I cannot attend to it as fully and thoroughly as I should like.<sup>91</sup>

It was indeed a demanding post with residential duties and school practice supervision, as well as demonstration lessons and a full weekly programme of lectures. An amusing sidelight on conditions in the public education system in England at the start of the last century is found in the formal notification of Fred's qualified teacher status. It was dated from 1904 when he had already been successfully training teachers for more than a year. Mitchell states 'little is on record concerning his short period of only two and a half years at York' (p.14). On the contrary, the almost daily chronicle which he sent to Edith, now teaching at St. Ebbe's Boys School in Oxford, provides a lively account of those years. Examination papers and concert programmes have survived and show the standard of work that was expected.

Fred worked closely with J.L. Brockbank, the head of the Model School, who became a lifelong friend and married Edith's closest friend, Hetty Tyrrell. Fred was also very friendly with the vice principal, a clergyman who was also the incumbent of a country parish near York. Fred would cycle over to join the choir of this country church, singing tenor if it was not too high. He had a light baritone voice and enjoyed choral singing. Mitchell claimed that 'he was no athlete'. That is correct, but he did enjoy rowing. He set up a rowing club at St. John's and also cycled everywhere within reasonable distance of where he was living. He was also prepared to cycle all the way from Southampton to Oxford. In South Africa he played golf and also enjoyed many evenings playing bridge. The latter was a common recreation for the staff of the South African College, but when he was examining at Stellenbosch University, the puritanical nature of the place precluded such entertainment. In Oxford when the river froze he enjoyed skating. At York he was also responsible for organising college sports. It was during those years that

he found his true vocation but constant residential duties and the lack of privacy proved increasingly irksome.

The election fever of January 1906 and the fall of the Conservative government seem to have gripped everyone, especially those concerned with education and the role of the Church in the provision of schooling and the training of teachers. Fred was especially depressed by the quality of some of the men he was expected to train as teachers. A letter written in late January provides evidence of his growing awareness of what his vocation was to be:

The longer I stay at this work, the more do I see the utter uselessness of some of the half-baked clods that want to become 'teachers' in nothing but name. 'Tis strong speaking I know, but one is angry not so much with the men themselves (who often cannot help it.) but with the system that allows such useless lumber to get in the way, spoil children and make the public believe they are teachers. ..The longer I go on, the more clearly do I see that this is the line of work marked out for me and I want to take all the opportunities I can of making myself better fitted for it.<sup>92</sup>

He foresaw possible changes in legislation from the new government which might affect the church training colleges and a few weeks later applied for the post of Professor of Education at Hartley College, Southampton, although he did not know anyone there and thought he had little chance of getting it. He was interviewed on 20 February 1906, and afterwards sent a telegram to Edith to tell her he had been appointed. He was 25 years old. On arriving back in York he asked the principal to waive the usual three months' notice but was unable to leave until the end of March. The York students gave him a rousing send off and presented him with an ornate marble clock as a token of their esteem. He stayed one night at Oxford and then went on to Southampton to meet the staff and assess the situation there before the spring term ended. He was thus able to reflect during the Easter vacation on what had to be done at the start of the summer term.

### *Hartley College, Southampton:* <sup>93</sup>

The official history of the University of Southampton was Mitchell's main source for these years. Temple Patterson glosses over the departure of Fletcher, Fred's predecessor, and summarises Fred's achievements in Southampton, but the letters to Edith provide a running commentary on the daily life of the College. In particular, they

detail the utter chaos in the education department when Fred arrived. His predecessor, who had either been asked to resign or had been dismissed, had not maintained the standards of Chapple, the first professor of education at Hartley. Chapple, a graduate from Aberystwyth, was only 22 years old when he was appointed. He left after a few years to take up a post in Argentina. There must have been difficulties in staffing education departments at that time as so few people were qualified. Scottish and Welsh universities provided some staff but most graduates of English universities had little or no knowledge of the elementary school system. Fred was one of very few graduates who had been trained in both college and university.

His reaction to the promotion was typical of his response to other appointments in his life. In South Africa he found a situation with great possibilities for development and he set to work quickly to make the most of them as the letter to Hetty Brockbank from Cape Town shows:

I had a long letter this morning from Miss Faye, the lady assistant at Southampton in answer to my enquiry for details of the work. To simplify matters as she puts it she says that things are in a state of muddle and proceeds to demonstrate very clearly that they are. Altogether I shall have plenty to do, but I want to be where the work is and the greater the confusion the more opportunity I shall have of asserting myself. There are 144 students altogether I hear.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise, on 4 April 1911, he wrote from the South African College, Cape Town:

It is a most remarkable change from Southampton both with respect to grasp of university problems and enthusiasm and unity of spirit. I shall have a much better position than I could have hoped for in England, as this is a capital city I shall be right in touch with the centre of things. In England I should have had small chance for constructive developing work. At best I could only look forward to comfortable routine. Everyone tells me I have a great chance here and if I find that is so I shall stay and take it up. How different a colony is from one's anticipation. Cape Town for example is more polished and cultured in its style and manners than any English town I know, even Oxford.<sup>35</sup>

Fred's appointment to Southampton meant that marriage was possible at last and the correspondence between Fred and Edith ends in August 1907. Edith was able to leave her teaching job and devote all her time to helping with her husband's work.

### *The Situation at Hartley College*

When Fred arrived in Southampton for the summer term he was briefed by a new colleague, who lived in the same house. It was clear from the start that there would be many worries associated with his new post:

After the style of work I have been used to at York, the practical teaching down here is enough to make me sick ...Already I can see that this job will be a heavier one than that at York. I am thrown on my own responsibility for decisions and measures, which were left to others there.<sup>36</sup>

For the first time in his life he was teaching girls and he had to adapt his style as he found they were very different from the male students.

It is rather a new experience to be supervising teaching in girls schools but, broadly the same conditions hold as in boys' schools and so I am not altogether strange. But I do occasionally put my foot in it. Still so far I like girls' schools, if only because there is an air of greater keenness and greater neatness about them. I had a visit on Thursday from a man on the Education staff who has been ill and is taking a year's rest- Maxwell. A very nice fellow, quiet and pleasant and I should say, rather a thinker by his style<sup>37</sup>

Maxwell's illness may have contributed to the chaos in the education department.

I have heard a good deal more about the trouble which disturbed the College a little while back. When I tell you that at the supreme head of affairs you have a Court of Governors, then a Council, then a Senate with the Principal and then the departmental Lecturers you can see that there is plenty of room for friction.<sup>38</sup>

For the first time Fred was in charge of a department, a member of the Senate, and able to see his department in the context of the College as a whole. The Principal often sought his advice and Fred played a much greater part in the general running of the College than he had ever been able to do from his relatively junior position at York. His first task was to deal with disgruntled students and he found support in this task from Miss Faye, the Lady Assistant.

I begin to see daylight through the chaos and by the end of term I shall be quite ready to make a real start next year. The Second years are the obstacle now. I shall do what I can for them, but the sooner they are shuffled off the better. I think I shall be able to work with Miss Faye very well...She is young, bright and cheerful and much liked by the students.<sup>39</sup>

Staff relations were not good and Fred deliberately cultivated interests outside college:

Life here would not be worth living without the power to become absorbed in one's reading, to enjoy without distraction the natural beauty of the county or to throw oneself entirely for the time being into the recreations and interests that claim one's attention. The principal himself is a melancholy example of inadequate power of this sort. He called on Monday evening at 8.30 just as I was settling down to a quiet read. He stayed on till midnight, and the whole time discussed nothing but the College and his personal relation to it. Poor man! The place seems to have taken entire possession of his mind, his time, his whole person....What a different man he might be if he could only have a letter like the one I had this morning and could sit down to write a reply like the one I am writing.<sup>40</sup>

He gained the Principal's complete confidence. There were a few other unmarried members of staff, but the Principal seems to have found that the new Professor of Education was someone he could trust and with whom he could share all his troubles. One consequence was that Fred became aware of the many problems facing the college and of how rapid his new promotion had been. The problems at the college were common knowledge in the town and relations with the Southampton Council were strained.

I feel more and more that I can do something to save this place from futility and failure and I mean to try, sink or swim. If I fail I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I have honestly tried. If I succeed, so much the better for me, and for you. I shall get plenty of help though there will be many difficulties. The worst of it is, that, owing to the continual squabbles. Hartley University College is fast becoming a byword in the town and district.<sup>41</sup>

Several days later he complained to Edith about his training as an elementary school teacher :

I want you if you will to send on that German reader. I am putting in such odd time as I can to get at some German for I want to be able to read it efficiently as soon as possible. Not a day passes but that I am penalized for the deficiencies of my earlier 'training'. How I should like now some of the hours I wasted in wearisomely doing the same sort of 'sums' over and over again, or in cramming in piles of lumber under the guise of the 'facts' of History and Geography. As a matter of fact my education did not begin until I was 18 and here am I lagging behind in attainment those who are no better endowed than I.<sup>42</sup>

A letter of early October reveals how he had to discipline some of the students.

Two women students (local) stand convicted of copying in the College Entrance Exam. I had overwhelming evidence but one of the two continued to deny her guilt in a most barefaced way and only with much pressure could we get at the truth. Then when all was clear they both broke down and there was a scene, but to find a girl persistently denying what she knew and we knew to be the truth was a painful enough experience for me. The whole tone of the Department needs raising and it must be raised too.<sup>43</sup>

Monday and yesterday were two of the most trying and worrying days I have ever had. No one except those who have tried it knows what it is to attend to such a multitude of details and distractions and yet to preserve one's patience and courtesy through it all. But for me I can see it is a case of now or never. I have a greater chance than has been offered to me hitherto and upon the work done in the next few months much of the future will depend. The work is at present hard, very hard, but I notice its difficulty the less in keeping steadily before me the ends I want to achieve. Then instead of seeing the difficulties of the means one sees rather the steady realization of the ends.<sup>44</sup>

Following his visit during the summer of 1906, Harrison, the HMI, visited the College again in mid October.

They turned up at 9 so I had to keep them going as well as give four lectures. Things in my own Department went well enough, but in other lectures to Day Training Students there were hitches, English and Chemistry, for example. This place is all so clumsily organized there seems to be inadequate foresight and inadequate grasp on the part of those who ought to plan its arrangements as a whole. That is just the difficulty; people cannot be led to take a broad view of the working and the interests of the College. There is much in the work of the last four weeks that is discouraging. Sometimes one is tempted to give way to disgust at the bungling, the futility and the getting in one another's way which are so common here. But there are also some encouraging signs and I think that by steadily acquiring some influence in every branch of College work I may be able to reduce it to order a little. I wish I could get rid of some of the pretentious futility of the place. The task is a big one and may be thankless enough. But I can feel myself getting stronger and I am determined to get something done. The inspectors come to me again tomorrow. I know they will have much to complain of and criticize. But I feel inclined to tell them plainly to give me a fair chance, not to carp and cavil but to stand out of the way, let me see what I can do, then pronounce upon it afterwards. It is the dogmatic way in which they pronounce judgments

after half an hour's observation that annoys me. I do not intend to swallow wholesale the remarks of Mr. Harrison or of anybody else.<sup>45</sup>

Matters came to a head in the autumn term of 1906 when another professor tried to curry favour with the students and deliberately challenged the Principal at a Senate meeting. Fred led a group of six out of the nine professors who supported the Principal and the next letter records that their motion was carried at a special Senate meeting. He was, however, under no illusion about the trouble this colleague would continue to generate.

I half imagine how some of the people here wonder how I keep going with such apparent ease. They would understand if they knew whence this strength comes, if they knew how much of my life is really yours. We had the Senate meeting on Thursday and settled Hearnshaw's account for this time. The motion to support the Principal's action was carried. Hearnshaw appeared but sat on the fence, not voting either way. Personally I would either have stayed away or would have come in order to support my previous action. But he did neither. He is not done with by any means for I am sure he is untiring in his efforts to make trouble. Still I think we can deal with him now. I am looking forward to a rather easier time now and so shall be able both to get out in the evening and to do a little work on my own lines.<sup>46</sup>

After six months at Hartley College, Fred was able to identify the main source of the disruption. He was then able find a constitutional means of supporting authority and dealing with it. This was the first incident in his life to be recorded in such detail and it showed his power of leadership. There were to be many occasions later, especially in South Africa, when this quality was evident. His refusal to compromise with anything which he considered unethical was to prove one of the main reasons why eventually he had to leave South Africa.

In spite of all the work involved in relations with the staff and the Town Council,

Fred managed to establish good relations with the students.

Would you send me my '*Gaudeamus*' (a song book of student songs). I have been elected president of the students' choral society and I want the men to sing the chorale of Browning's. I shall be very glad to have a voice in questions affecting students' music. In addition to that mentioned I am the Vice Pres. of the Old Students Association, on the committee of the local Record Society and of the Teachers Guild, on the N.U T and helping to form a branch of the new Historical Association.<sup>47</sup>

I understand I may be nominated as the first president of the Historical Association. Hearnshaw is suggesting it and unfortunately one has to watch his suggestions. Should I be elected I shall do all I can to get a settled policy for the Association as soon as possible and get it to work for a reform.<sup>48</sup>

I was duly elected president of the New Historical Association.<sup>49</sup>

He was also asked to take the chair at student debates and to take an active part in them.

I opened the debate on Friday on the motion that 'The drama has greater influence than any other form of literature'. Hearnshaw opposed and we had quite an interesting time. Very few students joined in for they rather preferred to see the two professors going for each other. We had all the Puritans against us and lost by 56 votes to 44. But I think the effect on the students will be good.<sup>50</sup>

### *The Borough Council and the County*

As well as his problems with poor staff relations the Principal had a difficult relationship with the Southampton Borough Council. Since this was one of the main funding authorities for the College the small size of its grant was an important source of Hartley's financial difficulties. Two letters written in November 1906 record Fred's efforts to fight the local authority on behalf of the college.

You remember me telling you about the concerted attack on the Principal back in summer by a hostile section of the Council. The attack was then parried by the appointment of a committee to inquire into the statement that the Principal's character was such as to make it impossible for the staff to work with him. Well, the precious Committee is, I understand to hold its sitting next Saturday and the staff must be in attendance to be called upon if necessary. No member of the staff is brought into such constant and intimate relation with the principal as myself. So, if they see anyone, they will probably want to see me and a very bad impression would be created if I were not in the town. At the root of all these attacks on the college is the desire to withdraw the ½ rate which is allotted to its support. The whole subject is to come up at a meeting of the Town Council this week and two or three of us are working to get a straight denial from the whole staff to the statements that will then be made. Unless the charge of dissension and inefficiency can be refuted it will be used as the means of depriving us of the rate. I wish all these things would be settled once for all so as to leave us free to work untrammelled. But the prospects are brighter than they have been. Already three or four of us on the Senate form a compact group



determined to keep out contentious matter and to establish a tradition of harmonious cooperation. I can feel already, too, that I have been able to do something. Soon after coming to the College I saw that it might be possible for me to do something for the place. And I can see the process at work even now. It takes very much out of one, owing to the efforts, the pertinacity and the patience involved. But at the end this is the solid gratification of something achieved.<sup>51</sup>

A party on the Borough Council is again trying to take away our rate on the plea that the College is mismanaged by reason of the Principal's incompetence. We have had to do something to rebut such statements and to convince public opinion. That meant two long meetings on Monday and Tuesday. Then yesterday came a special Senate meeting over prizes, so that taking things together my time is being more than filled. I was at it until 12 last night and on Monday I got my dinner at 3.40.<sup>52</sup>

No doubt his study of political economy at Oxford under Ernest Barker, had enabled him to handle both university and local politics in a diplomatic way. This quality became much in evidence later in South Africa when his work for the Juvenile Affairs Board led to his becoming a kind of trade union negotiator. From early in life he understood the value of conciliation. His 1898 prize for his First Class Certificate in Religious Knowledge was *A History of the Church of England* by H.O. Wakeman. The section on the Reformation was particularly heavily annotated. Fred's comment, in the margin reads 'It was a compromise. That is why it has lasted'. The many meetings he attended were on top of a very full teaching programme. In another letter written in November 1906, he outlined his morning's work:

9-9.45 Lecture on psychology (Physiological)  
9.45-1030 Reading Class (Lamb' essays)  
10.30- 11. Correspondence; seeing students  
11.11-15 refreshments  
11.15- 11-30 Seeing more students and preparing for next lecture,  
11-30-12.15 lecture on Historical Geography  
12.15-1.0 Lecture on Renaissance Education  
1.0-1.15 arranging stewards for tomorrow's function  
1.15- 1.45 Preparing return of marks for the Registrar.  
Rather a fuller morning than usual. Otherwise fairly typical.<sup>53</sup>

He had a wider circle of friends now that he was no longer doing a residential job. Descriptions of many excursions by train, cycle rides and walks into the Hampshire countryside were a foretaste of the ones he

would later enjoy with Edith. Sometimes he was accompanied by the Professor of French or by Dr. Ross, who remained a lifelong personal friend even after he accepted a position abroad. Mr. Leake, the conductor of the Choral Society also became a personal friend and his daughter later taught in Cape Town.

At the end of the summer term there were various social functions including a visit to the home of Captain Suckling, organised by the Teachers' Guild.

I cycled all the way. Captain Suckling is a breezy bluff old sailor. His wife is also one of the Suckling family— the daughter of a man who was one of Nelson's midders. They have a fine lot of Nelson and family relics. In the dining room is a Van Dyke portrait of Sir John Suckling, the Cavalier poet<sup>54</sup>

Hartley College also had links with the local aristocracy, its president being the Duke of Wellington. He and his family came to the college sports day.<sup>55</sup>

When he went home for Christmas in December 1906 Fred had established himself firmly both in the life of Hartley University College and in the cultural life of Southampton. He had set up good relations with the practising schools and made friends with local head teachers in a way which was very different from the sort of relationship he had experienced at York. In January 1907 he wrote hopefully about the future of the port of Southampton with news that Cunard and White Star Lines were to use it. A good relationship with Hearnshaw seems to have been established by this time. They later collaborated in writing a *History of Southampton*, published in 1910. A letter of January 1907 is proof of his overriding desire to improve the training and status of teachers.

The more I see of teachers individually and socially the less hope I can see for them. How can they ever hope to be accepted on equal terms by those with whom they so loudly claim equality. So many of them are just compounds of two elements only, mechanical grounding in school and pretentious vulgarity outside it. The fact that a few are so much better only makes the deficiencies of the rest more glaring. I have long wondered whether it will ever be possible to endow teachers with more self respect on the one hand and with greater power on the other. But only those who have tried know the tremendous difficulty of breaking through the thick crust of tradition and conventionality, wherewith so many teachers love to cover themselves. I have tried but with indifferent success.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Threats to the Future of Hartley College***

Fred noted the forthcoming visit of the University Commissioners but was under no illusion about the state of the College:

Under present conditions it will never be possible to do very much. The place is too badly managed, too unwieldy, too badly equipped in the way of buildings, to give one much free scope. The type of student one gets is not good either and I find as I get about in the town that good possible students are kept away just because of the poor stuff we already have. One thing may be done. With long efforts and much persistence we may gradually raise the tone of the Day Training Students so that people will not object to send their sons and daughters to mix with 'those normals'.<sup>57</sup>

The Commission conceded that the College 'was taking a much more prominent - it may fairly be called a predominant - part in the organization of teaching in Southampton and the surrounding districts' but the overall report was unfavourable and the grant was cut. Fred managed to establish a college entrance examination for prospective teachers but the low standard of those applying is clear from a letter written later in 1907:

I have spent a very interesting afternoon interviewing prospective P. T. s. Grubb and I have been sitting on a kind of commission and we have another session tomorrow. It is remarkable what a diversity of material one gets. One girl, for instance, on being questioned about her reading, said that she sometimes read *Comic Cuts* and that she had also read *A Peep Behind the Scene. Mother Come Home and Wait a Minute*. It was as much as I could do to restrain myself at times, let alone Grubb. Then we had a little prig of a Christian Endeavourer who 'never took any notice of theatre posters'. I am looking forward to another interesting afternoon tomorrow<sup>58</sup>

Further letters reveal that failing applicants could cause problems with the local authority.

I have had to spend a good deal of time over this P.T. exam and Grubb is coming in again tonight about it. The Education Committee is meeting tomorrow to receive the report. It is not impossible that we may have to meet some criticism and opposition. But I think we are ready. On the other hand if they recognise our decisions it will give me a position of greater influence in future. It is my policy here to keep in the background until asked to come forwards. Ones' position in much stronger in the long run<sup>59</sup>

We are going to have a struggle with the locality over the admission of local students who have again done very badly. But we hold a fairly strong position and should come out trumps in the end.<sup>60</sup>

His influence was also felt in the county. In the summer of 1907, for example, he was asked to inspect the work of 'a large secondary school at Winchester'.

At the end of February the inspectors returned.

These Inspectors are giving us a lively time. Harrison is strongly prejudiced against Day Training Colleges in general and ours in particular. I have felt more than once strongly tempted to explode, but consideration for the College has driven me to sit on the safety valve. I think he will be fairly well satisfied with our work in the Education Department but he is likely to sit on other parts of College work<sup>61</sup>

After another unfavourable report major changes were made. The Principal, in commenting to the Council upon the Inspectors' report, ascribed the unsatisfactory examination results chiefly to the deficiencies of the students before admission, pointing out that the majority had not had a secondary school education, but had passed from elementary schools by way of pupil teachers' centres to the College. In response, the Council resolved that henceforward no student should be admitted who had not passed a satisfactory examination. A further letter suggests that the Principal discussed this move with Fred beforehand.<sup>62</sup>

The College was doing its best to educate the general public by a series of public lectures given by the professors. Fred reluctantly agreed to contribute and gave the final lecture in the series in March 1907. Edith came to hear him and stayed with Mrs Leake. A report of what he said appeared under the heading of 'English Education' in the local paper of Saturday 9 March.

The final public lecture of a series of six was given at the Hartley Hall on Thursday evening, Councillor J.D. Haysom presiding, when Professor F. Clarke. M.A. discoursed upon 'English Education - Mediaeval and Modern'. The great difference in the Mediaeval and modern system was that in the former all had an equal chance of rising to the highest position, which in the latter, at present did not exist. The lecture was appropriately illustrated with lantern slides. A vote of thanks was passed to Professor Clarke at the close.

The handwritten text of this lecture has survived, as has the printed resume of it published as a handout. Fred gave a sequel to it the following year, under the heading 'The Early Days of Universities', the text of which has also survived.

### *A Home Together at Last.*

Fred and Edith were married on 25 August 1907, at Chipping Warden, the village where her uncle was schoolmaster and where she had spent many holidays as a child. They clearly did not want to be involved with St .Ebbe's School as she had taught there right up until the end of June 1907. They had moved a long way away from their antecedents. Fred's mother was aware of this but she always supported him and was proud of his success. Photographs of 65 Portswood Road, Southampton, suggest a comfortable home furnished in an old fashioned style; they include an elegant tea party in the garden. Edith entered fully into all aspects of her husband's work. 'Mrs. Clarke has completed the work of cataloguing the Cope Collection of Hampshire pamphlets, so that now there is a full catalogue available to the use those who seek information on the history of the county'<sup>63</sup> In the same number of this journal there is a reference to Fred's work as joint secretary of the Teachers' Guild.

At the annual general meeting he gave a paper on 'Early Teutonic Invasions of Hampshire' which has not survived, but another, given to the Hampshire Field Club has, inside my mother's copy of his history of the county. Thanks to her help, he was able to enjoy something of his real passion for history, in spite of the demands of his daily work. They travelled together through the county by train or bicycle, collecting the information recorded in what Ernest Barker considered 'the best volume in the series in which it appears. It is as lucid as it is sound, and it shows a high degree of historical scholarship.'<sup>64</sup> The printed plan of his March 1907 lecture on 'English Education – Mediaeval and Modern' is the earliest example of a method he used all his life. The handwritten notes of all the lectures he gave to teacher audiences during the last years of his life follow the same lucid, clear exposition of the line of argument he sought to elaborate. This left him free to adapt what he said according to the mood of his audience, a feature which made him such an outstanding teacher. The parish magazine of St. Michael's Church, which my parents attended, records Fred's contribution to their series of Lent talks in 1910. His was the last one entitled 'The Sacramental Life'.

His good relations with the students are evident from his election as president of their Choral Society and his interest in the Male Voice Party. His love of music and the arts was lifelong and he must have gained great pleasure from the first College concert held on 6 May 1910, at a time when the future of the College itself was in doubt. Mr. George Leake, a local musician and personal friend conducted the orchestra and the Male Voice Party and the Choral Society contributed.

The College magazine printed a full report with details of the programme and everyone who took part: 'The Hall was filled almost to overflowing and the organisers of this event hope to see that the present Junior students will see that a similar event is arranged next year'. Tattered copies of *The Minstrelsy of England* and *Guadeamus* show how much music played a part in Fred's life at this time. He was never involved directly in folk song collecting, but a Christmas card from Cecil Sharp, dated 1910, indicates an interest in it. For almost the only time in her life Edith, too, was able to pursue an intellectual interest. She studied for the Bishop's Certificate in Church History and some of her notebooks are extant. One can imagine the conversation at their home and among their large circle of friends in the town and county.

Fred may have enjoyed many aspects of his life in Southampton but troubles loomed ahead. The inspectors' reports indicated some improvements including particularly good relations with the schools but the standard of entry of the students continued to be very low and was one of the main reasons why the College was under threat from both the University Commissioners and the HMIs. A letter from the Board of Education to the Hartley Council in July 1910, stated that 'unless definite and satisfactory plans for the immediate provision of new premises could be submitted to it before the close of the current financial year on 31 March 1911 it would not recognize the Day Training Department for the admission of any further students after the coming session'<sup>65</sup> Earlier in the year the University Commissioners had 'advised that the College should not remain permanently on the list of university colleges in receipt of Treasury grants, though a reduced grant of £1,500 should be made for one year longer in order that its work should not suffer during the transitional period'.<sup>66</sup> Clearly both aspects of Fred's work at Hartley were under immediate threat and it must have been with some relief that he prepared his job application to the Council of the South African College. He had already had experience of seeing people leave and arrive at Southampton docks. His sister had left for Hong Kong and later returned to Southampton for the birth of her first child, and he had also farewelled his cousin when he departed for India.

On Monday I made my first acquaintance with a troopship. I don't think you would like to see a great vessel like the 'Plassey' loading up with men women and children for foreign service. I know nothing which better illustrates what Kipling meant by the 'white man's burden' - a shipload of offerings to the god of Empire. I missed the train by which my cousin came, so hurried back to dinner and then went down to the

Docks and was lucky enough to find them. Then I had to rush off to a criticism lesson, came back at four, bade my cousin good bye and then saw my aunt and uncle off home by the 5.23.<sup>67</sup>

When he prepared his application to work in South Africa in November 1910, he cannot have had any idea of how much he and his family would have to sacrifice to the 'god of Empire' but he felt that he had to go. He had few regrets about the move. A letter written from Cape Town after only six weeks in South Africa reveals his thoughts at the time:

I have had a few bad moments lately when I have doubted whether I did right to come to S. Africa at all. But what else can be done? Things Hartleyan go from bad to worse. I hear the Board of Education is more intolerable than ever. Had I stayed I am pretty sure I should have become a soured, saddened and disappointed man, full of cynicism and empty of hope. When I look into myself – my chance of retaining faith and hope in things - my chance of satisfying my own aims I feel quite convinced that I have done the right thing.<sup>68</sup>

### *Leaving England*

Mitchell deals fully with the historical and educational background in South Africa. He was not able to consult the archives of the University of Cape Town though he quotes extensively from articles written by Fred shortly before he left South Africa in 1929. The University archives show that the Senate professors at the South African College were urging the Council to establish a Chair of Education. The Senate representatives (Lewis and Beattie) 'had forwarded to England by last mail an advertisement for a professor of education'.<sup>69</sup> I have not been able to trace this advertisement, but Oxford University would almost certainly have known that Cape Town was looking for a professor. There was also a long-standing link between the South African College and Oxford University. Fred, while still a student in 1903, had been approached with the offer of a post at the School which was at that time still attached to the College.<sup>70</sup> His application for the post of professor is dated November 1910. His testimonials included one from Ernest Barker, his Oxford tutor, who had written a complimentary letter about his 1909 publication. Others to write on Fred's behalf included:

A.W. Priestley B.Cl, late Master of Method in Oxford University  
Day Training College.

Rev. E.E. Nottingham M.A, late Principal of the Diocesan Training  
College, York

S.W. Richardson D.Sc. M.A, Principal of Hartley University College.

W .E. Darwin M.A, Treasurer of Hartley University College (for the President of the College) and

C.R.L. Fletcher M.A Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, formerly fellow of All Souls.

In his curriculum vitae Fred wrote that he was 'now engaged...on a History of Primary Education in England which would be published by Oxford Press'. This was, in fact, never published or even written. The testimonial from Ernest Barker read, 'Since 1903 I have kept in touch with him and I had the pleasure a few months ago, of staying with him at Southampton and of reading, at his request, a paper to the local branch of the Historical Association of which he is President.' The Registrar of the South African College duly reported 'that Council had offered the Chair of Education to Professor Clarke of Hartley University College Southampton'.<sup>71</sup>

Fred sailed from Southampton on 11 March 1911. Edith remained in Oxford awaiting the birth of their first child Mary, who was born at the home of her parents on 11 April 1911. Edith set sail on 20 May, when Mary was five weeks old. Fred wrote a log of his voyage to help her to know what to expect. This account of his arrival and reaction to Cape Town would not have existed if he had waited in England for the birth of his first child. Fortunately he was a good sailor. Edith was not, and she suffered a good deal from the voyage.

### *Arrival in Cape Town*

Fred's voyage was the first of many across the Atlantic ocean. It lasted 17 days and the passengers organised social events in which Fred took an enthusiastic part. At Madeira he received a letter from Hoernle, his new colleague, who advised him where to take lodgings in Cape Town. A long letter describes his arrival.

The whole place was shrouded in mist as we approached today, but the sun broke through and presented us with a glorious sight. Cape Town is surely one of the loveliest places on earth. Hoernle, this history man and Edgar (another Balliol man) met me at the docks and brought me into town. We called at the Civil Service Club of which both are members and I stayed there for a time. Then Hoernle took me round the town and up to the College. The College is in lovely surroundings. Already there are half a dozen blocks of buildings and more in course of erection. The place really is growing fast. I had a talk with Hoernle about the work and the college generally, met several of my colleagues



and then went down to the club with Edgar for Lunch. Met Dr. Muir, the Director of Education but as he leaves for England tomorrow I shall not see much more of him just yet. Then I came up to the town again and reached these rooms just before four. Snape, the engineering professor, lives here. He is a keen E.C.U. man and had heard of me through the E.C.U Gazette and also from the Vicar of St. Barnabas. He attends there. The church can be seen from my room. Shape was assistant to the Southampton Borough Engineer some time ago. Lived in Alma Road and did a lot of work in running St. Paul's mission down in Bevis Valley. He knows all the Southampton people quite well. Edgar knows Barker well so I feel quite at home already. Isn't it all splendid? I had tea with Snape and then went down town again. We went into the Union Parliament and heard part of the debate on the budget. I saw some of the Big men, Merriman, Smuts, Fisher, Lord Phillips. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick and others but Botha was not there. Then we had a walk round the town. It is a most delightful place. Fine shops, stately buildings well dressed people and well behaved. There is no workhouse, no poor rate, no abounding squalor and misery as in England. And the scenery baffles description. You must see Table Mountain to see how it dwarfs into pigmy insignificance everything else. Almost everything I have seen so far and almost everything that has happened to me so far is of a kind that you will like. I feel quite sure that we can be happy here and everyone tells me I ought to be able to make an extra £100 a year without much trouble. And there is educational work to be done here. I feel I have a big chance and the people are so nice too.<sup>72</sup>

He was aware of the problems that lay ahead but he was confident that he would have support of a kind which he felt he never had in Southampton.

I have met my class today. They are not great. Indeed the whole problem of training teachers has hardly begun to be understood here.<sup>73</sup>

March 30<sup>th</sup> 1911. I am trying to get all the information I can. But things are in a terrible tangle and the superseding of Provincial Government by the Union Government is, for the time being at any rate, making matters worse. I have a big task before me. It will be two or three years before much visible result accrues.<sup>74 75</sup>

His letters to Edith are full of enthusiastic descriptions of Cape Town and its surroundings including an excursion to Cape Point with Snape and some students, as well as plans to settle in the Gardens area of the city. By the end of his first month in South Africa Fred had established his position at the South African College, written his first articles for the local press, had his first lesson in Dutch and given a contribution to the

building of Cape Town Cathedral as a thanksgiving for the birth of his first child. Ability to speak Dutch/ Afrikaans was crucial for good relations with the Dutch speaking teacher training institution. A positive relationship with the Anglican Church was a lifelong necessity for him and he took the job of churchwarden at St. Barnabas seriously; it involved working with St. Augustine's, the mission church. As a consequence he had contact with black Africans from the start. He was also able to extend his work for the Juvenile Affairs Board to Cape Coloureds. Though he was never able to train 'native' African teachers himself, his students did. This is made clear in a letter from Rousseau, a former student at Cape Town.

I cannot help thinking of you as Professor Clarke, under whose influence at Cape Town my interest in Native education (as well as other educational issues) was first aroused. Some time ago I was told that you were coming to Basutoland. If you can manage to include a visit to Fort Hare in your itinerary, you will certainly be most welcome here and your anticipated address to the students will be inspiring and helpful. Being in charge of the only Education Faculty training non-whites as post-primary teachers I am faced by many problems which your wide experience will probably be able to solve.<sup>76</sup>

Edith arrived on 6 June 1911, to be met at the door of the house where they were to live by a large dark skinned woman in a gleaming white apron, saying 'What can I do for Madam'. She was Emily Dyson, who lived a short walk away, across the arum lily field. She helped the whole family all the time we were in South Africa and her husband John came at weekends to help in the garden. They were Cape Coloured but their way of life was European, so different from that of many of the black African population. They were close to my mother and father and to all of us and kept in touch until Emily's death in 1948

### *An International Dimension*

The International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1925 was a landmark in Fred's career. For the first time he was involved in international affairs. Before returning to South Africa he visited Weston on the Green. The long letter he wrote to Edith from his mother's home in Oxford shows quite clearly that the driving force of his life was his father. It seems that his parents talked about their early life to their children as little as our parents talked to us about theirs. Mitchell deals with this letter (p.9) but as he did not have access to all the early private papers he was unable to assess its full significance.

It would do your heart good to see what has happened in that village and my Father began it all, fifty years ago. What he looked for has come about as he wished it, with the village church still very much in the picture. They told me how when he was following the plough he would take a piece of chalky stone off the field and put figures and letters on the plough and teach the ploughboy as the team went along. But he had to go. Thinking was the cardinal sin in those days when the all-powerful farmers in alliance with church and gentry held the labourers in thrall. It was enough to be known to have a spark of independence in you to get a notice to quit your cottage<sup>77</sup>

When Fred returned to South Africa life was most happy for all of us but it did not last. He was asked to serve on the notorious Flag Commission but declined the offer using as an excuse the Imperial Education Conference and long service leave owing to him.<sup>78</sup> The Government appointed him leader of the South African delegation to the conference but Fred knew that the situation in South Africa was becoming increasingly difficult. Friction was growing between the two European peoples and Afrikaans had replaced a European language in the maintained schools. Fred could not bear the way the white people were treating the black population in much the same way as his ancestors had been treated by the landed gentry. But a return to England was still denied him. His rejection by the University of Oxford was a bitter disappointment. In spite of all the testimonials on his behalf, including one from General Smuts, he was passed over because he had not had a public school education. All Edith's efforts, working for him in Oxford, could not break through the class barrier in English education.

### *The Transatlantic Connection.*

It was North America which ultimately rescued him. He was able to decline the offer of a six months visiting chair at Columbia University when he was offered an appointment at McGill University in January 1929.<sup>78</sup> The Carnegie Corporation subsequently sponsored his return to England to a position at the London Institute of Education from which he was at last able to influence the provision for popular education in his own country. In the last years of his life he achieved what he was unable to achieve at Southampton and his influence spread worldwide. When he retired from the London Institute in 1945 he advised his successor to 'Get on with West Africa and the Area Training organisations'. The training of teachers was brought under the aegis of the universities in England, and university education was extended to Africans. He

continued until his death to work for the National Union of Teachers, explaining the provisions of the 1944 Education Act, though the form in which it was finally passed was not exactly what he had wanted. for the British Government as Chairman of the Central Advisory Council to the Minister, and for the overseas students at the Institute of Education. At the time of his death on 6 January 1952, the 1951 Christmas cards had not yet been taken down. They came from all over the world.

### NOTES

1. The family tree has been extensively researched by Mrs. Priest of New South Wales. She is a cousin. She visited Weston about ten years ago and gave me a copy of the family tree and copies of the letters from the 1840s onwards.
2. Fred Clarke (FC) to Edith Clarke (EC) 29 July 1935
3. FC to EC 22 May 1914. 'I have been talking about Rousseau to the newly formed Child Study here'.
4. The tragedy for all of us was that he was so often at the other end or the other side of the Atlantic Ocean and we were all deprived of the family life he valued so much.
5. The letters start in 1901 when Edith left Oxford to teach in London. They are grouped chronologically: 1901-1907, covering life and work in Oxford, York and Southampton; 1911, 1914-15, 1920-1921 1923-24 1927 1928 1929 relating to the years spent in South Africa; and 1929-1930 to life in Canada. Thereafter, the letters became less frequent as my parents were together much more.
6. Fred Clarke and the Politics of Vocational Education in South Africa 1911-29, *History of Education*, 25,4 (1996), 15-162\*. Kallaway was incorrect when he stated that Clarke did not work with the Coloured Teachers' Association. Among the 1929 papers are letters of thanks for his support from this association and from the Coloured Juvenile Affairs Board.
7. The story that, aged three, he ate deadly nightshade berries and his mother turned him upside down and shook him until he coughed them up may well be true. His deep devotion to his mother is evident all through the correspondence. Wherever he was he wrote to her every week until her death in 1927. She was probably the main inspiration for the move into Oxford, so crucial for her son's development.
8. 'Look at me. I went to St. Ebbe's and you cannot have a worse sink than that.' FC to EC 20 Sept 1920.
9. The university was involved as the Rev. J. Frank Bright, Master of University College, was a member of this sub-committee.
10. The records of this school are in the library of Oxford Brooks University, on the Gipsy Lane site.
11. Innumerable pieces of paper, in the handwriting of both Fred and Edith, reveal the content of the pupil teacher curriculum at this date.
12. R.H. Rich *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales*. 1933
13. A long letter from Southampton (FC to EC 7 Oct 1906) argues the case on historical and logical grounds for Catholic Christianity. He had just attended a service at St. Michael's, and wished to share his feelings and ideas with Edith.

14. L. Tomlinson. *Oxford University and the Training of Elementary teachers. The Early years 1892-1921, British Journal of Educational Studies*, 16 (1967), 303.
15. *Ibid.*
16. He had the Toynbee Scholarship and also one from the Leathersellers Company'.
17. FC to EC \* June 1921
18. Tomlinson, 304
19. Sir Ernest Barker *Age and Youth. Memories of Three Universities. The Father of the man.* OUP 1953
20. FC to EC. 13 Dec 1901 'This will be a pretty heavy vac. More I can see. A week's practice in school, besides reading for next term's work and clearing off the rest of this term.'
21. In June 1902, when he knew he could earn his living as an elementary school teacher, Fred asked for two days leave of absence to go to London. He went to give Edith 'the little round pledge' which sealed their engagement.
22. FC to EC 4 July 1902 'What will be the freest year I can ever hope to spend.'
23. FC to EC 15 Oct 1902
24. FC to EC 8 Oct 1902 'Even our house and garden, the Parish Room and the dingy streets around here are chuck full of historical associations or at least their sites are.'
25. FC to EC 22 April 1903
26. FC to EC 29 April 1903
27. FC to EC 8 June 1903
28. FC to EC 9 June 1903
29. FC to EC 17 July 1903
30. See W. Etherington. *A History of St. John's College York* M.Ed. University of Leicester. 1979-70.
31. FC to EC 11 Oct 1903
32. FC to EC 28 Jan 1906
33. see. A. Temple Patterson. *The University of Southampton 1962*
34. FC to EC 23 Feb 1906
35. FC to Hetty Brockbank, 4 April 1911
36. FC to EC 25 April 1906
37. FC to EC 26 April 1906
38. FC to EC 2 May 1906
39. FC to EC 20 May 1906
40. FC to EC 18 May 1906
41. FC to EC 19 Sept 1906
42. FC to EC 23 Sept 1906
43. FC to EC 3 Oct 1906
44. FC to EC 11 Oct 1906
45. FC to EC 17 Oct 1906
46. FC to EC 26 Oct 1906
47. FC to EC 4 Nov 1906
48. FC to EC 28 Nov 1906
49. FC to EC 2 Dec 1906
50. FC to EC 7 Jan 1907
51. FC to EC Nov.11th '06

52. FC to EC 14 Nov 1906
53. FC to EC 28 Nov 1906
54. FC to EC 24 June 1906
55. FC to EC 20 June 1906
56. FC to EC 27 Jan 1907
57. FC to EC 30 Jan 1907
58. FC to EC 8 May 1907
59. FC to EC 12 May 1907
60. FC to EC 26 July 1907
61. FC to EC 28 Feb 1907
62. FC to EC 3 March 1907 'I should have begun your letter an hour ago, but the Principal has been in, talking shop and I have only just shunted him'.
63. *The Hartley University College Magazine*. Vol 29, June 1910
64. Testimonial of November 1910 referring to *A School History of Hampshire*. Commissioned by Oxford Press and published in 1909
65. Mitchell 17
66. Temple Patterson 120
67. FC to EC 6 Feb 1907
68. FC to EC 9 May 1911
69. Council Minutes 20 Oct 1910
70. See E.A. Walker, *The South African College and the University of Cape Town 1829-1929*. Also Ritchie, *University of Cape Town Quarterly* 12,384 (1929)
71. Council Minutes 20 Feb 1911
72. FC to EC. Cape Town 28 March 1911
73. FC to EC 29 March 1911
74. FC to EC 30 March 1911
75. Rousseau to FC 14 Dec 1944
76. FC to EC 6 June 1925
77. Glotzer is incorrect in his article Sir Fred Clarke: South Africa and Canada Carnegie Corporation Philanthropy and the Transition from Empire to Commonwealth, *Education Research & Perspectives*, 22, 1, (June 1995) when he states that Fred served on this commission. See Minutes of University of Cape Town for copy of Hertzog's letter to Fred and Fred's reply. He used the excuse of the imperial Education conference and his long leave to decline the request.
78. Fred did not apply for this post. See letter from Sir Arthur Currie 21 Jan 1929 confirming the offer made at an interview on 17 January in London and a letter from Fred to Sir Arthur of 22 Jan 1929 accepting the post. Currie was Principal and Vice Chancellor of McGill University and a Trustee of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. I have not been able to discover who introduced Fred to Currie, but it may have been through Currie's connection with the Carnegie Foundation. The correspondence between Fred and the Carnegie Corporation of New York does not start until 1932, but the Carnegie connection with South Africa has been well documented by Glotzer in his article cited in endnote 77 above.