

CHAPTER THREE

William Huston Dodd, Rev. William Craig, and Dr. William Molony, 1868-1877

'SERGEANT' DODD

Mr. Gowdy was succeeded by William Huston Dodd in 1868. By this time, the Managers of the School were Captain Despard and Godfrey Lyle. An advertisement in the *Belfast Newsletter* said:

*It is the design of the Trustees and Managers to make this a high-class intermediate school. With this view, they have appointed as Master Mr. W.H. Dodd, A.M., ex-scholar of Queen's College, Belfast, and Gold Medallist of the Queen's University in Ireland.*¹

ENDOWED SCHOOL, BANGOR,
COUNTY DOWN.

TRUSTEES:
Lord Viscount Bangor.
Robert Edward Ward, Esq., D.L.

MANAGERS:
Captain Despard, J.P.
Godfrey Lyle, Esq., J.P.

MASTER:
William Huston Dodd, A.M.

It is the design of the Trustees and Managers to make this a high-class intermediate school. With this view, they have appointed as Master Mr. W. H. Dodd, A.M., ex-scholar of Queen's College, Belfast, and Gold Medallist of the Queen's University in Ireland.

The Half-yearly System of the English Schools will be adopted. One Half-year will commence on January the 20th, and will end on June the 10th. The other will commence on August the 1st, and will end on December the 20th. During next year Boys will be received at any time, but after that they will be admitted at the beginning of each half-year only.

The course of instruction will vary with the advancement of the pupils. And Examinations will be held statedly, by the result of which the standing of the boys for the next half-year will be determined.

The Lower School will be confined to an English Education in the preparatory branches—Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, with the Rudiments of Grammar, Geography, and History.

The Middle School will embrace the higher English subjects, Literature and History, the higher Grammar and Arithmetic. And the rudiments of Latin and Greek, Algebra, and Euclid will be taught, with the elements of some of the Natural Sciences.

The work of the Upper School will be Latin, Greek, and Mathematicae, History, ancient and modern, English Literature, and Philology, and the elements of some of the Mental Sciences.

Boys will be prepared for College and the Civil Service Examinations, but such preparation will be held subordinate to the higher aim of giving a thoroughly good education.

Fees for the Half-Year :—

Lower School, ...	Two Guineas.
Middle School, ...	Three Guineas.
Upper School, ...	Four Guineas.

Modern Languages and Drawing, Two Guineas each.

The first half of the Fees payable on entrance, the second half six weeks after entrance. The boy who stands first in each school at the Half-yearly Examinations will be exempted from payment of the Fees for the next half-year.

Boarders will be received by the Master. Fees and conditions will be sent on application.

The School will be OPENED on TUESDAY, the 4th August.

Letters for the Master to be directed, up to the 1st of August, to 3, ALBION STREET, Belfast;

Belfast Newsletter, 24 July 1868

¹ *Belfast Newsletter, 24 July 1868.*

The advertisement contains considerable information about the School under Mr.Dodd, but interestingly, no reference is made to *'astronomy and navigation'*.

W.C.Seyers, a member of the Town Commissioners and Urban District Council for many years, referred to Mr.Dodd in his *Reminiscences of Old Bangor*. Mr.Seyers, who was born in the mid-1850s, writing about his *'early boyhood'*, (although he may well have been a teenager), almost eighty years later, recalled that,

'Sergeant Dodd was the Headmaster at that time and he lived at "Woodville" after Rev.H.Woods' death'.

(Hugh Woods had been Minister of First Bangor Presbyterian Church from 1808 until 1856; he died in 1869. *Woodville* was on the Clandeboye Road.) In 1912, at the School Prize Distribution, Rev.Dr.Henry Montgomery referred to his pride that *'Mr.Justice Dodd'* had once been Principal of the School, a position he retained until 1870.²



William Huston Dodd, B.A., M.A.
(Photograph from the *Northern Whig*, 19 March 1930).

William Huston Dodd, described in his obituary as *'a brilliant scholar'*, was born in Rathfriland in 1844 and was educated at the *Royal Belfast Academical Institution* and *Queen's College Belfast*, where he gained First Class Honours in both his B.A. and M.A. At one time he had intended to enter the Presbyterian ministry, but instead *'he was for some years a teacher and held the post of Professor of Metaphysics in different schools'*; he was also editor of the *Banner of Ulster*. He became a barrister in 1878, a Queen's Counsel in 1884 and a Sergeant-at-law in 1892. A supporter of W.E.Gladstone's Home Rule proposals, after two unsuccessful attempts to enter the House of Commons, he was elected as the Liberal (or Nationalist) Member of Parliament for Tyrone North in 1906, defeating the Roman Catholic Unionist candidate, D.S.Henry, K.C., who later became the first Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland. He became an Irish Privy Councillor in 1913 and from 1907-1924, he was one of the Justices of the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland. When he died in March 1930 just two weeks short of his 86th birthday, obituaries appeared in both the Belfast and Dublin press, the *Northern Whig* referring to him as *'Serjeant Dodd, Q.C.'*³

PUPILS

Mr.Seyers recalled that among the pupils were Henry and Edward Rose Cleland, of Rathgael House, three sons of Robert Nicholson of Balloo House (members of the same family as Robert Steele Nicholson, one of the Trustees mentioned in the 1856 Indenture), and the sons of John

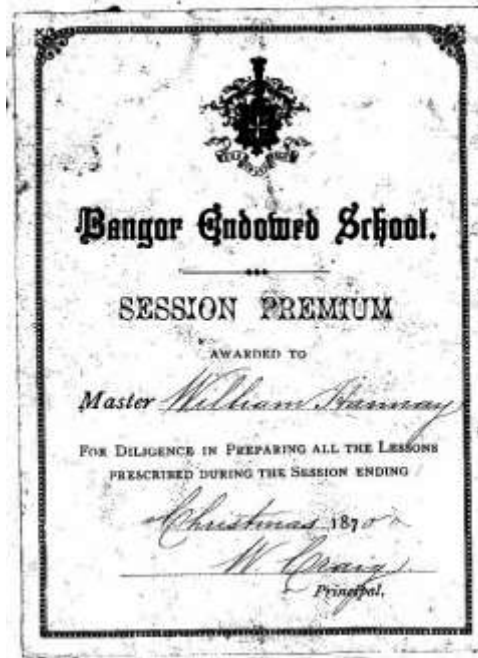
² *County Down Spectator*, 6 December 1912; *Belfast and Province of Ulster Post Office Directory, Volume 1* (1870).

³ *Who was Who?*, Volume 3, 1929-1940 (1941); *Irish Times*, 18 March 1930; *Belfast Newsletter*, 18 March 1930; *Belfast Telegraph*, 18 March 1930; *Northern Whig*, 19 March 1930.

Jordan, one of whom was later knighted (presumably Sir John Newell Jordan, who was to become H.M.Ambassador to China, and who was later referred to as a former pupil of the School).⁴ He was obviously referring to a time not far removed from that recalled by Sir Thomas McMullan in 1932 when speaking at the *Old Boys' Association Dinner*, for he too mentioned the Rose Clelands and the Nicholsons. However, in 1869, the *Belfast Newsletter* published two prize-giving reports. The prizes had been awarded for Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Parsing, Arithmetic, Mathematics, History, Geography, French, Latin and Greek. The June article reported that the examinations had been conducted by Mr.Dodd and seven others, including three clergymen. It also said that the Trustees had donated £10 for yearly Exhibitions, £3 of which was to go to the boy who took the highest place on entering *Trinity College, Dublin* or who obtained the highest scholarship in any of the *Queen's Colleges*. Boys from a distance could, said the article, obtain lodgings at moderate terms in the town or would be received as boarders by the Master. The report ended with: "*The school is open to girls, but no special classes will be former for them*".⁵

REV.WILLIAM CRAIG

By the start of the new school year in the Summer of 1870, the Principal of *Endowed School, Bangor* was Rev.W.Craig. Until December 2004, no one seemed to be aware of Mr.Craig's existence; no one, that is, except George Matthews, who has in his possession a book presented to his great-grandfather, William Hannay, at Christmas 1870; it contains a bookplate, bearing the words *Bangor Endowed School* and is signed by '*W.Craig, Principal*'.



One of only two references to Mr.Craig that have been discovered.⁶

Although the crest and the motto, '*Sub cruce salus*' ('*Safety under the Cross*'), are unfamiliar, on further investigation Mr.Craig's tenure as Principal is confirmed by an advertisement in the *Belfast Newsletter*.

⁴ W.C.Seyers, *Reminiscences of Old Bangor* (1983), first published in *County Down Spectator* in 1932-33.

⁵ *County Down Spectator*, 30 January 1932; *Belfast Newsletter*, 6 January, 1869 and 26 June 1869; *Northern Whig*, 25 June, 1870. A list of the names of pupils, who were known to have attended the school during these years, can be found in Appendix 17A.

⁶ This copy of the bookplate was provided by George Matthews, whose son, Andrew is the fifth generation of the family to have attended the School.

ENDOWED SCHOOL, BANGOR.
 REV. W. CRAIG, PRINCIPAL.
THE ABOVE SCHOOL WILL RE-OPEN ON
 MONDAY, 1st August, at Ten o'clock. A
 punctual attendance of the Pupils is requested.
 For the convenience of Summer Visitors, Pupils
 will be received by the month.
 Applications to be made to the PRINCIPAL.
 7322

Belfast Newsletter, 25 July 1870

Nothing more can be said for certain about Mr. Craig, but is it only coincidence that the minister of *Conlig Presbyterian Church*, one William Craig, died on 19 April 1872, less than four months before the announcement of the appointment of Dr. William Molony as Headmaster?⁷

DR. WILLIAM MOLONY

When Dr. Molony was 'elected to the office of Head Master' of *Bangor Endowed School* in 1872, his experience and reputation gave hope that 'the historic fame of the Schools of Bangor may revive under his administration'.

BANGOR ENDOWED SCHOOL
 WILLIAM MOLONY, A.M., LL.D., T.C.D., PRIN-
 CIPAL.
DOCTOR MOLONY HAVING BEEN
 elected to the Office of Head Master of the
 Bangor Endowed School, is led to hope, from his
 experience as a teacher, the success of his former
 pupils, and the anticipation of his friends, that the
 historic fame of the Schools of Bangor may revive
 under his administration.
 Business shall commence within the current
 month, of which due notice shall be given.
 August 3, 1872. 8950

Belfast Newsletter, 5 August 1872

Despite him advertising the School, rather grandly, as "*The Bangor Endowed School: English, French, Classical, Scientific and Commercial Select Boarding and Day School*", it was to be a false hope, for, speaking at the opening of the new building in 1906, Rev. Edward Maguire, (a former pupil, perhaps), commented that, although Dr. Molony had been a good classical scholar, he was, 'by reason of his advanced age, unfit for the up-to-date duties of teacher'. (He was in his seventies by the time of his retirement.)

Sir Thomas McMullan M.P., who attended the School as 'a very small boy', with his brother, remembered Dr. Molony as,

*'a dear old gentleman with a white beard and, I think, a black skullcap, and he always wrote with a quill, which spluttered all over the place.'*⁸

⁷ *A History of Congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1610-1982* (Belfast, 1982); the Minutes of *Conlig Presbyterian Church* Kirk Session make no reference to any involvement by their Minister with the School, however the Minutes are very brief and such an involvement might not ordinarily have been mentioned. *The Presbyterian Historical Society* records show that the minister of Conlig was the son of Robert, a farmer from Ahoghill and he was born on 22 September 1829. He was educated at Old College, Belfast (the university department of R.B.A.I.), where he gained his general certificate (the equivalent of a degree) in 1859, and Assembly's College. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast in May 1860 and was ordained in Conlig on 4 September 1860. He died on 19 April 1872, aged 42 and was buried in Bangor Abbey churchyard. His wife, Mary McKee, of Whitechurch, Ballywalter, outlived him by 52 years, dying in Holywood in 1924.

⁸ *County Down Spectator*, 30 January 1932; *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 December, 1872, 25 June 1873, 17 July and 23 December 1874, and 17 July 1876.

William Molony, the son of James, a watchmaker from County Clare, entered *Trinity College Dublin* in 1825, aged 20. He graduated B.A. in 1831, M.A. in 1834, and LL.B and LL.D in 1840.⁹ A newspaper advertisement in 1868 names him as Principal of *Carrickfergus English, Foreign, Classical, Scientific and Scriptural Select Boarding and Day School*. That advertisement reported that ‘*Dr.Molony’s pupils have been highly distinguished in the universities and many of them hold creditable positions in the Church, the Law, Medicine, the Army, the Navy Engineering and Commerce.*’ He was obviously highly regarded in Carrickfergus, for a Testimonial was published in the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1873, expressing regret at his departure, confidence that “*the same learning, patience, and thoroughness, which distinguished your teaching in former years, will be displayed with good results in your new sphere of labour.*” It continued asking Dr.Molony to “*convey to Mrs.Molony their affectionate remembrance of her kind and constant care.*” A bank order of 100 guineas was sent as a Christmas gift.¹⁰

Sir Thomas recalled:

‘There were only about twelve boys at the School, two Clelands from Rathgael, two Nicholsons from Balloo, a boy called Fitz Beattie, who was a great athlete, two Thompsons, sons of old Dr.Thompson of Bangor, one of whom became a leading physician in South Africa and was knighted, two or three Reids, cousins of Mr.Kinghan of Glenganagh [at Ballymacormick], Col.Fred.Crawford, the hero of the Ulster gun-running, and my brother William. I think they are all dead now except Col.Fred Crawford, my brother and myself. There was not much work done at the School, and on fine days, the old Doctor sent us all home, because it was too sunny to work, while on wet days, he objected to teaching only the few boys who turned up, and sent them all home. His opinion was that school was no place for growing boys.’

Nine years later, in 1941, Sir Thomas entertained the *Old Boys’ Association* with further stories of his schooldays. He remembered Dr.Molony as being ‘*very fussy, but very friendly*’, and claimed that, ‘*the only learning I got, that stuck to me, was the Geography lesson. The Geography master was Mr.Fry, who was afterwards drowned trying to save a life at Portrush*’.

‘Dr.Molony, on one occasion, in a misguided moment, decided to have a public oral examination and it was held before the Governors, with Robert Edward Ward in the chair. The boys got rather nervous, or the company was too much for them and they could not answer the questions. It was really a very disgraceful exhibition and when my brother and I got home, there was a council of war and my father said we should be thrashed, but my mother begged us off. A few days later, however, a beautiful book arrived for me – a prize for distinguished answering. When I showed the book to my father, he was angrier than ever and threatened to throw it in the fire, but again my mother came to the rescue and saved the book.’¹¹

Sir Thomas’s recollections raised laughter, but Dr.Molony can have done nothing for the standing of the School in the district. He remained as Headmaster until 1878, when he announced that he had “*consented to REDUCE THE SCHOOL FEES to the means of all who can appreciate the advantages of a superior education*”, possibly in the hope of attracting more pupils, for, when his successor, J.H.Rainey, took up his position, there were only three pupils attending the School.¹²

Although the School seems to have gone into something of a decline during the 1870s, elsewhere progress was being made in a variety of fields. Rome became the capital of a newly-united Italy, the Second German Empire was established with the legendary Bismarck as Chancellor, Queen

⁹ Information provided by *Trinity College Dublin*.

¹⁰ *Belfast Newsletter*, 25 June 1868 and 2 January, 1873.

¹¹ *County Down Spectator*, 13 December 1941.

¹² *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory, Volume 9 (1877); Belfast Newsletter*, 5 April, 1878; House of Commons Sessional Papers, 1881, Volume XXXV, pp 220 and 248.

Victoria became Empress of India, Stanley met Livingstone in east Africa and, although hardly 'progress', Custer made his 'last stand'. In the United Kingdom, the Secret Ballot was introduced in parliamentary elections and the Rugby Union was set up to regulate the game. Thomas Hardy wrote *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Mark Twain created the immortal *Tom Sawyer*, and Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* was performed for the first time. Among the inventions of the decade were Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, Thomas Edison's phonograph and Melville R.Bissell's carpet sweeper.