

THE OLDEST EXTANT MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
GOVERNORS OF SHERBORNE SCHOOL.

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Not long ago I was looking through some Court Rolls in the Library of Sherborne School; these Rolls refer to the School Estate at Gillingham, and sewn up with these I found the following Draft of Minutes of a Governors' Meeting. This Draft is all in the handwriting of Thomas Wynnyff the Steward, except a few alterations, which are in another hand. The Minutes run as follows:—

“*Scirburn Scole.* Ordynaunces made the VIIIth day of October, An^o. Reg^m. Regis Ed: VI. quarto by the holle concete of the Gov^{rs}. then beyng nomynted uppon the Kynge's Maiesties letters pattentes ffyrste that ffrom henseforth the Scolemayster shalbe p'sent w^t the said Gover^s. ffor the xamynacon and electyon of Ussher of the said Scole.

“Itm yt ys ordeyned by the said Gover^s. that no Gove^r. ffrom henseforth to be elected after the death or avoydance of any of the Govern^s. now beyng but that the said Govn^r. so to be admytted shall make a corporalle Athe to obs^{re}. and kepe all ordynaunces allredy made or hereafter to be made.

“Itm yt ys ordeyned that no Govn^r. now allredy appoynted or hereafter to be appoynted shall disclose or open any counsayle or communycacon hadde bethwyx the said Govn^s. in their comon house or ells where soever they shall assemble them selfs to gether for any matters conscernyng the said free scole uppon payne of deprivacon and utter expellyng of hym so offending from the said corporacon for ever.

“Itm that every year wⁱⁿ VI. wekes and immedyatly after the ffeaste of the nativity of Saynct John the Baptiste ther shall be elected one new warden and that the olde wardens shall then render and make ther Accompte for the yere paste.

“Itm yt ys ordeyned y^t the Wardens w^t the Steward shall be at the Courts kepte uppon the said lands and ther to lerne the best offer of every burgage or fferme ther to be lette or sette and that same offer to be presented before all the said Govn^{rs}. at their retorne home to Shirborne and the partye makyng that offer to be by all the said Govn^{rs}. appoynted tennante.

“Itm yt ys ffurther ordeyned and concluded that neither tenement burgage ne fferme now belonging or hereafter that shal belong unto the said free scole shall at any time be granted lette or sette by the said Wardens and Govn^{rs}. other wyse than for iii lyffes or xxi yeres.

“Itm yt ys ordeyned that yf any of the Govn^{rs}. be lawfully warned

by the Wardens for the tyme beyng to assemble and come to gethere to their comon house and do wyllfully absent hym self havyng no lawfull excuse and not makyng his depute shall for every tyme so offendyng paye xii^d. to the hands of the Wardens.

"Itm yt ys ordeyned and graunted by the said Govn^{rs}. that Master Gybson now beyng Scolemaster of the said Scole shall have yerely for his salary and wages xvi^{li} to be payde at the iiii usual termes of the yere.

"Itm yt ys graunted and ordeyned by the said Govn^{rs}. that Thomas Wynnyff for the terme of hys life now beyng appoynted by them to be Steward of the said lands shall have yerely for his ffee xiii^s. iiii^d. to be payde by the Wardens.

"Itm yt ys agreed and covenanted be twen the said Govn^{rs}. and the said Thomas Wynnyffe that the said Thomas shall make and engross every Wardens accompte ffrom yere to yere and allso kepe and wrytt one boke of ordynances nowe made for the said Scole and also shall by hym self or his sufficient depute kepe yerely all the Courts apperteynyng to the said Scole and the said Thomas shalbe allowed his charges at the said courts and for such paper and parchment as he shall expend for the same.

"Itm yt ys ordeyned that the said Warden so ellected and chose as ys aforesaid shall chuse to hym self one of ii persons whyche ii persons shalbe appoynted by the hole Govn^{rs}.

"Thes aforesaid ordynaunces are made the viiith daye of October, An^o. R. R. Ed. vi. iiii^{to} in o^r Comon House by us, &c."

On the next page follows a list of rents and fines due and a rough sketch of the School Seal. This makes us ask whether we have actually before us the original sketch of it? Turning over three leaves we come to the following entries made the

"' xxx^{mo} Die Octobris Anno Regni Dicti Domini quarto': Itm paid to the Skolemaster for iiii quarters wages endyd at Mich'as xvi^{li}. Itm to the Usher for iiii quarters wages ended at the said feaste v^{li}. Itm paid for the Seall xx^s."

These entries teach us a good deal that we did not know or were not certain of before: we get the name of the man who was the last Headmaster under the old system and the first Headmaster under the Charter of reFOUNDATION of King Edward. As he is paid a year's salary on the 30th October, 1550, it follows that he was Master before the reFOUNDATION in May, 1550; under the old scheme, too, there was evidently an Usher as well as a Master. It seems also probable that this Usher left in October, 1550, as one of these ordinances quoted above provides that the Master shall aid the Governors in the election of an Usher.

It is now proved without a doubt that Mr. A. F. Leach was quite right in his view (which he put forward in his

paper read before the Archæological Institute in March, 1898) that there had been no break in the continuity of Sherborne School in spite of the dissolution of the Monastery. No doubt, however, the School suffered by that; it must have lost, for instance, the Exhibitions which the Abbot and Convent had, according to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, given to the School.