

V.—THE MASTERS OF HORSLEY'S SCHOOL,
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

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[Read on 27th February, 1924.]

Thomas Horsley, the founder of the school, was a merchant adventurer of Newcastle, and was five times Mayor of the town and governor of the company.

In 1525 he made his will leaving his property for the use of a grammar school, which was to be founded after his death and that of his wife.

He died about 1544, so that the school came into existence soon after that date.

Of the first headmasters we know nothing. The first whose name is recorded is John Gray, but curiously enough his christian name is nowhere definitely mentioned by local historians.

He is probably that John Gray who was a scholar of Queen's College, Cambridge, from 1529 to 1531. There is no record of his graduation but a man named John Gray was vicar of Foxton in Cambridgeshire from 1552 to 1554. If this is the same man, John Gray probably came to Newcastle about the latter date, when he was nearly forty-three years of age. He was already married and his family consisted of at least two boys. What relationship existed between him and the several families of Grays then in Newcastle is difficult to determine.

The first local reference to him is in the corporation accounts, the earliest existing volume of which is for the year 1561.

' 1 Weke Novembre 1561.

Item paid to the mayster of the Hygh Skull for his quarteryche at Alhallows, 25s.'

The succeeding quarterly entries, when in existencè, are always in this form until 1576.

In July, 1563, in a case brought before the Commissary for the county of Northumberland—a case of Hewbank against John Atkinson, spu^rrier, *in causa diffamaciones* ' Mr. Gray scholemaster ' is quoted as a witness that the said Watson (*sic*) was beating his apprentice ' being the said Ewbanke sonne.' Welford thinks that this refers to Humphrey Gray, but he is wrong for Humphrey did not enter Cambridge till three years later.

The next mention of the schoolmaster is in connection with the rebellion of the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland in 1569. In December of that year Sir William Drury, marshal of Berwick, who seems to have acted as a government spy, wrote to Cecil concerning the r^efugees, adding that ' young Gray, the schoolmaster's son of Newcastle is another ' and perhaps inferring that he was at Louvain. This son would be an elder brother of Humphrey who no doubt was kept at Cambridge in consequence of Cecil's orders to retain all students who had relatives in the North. What became of the elder son we know not. He may be that Grey who with Radcliffe, the brother of the earl of Sussex, was executed in the market place of Namur in 1572 charged with participation in a pretended plot.

In spite, however, of the disorganised state of affairs both in Newcastle and the surrounding country due to the after-effects of this plot, the schoolmaster's work was being appreciated. In the same year (1569) ' Jeanne Leven, of Newcastell, widow ' says in her will ' Also I gyve and bequithe to four poor skollers of Cambridge being born in this town euery one of them ten shillings.' It would be interesting to know the names of the recipients.

There is now a break of seven years before we find the schoolmaster mentioned again. The reference is to be found in the municipal accounts of Newcastle where, however, it is this year changed in form.

' Februarie 1576.

Paid to the master of the hie scole and his son Humfraye Graie for their quarteryche 50s.'

Here we have the definite fact of the schoolmaster being the father of Humphrey Gray who succeeded him. What had happened to the elder Gray that his son should be associated with him in the mastership and at the same salary? The usher of the school was usually paid 16s. 8d. per quarter—Humphrey was something more than the usher. Perhaps his father's health was failing because of age, for he was then sixty-five, or because of the trouble connected with his elder son. When the next Visitation took place at St. Nicholas church on February 1st, 1577, the name of the elder Gray is omitted. The record for St. Nicholas' church is:—

' Umfridus Gray, ludimagister, non citatus.

Thomas Boswell, ludimagister, non citatus.

John Stokoe, ludimagister, non citatus.

Johannes Bowke, ludimagister, non citatus.'

Randall suggests that the first two were of Horsley's school; the other two may then belong to the writing school or song school. This may be so but a reference to the municipal accounts reveals the fact that both Humphrey Gray and his father are paid up to February, 1581 at least, after which the accounts are missing for a few years. No reference is found, however, to any payments to Thomas Boswell, but then there is no reference to any usher being paid by the corporation until 1590. We do find though that Thomas Pearson, the clerk of St. Nicholas' church, was paid twenty shillings in the first place for being clerk and ten shillings 'for kepinge and teaching four boys for maintayning sarvis in saint Nicholas church' while John Wallis was also paid ten shillings for the same duty. Thomas Kaye, one of the clergy of St. Nicholas, in his will, made in 1586, calls John Wallis the singing master. Hence we are inclined to place these two as masters of the song school

or choir school, and John Stokoe and John Bowke masters of the writing school.

The last reference to John Gray is in the registers of St. Nicholas' church where we read—

'1584. August 12, John Graye, scolemaister buried.' and we assume that this is the father of Humphrey Gray. That this is so is evident from a brief reference many years later in the municipal accounts. The 'city fathers' were very generous in those days and 'Widow Graye' 'olde mistris Graie' regularly received her ten shillings a quarter while she lived. The entry in the accounts for February, 1593, reads: 'Paid to wedow Graie late wife of Mr. John Graie, schoolmaster, for hir qr 10s.' This payment to widow Gray begins when the father of Humphrey Gray ceases to receive his quarterly stipend.

Humphrey Gray, the son of John Gray, was born about 1549, and was in all probability one of the early pupils of Horsley's school. He entered Queens' College, Cambridge, as a pensioner in 1566, obtained his B.A. degree in January 1569-70, and graduated M.A. from St. Catherine's College in 1573. Three years later he is assisting his father at Newcastle, where up to 1581, at least, he was associated with him in the head-mastership. It may be that John Gray was failing and the council, unwilling to cause him any pain by displacing him, appointed his son to carry on his work. About the time of his father's death in 1584, Humphrey became sole head at the salary previously given to the two. He had married soon after coming to Newcastle, but only two of his children, Robert and Dorothy, survived him. He died in July, 1594, at the early age of forty-five and was buried on July 8th in St. Nicholas' church, Newcastle. His wife survived him only a few months. In his will proved on August 4th, he gives his best gown and books to his son Robert, his great Bible to Mr. Wm. Riddle, books to his friends William Symson, Rowland Tempest, Ralph Carr, William Jackson, Thomas Carre and William Jennison. The residue goes to his daughter Dorothy. It is

interesting to note the names of his friends. They were all well-known in the town's affairs. Some may have been at school with Humphrey; their sons may have been taught by him.

Of John Gray's assistants or ushers we know nothing whatever. The visitations of 1577 and 1578 give the names of Humphrey Gray and Thomas Boswell, but whether the latter taught at the High School or not is uncertain. He is probably that Thomas Boswell or Buswell who was at Christ Church, Oxford, obtaining his B.A. degree in April, 1544, and M.A. in 1547.

The first mention of the usher of the High School is in connection with John Murray whose name occurs in the list of perpetual curates of St. John's church, Newcastle, where he commenced duties on August 22nd, 1590. A month later he was appointed usher at a salary of six pounds per annum. These two offices he retained till his death in August, 1596. He was buried in Saint Nicholas' church.

Francis Burrowes succeeded Humphrey Gray as headmaster, being appointed by Lionel Maddison and the common council in 1594, at a salary of £10 per annum. Coming from Staffordshire, he matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in November, 1581, at the age of twenty-one, and obtained his B.A. degree in January, 1581-2, which seems to show that he had migrated from some other college.

Burrowes became headmaster at a time of great contention in the town. In 1583 Queen Elizabeth had granted to Henry Anderson, mayor, and William Selby, alderman, the leases of the manors of Gateshead and Whickham. The sale of coal from these districts was placed in the hands of the hostmen, a society of the freemen of Newcastle, not as yet chartered. This placed an injustice upon other traders. Moreover the hostmen seem to have profited very considerably from their monopoly and were accused of extravagance in the management of the town's affairs. Lionel Maddison and his party were, on the other hand,

strongly in favour of retrenchment. Burrowes unwisely took a part in the controversy and joined the latter party against the 'Grand Lessees' as the others were called. From a reference in the corporation accounts for 1590 it appears that Humphrey Gray had acted as a host for several weeks and had thus, unintentionally perhaps, identified himself with the 'Grand Lessees.' Later he and his friends appeared to be in favour of retrenchment but early in 1594 his friends had mostly gone over definitely to the other side. William Jenison, the sheriff, was made an alderman, and so also was William Riddell—the latter became mayor in the following year. Ralph Carr became solicitor to the party and William Simpson an elector.

Burrowes was in a minority; he had alienated himself from the friends of the school and had suffered in consequence. In spite of being recommended for his post by the Archbishop of York and the Lord President of the Council of the North; in spite also of his licence by the Bishop of Durham he was turned out of his house and dismissed from his school by the mayor, Henry Anderson (1594-5) and Cuthbert Ogle appointed in his place at a salary of £20 per annum, double that given to Francis Burrowes. On an appeal to the Council of the North he was restored and Henry Anderson two years later was charged with misusing the town's money and, among other items, with using £100 for displacing Burrowes.

For a few years nothing further was done but Burrowes could not have had an easy time seeing that the 'Grand Lessees' dominated the council and that two headmasters were still acting and being paid by the council. In the corporation accounts for 1595 we read:—'Paide to Mr. Oagle Mr. of the hie scoole £5' and again 'to Mr. Ogle Mr. of the townes scoole £5.' In May, 1596 the entries are:—'Mr. Ogle Mr. of the townes scool £5'; 'Mr. Burras scoolm^r 50s. nihill.' Towards the end of 1596 we read:—'Mr. Cuthbert Ogle scoolm^r of a schoole in the towne, £5' and, 'Mr. ffrancis Burris Mr. of the hie schoole in the towne so called, 50s.' In February 1597,

they are each called 'scoolem^r' but paid £5 and 50s. respectively.

Meanwhile Mr. Murray the usher, had died in 1596, and no one seems to have been appointed in his place.

Cuthbert Ogle appears to have had considerable influence in the town especially among the 'Grand Lessees.' Maybe he was one of the Ogles of Ponteland or of Eglington, and most probably that Cuthbert Ogle of Northumberland, who, at the age of thirteen, in November 1582, had matriculated at Queen's College, Oxford, and had graduated B.A. in December, 1586. In July, 1595, the common council paid six shillings for three 'stall rooms' for him at St. Nicholas' church. Next year, on December 27th, 1596, his son William was baptised at St. Nicholas' church, his sureties being alderman William Jenison, William Jackson, the town clerk, and Mrs. Fortune Anderson, the wife of alderman Henry Anderson. His name occurs in the corporation accounts for the last time in August, 1599.

Matters came to a crisis in November of that year when William Jenison became mayor. Burrowes was again ejected from the school, which the mayor locked up and placed in the care of William Allanson, one of the clergy of St. Nicholas' church. Burrowes at once applied to the Exchequer Court for a writ of injunction to be sent to the mayor to stay further proceedings and for a writ of *sub poena* to be granted to compel them to show by what right they had taken action. The next year or two was filled with these charges and counter charges in all of which heavy expenses fell upon the corporation. The school must have suffered greatly in consequence of these differences.

In March, 1600, the Mayor consulted John Hedworth, the lawyer, on the legality of placing Mr. Allanson in the school and the town had to pay his charge of 20s. Then the town clerk, Mr. Jackson, and his servant went to York on the school's business and their expenses came to 30s. Next Mr. Jackson

drew up the mayor's answer to the complaint of Mr. Burrowes, and that with other matters concerning the school cost the town another 30s. Then James Clavering, the sheriff, sued Mr. Burrowes and the town paid the 21s. 6d. Burrowes claimed his arrears of stipend and Mr. William Cook, counsellor-at-law, sent in his account of 70s. while the mayor's account for going to York to answer the claim came to 90s. Other charges concerning the same matter amounted to 42s. 2d. Andrew Boone, solicitor for the corporation, sent in a bill of £6 and later another for £11 3s. 6d. Then came various costs amounting to £8 in all and finally in October, 1600, came the following item—' Paide to ffrancis Burrowes, gentelman, who taught in the hie schoole of this towne as schoolm^r att the desire of the reight honourable the lord Kurye lorde vicepresident and the rest of the Counsell att Yorke for pacefying of all suttes and quarrells between him the saide Mr. Burrowes on the one p'tie and the Mayor and Burgesses of this towne on the other p'tie and for the relinquishing and surrender of the said schoole, commanded by Mr. Maior to paie, his brethren and the common counsell the some of £50.'

Virtually then Burrowes had won his case and the town had to pay damages and costs, which as will be seen by the extracts above were very heavy.

What happened to Burrowes during the next year or two is uncertain, but in all probability he remained in the town. Meanwhile William Allanson stayed on as head till his death in 1602. His usher was a Mr. Cooke, who, however, held the post but for a short while. He left before August, 1601, when he received not only the stipend due to him but also an extra sum for the pains he had taken in producing a play before the mayor.

The corporation accounts from this time forward clearly distinguish between the grammar school and the writing school, two schools often held in the same building. Mr. Robert Johns was now made master of the writing school at a

salary of £20 per annum. At the visitation in March, 1606, at St. Nicholas' church, he was presented to Bp. Mathew by Walter Denton, curate of the chapel on the Bridge, and most probably an old boy of Horsley's school, for teaching without a licence. The matter was arranged satisfactorily for Johns continued to teach.

On the removal of Mr. Cooke as usher, Thomas Oxley was appointed in his place. He received his first payment as 'usher of the gramer schoole' in September, 1601, the stipend being at the rate of £10 per annum. He was the eldest son of Amor Oxley of Morpeth where he was educated under his father's care. He matriculated as a sizar at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1597-8, and graduated B.A. in 1600-1. How long he remained at the grammar school is doubtful, but in March 1601-2 he was probably made curate of Bamborough. Later he went southwards, as many of his family did, and, on obtaining the rectory of Newinden, Kent, in 1615, he was able to join with his brother Charles in assisting their younger brother Amor, the future headmaster of the Newcastle school, who that year entered Christ's College, Cambridge. Thomas Oxley held the rectory till 1618. In April, 1620, he was appointed to the rectory of Chignall St. James, Essex, where he remained till his death some time before January, 1638.

Meanwhile William Allanson had died in December, 1602, and Francis Burrowes was reinstated as head with (Edward) Wigham as his usher.

Soon after the reception of the 'Great Charter of Elizabeth,' steps were taken to carry out its provisions. In 1601 John Saville, the recorder, received a fee for plans 'towards the erectinge of a fre scoale.' The plans fell through since it was decided to utilise the buildings of the Virgin Mary hospital. During 1606 and 1607 bills were paid for work done both at the grammar school and at the writing school. The accounts cease in 1608 and we may assume that is the year in which the boys were finally settled in their new buildings. The last

item seems to imply an opening of a new school with a demonstration of the boys' abilities.

' 2nd Week June 1608

Paid to Mr. Wigham for money he disbursed upon orra-
tions wherin he was employed by direction of Mr.
Maior and his Brethren £3.'

Meanwhile Francis Burrowes had again retired and the head-
ship was in the capable hands of Robert Fowberry, M.A., who
from 1603 to 1607 had been head of Hull Grammar School.
With his advent Horsley's school came to an end.

