

Quotations from Father Julian Tenison Woods' article *Personal Reminiscences of Adam Lindsay Gordon*

[Gordon] was then a tall, slim young man, with a peculiar stooping figure and very awkward gait. This arose from being so near-sighted that his head was thrown forward and his half closed eyes were peering around as he walked along. His features were small, and the whole contour of his face reminded one a good deal of the portraits of Byron. His beard was thin and scanty, and his complexion pale.ⁱⁱ

After that day we often met and had many and many a long ride together. My duties kept me constantly on the move....It was always a great advantage to have a companion, if it were only because the horses travelled better, and two heads are better than one in crossing difficult country. But to meet with a companion like Gordon was quite a treat.ⁱⁱⁱ

He used always to carry a book with him in his pocket, and generally it was a Latin classic. It will be easily understood how soon the volume became knocked to pieces in this way. Whatever books I lent him were generally returned in a most dilapidated condition, yet I could not complain when I saw how well used they had been.^{iv}

In 1860, while making a journey with him from the sea coast to Mount Gambier, we were overtaken by a severe storm and lost our way. Night came on and the rain poured down in torrents. As my sight at night was nearly as defective as Gordon's, we gave up looking for the track and sat crouched under a tree waiting for the rising of the moon. We were both miserably cold and hungry and it was most ludicrous to hear my companion reciting long passages from various authors on the subject of storms. We could not light a fire and I only had to shiver while he gave me the tempest scene in "King Lear", which he knew by heart. He was much amused when I asked him whether he would not like a nice drink of cold spring water after his exertions. We got to a station about midnight and had to share the same room; but Gordon would not go to bed. The warm tea we had had at supper had revived him and he kept walking up and down the supper room reciting "Childe Harold" till near morning.^v

During my visit to Adelaide...I had one or two long conversations with him....He spoke of trying to get literary employment on a newspaper and had made up his mind to resign his seat in Parliament and go to Melbourne to reside. He had at this time published some more verses which had gained for him quite a name....He said, amongst other things, that he was sure he would rise to the top of the tree in poetry and that the world should talk about him before he died. He made great use of the Parliamentary library. All his spare time was taken up reading classics and the best English and French poets.^{vi}

Thus passed away one who has left no mean name in Australian literature. His character may be gathered from what I have said. With great literary taste, a splendid memory and fine poetic talent, he had to contend against enormous difficulties. A bolder man with less feeling would have breasted them all, but with his shy and sensitive nature he gave way under them.^{vii}

Other Recommended Reading:

Border Watch (Mount Gambier, SA : 1861-1954) Tuesday 4 October 1927, page 5 obtained from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article77710667>

The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889-1931), Friday 24 January 1913, page 11 obtained from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5366144>

Adam Lindsay Gordon and Father Julian Tenison Woods obtained from The Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee Inc. website

<https://adamlindsaygordon.org/gordonandfathertenisonwoods/>

ⁱ **Personal Reminiscences of Adam Lindsay Gordon** Julian Edmund Tenison Woods, 1884 in *Melbourne Review* vol. 9 no 34, April 1884; (pp. 131-141)

ⁱⁱ Ibid p. 131

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid p. 133

^{iv} Ibid p. 134

^v Ibid p. 135

^{vi} Ibid p. 139

^{vii} Ibid p. 141