

Those who met Canon Porter are not likely to forget him as he had a striking personality. He was rather tall with white hair and side whiskers. At one time while on holiday abroad he injured the ligaments of a leg and after that he always carried a tall stick. I was interested last year to see this stick again, it now belongs to Mrs F. Arnold and was lent to Canon Porter by her father Mr John Fortescue and returned to him when no longer needed. Rather inclined to be irritable at times he would rattle and rap the ground with this stick when provoked by the lack of answers and slowness of the children.

Mrs Porter died when I was seven years old, very suddenly while praying on her knees in her room. She was a very sweet and saintly lady, very much loved in the parish. Two of her brothers were famous clergymen of the time. One of them, Canon Bickersteth Ottley, and another was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford. One of her sisters was Head Mistress of one of the High Schools. I have forgotten where though I read an interesting life of her a few years ago. I remember well coming back from a walk down the Southam Road and meeting the funeral procession. Very different from those we so often saw living in that part of the town, with the coffin carried in a large hearse drawn by black horses, mourners following in carriages dressed in black with wide bands of crepe and carrying handkerchiefs with black borders. This coffin was carried on an open bier covered in flowers, the Vicar and her brothers followed walking in surplices and scarlet hoods. Instead of the usual [f.5] sad tolling of one bell a full peal of bells rang, not muffled, so that it was indeed a joyful procession! This was the Vicar's wish to celebrate her entry into Paradise rather than the mourning of those left.

Canon Porter's sister was the wife of Bishop Mackenzie working in Africa. When they came to England they stayed at the Vicarage. This led many ladies of the parish to form a working party and take much interest in missionary work among the Zulus. I had a collecting box with a picture of a woolly haired boy on it and I remember sitting on Mrs Porter's knee after she had opened the box and that she told me about the little black children in the mission school and how they lay at night rolled up in rugs in rows on the ground looking just like little sausages.

I began teaching in Sunday School as soon as I left school at seventeen, two years before Canon Porter retired. We had preparation classes round the table in the bog room where we had prepared for Confirmation. He was rather an alarming old gentleman though we were all fond of him. He would talk for a long time with his eyes closed and