

College des Ecosais, Montpellier

Verses about the Scots College by Patrick Geddes

Four years syne we found this
cottage
Ruined - croft neglected long,
Stony, barren olives hewn wrong --
Here's the place to build our college!
Stones! -- for terrace-building ready!
Soil! - with deep and careful tillage,
Needs but labour long and steady,
Water too! - 'tis dry, our village!

And our Outlook! That's the secret
Open to all with eyes,
Here's the place for all who seek read
Nature! City 'fore us lies!

So round cottage builder labours,
Higher, lower, either side,
Puzzlement of friends and
neighbours,
As tower looks out far and wide!

First three students, then four
others,
Half-a-dozen, still few more;
Yet enough to make beginning,
And plan for another score!

First two years we've passed six
theses,
Now progress as many more,
Fresh minds soon will come to join
us,
Interpreting and gathering lore.

House and Garden, microcosm
Of culture, urban, rural,
Survey the whole world macrocosm,
West 'Frisco;- east, to Surul!

II

So raise we here enduring home,
Wrought fire-free, roofs and walls,
With chambers silent, as Thought
claims,
Yet Music through its halls!

Live thence beyond, 'mid gardens
fair,
Wrought deep 'tween hardened
rocks,
Where Art with Nature mingles rare,
Their secret each unlocks!

Thence further roam - o'er moorland
heath,
Rocks bare - flowers rich and strange
-
Read Evolution of great world!
Seas ancient! - Seasons' change!

Look sunward too - see Midland Sea
Yet man's world-mastering ways;
Riquetti's triumph! - Bronze-age
Road! --
Phare! Recent, ancient days!

From heights and Tower sweep far
your ken,
East? - yonder's Mont Ventoux!
-- West? - see at dawn shine out
sublime
Vast snows of Canigou!

North? - climb the noble Pic St.
Loup,
'Yond Hortus cliffs, Aigoual!
Through Cavernes drive on "Brother
Ass!"
Glens - canyons - survey all!

Yet even there man masters world!
Old Flahault's here before us!
Since forty years hus hort de Dieu
Tunes living forests' chorus!

III

Thence come you down to your
Chateau,
Be each a Marquis d'Assas!
Here's History through a thousand
years,
No mere play-place for Jack-Ass!

But where you each past Age may
live,
Dark - Middle - the Renascence:-
The Revolution too will give
You scope for fresh Revivance!

IV

Come back to City: ancient Fair!
Red Sea and Black, Spain too,
Italy, Greece, all landing there
Baled treasures, old and new.

Wise Jews and Moors come most
from Spain;
Learned herbalist, skilled leech,
Come here to sooth our sick folks'
pain,
For deep, kind treatments reach!

Hence Medicine's foremost Western
School,
Herb-students' Garden too;
And here may Michael Scot have
found
Lost Aristotle anew.
In Latin, turned from Arabic,

All eager youth soon reading!
Great Paris thus, for learning ripe
Woke bright to world's thought-
leading!

French learning thus had two
World-Schools,
Here doctors, there divines!
To each came law: both wise and
fools
Wrote books, heady as wines!

Thence 'Varsities through all our
lands
Spread far - to Scot and Russian,
Aristotle, in Aquinas' hands
Reached Sums - deep discussion!

Soon Petrarch here long studies
made,
Next Rabelais as well;
These the new learning bred, and
spread -
Popes' castle to friars call!

And since their days, our ancient
Schools
Have gone on healing, thinking!
Hence at their wells, with wide
world's youth,
We here to-day are drinking!

V

Come back to College: -- Future's
germ -
For Scotland, old 'mong nations,
Looks backward, forward, -- Janus-
Herm!
Pioneers Inter-Nations!

Revives her ancient League with
France,
Rampant 'mid fleurs-de-lys,
But now, with Peace-doves' flight -
Love's dance -
Seeks more than Golden Fleece!

'Yond blatant Nationalism's craze
'Yond Christendom's disunion,
For East and West we'll strive to
raise
Eutopia - towards World Union!

Scots College and Palestinian,
American as well as Indian -
Sister nations, old and new,
Come ye, build your college too!