

SOME ACCOUNT OF SION COLLEGE, IN THE CITY
OF LONDON, AND OF ITS LIBRARY.

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OF THE COLLEGE.

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My first and most agreeable duty upon the present occasion is in the name of the President and Fellows of Sion College to bid a hearty welcome to the large and distinguished audience which I see before me. The President and Fellows are never better pleased than when their ancient hall can be made a centre for the diffusion of useful and interesting information, or for the discussion, by competent persons, of questions which occupy the public mind, even though they may be very difficult and burning questions which agitate as well as interest.

Happily for my incompetence it is not one of those burning questions of absorbing interest with which I am to deal to-day. I am not called upon to handle one of those topics which, however tenderly and skilfully they may be dealt with, yet can never fail to excite the feelings, cut across the prejudices, and inflame the passions of those before whom they are

discussed. My task, upon the present occasion, is of a far more simple kind. My aim, as it seems to me, should be to endeavour to imagine what such a company as I see before me would desire to know about the uneventful history of a peaceful institution such as Sion College is and was intended to be. What I have to do is to find the best answers I can to such questions as I may believe an intelligent audience would put were they permitted to catechise me upon the subject which is to engage our attention. Now, it seems to me that the following, at any rate, would be some of the questions thus put to me:—What is Sion College? When was it founded? By whom was it founded? Why was it founded? What is its *raison d'être*? What has been its external history? What has it done in the past? What is it now doing? What does it hope to do in the future?

It is to the answering of these questions, some or all of them, therefore, that I am now to address myself.

And first, What is Sion College? Sion College is nothing more nor less than a Gild, Company, or Corporation of the parochial clergy,—the Rectors, Vicars, Lecturers, and Curates (to use the precise terms of the charter) of the City of London proper and of the immediate suburbs thereof. At the first foundation of the College these suburbs were only the few parishes of enormous extent which touched the city walls in any portion of their circumference; and the Suburban Fellows were few in number, being only the incumbents of these few parishes. By a decision of the Visitor, however, dated June 15, 1846, the right of Fellowship has been conferred upon all the

incumbents of all the new parishes, the churches of which are situated within the limits of those old suburban parishes. Hence, the Suburban Fellowships are now more numerous than the Urban, and the total number of Fellowships has risen to full one hundred and sixty, largely in excess of the number at the time when the College was founded, then about one hundred—still more in excess of the total at which the Fellowships stood for nearly two centuries after the Great Fire of London had given the opportunity for reducing, by a large union of benefices, the excessive number of city incumbencies. The present large number of Fellowships * has been reached by this vast addition to the Suburban Fellowships, and in spite of some further extinction of the original City Fellowships, by the operation, miserably slow as it has been, of the different Acts for the union of benefices within the City of London. The propriety of this decision of the Visitor was not, possibly could not have been, questioned at the time, and certainly could hardly be set aside now. But it would be difficult to show that it has practically promoted the efficient working of the College for the purposes for which it was founded. Nothing could be more desirable than a large extension of the area of the College. But then that extension ought not to have been in one direction only.

The founder evidently desired the incorporation of the clergy in his College in order to facilitate unity of action among the leading parochial clergy of the Diocese of London, who then were unquestionably found principally in the incumbencies within the city

* About one hundred and eighty.

of London. To these the Hall and other buildings of the College would afford an easily accessible centre of union, whilst, at the same time, their views and interests, closely connected as they were by many ties, in the practical questions of the day, would be for the most part identical. But the Sion College of to-day is a very heterogeneous body, which can no longer claim to be so representative of the diocese that the terms "The President and Fellows of Sion College" and "The London Clergy" can still be taken as equivalents one for the other, as in the early days of the College they certainly were, and with great propriety. Without any invidious comparisons between the merits of the clergy of the cities of London and of Westminster, of the districts of Paddington and of Kensington, of Whitechapel and of Bethnal Green, it is plain that the incumbents of the City and of the extreme east and north-east sides of the Metropolis cannot fairly claim to represent the whole diocese. Nor have they any such real bond of union between themselves as can make their unity of interest and of purpose a compensation for their deficiency in representative character. Should the College prove able to carry out its plan for raising in a more central position than that which it now occupies more convenient and sumptuous buildings than those which it at present possesses, it is hoped that such an extension or modification of the charter must follow almost as a matter of course as will restore to the College its proper representative relation to the diocese at large.

But to return to the question, What is Sion College? Should any one feel inclined to question the propriety of my language, when I speak of it as a Gild, Company,

or Corporation of the clergy of the City of London and its suburbs, I would ask leave to point out that if in some few points it diverges from the ordinary type of City Companies, in far more it resembles them very closely, that in its constitution it is, in point of fact, almost identical with the chief of them, such differences as there may be being in name rather than in the essence which underlies the name, and, in one or two important particulars, it may even be said of Sion College that it keeps closer to the original idea of a city gild than do the other companies of the City of London.

I go on to enumerate some of the points which prove Sion College to be such a gild or company as I contend that it is. Sion College has its Court of Governors, annually elected, of which the chief is the President, the equivalent of the Master or Prime Warden of other companies; next to the Chair, to which they usually succeed, in due course come the two Deans, identical with the Wardens or Renter-wardens of other companies; and then, besides these, there are four Assistants. Sion College has also its Livery, capable of election upon and electing to the Court of Governors. This Livery consists of the Incumbents of Benefices within the area already defined. The Members of the Livery are styled Fellows of the College. Sion College has also its freemen, the Lecturers and Curates at those churches, the incumbency of which confers Fellowship upon their possessors; these are members of the College, but can neither choose nor be chosen Governors. The annual election of Governors is appointed by the charter to be held upon the third

Tuesday after Easter Tuesday. And here I come to one of the chief points in which Sion College adheres more closely to the original idea of a Gild than do the majority of civic companies now-a-days, viz., that the election is a reality. It is absolutely free, or, if restricted at all, it is restricted only by certain bye-laws which were enacted by the Livery, the whole body of the Fellows, and subsequently approved by the Visitor; the object aimed at in these bye-laws being only to provide some security for permanence and stability in the management of the affairs of the College, and to guard against unfair surprises upon the day of election. To secure these objects, the principal provisions of the bye-laws are, that no one shall be elected President who has not served two years, nor Dean who has not served one year, upon the Court of Governors; and that no one shall be eligible to any office upon the day of election of whose intended nomination the President has not received at least fourteen days' previous notice.

Whilst, however, the College is thus free annually to elect almost whom it will to serve upon the Court of Governors, when once chosen, for its year of office the Court becomes supreme. With it lies the entire and uncontrolled management of the whole business of the College—the use of the seal for all administrative purposes, the appointment of all officers, the granting of leases, the control of the expenditure, the management of the library, and the like. In the year 1855 an attempt was made to dispute this exclusive administrative supremacy of the Court of Governors. The opinion of counsel learned in the law was

taken upon the subject, and as, of course, each side to the dispute submitted its own state of facts, each got an opinion in its own favour, and the points in dispute could only be settled by a reference to the Visitor, who, after duly fortifying himself with a third and an independent opinion from his own legal advisers, gave his decision upon every point in favour of the Court of Governors; he declared that the Court was entitled, without any reference to a General Meeting, to exercise all the functions above enumerated.*

That this decision was in as strict conformity to law and precedent as in the interests of the College it was judicious, can, I think, easily be shown. For Sion College was founded just at the time when in all the new charters which were solicited by, or forced upon, the ancient Gilds of the City of London, the Court of Governors or of Assistants was for the conduct of the business of the Gild substituted in the place of the *communitas* of the whole Gild. We are told by high authority that the first legal instance of such substitution occurred in the reign of Philip and Mary. After that date this was so frequently effected, that, by the reign of James I., in every Gild the supremacy of the Court over the *communitas* was taken as matter of course. Founded, then, just subsequent to the time when this supremacy of the Court had in all Gilds become an accomplished fact, no longer debated or even questioned, there can be no reasonable doubt but that the charter granted to the College would be drawn upon these lines, and confer upon the Court such powers as had become the ordinary attributes of such a body, and much may be

* See Appendix.

urged in favour of the arrangement. The supremacy of the Court when once elected seems to be as conducive to the interests of the College as it is in harmony with what was then the ordinary practice. For property cannot well be managed, leases granted, tenants looked after, rents collected by a large body of men connected by a loose tie, with no fixed days of meeting, and with no special inducement to attend meetings when convened, with anything like constancy and regularity. At the same time, however unquestionable the supremacy of the Court when once elected, it may be in whole or in part superseded by another Court should such prove to be the will and pleasure of the Fellows upon the election day. Hence, if and when it pleases, the general direction which shall be given to the affairs of the College remains in the hands of the *communitas*; and here again Sion College remains nearer to the old idea of the gild.

In speaking of the analogy which subsists between Sion College and other city Gilds or companies, another important point in which its practice varies from that ordinarily pursued, but in which it at the same time cleaves closer to ancient types, must not be passed by.

It is an honourable peculiarity of Sion College that all who are Members of the College must be of the craft of which it is the Gild. It is a Gild of clergy engaged in active work within a certain area; whoever loses this qualification ceases at once to be a Member of the Gild. Sion College has no Members who are so by inheritance or by purchase. A citizen may be a member of the Goldsmiths' Company and never have

weighed or wrought or traded in a single ounce of precious metal in his life. A citizen may be high in office amongst the Vintners yet never have imported a butt of sherry or even sold a glassful of alcoholic stimulant in his life; a teetotaller of sensitive conscience might remain on the Court of that Company. A citizen may be Prime Warden of the Fishmongers yet never have cheapened a cargo of fish at Billingsgate or elsewhere. But to be a Member of the clerical Gild called Sion College a man must, I repeat, be a clergyman in active parochial work within a certain area. The moment he resigns his benefice or gives up his cure he ceases to be a member of this Gild. In a third point of difference, however, between Sion College and most gilds, it may be more open to question whether *what is peculiar to Sion College works well*. In most gilds those who have passed the chair remain upon the Court of Governors, and of course powerfully influence its policy. In Sion College those who have passed the chair are elevated into a certain dignity of position, but they do not remain upon the Court, and so their influence upon its resolutions are *no greater than that of any other Fellow*, and their experience is practically lost to the College. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the initiative of a freely-elected Court would be much hampered if they were liable to be out-voted by a body of their seniors more numerous than themselves, and often pledged to some policy of the past.

I next turn to the questions, When and why was Sion College founded? How did it legally acquire the status and constitution just described? It owes them

now to letters patent granted by Charles II. in the sixteenth year of his reign, June 20, 1664. These letters patent, however, recite other letters patent, which they confirm, granted by Charles I. in the sixth year of his reign, July 6, 1630, and this is the date of the actual foundation of Sion College. An earlier charter, granted March 7, 1626, was withdrawn and cancelled, because the first attempt to work it disclosed in it various provisions contrary to the episcopal state dignity and jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. Under this suppressed charter the Bishop of the diocese was to have been *ex officio* President of the College, and might seem thus to be reduced into a *primus inter pares* with the rest of the City clergy. In the existing Charter he fills the more remote and dignified position of Visitor. It will naturally be asked, What moved the Crown to grant these letters patent? To which the reply is, the prayer of the executors of the last will and testament of the Rev. Thomas White, D.D., the pious founder of Sion College. The executors prayed for the charter to enable them to give effect to a certain portion of Dr. White's will. Many and munificent are the other charitable provisions of that will. The part relating to Sion College, of course, alone concerns us now. But before going into the provisions of his will, it may be well to give some answer to the question, who was Dr. White? Thomas White was born in Temple parish, Bristol. He was the son of John White, a member of the family of the Whites of Bedfordshire, but himself domiciled at Bristol. Thomas White was entered at Oxford in 1566. This is the

first fact we learn about him, of his boyhood there is no record. He was a pious, active, energetic, well-learned, large-hearted man, who enjoyed a great reputation as a preacher when every one preached more or less, or at any rate took an intense interest in preaching. Dr. White's success in the pulpit, combined with great learning and high character, together with the requisite influence, obtained for him large preferments. He was first appointed Minister of St. Gregory by St. Paul's, thence he was removed to the vicarage of St. Dunstan in the West. With this he held the prebend of Mora in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, to which he was appointed in 1588, nor was that then a ghostly, corpseless preferment such as these soi-disant prebends have now become. To the vicarage and the prebend were added in 1590 the treasurership of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, in 1591 a canonry of Christ Church, Oxford, and in 1593 a canonry of St. George's, Windsor. As Dr. White did not die till March 1, 1624, he was incumbent of the last acquired of these preferments for thirty-one years. No wonder that he died a rich as well as a much-esteemed man. At the same time it is fair to say that his tenure of all these benefices by no means implies that Dr. White was anything but the most conscientious of men. We must remember that in those days he who refused a good piece of preferment when offered him would have been looked upon as a fool, or worse, as one fit to take rank in this world and the next with him—

"Che fece, per viltate, il gran rifiuto."

What Archdeacon Hale once called "the sacred prin-

ciple of delegation" was then fully admitted, and he who had most duties to delegate to others was the greatest man. Anyhow even the sternest reprover of pluralities must admit that if ever the holding of them may be excused it is in the case of those who make as good and generous a use of the wealth derived from them as did Dr. Thomas White. Abundant was the harvest he reaped upon earth, but there was something of heavenly in the barns in which he stored it, for if he accumulated it was not for the bare comfort and merriment of his own soul but for the relief of various forms of distress, for the social, moral, religious benefit of others, for the public weal.

Moreover it seems fair to note on the one hand that of all these preferments but one had any cure of souls attaching to it; on the other hand, that there is no place with which their holder was connected, if we except Windsor, his latest benefice, in which, therefore, he had less time to acquire an interest, which does not to this day benefit largely by his judicious, provident liberality.

To Dr. White his native city of Bristol is indebted for Temple Hospital, a grand eleemosynary foundation, which has supported and still liberally supports a large number of deserving poor. To Dr. White St. Paul's Cathedral is indebted for a handsome endowment for a Divinity Lecturer. To Dr. White the University of Oxford owes the revenues which support a Lecturer on Moral Philosophy. To Dr. White what was then not merely by prescription the City of London but the real Metropolis, the centre, not of commercial activity only, but of thought, and of life, is indebted for the

formation at Sion College of its parochial clergy into a body corporate. To Dr. White forty poor persons chosen in varying proportions from the Merchant Taylors' Company, the parishes of St. Dunstan in the West and St. Gregory by St. Paul's, and from the freemen of the city of Bristol, owe their pensions of 35*l.* per annum each, derived from the improved property of Sion Hospital, the modern representative of the Almshouse of the President and Court of Governors of Sion College. The original number of these poor persons was twenty, but by judicious management the number has within the last two years been doubled. And now for a word or two about the *raison d'être* of Sion College. What were the principal objects which Dr. Thomas White had in view in founding it? One at least is quite clear, he wished to secure to the clergy of the City of London that corporate existence which had been long secured to almost all the crafts and to not a few of the professions carried on within its walls. He wished to furnish them with a centre from which as from a watchtower they might observe the course of events, and be ever ready to interpose with all the force of united action when they should conceive that the interests of religion, morality, and true progress would in any way be benefited by their interposition. At the same time Dr. White wished that the edification of its members should be another main object to be steadily kept in view, as he expresses it in his will. He desires the foundation of this Corporation greatly "for the glory of God, the good of his Church, and redress of many inconveniences, not prejudicial to the Lord Bishop of London's jurisdiction,

whom I would have Visitor, he and his successors for ever; but to maintain Truth in Doctrine, Love in conversing together, and to repress such sins as follow us as men; that they might be admonished and ordered there to make them amend, or else the College to send them and their cause to the Bishop to be punished accordingly."

Except upon the principle *qui s'excuse s'accuse*, this double reference to the Bishop and his lawful authority would seem to dispose of an insinuation which has sometimes been made against Dr. White. It has been hinted that he was a Puritan, a charge which, in a certain sense, he would probably not have cared to rebut. He probably was, but there is absolutely nothing to prove, as has been insinuated, that he belonged to the extreme party, or that would make it likely that his aim in founding the College was, by anticipation, to organise the clergy of the diocese into a kind of Presbyterian Classis. If it be permitted to speculate upon the point, I should be inclined to suppose that he had a genuine wish to bring the Bishop and principal clergy of the diocese into more intimate relations, to provide the Bishop with a larger and more influential council of clergy than could be found at St. Paul's, with its ghost of a Chapter, restricted practically to the Dean and three Residentiaries. Dr. White further desired the incorporation of the clergy that they might be legally qualified to hold property for and administer the affairs of an Almshouse, which he had determined to found in any case, but of which the management was to be with the Merchant Taylors' Company, should it be found

impossible to obtain a charter for the incorporation of the Clergy at Sion College—a point upon which some doubts seem to have been entertained. Dr. White was not one of those persons who are content to will things and leave to others the provision of the means for carrying out their wishes. Whatever Dr. White willed, for that, in intention at least, he amply provided.

Hence, for the purchase of a site for his College and Almshouse, Dr. White in his will appropriated a sum of 3000*l.*, and his executors were to provide out of his estates in the country an annual revenue of 160*l.* per annum, of which 120*l.* was to be secured to the Hospital for ever and 40*l.* to the College. Out of this latter sum were to be made payments to preachers of quarterly Latin Sermones ad Clerum, and the cost of the banquet upon the anniversary and the other appointed days which was to reward those who listened to the sermons was to be defrayed.

If the charter for a College should prove unattainable, then the half of the sum provided for the purchase of a site and for erecting buildings, viz. 1,500*l.*, was to be expended upon a site and buildings for the Almshouse, the premises and government of which were to vest in the Merchant Taylors' Company.

The last will and testament of Dr. White, containing these provisions, was dated October 1, 1623; and having thus, as far as depended upon himself, secured the carrying out of many objects very dear to him, he could finish his course in peace, content that his works should follow him. And so he died, March 1, 1624, and was buried in the church of St. Dunstan in the West, one of his earliest and best-loved preferments.

By his will a tomb should have been erected to his memory. In this particular only, for some unexplained reasons, his executors appear to have failed in carrying out its provisions. At any rate, till the year 1877 this eloquent, large-hearted, open-handed man remained without such a monument as he had desired. In that year, when Mr. Lyall was President of Sion College, the long omission was supplied, and in the chancel of St. Dunstan's church, a fair and handsome tablet, from the design of Mr. Arthur Blomfield, with a medallion portrait of him whom it commemorates, was erected at the expense of the President and Fellows of Sion College, and of some of the trustees of the Municipal Charities of the city of Bristol.

The executors of Dr. White's will were the Rev. John Simpson, rector of St. Olave, Hart Street, "his kinsman," and Mr. John Keeling, lawyer, of the Temple, his "long friend;" and as overseers were appointed Sir George Croke, "his very kind, dear friend," and Mr. John Durnham, preacher, "his very good neighbour in London."

Some account of the way in which these gentlemen discharged themselves of their trust will carry us a step further in the history of the foundation of Sion College. They were evidently able, practical, conscientious men. The labour entailed upon them in administering and realising what had to be realised of a property so considerable as that of which Dr. White died possessed must have been very great. We need follow them only in that part of it which resulted in the successful foundation of Sion College and Alms-

house. If they were as diligent in the rest as they were in what concerned the College, and there is no reason to doubt it, the other interests had no reason to complain of them.

As already mentioned, the date of Dr. White's death was March 1, 1624. By March 7, 1626, a charter for a College, such as Dr. White desired, had been obtained, and though this charter had subsequently to be modified, yet the grant of it had proved that there were no insuperable difficulties in the way of carrying out Dr. White's intentions. And so the executors at once set to work to find a site for the necessary buildings. After some search they found just such a plot of ground as they wanted; one, too, as will appear presently, which from the uses to which it had been but a comparatively short while before dedicated was peculiarly appropriate for such a College as was now to be erected upon it.

Our records inform us that on 25th April, 1627, the executors of Dr. White bought of Robert Parkhurst, citizen and alderman of London, and of Helen his wife, one capital messuage, sometime belonging to the priory of Elsing Spital (of which more anon); three tenements and two gardens within the close and precinct of the said priory; one long messuage or house, situate near the said close and precinct of the priory, and extending in length from the priory church (which, or some portion of which, had been bought 7th June, 1546, by the parishioners of St. Alphage, for the sum of 100*l.*) towards the east, by the common way leading from Cripplegate to Bishops-gate towards the north, to Philip Lane towards the

west; three tenements in Philip Lane; two in Aldermanbury, all lying together and abutting to the said priory garden.

The history of this site, since the dissolution of religious houses, is not without its interest. In less than a hundred years it had changed hands five times, if we include the purchase by the executors of Dr. White. Parkhurst and his wife, of whom they had it, had bought it of Sir Rowland Hayward, knight and alderman, and John Large, citizen and cloth-worker, of London. Hayward and Large acquired it by purchase of Henry Norrey, Esq., and of Margery his wife, to whom it really belonged, as it had come to her as her dowry. *She was one of the daughters of Sir John Williams, who, after the surrender of Elsyng Spital to the king, 11th May, 1530, purchased it from the Crown, together with certain lands which had belonged to Nutley Abbey, in Buckinghamshire, for the sum of 526*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.* The annual value of Elsyng Spital, at the time of the Dissolution, was 193*l.* 15*s.* 5*d.**

At the date of this last-mentioned transaction, Sir John Williams, who was subsequently created Baron Thame, was keeper of the King's jewels. As soon as he obtained possession he turned the lodgings of the prior and canons of the Spital into a dwelling-house, the chapel-yard into a garden, the cloister gallery and alms-houses into a stable. Whilst Sir John was still living in the priory, in 1541, the whole dwelling-house, with its appurtenant buildings, was burned down by a fierce fire. Of the King's jewels many were consumed in the conflagration, and

many more were stolen in the confusion attendant upon it.

Thus perished every vestige of Elsing Spital, save the portion of the priory church which had been purchased by St. Alphage parish, to which Sion College has no claim, which, therefore, can properly find no place in an account of it, more especially as it is presently to be ably treated of in a separate paper.

But though no remains of its ancient buildings lingered upon the site of Elsing Spital when it was conveyed to the executors of Dr. White, that they might erect upon it Sion College and Almshouse, it is pleasing to be able to point out that it was the same spirit of piety and active beneficence which, though under changed forms, was finding an expression in the later as in the former Foundation. It was so to say an undesigned coincidence which placed Sion College upon the site of Elsing Spital; but had it been designed, none more appropriate could have been found. If in such subject matter such language be permissible, the succession of Sion College to Elsing Spital, after the intervention of some dissimilar links, might be described as a striking instance of reverting to types.

Sion College still possesses as many as twelve deeds relating to Elsing Spital, from which, and particularly from the deed of its foundation, may be fully justified the assertion now made.

It should, however, be mentioned in passing that Elsing Spital was not the first religious foundation which had occupied the site. The Spital was preceded by a convent of nuns—about which scarcely anything seems to be known save that it once existed.

Were more of its history recoverable it could hardly be recorded here. No convent of nuns could have had such points of resemblance with Sion College as had Elsing Spital, points of resemblance which seem to justify me in representing the College as in some sort a revival and perpetuation of the Spital. Elsing Spital was so called from its founder, William Elsyng or Elsing, who in the year 1331 endowed it as a hospital for a hundred sick poor, which in the first instance he designed to be managed by and ministered to by a warden and four secular priests. Nine years later, however, at his desire, and with the requisite consents, the warden and secular priests were superseded by a prior and five canons regular of the order of St. Augustine. The motives of this change alleged by the founder were, that, taking into account their frequent daily opportunities of mixing with the world, secular priests can hardly help becoming thoroughly worldly, from which the Augustinian canons are saved by their life in community, whilst at the same time their rule is not so unduly strict as to make those who follow it impractical. The founder endowed his hospital with tenements in several other London parishes, besides those of St. Mary Aldermanbury and St. Alphage, in which lay the bulk of its property. The rectory of the former of these parishes, with the consent of the patrons, the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, was appropriated to and consolidated with the Hospital. Hence a Warden or Prior had upon his election to obtain the approval of the Cathedral Chapter before he could be confirmed by the Bishop.

But, after all, our chief interest in Elsing's Spital

is not so much with the inquiry, whether it was managed by secular or by regular clergy, as with the primary object of its foundation, which was to provide decent lodging, decent bedding, decent clothing, for aged and impotent, especially blind and paralytic folk, to the number of one hundred. William Elsing expressly states that he was moved to provide such a refuge by the sad spectacle of wretchedness which he often witnessed in the streets. He saw frequently poor impotent and aged folk who, from casual charity, could get sufficient to eat and drink, but who had no place in which to lay their heads, no means of repairing or renewing their rags. Above all, he tells us, that what specially wrung his heart, what more than all the rest stirred the bowels of compassion within him, was the sad plight of many aged persons for whom the misery of advancing years of failing strength, and of extreme penury, was complicated by blindness and by paralysis; to them he gives the first claim upon vacancies in the Hospital; when these are provided for the other places might be filled by sufferers from other forms of distress.

To this distress it was Elsing's desire to provide the completest remedy possible, and if the Prior and Canons of the Spital at all lived up to the letter and spirit of their founder's rule the inmates must have had constant cause to bless him, as we shall see if we follow the community through a day's work as prescribed by him.

It was ordered that at dawn of each day the chapel bells should be rung, upon which the Warden and Prior and Canons were to proceed to the chapel and

there say Matins and the Canonical Hours, with due pauses and with a plain pronunciation. Upon all Sundays and the greater festivals they were to sing them. Each Priest was to rule the choir in a weekly turn except the Warden or Prior, who, on account of important duties connected with the property of the Spital which had to be discharged elsewhere, was excused from this duty. Then each Priest in due succession was to say his separate Mass in the Chapel. Then before the third hour, 9 a.m., the Warden and Canons were to visit the sick and suffering, to relieve their wants and mitigate their pains as much as possible. Next the bells were to be rung again and the solemn Mass of the Community was to be said or sung, accordingly as it was a ferial or a festal day. After this came the common dinner; then an interval was allowed for repose or recreation. But after no long while the Community had to return to the chapel. Every day, before Vespers and Compline were solemnly sung, the office for the faithful departed was to be devoutly and distinctly recited. Compline ended, there was supper for those who cared for it. But even so the duties of the day were not concluded. As in the morning, so in the evening, the whole religious community were to visit the chambers of the poor inmates and again to relieve want, to assuage pain, and minister to the soul diseased. The Prior had yet one more duty to discharge before he could accompany the community to their rest in the common dormitory. He was to appoint the Morrow Mass Priest, *i. e.*, that member of the body who was to discharge the earliest religious duty of the next day.

All thus set in order, there follows this curious provision, that this order, as far as the Divine offices are concerned, shall continue only till the appointment and custom of the Church shall settle some other times and modes for the celebration of Divine service. Surely the founder should not lose the credit of this early recognition of the fact that the forms and seasons of Divine worship are not of perpetual obligation; that the reform of offices and ceremonial may become a necessity? Surely, too, the clear way in which the founder thus sets the doors of reform by competent authority wide open as far as his Spital is concerned, and the charitable work carried on therein should have saved his institution from destruction even when the mania for despoiling religious houses was at its height. But then the King would not have got from Sir John Williams so much of his 526*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.*, as represented the value of the site of Elsing Spital, nor Sir John a valuable property almost for a song. It was the site of this hospital, with the memory of many deeds of heroic charity cleaving to it, which the executors of Thomas White just a hundred years after its secularisation bought as a fit plot of ground upon which to erect Sion College and Alms-house. They gave for it the sum of 2450*l.*, just over four and a half times as much as Sir John Williams had given for it and for the lands of Nutley Abbey together a century earlier.

Having thus obtained a charter and a site for the College, the executors proceeded with no less diligence to procure the erection of the necessary buildings—a hall, a dwelling-house for the clerk, lodgings for the twenty almsfolk. These began to rise rapidly, when

an incident occurred which led to an important addition being made to the original plan of Dr. White, an addition which has proved of the highest value, which has, in fact, given much of its character and fame to Sion College.

The incident was this. Mr. Wood, Rector of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, an Assistant upon the first Court of Governors, which had been nominated in the charter, in company with Dr. Simpson, one of the executors of Dr. White, was viewing the progress of the works, turning to whom Mr. Wood remarked that a fine room for a library might well be built over the unfinished Almshouse. The remark was not lost upon Dr. Simpson. It led eventually to his becoming almost a co-founder with Dr. White of the College as we know it; for at his own charge over the lodgings of the almsfolk he built a room one hundred and twenty-one feet in length and twenty-five in breadth. He lined it, we are told, with wainscot; he fitted it with stalls, desks and seats; he added for its maintenance an endowment in land calculated to yield 16*l.* per annum. As the recorded dimensions are as nearly as possible identical with those of the present library, it is clear that in the rebuilding, after the Great Fire of 1666, the ancient foundations and lines were adhered to as closely as possible. Dr. Simpson's benefactions to the new foundation and the cause of learning did not end here. Having provided a spacious library to contain the materials for study, he thought it well to provide the students who should desire to avail themselves of these materials with suitable and inexpensive lodgings in close proximity to the library.

He built, therefore, a certain number of sets of

chambers along the south side of the garden, which should at once accommodate students economically, and yield a small revenue to the College.

It seems a great pity the plan had but the shortest time in which to prove its utility. These students' chambers, within forty years of their building, were destroyed in the Great Fire, and when rebuilt, and as far as they were rebuilt, they could no longer be dedicated to the same purpose,—the poverty, not the will, of the College preventing it. It was only by granting building leases that the College could get any but its most essential buildings re-erected. And with the granting such leases the power of restricting tenants to a particular class vanished.

Brief as was their existence, at least one distinguished man availed himself of the advantages which they afforded. For in one of these sets of chambers for a while dwelt Thomas Fuller, the learned, the witty, the humorous historian and divine. This was in 1640, when he came to live in London, and was chosen lecturer in the Savoy Chapel. Gratitude to a considerable benefactor requires that the name of one more of those who dwelt in these chambers should be mentioned—Nathaniel Torperley, a name but little remembered now, though he who bore it in his day enjoyed a high reputation as an eminent mathematician, and corresponded on terms of equality with all that was most distinguished in that branch of science. To him Thomas Hariot, or Harriot, left by will all his manuscripts. These, or some of these, together with other manuscripts, and a considerable collection of printed books, besides many

articles of value, diamond and gold rings, of which he seems to have had a collection, Torperley bequeathed to the College; a bequest which brought John Spencer, the second Librarian of the College, into much suspicion and much trouble.

Thus has some answer been given to the questions: What is Sion College? Who founded it? When, why, and where? It has been shown how it came by its Charter, its Buildings, and, above all, its fine Library. Let us now glance at its history, see what signs of life it has given, and how far it has fulfilled the intention of its founder.

Well, for some considerable time, from circumstances which will be related, its whole energies were of necessity absorbed in the struggle for existence. If, however, its annals are but meagre; its action more restricted than could have been wished, and might have been anticipated, this comparative failure for a time can easily be accounted for.

The College had hardly acquired its existence before the troubles of the Great Rebellion were upon it; by these it ran some risk of being strangled in its cradle. They had scarcely subsided when the Great Fire consumed all its buildings, and its principal sources of income. Hence a prolonged struggle with poverty; a large expenditure imperative, whilst no revenues were coming in to meet it.

If I mention a few incidents connected with these events, I shall, I think, account for some shortcomings and illustrate the general history of the times.

For a short time everything seemed to be going on smoothly enough. The first Court of Governors was

nominated in the Letters Patent of July 6, 1630. The President was John Giffard, Rector of St. Michael Bassishaw. Thomas Worrell, Rector of St. Botolph Bishopsgate, and John Simpson, Rector of St. Olave, Hart Street, the Founder of the Library, and one of Dr. White's executors were Deans. The four Assistants were Francis Dee, Cornelius Burgess—of whom we shall hear again—Edward Abbot, and Thomas Wood. They remained in office till the Third Tuesday after the Easter Tuesday next ensuing, when the first elected Court was chosen.

For first elected President the choice of the College fell upon Thomas Westfield, who was continued in office two years. The Deans and two of the Assistants were re-appointed; but, in the places of Dee and Abbot, Richard Watson, Rector of St. Mary Aldermary, and George Walker, Rector of St. John Evangelist, Watling Street, were elected Assistants. It is interesting to note this in proof that at first the election of Governors was free, as the founder intended that it should be, and independent of any principle of rotation.

It is also interesting to note that the two first elected Presidents of the College became Bishops, Westfield, of Bristol, John Hacket, Rector of St. Andrew Holborn, his successor, and otherwise a remarkable person, of Lichfield and Coventry. We may further note that before 1700, of the fifty-one Presidents of the College eight had been made Bishops, six Deans, five Archdeacons, two Masters of Colleges, not a few Canons—that up to the same date it was by no means unusual to continue the same Fellow in office, as Pre-

sident, for two or even three years, when the state of the College business seemed to require it, an honour very rarely accorded since that date; the last instance being that of the present Writer, who was President in the years 1874 and 1875.

The early records of the College suffice to show that the first Court set to work in quite a business-like way, granting leases, electing almsfolk, filling the shelves of the library, but beyond this little can be gleaned from them. They were kept in the most meagre way. Fragments of transactions are mentioned, but not their whole course. Sometimes the beginning of a piece of business is recorded, of which the end has to be inferred. Sometimes it is the conclusion which is noted, leaving the steps which led up to it to be divined. It was not till towards the close of the last century that the minutes came to be kept with any fulness. From 1799, when the Rev. Robert Watts, Vicar of St. Helen, afterwards Rector of St. Alphage, was appointed Librarian and Secretary, and even from some few years earlier, they have been kept with a fulness and particularity which leave nothing to be desired. A complete history of the affairs of the College might be easily compiled from them, and some side lights thrown upon passing events—but to return. However faithfully and conscientiously the first Courts of Governors may have set to work to discharge their duties, it soon became too apparent that they did not possess the art of coining money. And the money question, even before religious and political trouble came, entered into an acute phase. Dr. White had been munificent in his intentions. One of his

executors had been munificent in adding largely to his original plan; the others diligent in carrying out his views. And yet the question of finance soon became a very embarrassing one. In those days country rents were very uncertain, and sometimes hard to come by, so that, far from being able to display activity in a wide field, through lack of funds the College was straitened even in the fulfilment of its own more immediate functions.

The Founder had desired that, besides the anniversary banquet, which he intended to be the almsfolks' court day, there should in every year be four quarterly dinners, before each of which a Latin sermon was to be preached, and an honorarium paid to the chosen orator for his pains in preaching the same. At the close of his second year of office, 1633, Dr. Westfield, the first elected President, preached the first Latin sermon, taking for his apt text the eighteenth verse of the fifty-first Psalm, "*Benigne fac Domine in bonâ voluntate tuâ Sion.*" "O Lord, be favourable and gracious unto Sion." At the same anniversary four doctors were duly appointed to preach the quarterly sermons. Only three years later, in 1636, provision was made but for two sermons, because the College could afford but two dinners. Nowadays we may smile at this inversion of the old adage, no song no supper, into no supper no sermon. This admission that Latin sermons are things not to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, save by the well-fed and the well-feed, may sound strange to us. But, however little heroic such an admission may be, it brings out that for which I have chiefly drawn attention to the

fact, viz., the early date at which the College found its proceedings hampered by the extreme narrowness and insecurity of its income. Before passing on to other topics I may perhaps as well finish with the fate of the Latin sermons. There seem to have been fitful and not very successful attempts made to secure the due preaching of them. The College records tell us that, in 1642, they were omitted by reason of the plague. From 1656 to 1660 Doctors or Bachelors of Divinity were regularly appointed at each anniversary to preach them, but, it is added, that few discharged the duty to which they were appointed. Alas! still for no better motive than this, that though they might preach there was no security for either fee or food.

On the other hand, though those who were elected to preach the quarterly sermons too often failed to discharge the duty, from the time when Dr. Westfield, the first elected President, 1633, set his good example, down to 1854, when Mr. Goode occupied the Chair, save on very rare occasions, and in quite exceptional circumstances, such as the plague in 1642, no President had failed to preach at the anniversary the Latin sermon expected of him. At the Anniversary Meeting of the Fellows in 1748 it was declared to be by laudable custom dating from time out of mind a branch of the President's office. It was never intentionally omitted till 1855. Mr. Scott, President 1858, reverted to the laudable custom, which thenceforth was again continued with tolerable regularity down to 1876, when the present writer closed his second year of office as President, as he had closed his first, with a

Latin sermon. Mr. Collins, President 1877-8, also preached his in due course; but this was the last. The subsequent omission is less chargeable to a want of willingness and ability in those who should have preached than to a want of readiness and intelligence in those who should have listened; and perhaps there is some justification for what seems to be the general feeling, that by this time Latin sermons are a little out of date. To resume, it was not want of funds only, but the troublous character of the times in which it was cradled, which prevented the College from attaining such a development in its earlier years as might have been hoped for.

The first elective Court was chosen in 1631, and barely a dozen years later, 1643, the Great Rebellion had broken out, old landmarks were being obliterated, and something more than Puritanism was setting in with so full and relentless a tide that the President, Dr. Marsh, Rector of St. Dunstan in the West, Archdeacon of Chichester, was ejected by the Parliamentary Visitors, and Mr. Andrew Janeway, Minister of All Hallows London Wall, was substituted in his place. An attempt had already been made by John Sedgwick, Rector of St. Alphage, to invalidate the regular election of the year. Against it he had protested upon four grounds—two technical, two political. He urged, firstly, that lecturers and curates had not been summoned; secondly, that the Latin sermon had been omitted, and then he goes on to his real grievances; he insisted thirdly, that at the election some voted and were chosen who were sequestered by the Parliament; whilst on the other hand, fourthly, some instituted by

the authority of Parliament were restrained from voting. The attempt of John Sedgwick to confiscate Sion College to the Presbyterian party failed for the moment ; but a few months later a second attempt was, as we have seen, abundantly successful ; the elected President and Governors, or such of them as were distasteful to the dominant faction, being thrust out of office, and more acceptable persons substituted in their place.

How complete the success of the second attempt may be inferred when we read that on February 11, 1647, a Mr. English could find no more acceptable gift to present to the intruded President and Court than a copy of the Solemn League and Covenant, handsomely framed, to be by them hung up in their Common Hall.

It is not without its interest to note that for this year and the following, 1648, the President of the College was Cornelius Burgess, Rector of St. Magnus, London Bridge. He had been, as already noted, a member of the Court of Governors nominated in the charter, being at that time one of the chaplains of King Charles I. ; but, in 1645, by authority of Parliament, he was made a kind of Dean of St. Paul's, the Deanery being assigned to him for his residence with a pension of 400*l.* a year, whilst an enclosed portion of the Cathedral was appropriated to him in which it was his duty to lecture on Sunday evenings.

The gift of the copy of the Solemn League and Covenant seems to have been accepted with good grace and gratitude enough. Not so another boon, for which the Fellows were soon to be indebted to the Parliament, viz., a troop of soldiers, who were ordered to be

quartered in the College. This was a sacrifice for the good cause, which even a Puritan Court of Governors would not make without a struggle. Through the President, Dr. Seaman, and Mr. Calamy, a sufficiently lively remonstrance was addressed to the proper quarter, which at first was attended with success. But though the soldiers were for the moment removed they were soon sent back again, and, at their second coming, they turned not only the Clerk and other Officials but the peaceful students also out of their lodgings.

Had this conversion of the College into a barrack been attended with no graver loss than the silver clasps of the vellum Register of Benefactors, a theft with which tradition credits these soldiers, the mischief would not have been great.

But by thrusting the students out of their lodgings they deprived the College of rents to the amount of 54*l.* a year. This was the *coup de grace*, and completed the financial embarrassments of the College. Already, in consequence of the troubles, country rents were coming in, if at all, in smallest dribblets and with excessive irregularity; and now all other sources of revenue were so completely dried up that the Governors could only pay the inevitable rates and taxes by a deduction from the pittance of the alms-folk. From this time a period of chronic financial embarrassment commences, which lasted for nearly a century, till the heavy debt incurred in the rebuilding after the Great Fire was discharged, and the building leases upon fines, granted after that calamity, fell in.

It is fair to add that no sooner were the depredations committed by the soldiers brought under the notice of the Great Protector than he removed them, and ordered that an account should be furnished of "such spoil and harm as they may have committed in the time of their occupancy." There is, however, no trace of this good intention bearing fruit. The Protector's hands were too full to admit of his seeing to so minute a matter himself, and those to whom he remitted it seem to have neglected it; at any rate, no compensation was ever paid.

In connection with military occupations of the College, I may mention that in 1711 the Lieutenancy of the City of London ordered a company of Train Bands to keep a court of guard in the College gardens, but being remonstrated with withdrew the order. William Reading, then Librarian, tells us that at that date guards were set in many of the churches. He himself saw them in St. Alphage and in St. Mary Whitechapel.

Again in 1803 leave was given to the captain of "The Voluntary Military Associations in the Ward of Cripplegate Within" to exercise young recruits in the Gardens, the College subscribing ten guineas to the Association. And when the present Volunteer Force was set on foot one of the City Regiments was allowed to drill in the College Gardens.

In spite, however, of an income which had diminished till it was at the point of vanishing away,—in spite of the fact mentioned that in 1643 the President and Court regularly elected at the Anniversary were in the autumn of the same year superseded by a Court irregularly chosen,—in spite of all the troubles

of the Great Rebellion and the Commonwealth,—the College escaped actual dissolution, and, for the most part, elected its own Officials at the time appointed by the charter. The minutes record but two, or, at most, three instances upon which the election of Governors was held upon any other day than that appointed by the charter, and these much later than the period now under review. The occasions referred to were in 1693, and again in 1697, when the anniversary was, by leave of the Visitor, postponed, and for the same reason, viz., because in both those years it so happened that the Government had ordered a solemn fast upon the day prescribed by the charter for the College feast. Before, however, quite passing away from the period in which Puritanism was as rampant in Sion College as it was elsewhere, I will mention an amusing form in which it exhibited itself there. In all official records, from 1648 to 1658, both inclusive, the Saints have ceased to be Saints, and the Clergy have ceased to be Rectors or Vicars. For example, the Fellows elected upon the 17 April, 1649, and their benefices are thus set down: President William Gorege, Ann Blackfriars; Deans, E. Calling, Mary Aldermay, James Naller, Leonard Shoreditch; and the four Assistants are Ministers of Sepulchres, Mary Woolnoth, Stephen Walbrook, and Austins. Besides this the library possesses to this day a thick MS. volume which contains the records of ecclesiastical proceedings (in London) for the period during which Presbyterianism was the recognised religion of England. The book was the gift of Mr. Thomas Granger, of the India House, and is a large manuscript volume,

entitled "The Records of the Provincial Assembly of London, begun A.D. 1647, and ending A.D. 1660." It contains also, secondly, a "Vindication of the Presbyteriall Government, published by the Ministers and Elders of the Provincial Assembly, Nov. 2, 1649;" thirdly, "*Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*;" and fourthly, "An Exhortation to Catechizing," both published by the same authority. In a similar volume the library possesses also "*The Acts of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, 1650—1651.*"

This triumph of Presbyterianism proved, of course, to be an episode, and a very brief one, in the affairs of the College, as in the history of the nation.

In 1659 the Royalist reaction was bearing fruit in Sion College, as it was throughout the length and breadth of the land. All the Saints recovered their titles more quickly than they had lost them, though the Incumbents seem to have hesitated longer before they resumed their old appellation, and became once more Rectors, Vicars, &c. On May 7, 1660, a General Court of the College was held, at which "The King's Majesty's most gracious Declaration from Breda" was read, and (whatever dire misgivings may have lurked in the hearts of some present) without a dissentient voice was "most thankfully acknowledged," and it was ordered "that a humble address to his Majesty, now in Holland, be presented by the Ministers in and about London." The Address to be presented by Dr. Reynolds, the President, and others; but, alas! mark the poverty of the College. It was necessary to make it an express stipulation that the Fellows forming the deputation should bear their own charges, the utmost

the Corporation could do being to make itself responsible for the Clerk's share thereof. And now that King and Church have come by their own again, perhaps by something more than their own, may it not be expected that prosperous days will at length dawn for the College too?

Not so; for different reasons from those which led to the disappointment of so many (the King's cold oblivion of old servants and faithful services had no share in it), the Restoration proved as great a deception for Sion College as it did for too many others.

It was the remorselessness of a devouring element, not man's ingratitude, which now interfered to prevent Sion College from developing as it ought to have developed, and initiating a new career of usefulness.

The Fire, the Great Fire of London, which broke out upon September 2nd, 1666, together with almost all the rest of the City, consumed the College Hall, Library, Official Buildings, Students' Chambers. All were destroyed.

A desperate exertion, not altogether unsuccessful, was made to save the books, and a considerable portion were happily removed to the Charterhouse, not, however, before at least one-third had been consumed or hopelessly spoilt. The Almsfolk were permitted to take refuge in the church of St. Alphage, one of the few buildings which escaped the devouring flames. The lower stories of the tower—it was rebuilt in 1649, as far down as the floor of the belfry—still stand, but the church in which the almsfolk took refuge fell more and more into decay till 1724, when we are told the pavement was sunk and the pews so deranged

that it was dangerous to pass along the aisles. Then 291*l*. was spent in repairs, just so much money wasted, for at last in 1774 the whole church was pronounced so decayed and damp as to be unfit for use, and accordingly was shut up, and soon after taken down. Whereupon, as a specimen of the intelligent taste of the period, in a very rich London parish the present dismal, depressing, degraded building was erected, and in the course of some three years opened, June 24, 1777.

The President and Court of Governors elected at the Anniversary next ensuing upon the Great Fire did their best to retrieve the disaster. Dr. Lake, who at the time was Rector of St. Botolph Bishopsgate, and Prebendary of Holborn in St. Paul's Cathedral, who subsequently was raised to the Episcopate, and in quick succession became Bishop of the Sees of Sodor and Man (1683), Bristol (1684), Chichester (1685), was elected President, and continued in office three successive years. The first steps taken by Dr. Lake and his colleagues was to put out an appeal to the Fellows and to the public for funds to rebuild. The appeal was fairly responded to, the total amount subscribed in this and the next few years amounting to 1561*l*. The names of the persons subscribing and the amount of their contributions have a certain interest. The list contains, besides the names of almost all the Fellows, those of bishops, peers, farmers of the public revenue, aldermen, merchants, and other leading citizens of London. If we come to particular names, we may mention that of the Duchess of Monmouth, of the Earl of Northampton, the Countess of Southampton, of Dr. Sancroft, Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Stillingfleet,

Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, Dr. Simon Patrick, the Rector of St. Paul's Covent Garden, nor will we omit that of Samuel Pepys, Esq., Secretary to the Lords of the Admiralty, who gave 20*l.*; the other donations vary from 100*l.*, the largest sum received from a single individual, to 1*l.*

Still, though the appeal met with a fair response, the sum collected was totally inadequate to defray the charges consequent upon the re-erection of all the College buildings. As we have said, the contributions amounted in all to 1561*l.* But the rebuilding of the Library alone absorbed 1300*l.* of this sum, whilst for the Hall, Clerk's house, and other necessary work, a further outlay of 2000*l.* was found necessary.

Thus the College came to be burdened with a heavy debt. How was it to be met? The Governors let off considerable portions of the site upon building leases on these terms. The tenants desiring leases were required at once to pay a large sum down by way of fine, and then were to hold for the rest of their term at a reserved rent, set so low as to be little more than nominal. Unquestionably by this plan the College was relieved from immediate pressure, but at a heavy cost. Its income was anticipated, its resources crippled, for years to come.

We cannot, then, be surprised to find that until the close of the century, and well on into the next, the College had a severe struggle for existence—that its expenditure was too often in excess of its revenue—that further appeals had to be made to the Fellows and to the public to restore, if it might be possible, the disturbed equilibrium, and this, too, with very partial success.

The first of these supplemental appeals was made when Dr. Bell, Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, was President. He was elected in 1672, and continued in office for the two succeeding years. He put out his appeal in his second year of office, 1673. In it he points out that the destroyed Library was a large building fitted with twenty-six double desks, that it had been erected for the public use of the Ministers of London, but had been free to all other persons who chose to repair thither. He puts the actual loss of income to the College by the Fire at 106*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* per annum, and pleads for help from the public, in the public interest, to complete the re-erection and refurnishing of this library. We do not know what response was made to this appeal, but in 1688 the restoration of the building of the College was completed. Its financial position seems still to have been so unsound that Dr. Lilly Butler, President for two consecutive years, 1714, 1715, towards the close of his first year of office, determined upon one more appeal. There was little response from the laity, but the two Archbishops, the Visitor, and other Bishops, several Deans, and other dignified Clergy, sent in their contributions. But even after this supreme effort there still remained a debt of 700*l.* No further attempt seems to have been made to clear this off till the leases granted after the Fire had run out. These leases were of houses in Aldermanbury, in London Wall, in the College Gardens in Philip Lane, and Sion Court. The reserve rent upon the whole seems to have amounted to no more than 11*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per annum, whereas the rental of the far smaller portion of the property, covered with buildings

before the Fire, had yielded 106*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* The building leases fell in between 1731 and 1738, and thenceforth for more than a century, except when some exceptionally heavy repairs crippled for the moment its resources and necessitated a call for further subscriptions in aid, the College might boast, if not of affluence, to this it has never attained, yet of finances in a fairly satisfactory condition, sufficing with due economy, if not more than sufficing, for the purposes for which they were bequeathed. This satisfactory condition continued down to the fatal year in which to pay for a new Almshouse, the expense of which had been imprudently incurred before the means of paying for it were provided, the whole London and Country property of the College was tied up by an expensive mortgage, from the meshes of which the College was extricated only some few years ago.

To finish the history of the College it will be well to glance at any points of interest which may be connected with the original Buildings, and this the more because, in consequence of a plan which has been adopted for the removal of the College to the Thames Embankment, soon none of them will remain. Some attempt has been made to throw a halo of romance round these buildings, and to deprecate their destruction. A perusal of the College accounts makes it plain however that they were from the first ill-constructed—a source of expense rather than of pride. To pass over less important occasions, in which they have demanded a large outlay, it should be mentioned that in 1800 it was reported that extensive repairs were necessary. The surveyor specified that the main timbers of the roof and floor were

much decayed; that the piers of the gateway were crushed and had given way; that the whole of the front towards London Wall must be taken down, and a new roof, floor, and ceiling provided. Upon this the Court, apprehensive of exaggeration, went to view the premises, and have left it upon record that the case was worse even than their surveyor represented, and that they were filled with astonishment that the roof had not fallen in long before. Upon this occasion the cost of the repairs to the library alone amounted to 2624*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.*; whilst, fifteen years later, 1000*l.* more were expended upon the hall, which was practically rebuilt; at least the walls and the roof were all made new. Thus at this date there was no portion of the buildings left in which new work had not superseded the old. When the present buildings of Sion College shall be removed, sentimental admirers, who would preserve every bit of rubbishy old brickwork, if only it can boast a reputed antiquity of two hundred years, need shed no tears over them. If reverence for the “genius loci” and the wish to preserve all relics of the past were the sole hindrances, the removal to the Embankment might be considered already an accomplished fact. These enthusiastic worshippers of old brickwork had not far to look for proof that the worship of the present library of Sion College, as a specimen of ancient work, is quite misplaced, for, on the northern external wall, this inscription may be read by every passer-by:—

Hæc Bibliotheca Fronte cum Tecto,
Vetustate pene collapsis,
Sumptibus Collegii instaurata est,
A.D. M.DCCC, Johanne Moore Præsida.

In this connection we may note several things in passing; first, that this John Moore, who was President in 1800, was Rector of St. Michael Bassishaw, and also Warden of the College of Minor Canons in St. Paul's Cathedral, at that time a very important corporation with much property, in the management of which Mr. Moore was as diligent and successful as he was in his management of the affairs of Sion College; next, that the present President (1881), the Rev. W. J. Hall, Rector of St. Clement East Cheap, also a Minor Canon of St. Paul's, is the last of the Minor Canons who, in consequence of the degradation of that office, effected by the Dean and Chapter in 1875, can ever be President of Sion College. Thirdly—

It had been hoped that during Mr. Hall's year of office the first stone of the new building upon the Thames Embankment, by which it is intended to supersede the present insufficient library and hall, might have been laid. A site has been obtained from the City Lands Committee, in a very choice position. The realization of the present site is in progress, and though carried out less rapidly and successfully than might be desired, still much of it has been disposed of upon fair terms. A plan and elevation for the buildings to be erected upon the new site have been supplied by Mr. Arthur Blomfield; in which far more accommodation of every kind will be afforded than is furnished by the present buildings. Not only will there be space for the proper display of the present library, but abundant provision is made for the storing, in a convenient way, for many years to come, of the annual increase of the library at the ordinary rate at

which additions are made to it. The elevation has been very generally approved as a bold, handsome design, in which the purposes to which the building is to be dedicated, and the date of foundation, are well marked. It was exhibited in the Royal Academy, 1880. There is still, however, delay in getting possession of the new site, as the City have failed to get the Bill passed in Parliament which was to enable them to sell the freehold to the College. This power of sale was, unfortunately, mixed up with a much larger transaction—the transference of the Mint to the vicinity of the Temple. Against this removal a Committee of the House of Commons has reported, and the sale of the new site for Sion College being embodied in the same measure, the failure of the larger scheme has led to the withdrawal of the Bill. Another Session must now, in all probability, be waited for, and consequently the laying the first stone must be the work of another President. It may be repeated that it is desired, as an almost necessary consequence of the removal to the Embankment, to widen the area of the College, and admit to a share in its privileges many of the leading Clergy of the metropolis, who by the terms of the present charter are not entitled to a fellowship.

Having thus sketched the history of the old buildings, and indicated what are, at any rate, the aspirations, with respect to accommodation, of the College for the future, it is time to say somewhat of the action of the College, of the way in which it has used that position which the Founder assigned to it.

The mode of action more usual with the College has been when any question has been stirring the

public, and more especially the clerical mind, to hold general meetings, or courts as they were often called, at which the absorbing subject has been discussed, and addresses to the Crown or to the Bishop or petitions to Parliament, embodying the views of the majority, have been adopted. These meetings until the beginning of the eighteenth century were comparatively few. Reading, in his "State of Sion College," published 1724, mentions only two, or, at most, three. At one of these, as already mentioned, an address to King Charles II. on his restoration was agreed to, and it was voted that a Bible should be presented to him. When, however, just about the date of this publication, the College had shaken off its burden of debt, these meetings became much more frequent. A meeting of great interest was held in 1719 upon the summons of the President, to whom the Bishop had written a letter commending to the charitable consideration of the London Clergy the state of poor livings in the Diocese. Had the College chest been better provided than it was it would have been a question whether a grant from the common funds even for so excellent a purpose fell within the implied trust upon which such funds are held. As it was, its emptiness made it unnecessary to raise the question of principle, and it was agreed that those present should subscribe according to their will and ability, and the list should be handed to the Librarian, that he might solicit donations from the absent.

In 1730 Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, was publicly thanked at the anniversary for "his seasonable defence of the doctrines of the Christian faith,

his care and vigilance in maintaining the customs of the Church and legal rights of the Clergy." It was ordered that this expression of gratitude should be entered upon the Minutes as "a perpetual memorial of the just sense which the Clergy of London have of their singular happiness in being under the protection and government of so great and able a prelate." Space will not admit of any consecutive account of these meetings, which with some exceptions, when larger interests have been involved, are for the most part of a routine kind. Addresses to Kings and to Bishops upon their accession, petitions to Parliament (which after presentation were always advertised *in extenso* in the leading journals of the day) against any measures which seemed at variance with Church interests. Some of these petitions, however vigorous in expression, must be looked upon as records rather of the unflinching Toryism of the London Clergy than of their superior insight into the progress of public opinion and the requirements of the times. It need hardly be said that petitions against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act, against Catholic Emancipation, against the removal of Jewish Disabilities, are many in number and forcible in expression. Perhaps it is scarcely fair to expect that the Clergy should have led public opinion upon such subjects.

But it will hardly be disputed that the College has better realised its mission in those meetings, or rather conferences, which of late years have been held, some half dozen in the course of each year in the College Hall, at which the most delicate and burning questions have been introduced by some of the most

eminent men of all schools of thought and opinion, and subsequently discussed with perfect temper and fairness. That the authorities of Sion College cannot be charged with lack of courage in their choice of representative men, and that they have been singularly fortunate in the kind spirit in which their advances have been received, will appear from the mention of some of the names of those who have addressed the College at these meetings: on ecclesiastical subjects, the late Dean of Westminster, the Deans of Llandaff and Manchester, Dr. Littledale, the Right Hon. A. J. B. Beresford Hope, Dr. Martineau, and Mr. Matthew Arnold: on scientific, Mr. William Spottiswoode, President of the Royal Society, Professors Huxley and Tyndall, Dr. Carpenter, Dr. Kitchen Parker, and others.

Here and there, in connection with the subjects to deal with which general meetings have been summoned, we get some information of permanent interest. Frequent attempts have been made to tax the stipends of the Clergy payable under the Fire Acts. These attempts have always been successfully resisted, though sometimes it has required much energy upon the part of those constituted by the Clergy at Sion College as a permanent Committee of Vigilance to defeat the attempts. In 1800 a great scare among the City Clergy, many of whom were pluralists, was caused by an attempt made by common informers to recover the fines payable for non-residence under the Penal Statute, 21st Henry VIII. The Bishop was addressed upon the subject; the evils of non-residence were admitted, but it was pleaded, and pleaded truly and successfully, that of the London Clergy many have

no parsonage houses, many others only such as are unfit for a clergyman to reside in and too small to accommodate a family; that the largest income of a City Benefice was 200*l.* and the smallest 50*l.* These, if unsupplemented from other sources, it was urged, do not raise the clergyman to the level of a clerk in a counting-house or of a foreman in a respectable shop.

Any historical sketch of Sion College would be incomplete without some notice of the Almshouse, which in the intention of the founder was a principal, if not the principal part of the foundation. As we have seen, the rooms of the almsfolk were beneath the Library, ten opening into the College Court, ten into Philip Lane. As time went on, the inconveniencies of this arrangement became more and more conspicuous. The fuller of books and more valuable the Library became, the more did the impropriety of exposing it to the immense risk from fire in days when fire-proof floors were unthought of, consequent upon twenty old and infirm people living beneath it in twenty small, close, insufficient rooms, become apparent to the Governors of the College.* Though sensible of the evil, Dr. Moore, who had so much to do with the rebuilding of the Library at the beginning of the century, did not see his way to remedy it. Nor was the risk to the Library the only objection to which the arrangement was open. There were grave objections to it for another reason; the opening of half the doors into Philip

* There was yet one more objection to these rooms. By the gradual rising of the soil upon each side, their floors had come to be some three or four feet below the level of the pavement of the College court upon one side and of Philip Lane upon the other.

Lane withdrew the inmates of these rooms from any real discipline. The necessity to be in by a certain hour, the surveillance of the Ostiarius, for their inmates had no existence. And yet it had been the Founder's express direction that all the almsfolk should be under discipline. They were to be constant in their attendance at divine service; to be regularly at home by the appointed hour; to be restrained from harbouring strangers in their rooms. It was to secure these results that the College and Almshouse were directed to be enclosed by a wall and to have a common gate, which was to be shut every evening at specified times varying with the seasons.

All these evils were not practically remedied till about forty years ago, when Dr. Russell, the well-known Head-Master of the Charterhouse School, afterwards Rector of St. Botolph Bishopsgate, President 1845, was the moving spirit in all which concerned the College.

It was then determined that upon a plot of ground south of the Library, where the clerk's lodgings had formerly been, a new Almshouse should be erected. In itself the undertaking was a most desirable one; but the question, how the 5000*l.* which had to be raised to pay for it should be obtained, was not early enough taken into account. Statutes then in existence, under which it might have been raised before the work was begun, but which were unavailable at a later stage, were overlooked; whilst the innate borrowing powers of the College were by legal advisers limited far more than they need to have been. The very nature of the College itself seems to have been misunderstood and

to have been misrepresented to those consulted, and, as a consequence, before the Almshouse could be completed, an Act of Parliament had to be obtained to give validity to a mortgage, which had been pronounced to be the only mode of escaping from the dilemma. Whether the only way or not, this mortgage proved to be an expensive and cumbrous mode of raising funds, and when once the Act became law, viz., August 26, 1846, the whole revenues of the College were absorbed in meeting the interest of the mortgage and complying with certain other very complicated provisions of the Act.

It may be asked, what has become of this brand new Almshouse raised so recently, and at such a serious expense? Why is it not still to be seen in the designated place? Well, though it proved a costly building to the College, though it was as well constructed as the space and means at command would permit, yet, after all, it proved to be neither a very convenient nor a very desirable abode for twenty old and infirm folk. Each inmate still had but a single room, whilst such of these rooms (about half) as looked into Philip Lane were very dark and gloomy. When extreme old age and feebleness came upon them, as the single small room gave no accommodation for a permanent attendant, even if the luxury could have been afforded, it was frequently found necessary to let the pensioners live away with their friends. Not only so, but the whole neighbourhood had changed, and was still more changing its character. It was not only that London House, removed after the Great Fire from the north-west corner

of St. Paul's Churchyard to Aldersgate Street, was there no more, that the houses of the nobility which *had lined both sides of that street, and which had been numerous in Charterhouse Square, had been diverted to baser uses, but the whole population of the city, poor as well as rich, was drifting away into the suburbs, so that the inmates of the Hospital were left in an ever-growing isolation, whilst the neighbouring tenements as their leases fell in at each rebuilding towered higher and higher, excluding more and more of light and air.* As a consequence of these changed conditions the occupants of Sion Hospital had ceased to be comfortable amid these new environments, whilst the value of the land upon which the Almshouse stood had risen immensely. Were the money locked up in their incommodious dwellings once set free the almsfolk would be comparatively rich elsewhere. What, then, was to be done? Ought a new almshouse to be erected in a more open space, and better air, and livelier neighbourhood? Or ought residence in an almshouse, with a small pension, to be converted into a more liberal pension, with permission to the pensioners to live wherever they might find it to be most convenient for them to dwell?

These alternatives were fairly discussed, and the deliberate conclusion arrived at by all interested in the foundation, by the Governors of the Hospital, by the various bodies who nominate the pensioners, by the then existing twenty almsfolk themselves, was, that the larger pension, with liberty to live with relatives or friends, would more promote the happiness and comfort of the class which Dr. White desired to

benefit than the continuance of a Common Dwelling, with all the privileges attaching to it, but with more restricted means.

Whilst, therefore, the author of this paper was President, an enabling Act of Parliament was applied for and obtained to carry out the desired change. By the intervention of Her Majesty's Attorney-General, some alteration was made in the governing body of the Hospital, which was no longer to be the annually elected President and Court of Governors of Sion College, but for the future was to consist of eight Fellows of Sion College, elected by the College, and of four other persons to be nominated by the High Court of Justice, or by the Charity Commissioners for England, as representatives of the four bodies to whom the nomination of the almsfolk was given, in varying proportions, by Dr. White, viz., the Merchant Taylors' Company, the parishes of St. Dunstan in the West and of St. Gregory by St. Paul's, and the Trustees of Municipal Charities of the city of Bristol.

This Act also provided the machinery for determining the proportions of the respective shares of the College and Hospital in the London property acquired under Dr. White's will—a question of no great moment when that property yielded a bare subsistence to College and Hospital alike, but which, with the increase in the value of land in the city of London, and with the prospect of its further development, required to be settled by the impartiality of a court of justice.

The arrangements sanctioned by the Act have turned out so completely to the advantage of the Hospital that the number of pensioners has been

twice increased since its provisions have come into operation, and now, instead of twenty pensioners with pensions of 3*l.* or 4*l.* per annum each, as appointed under Dr. White's will, there are forty who receive 35*l.* per annum apiece, living where they find it most convenient to live. A contrast this to the state of things at the beginning of the eighteenth century when the amount of pension was so inadequate that constant complaints were made against the churchwardens of the parishes to which were chargeable the inmates of the Hospital for failing to do their duty by them in coming to the relief of the chronic penury from which these inmates suffered. In one instance the authority of the Lord Mayor was invoked by the Court of Governors to compel a better attention upon the part of the parish officials to their duty in the matter, but with small effect. The scandal culminated in December 1743, when Philip Baker, very old and poor, was found dead in his room, starved, as it appeared, for want of fuel, bedding, and wearing apparel. That any responsibility in the matter should have attached to the Court of Governors seems never for one moment to have entered into their heads. They gave the room and pension, such as it was—the rest concerned the parish; nor, according to the views which then prevailed, can the then Governors be blamed. But we hail with satisfaction the better spirit of later times, when, as has been pointed out, the College accepted almost ruin in order to build a better Almshouse, and, quite lately, has cheerfully acquiesced in the allotment to the Hospital of the best piece of the London property, with the results already stated.

We come last, not least, to the Library—the Library of which John Simpson was the founder, which has been, and continues to be, the chief glory of the College: the Library of which Lord Campbell thus spoke, when summing up in a case in which the Court had to defend their dismissal of a negligent Librarian:—

“The Corporation of Sion College is one of the most venerable institutions of the country. The Library being very splendid, and one that has been of very great service both to literature and to science. It is most excellent, and I think the public are indebted to the Governors of Sion College in seeing that the public have the full benefit of that noble Library.”

The history of the Library thus praised by an eminent Judge and Statesman, as far as the collection of books upon its shelves are concerned, may be divided into three periods, the first of which extends from the date of its foundation, about 1628, to the date of the first Copyright Act in the reign of Queen Anne; the second, from the date of the first Copyright Act which gave a copy of every work entered at Stationers' Hall to the Library of the College to the date of the Act 6 and 7 William IV. cap. 110, which substituted for that right an annual payment or compensation of 363*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.*; the third, from this endowment of the library to the present day.

During the first period the Library depended for its growth upon benefactions, which came in in no stinted measure, partly in money, partly in books. A folio vellum volume is preserved in the library in

which these benefactions are recorded. The earliest entry is of the names of Paul and Ann Bayning, Viscount and Viscountess Sudbury, who gave 50*l.* each to the Library. Sir George Croke, one of Her Majesty's Justices of Pleas, the "very kind and dear friend" of Dr. Thomas White, and, as we have seen, one of the overseers of his will, gave 100*l.* The Rev. G. Walker, Rector of St. John Evangelist, Watling Street, whilst President, gave and procured to be given by his parishioners and others 110*l.* The largest single benefaction in money is the bequest of 200*l.* by Elizabeth, Viscountess Camden. There are other bequests of 100*l.* and a good many of 50*l.* each. If from benefactions in money we turn to those in kind, we find that Nathaniel Torperley, who describes himself as sometime student of this College, gave upwards of one hundred and seventy printed works, besides MSS. and a clock. Walter Travers, the celebrated opponent of Hooker at the Temple, two hundred works. In 1647 the Library of St. Paul's Cathedral, which had been carried first to Camden House, was brought to the College. In 1655, Simeon Ash, a predecessor of the present writer in the Rectory of St. Augustine, gave many valuable works, chiefly ritual books, among them a fine Sarum Missal, and a most interesting MS. York Breviary.

Then we come to the Great Fire, when, to quote the vellum register, "by reason of the dismall fire, which consumed this famous City of London, and this College, with the Library, and a third part of the books therein conteyned . . .—a sad stop was put to this Registry of Benefactors."

No sooner, however, by strenuous efforts and liberal

contributions, were the College and Library rebuilt, than the stream of benefactions began to flow afresh. In 1670 Daniel Mills, as became the President of the College and a successor of the Founder of the Library in the Rectory of St. Olave, Hart Street, was specially active in promoting the rebuilding, when the good work was near completion he set up in it at his own expense as many as nineteen whole and three half-desks, whilst other Fellows supplied at their own cost whole or half-desks.

In 1679, upon the seizure of a Jesuit study at Holbeck, the books were given by the King to the College. Some, however, were injured, and many more embezzled, so that it was but a small residue which reached the library.

Then, almost as soon as the renovated library was ready for their reception, came two very handsome benefactions. In 1682 the Right Honourable George Earl of Berkley gave his noble study of books, containing in all one thousand six hundred and seventy-six volumes, of which six hundred and one were in folio. In 1705 John Lawson left by will to the College his whole library, containing upwards of one thousand one hundred books.

April 10, 1710, was passed for the encouragement of learning the first Copyright Act, by which it was enacted that a copy of every book entered at Stationers' Hall should be given to nine libraries in England and Scotland. When the Bill was before the House of Commons, at the request of Dr. Gascaeth, then President, and upon the motion of John Ward, Esq., M.P. for Cheshire, the library of Sion College

was substituted for the library of St. Paul's Cathedral, which in the first draft of the Bill had been named as one of the nine libraries. Thus the library of Sion College entered upon its second phase. It was no longer dependent solely upon private liberality, but had a legal claim to a copy of every work published in England under the protection of the law.

It would take too long to tell how delusive in some respects this privilege proved, to what shifts authors betook themselves to escape the obligations it imposed, how remiss the College was at times in enforcing its rights, what trouble and expense it was put to in enforcing them when the Governors or the Librarian were properly active. Of all this a word or two shall be said when we come to the transition to the third and present provision made for acquiring new works for the library. Previously, however, I should point out that though unquestionably this public provision for the library had a tendency to dry up the sources of private liberality, it did not do so at once. For it was soon after the passing of this Act that Mrs. Eleanor James, relict of the celebrated printer Thomas James, chose Sion College as the depository of the fine library of three thousand volumes, which her husband had left by will, in general terms, for the service of the public, without specifying how it was to be made of such service. In 1712, however, the library received the last great benefaction of this class, when the Rev. E. Waple, Vicar of St. Sepulchre, Archdeacon of Taunton, President 1704, bequeathed to it his whole study of books, containing between eighteen and

nineteen hundred volumes, besides duplicates which sold for a sum of 155*l*.*

It is matter of history that, under the Act of 1710, it was not by any means always an easy task for the Libraries named in the Act to get possession of all the works to which under the Act they were entitled. Our Court Minutes are full of notices of the attempts made by the College alone, or by the College together with the Librarians of the two Universities, to hit upon some plan by which copies of all works to which they were entitled might be collected for them. The plan which worked best seems to have been to engage some one connected with Stationers' Hall, at a fixed salary, to make lists and claim copies of all works entered. But even so, whilst works of small value came in pretty regularly, larger, more expensive, and more important works, too frequently eluded the collectors. To avoid what they thought, and what perhaps was, a heavy tax upon them, authors had recourse to all sorts of shifty expedients to elude their obligation.

Even from the point of view of the Libraries themselves, except in the case of one or two like the British Museum, in which it is properly the aim of the Managers that there should be stored up copies of

* In connection with this bequest the following minute of the Court of Governors is not without its interest:—"Ordered, that Mr. Berdmore be employed to chain Mr. Waple's books at twopence per dozen. Ordered, that Mr. Wells provide a thousand chains at threepence per chain." Seventeen years later, however, 1729, all the books were set free from the bondage in which they had been held since the foundation of the Library, and the chains were presented to Mrs. Reading, wife of the Librarian, as a reward for her pains in providing the Court dinners.

everything printed in England, from the most ordinary broadsheet to the choicest and most elaborate works which are published, such as Lord Kingsborough's "Antiquities of Mexico," the right of copies from Stationers' Hall was not a satisfactory sole dependence for the supply of new works.

Under this right obviously a great deal would come to the Library, which, once placed on the shelves and catalogued, would be of very little further use ; whilst, whatever the observed deficiencies of the Library in respect to older home publications, there would be no means of supplying them, nor could works published in foreign countries be acquired at all.

On the whole, therefore, it was rather a benefit to the Library than the reverse when the Act 6 and 7 William IV. c. 110, took away its right to copies of works from Stationers' Hall, and secured to it instead an annual compensation of 363*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.* The sum is small, smaller than it ought to have been, not from any stinginess upon the part of the Legislature, but from the previous remissness of the College officials in making the most of their right. The thrifty Scotchmen who managed the Library of St. Andrews, in distant Fife, proved to have been much more vigilant than the authorities of Sion College, however close their proximity to Stationers' Hall. The compensation was awarded to each Library upon an average of the value of the books received by it in the seven years last preceding. The most was made of the difference in value between works in unsewn sheets and the same works as put into the hands of the public by the publishers ; nor was it forgotten to make a considerable

deduction for the cost of collection, and thus was the amount of compensation, viz., 363*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.*, allotted to Sion College arrived at. But for the same right, and subject to the same deductions, the compensation to St. Andrew's was 630*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.* There have been periods in which, perhaps, this modest compensation has not been judiciously employed. But with proper attention to their duty upon the part of the Officials this amount spent carefully year by year is practically found to allow of the addition to the Library of most of the more important works published at home; of the supply of observed deficiencies in the publication of the past, and of the acquisition of some of the more important works printed abroad.

To say a brief word upon the contents of the Library. Its MSS. are not very numerous, and, generally speaking, not of the highest interest. It has one or two rather late Greek Evangelisteria, one written in letters of gold. It has a rare York Breviary, a volume of great importance, as so few office books of the Northern Province survive. It has two or three Latin Bibles, also a whole Bible of the translation of Wycliffe; this was collated by Madden and Forshall for their Hexaplar. As a specimen of caligraphy may be mentioned the "*Psalterium pulcherrimum*," as it is styled on its title-page, which belonged to Simon de Mephim, Archbishop of Canterbury (1327). This beautiful book has suffered from iconoclastic zeal or antiquarian depredations, but the writing is very fine and bold; the ink and colours and gold of such illuminations as survive are very brilliant. The library also possesses several Caxtons, one or two in excellent con-

dition, and other Incunabula, samples of which were exhibited at South Kensington.

As becomes a library belonging to the London Clergy its chief strength lies in Theology, and in this department of literature it may be said to be well provided. Nor are the historical and biographical collections which it contains to be despised. The general principle upon which additions to the library are made is this: As far as the annual income will allow to purchase all works published at home which are likely to survive the first year or two of their publication; to purchase a certain number of the more important works published abroad; to watch catalogues of old works for the supply at a reasonable rate of observed deficiencies. It ought to be mentioned that besides smaller collections of rare tracts, including several large volumes bought at the sale of Archbishop Tenison's library, Sion College possesses three very considerable and interesting collections of Pamphlets, Tracts, and Sermons, for two of which it is indebted to private liberality, and for the third to the industry and foresight of a President. In point of date the first of these collections is the Gibson Tracts, of which there are seventeen folio, one hundred and five quarto, and two hundred and thirty-six octavo, three hundred and fifty-eight volumes in all. These were presented by the executors of Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London (1798). Then come the Russell Tracts, collected and bound into volumes by the care of Dr. Russell, President 1845. These amount to eight volumes of Episcopal and Archidiaconal charges, three hundred and forty-six of Pamphlets and Tracts, and fifty-nine

of Sermons, containing five thousand eight hundred and fifty-five items in all.

Lastly, the collection presented at various times by William Scott, President 1858. This amounts to two hundred and seventy-five volumes, containing nearly seven thousand particular items.

The following has been the succession of Librarians of the College—John Simpson, M.A., son of the John Simpson who founded the Library, was elected 4th June, 1631. To him succeeded John Spencer, elected 2nd September, 1634. With interruptions, during which he was suspended or discharged and then re-appointed, he remained Librarian till his death in 1680. Out of these thirty-six years, Thomas Leach, appointed 5th March, 1655, held office for three years. The truth seems to be, that Spencer was an excellent Librarian, but less trustworthy, or at any rate less fortunate in other ways. At his death, Nathaniel Torperley, already mentioned, left in the rooms, which as a student of the College were in his occupation, 40*l.* in gold, eleven diamond rings, ten gold rings, and two bracelets. After awhile the whole of these were not forthcoming, and for their safe custody Spencer as the resident official was held to be responsible. Hence he was first suspended, then discharged; against his discharge he appealed to the Council, but took nothing by the appeal. After an interval, however, his good qualities as a Librarian led to the condoning of whatever may have been otherwise amiss in his conduct, and, as has been said, he died Librarian of the College. In the title page of his folio volume, entitled “Things New and Old,” a sort of common-

place book of curious and interesting stories, he styles himself a "Lover of Learning and of Learned Men." To him the Library is indebted for the first printed Catalogue of its contents, which he published in 4to, 1650. Spencer died in 1680.

A Mr. Lewis was elected in his place, but it was not a good choice. Lewis failed to give the proper security required of him. He never performed his duties in person. It is solemnly recorded against him that by him the library suffered great loss—so he was discharged, and on the 11th December, 1684, William Nelson was elected in his stead. To him on the 8th November, 1708, succeeded Samuel Berdmore. These have left no permanent record but their names: though Berdmore, who resigned his office for rich preferment in the country, is said to have written a new Catalogue of the Books, and to have drawn up Tables of them. Not so the next in succession, William Reading, who was elected Library Keeper upon the recommendation of Dr. Compton, Bishop of London. He soon made his influence felt, and gave the Library a greater development than it had ever received before. He was full of proposals for its improvement, which were readily sanctioned by the Court of Governors, and which gave fresh importance to the Library. In 1724 he published a catalogue with this title, which I give in full, as, though compiled upon a principle no longer generally followed, the work was considered of great importance and utility when first published, and has always maintained a certain reputation amongst bibliographers: "*Bibliothecæ Cleri Londinensis in Collegio Sionensi*

Catalogus duplici formâ concinnatus. Pars prima exhibet libros juxta ordinem Scriniorum distributos, et ad proprias classes reductos. Pars altera omnium Auctorum nomina, et rerum præcipuarum capita ordine alphabetico complectitur." Reading was a ripe and industrious scholar, a well-learned man. In 1720 he published three folio volumes, with this title, "Eusebii et aliorum Hist. Eccles. Gr. Lat. post Hen. Valesium, recensuit Guil. Reading, Cleri Londinensis Bibliothecarius." Besides these, we have from his pen several volumes of sermons, and one or two devotional works. On 28th January William Brackenridge, Rector of St. Michael Bassishaw, and a Fellow of the College, was elected Librarian, having under him Thomas, the son of William Reading. He died in 1762, and in the December of that year William Clements was elected in his place. By his will, Clements bequeathed all his printed books and fifty pounds to the Library, also fifty pounds to the Almsfolk. On the 26th April, 1799, Robert Watts, Vicar of St. Helens, was appointed and continued in his office, in the discharge of all the duties of which he was very sedulous till January 19, 1842, when he died at a great age, beloved and looked up to by the Fellows, having been Librarian of Sion College for forty-three years. Mr. Watts acted as Secretary as well as Librarian, the offices having been frequently held together, though at times separated, and the Minutes, during the time he kept them, are models at once of caligraphy and of the art of giving the pith of transactions in a few sentences, so as to have a perfectly accurate and, at the same time, not too lengthy record of all that

has taken place. On the Anniversary, 25th April, 1809, being by this time Rector of St. Alphage, Robert Watts was excused from serving upon the Court of Governors, *i.e.* he was allowed to decline the office without paying the usual fine. For a considerable time election upon the Court of Governors, notwithstanding the free election secured by the charter, went by rotation, and if it was inconvenient for any Fellow to serve, and in the days of pluralities, when a man might have one or two country as well as his City living, it often was inconvenient, the Fellow declining to serve paid a fine. This fine was first imposed at the Anniversary of 1728, and was set at five guineas, and remained at that amount till 1810, when it was raised to ten guineas. The last fine taken was in 1840. Since then the competition for election upon the Court of Governors has become yearly more keen; seats upon it have been often contested, and so the principle of fining has become obsolete; a healthy sign of the interest taken in the affairs of the College.

But to conclude the list of Librarians. Upon the death of Robert Watts, full of years and high in the estimation of the London Clergy incorporated in Sion College, Henry Christmas was appointed 1842. He entered upon the discharge of his office with much activity. He re-arranged the library, thus destroying the usefulness of Reading's catalogue, but he made no perceptible way with the new one which was to replace it. In fact, contrary to all expectation, the appointment proved to be not a successful one. It was in the suit which was necessary before Mr. Christmas

could be removed that Lord Campbell pronounced the eulogy upon the library which has been quoted.

The list of Librarians will be completed by the addition of three names. Mr. W. G. Hall, Rector of St. Benet Paul's Wharf, was elected 10th February, 1850, and was soon followed by Mr. T. Pelham Dale, Rector of St. Vedast Foster Lane, elected 20th December, 1851. To Mr. Dale the library is indebted for a working catalogue which repaired to some extent the mischief which ensued from Mr. Christmas's rearrangement of the library, and which made its treasures once more accessible to the Fellows and to the public. Upon the resignation of Mr. Dale, the present Librarian, Mr. W. H. Milman, Rector of St. Augustine and St. Faith, was elected, October 1, 1856.

I will add a statement of the property belonging to the College and Hospital. The property of the College consists of three-quarters of the original site of the College in London Wall, acquired by the executors of Dr. Thomas White; and of a proportion of the net profits of the farms of Bradwell Hall and Hockley in Dengey Hundred, in the county of Essex, and of the profits of the Manor of Bradwell with Pilton fee. These are divided into one hundred and three equal parts, of which seventy belong to the Trustees of the Municipal Charities of the city of Bristol, five to the Divinity Lecturer of St. Paul's, and the remaining twenty-eight to Sion College.

The landed property of the Hospital consists of the remaining and best quarter of the site in London

Wall, of Beaches Manor and Farm with the appurtenances thereof Beaches Wood and Beaches Scrubs, Coxal Farm and Wood, all in the county of Essex, and Tyler's Causeway Farm, in Hertfordshire.

It may not be without interest to conclude this brief account of Sion College by recording—1st. That in the year 1791 was founded in Sion College, with which it has ever since remained in close connection, "The Society for the Relief of Clergymen, and the Widows and Children of Clergymen, within the Cities of London and Westminster, and the County of Middlesex." A peculiarity of this Society is that the funds are collected by clerical stewards, and the working expenses of the Society are literally confined to printing and postage. 2nd. That by invitation of the President and Court of Governors the first Meetings of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church were held in the College Hall.

Thus by providing for the relief of the distress of the poor, the sick, and the suffering amongst the brethren, and by contributing to the promotion of religious education, in addition to the active discharge of the functions more properly pertaining to it, has Sion College endeavoured to justify its existence and discharge its mission. I do not know how better to conclude this paper than by repeating the prayer of the text of the first Latin Sermon of the first elected President of the College: "*Benigne fac Domine in bonâ voluntate tuâ Sion.*" "Be favourable, O Lord, and gracious unto Sion."

APPENDIX.

VI.—JUDGMENT OF THE VISITOR. JULY 20, 1855.

[A difference of opinion having arisen among the Fellows as to the relative powers of the Court of Governors and the general body, on reference to the Visitor, his Lordship gave the following decision :—]

WE, CHARLES JAMES, Lord Bishop of London, Visitor of Sion College, having received a Memorial, dated the Twenty-ninth day of May, One thousand Eight hundred and Fifty-five, presented to us by the President and Fellows of the said College, under the College Seal, requesting our Judgment on the five several points therein proposed, do give our decision on each of the said points as follows :—

*Questions proposed to the Visitor in
the Memorial.*

1. Does the Charter vest in the Court of Governors, or in the President and Fellows, the power of regulating, leasing, and applying the proceeds of the property, with the use of the Common Seal of the College?
2. Referring to the clause of the Charter (beginning on page 13 of the printed pamphlet) —

“Volumus etiam ac per præsentibus pro nobis heredibus et successoribus nostris concedimus ac plenam potestatem et auctoritatem damus præfatis Præsidi et Sociis Collegii prædicti et successoribus

Decision of Visitor.

1. The Charter vests this power in the Court of Governors.
2. This clause vests in the Court of Governors the property left by Dr. White to the College, and also the after acquired property of the College for the use of the Almshouse and Almspeople : and the Court of Governors (as such) have a right to use the Common Seal of the College in leasing such property.

suis quod prædicti Præses Decani et Assistentes Collegii illius pro tempore existentes vel major pars eorum sint et erunt Gubernatores et Rectores prædictæ domus eleemosynariæ et pauperum in eâdem de tempore in tempus existentium tam ad hujusmodi pauperes super mortem recessionem sive amotionem eligendos secundum formam tenorem et effectum ultimæ voluntatis et testamenti dicti Thomæ White quam ad terras tenementa et hæreditamenta ad usum dictæ domus eleemosynariæ et pauperum danda et concedenda ad eorum juvamen commodum et beneficium dimittenda et disponenda ac ad omnia alia prædictæ domus eleemosynariæ et pauperum ejusdem pro tempore existentium de tempore in tempus exequenda secundum ordinationes pro Gubernatione ejusdem domus eleemosynariæ et pauperum in eâdem constituendas et ordinandas."

Does this Clause vest in the Court of Governors the property already left by Dr. White to the College, or property hereafter to be acquired by the College, or both properties for the use of the Almshouse and Almspeople?—And has the Court of Governors (as such) the right to use the Common Seal of the College in leasing such property?

3. Is the Court of Governors to be considered as the Representative or constituted Agent of the general body for the management of the property left by the Founder for the purposes of the College without special dele-

3. The Court of Governors is to be considered as such representative, or constituted Agent, of the general body for the management of the property left by the Founder, and all other property of the College with-

gation of such powers, either given generally at the annual meeting, or specifically *pro re nata*?

out any special delegation of such powers, either given generally at the annual meeting, or specifically *pro re nata*.

4. If in the judgment of the Visitor the Charter vests in the Court of Governors the power of absolute control over the property left for the support of the Almshouse and Almspeople, and at the same time leaves the control over the College property to the whole Corporation of Sion College, how (seeing that the property is to a great extent one) are the respective rights of the College and Court to be defined and exercised?
5. Does the right to appoint the Secretary, Librarian, and Porter, belong to the general body or to the Court of Governors?—What power has the Court of Governors in the internal administration of the affairs of the College, including the Library?—And does the disposal of the Treasury Grant for the purchase of books for the Library rest with the Court or with the general body?
4. The whole control over the property left for the support of the Almshouse and Almspeople, and of all the College property, is to be exercised by the Court of Governors.
5. The right to appoint the Secretary Librarian, and Porter, belongs to the Court of Governors. The Court of Governors has full power in the internal administration of the affairs of the College, including the Library; the disposal of the Treasury Grant for the purchase of books for the Library rests with the Court of Governors.

Given under our hand this Twentieth day of July, One thousand Eight hundred and Fifty-five.

C. J. LONDON.

