

MERCERS' SCHOOL.

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MERCERS' School is one of the oldest schools in London, and is of Royal foundation, which only one other school in the City of London can boast. It has, however, been eclipsed by the larger and wealthier foundation of Dean Colet, which was placed by him under the patronage of the Mercers' Company.

Carlisle, in his "Endowed Grammar Schools," writing in 1818, deploring the want of a panegyrist to record its merits, compares it in that respect to ancient Rome.

"Ancient Rome," according to Sallust, "was great, victorious and illustrious, but its mighty deeds were not gracefully recorded nor richly emblazoned. The same fatality has attended Mercers' School. It as yet has found no panegyrist to transmit its merits to posterity."

In the reign of King Henry II, there were famous schools attached to three principal churches in London, with others of less note attached to other churches or parishes. The names of the churches are not given by the chronicler but it is very probable that one of the schools was kept by the Master and Brethren of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon from the time of its foundation about the year 1190, or, at any rate shortly afterwards, and that in that school,

many of the youths of London were taught in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

However this may have been, there is no doubt that a school was founded in the Hospital of St. Thomas, in the reign of Henry VI, on the decay of the grammar schools, which before that time existed in London and the country. Everything of earlier antiquity is perhaps a little hazy, but it is, as I have said, highly probable that it was not the first school carried on on the same site and under the same auspices. How far the Mercers' Company were connected with it I should not like to say, but, if the tradition be well founded, that Dean Colet and Sir Thomas Gresham received part of their education in it, it is extremely probable that this was so. It is quite certain, however, that it belonged to a class of grammar schools, whose history will probably, in these times when antiquities are being more searched into than they used to be, become better known than it is now. The Grammar Schools with which we all are familiar are those which were endowed in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth out of funds arising from dissolved Chantries or Monasteries, or from the benevolence of private individuals, and the impression exists that this was the original of grammar schools. I venture to think that this is a mistake. Not only does the history at an earlier time of the Mercers' School, and the schools which preceded or existed side by side with it, show that grammar schools were well known previous to the Reformation, but there is abundant proof that schools of the same character existed, and were carried on very efficiently and produced very great men, throughout the middle ages.

In the year 1447, a petition was presented to King Henry VI by the Rectors of the parishes of All Hallows the Great, St. Andrew Holborn, St. Peter Cornhill, and St. Mary Colechurch, praying that grammar schools might be erected in their several parishes. The rector of St. Mary Colechurch was John Neel, the Master of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon, which stood where Mercers' Hall now is, and with which the Mercers' Company were intimately connected. The petition is in the following terms :—

“To the ful worthy and discrete Communes in this present Parliament assembled ; Please it unto the full wise and discrete Communes in this present Parliament assembled to considre the grete nombre of Gramer Scholes that sometyme were in divers Parties of this Realme, beside those that were in London, and how fewe ben in these Dayes, and the grete Hurt that is caused of this, not only in the Spirituell Partie of the Chirche, where oftentyme it apperith openly in som Persones with grete shame, but also in the Temprell Partie, to whom also it is full expedient to have competent congruite for manie causes as to your Wisdomes apperith. And forasmuche as to the Cite of London is the common concours of this Land, wherein is grete multitude of young people not only born and brought forth in the same Cite, but also of many other parties of this lond, som for lake of Schole Maistres in their owne Contree, for to be enfourmed of Gramer there, and som for the grete Almesse of Lordes, Merchaunts, and other, the which is in London more plenteuously doon than in manie other Places of this Realme, to such pouere Creatures as never shuld have be brought to so grete vertu and Connyng as thei have ne had hit been by the meane of the Alme abovesaid ; Wherefore it were expedynt, that in London were a sufficeant number of Scholes, and good Enfourmers in Gramer ; and not, for the singular availl of two or three Persones, grevously to hurt the Multitude of yonge People of all this Land ; For where there is grete nombre of Lerner, and few Techers ; and all the Lerner be compelled to go to the few Techers, and to noon other, the Maistres wexen riche of Monie, and the Lerner pouere in Connyng, as Experyence openlie shewith, agenst all vertuc and ordre of wele publik. And these Premises moven and sturen of grete Devocion and Pitee, Maistre William

Lyechefeld, Parson of the Parich Chirche of Al Hallowen the More in London ; Maistre Gilbert, Parson of Seint Andrewe Holbourne, in the Suburbs of the said Citee, Maistre John Cole, Parson of Seint Petre, in Cornhul of London, and John Neel, Maistre of the Hous or Hospital of Seint Thomas of Acres, and Parson of Colchirche in London, to compleyne unto you, and for Remedie besechyn you, to pray the Kyng our Sovereign Lord, that he bi the Advys and Assent of the Lords Spirituell and Temporell in this present Parliament assembled, and bi authoritie of the same Parliament, will provide, ordeyne and graunt to the said Maistre Lyechefeld and his successors, that they in the said Parish of Al Hallowen, to the said Maistre Gilbert and his successors, that they in the said Parish of Saint Andrew, to the said Maistre John and his successors, that they in the said Parish of Seint Petre, and to the said John Maistre of the said Hospital and to his successors, that they within the foresaid Parish of our Ladie of Colchirch, in the which the said House of St. Thomas is sette ; may ordeyne, create, establish and set a person sufficientlie lerned in Gramer, to hold and exercise a Schole in the same Science of Gramer, and it there to teche to al that will lerne ; And that everiche of the said Maistres, Maister William, Maister Gilbert, Maister John, and John Neel, Maistre, such Schole Maistre, so bi him sette, and everiche of theire Successors, suche Schole-Maistre bi him, or bi any of his Predecessors so established and sette, specially as is above rehercid, may in his oun Parish or place remove, and another in his Place substitute and sett, as often as to any of the said Parsones or their Successors semith that cause reasonable so requireth : And so to do, iche of the said Parsones and their successors, as often as it happenyth any of the said Scholes to be voyd of a Schole Maistre in any maner wyse, to the Honour of God and encreasyng of virtue."

The answer to the petition was that

"The Kyng wille that it be doone as it is desired, so that it be doone bi the advyse of the Ordinary, otherelles of the Archbishoppe of Canterbury for the tyme beyng."

Thus a Grammar School was established by Act of Parliament in the parish of St. Mary Colechurch,

under the superintendence of the Master of St. Thomas, as the Parson of that parish, and agreeably to the ancient practice of holding schools in churches.

Within a few years after the presentation of the above petition, five other schools were set up in other churches in London, by the care of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London, viz.: one within the churchyard of St. Paul, a second at the Collegiate Church of St. Martin's le Grand, another at St. Mary de Arcubus (Bow Church, in Cheapside), another at St. Dunstan's in the East, and a fifth at the Hospital of St. Anthony. This was done, says old Stow, to check and suppress other smaller schools of late set up by ignorant and illiterate grammar masters, which did the youth more harm than good, as the King's letters patent did hint. All these ancient schools had, in Stow's time, long since been dissolved and had vanished, except St. Anthony's, which outlasted the rest, but better were established in their room.

St. Anthony's School was situate in Broad Street ward, in the parish of St. Benet Fink, near the place where St. Augustine's Church now stands. It was large and fair, and before St. Paul's School was founded was of the chiefest account in London, and many eminent scholars were bred up in it, of whom Sir Thomas More was one. The school was part of the Hospital of St. Anthony of Vienne, in France, which King Edward IV annexed and appropriated to the Collegiate Church of Windsor, with all the estates thereto belonging. The revenue of the school had, in Stow's time, been embezzled, and it had come to nothing, although it was in being at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's time, when one Hilton, a grave and

good man, was Master. I think that Mercers' School may therefore claim to be the oldest school now existing in London.

The school of St. Thomas of Acon is stated to have been kept in the Parish Church of St. Mary Colechurch in the Old Jewry, of which the Master of the Hospital or College of St. Thomas of Acon was the Rector, and the Master and Brethren were the Improprate Rectors, and the school was maintained until the Hospital was dissolved and its property surrendered to King Henry VIII in the year 1538.

The Mercers' Company, who, as I have elsewhere shewn, were very intimately connected with this religious house, applied to the Crown for liberty to purchase the church and mansion which had belonged to it, together with other houses in the neighbourhood, and in November, 1539, it was ordered by the Company that Sir John Alleyn, Sir Raufe Warren, Sir Richard Gresham and Sir Thomas Kytson, aldermen, William Wilkynson and Richard Raynolds, aldermen's peers, and John Coke, Robert Palmer, William Lokke, Richard Jervyes, and Rollande Hill, assistants, should sue unto my Lord Privy Seal (Cromwell) for the purchase of the church and the houses about the same. Sir Richard Gresham moved the Lord Privy Seal accordingly, and at a Court held on the 15th March, 1539,

“The Company were duly minded for to follow the assent of the same, and referred all that matter to the wisdom and discretion of the Lord Mayor (Sir William Holles, a Mercer), and the worshipful aldermen, wardens and assistants, to do therein what they thought good, and whatsoever they did therein, the Company to be therewith content.”

The negotiations between the King and the Company were eventually successful, for the King by letters patent under the great seal of the Court of Augmentations, dated the 21st April, 1541, to the praise of God and the increase of divine worship, and of the men of the mystery of Mercery of the City of London and their better sustentation, and also in consideration of £969 17s. 6d. sterling, being twenty years' purchase, paid to the Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations by the wardens and commonalty of the mystery of the Mercery of the City of London, did grant to the said wardens and commonalty the reversion of certain premises at annual rents, and also the church, within the said City of London, lately called the Church of the said late College of Acon, London, then dissolved (such church in future to be called for ever the Church of the Mercers of his City of London, to the honour of God and the blessed Virgin Mary dedicated and founded), and the cloister and chapter house of the same late College adjoining the cloister, and the churchyard of the said late College, and the ornaments and implements of the said church and cloister, and all the lead thereupon, and the whole land and soil within the precinct of the cloister, and also four messuages and tenements in the several tenures of Robert Bevycode, Richard Brymyingham, William Toweres and Thomas Forge or their assigns, situate in the parish of St. Olave, in the Old Jewry, London; and certain other messuages in the parish of the Blessed Mary of Colechurch, including the Tavern called the Mitre, in Cheapside, and also the Rectory and Church of the Blessed Mary of Colechurch, and the advowson, donation and free disposition and right of patronage of the rectory and vicarage of

the same, and all houses, tithes, oblations, etc., to the same rectory and church belonging; and also a messuage or tenement late in the tenure of Sir Thomas More, knight, or his assigns, in the parish of St. Stephen, Walbroke, London; and also a great messuage in the tenure of Sir Ralph Warren, knight, or his assigns, in the parish of St. Stephen, Walbroke; and also other messuages in the parishes of St. Martin in Ironmonger Lane, and St. Stephen in Coleman Street, London, as fully and entirely and in as ample manner and form as the master and brethren of the said late House or College of Acon, or any of their predecessors in the right of the same house or college, had the same at any time before the dissolution of the same, or before that late house or college came to the hands of the King.

An indenture of bargain and sale was entered into between the King and the Mercers' Company on the same day as the above mentioned conveyance, viz., the 21st April, 1541, whereby, after reciting that the said King, of his mere motion and benevolent grace, to the laud of God and the maintenance of the said Mercers, and for the sum of £969 17s. 6d., had granted to the use of the said wardens and commonalty and their successors for ever, the Church of Acon, within the City of London, lately called the Church of the College of Acon, with certain appurtenances thereto, together with the Church of St. Mary Colechurch, and certain other premises, it was agreed, in consideration of the King having granted the petition of the said wardens and commonalty, that they should find three priests and chaplains, to be called the Mercers' Chaplains, to sing and say masses and other divine service continually in the said church, such

priests and chaplains on their admission to be sworn and charged upon pain of losing their service, that they should in their masses pray to God for the King and all his progeny for ever. And the Company further covenanted, at their own cost and charge, to find and keep a free grammar school within the City of London perpetually, and also a sufficient Master to teach twenty-five children and scholars freely, continuously for ever; and also yearly every Sunday in Lent to provide a learned man to preach a sermon in the Mercers' Church for ever, the Company to have the governance of the church and the power of appointing and dismissing the said priests, chaplains and schoolmaster.

Under this agreement with King Henry VIII, Mercers' School was established as a free grammar school in the City of London for twenty-five scholars. It was first opened at Michaelmas, 1542, one Thomas Freeman being the first Master, and appears to have been at first kept in the Church of the Hospital of St. Thomas, called the Mercers' Church, and afterwards in an adjoining Schoolhouse erected by the Company, or in the Chapel under the Hall, thus acquiring the name of the Mercers' Chapel School.

In the year 1549 when Freeman had been appointed to the High Mastership of St. Paul's School (an office which he held for ten years), the Wardens and Alderman Jervis were ordered to get lettered and learned men to dispute and argue learning with the approved candidate and to admit him, if found meet. Thomas Prince accordingly appeared before three of the Wardens and Alderman Jervis,

“and one Mr. Palgrave, Preste, and one Mr. Swerder, Gentleman, associated together with Mr. Wardeins, and in open presence here in

the perlour with the said Thomas Prynce (had) arguements and profounde questions of learnynge both in the Latten and Greke tounge, and after due communication, with good approbacion of the same Prince in the depnes of his learnynge, who shewed hym to be verrye well learned, not only by the dysputaciones thereof, but also a man bothe of qualyte and persone as also in lernynge meate and abell to teache in any place, he was declared a meate man for the rome,"

and admitted by the Wardens to be Schoolmaster during the Company's pleasure.

The salary of the Mercers' Schoolmaster was at first but £10 a year; but Freeman and Prince obtained permission for the augmentation of their incomes to take fifteen private scholars in addition to the twenty-five taught gratis. This practice was, however, prohibited in Prince's time, and he resigned. I. Gonalwyn, Dr. Gammounde, Sir Thomas Shackspeare, Sir Thomas Augustine, and William Alexander rapidly succeeded; and on the resignation of Alexander, after his salary had been raised but he had been refused permission to take extra scholars, Richard Langhorne was appointed with a salary of £12 a year, and also to be the Minister in the Mercers' Church with a stipend of £8 a year.

During the mastership of Richard Martindale in 1563 both St. Paul's and Mercers' Schools were broken up on account of the Plague; and in the following year the Mercers at the exhortation of the Spital Preachers, backed by the Lord Mayor's precepts to the different Companies, founded two scholarships for a graduate at Oxford and another at Cambridge in the appointments to which it was determined that the children of Mercers should have the preference.

Richard Wilkinson, chosen Schoolmaster in 1574, was allowed to teach forty scholars, and held the

office twenty-one years. Druwen succeeded, and in 1599 came Richard Levesley, who entered into a bond in the sum of £50 for his good carriage in the office ; which he appears not to have forfeited for he continued Schoolmaster for twenty-one years, and then retired with a pension in consideration of his age and long service. He was permitted to take thirty-five private scholars, and latterly was allowed an usher. The following regulations were made for the School in his time :—

“ In primis whereas the foundation of this Schole is but for twenty-five schollers to be taught in the same free, nevertheless at the humble sute of Richard Levesley, now Schoolmaster there, in regarde he kepith at his owne chardge a sufficient Ussher, he is allowed to take for his benefits, dureing the Companies pleasure, thirty-five schollers more, which in all makith sixtie schollers.

“ Item because the said Scholehouse is not sufficient nor able to conteyne more then the said twenty-five free schollers, it is agreed that he shall have libertie in the North Ile of the Church at the Entrey goinge up to the said Schole to teach the said thirty-five residue, provided that none of the monuments Seates Ceeling-Wainscott Walles Glasse Windowes or other thinge in the said Ile Church or Church porch be broken impaired or defaced by anie his said Schollers or other by any their meanes or procurements.

“ Item the said twenty-five free schollers to be especiallie Mercers' Children, and such speciallie whose parents and friends be poore, and no Mercer to have above two free schollers at one tyme, and if there be not so many Mercers children in the Schoole, then the same number of free schollers to be supplied by other the poorest schollers, that be towardliest in that schole.

“ Item no free Scholler or other to be received or allowed in the same Schole, without the assent of the Wardeins of the said Companie or of the Renter Wardein at the least, the same allowance to be by wrytynge under his or thier handes.

“ Item the said Schole Master and Ussher shall submit them and their Schollers to be examyned once or oftner everie yere, where and when it shall please the said Master and Wardeins.

“Item they and their Schollers shall duly keepe their houres in the Schole, videlicet to come at 7 in the morninge and tarry till 11, and come at 1 and tarry till 5.

“Item neither the said Master nor Ussher shall be absent from the Schole, but upon Licence had of one of the Wardens, excepte he be lett by sickness.

“Item the Schollers to use praiers in the Schole morninge and eveninge and therein mention to be made especially of the King’s Majesty and of this Companie, Founders and Patrons of the said Schole.

“Item the Scholers not to have any remedies to plaie except on Thursdaie and Hollidaie eves in the afternone of the same daies, unless it be by the Consent of one of the said Wardeins being in person in the said Schole or under his hande in writinge.

“Item the said Schole Master and Schollers to be at the Sermons in the Lent and buriall Sermons that shall be in the said Church and suche like tymes of service there as hath byn accustomed.

“Item whereas the Schole Master hath allowance for aidinge and helpinge the Mynister in Service in the said Church as hath been accustomed, it is thoughte meete that he shall provide at his Charge a fitt man to begyn the Psalme before and aftere everie the same Sermones.

“Item whereas some question hath byn concernynge the pulpitt clothe at burials in the said Church whether the same should belong to the Mynister, the Schole Master or Sexton of the same Church. Forasmuch as in righte the same doth not belonge to any of them, but onelie to the parson, which is the Company. Wherefore it is nowe ordered and apointed that the Sexton hereafter shall see it, and the offerings there when any suche shall be, to be brought alwaies to the said Master and Wardeins, and they always to give and dispose therof in their discretion where and to whome they shall thincke good.

“Item that the Schole Master take Order that the Scholers in their comynge and goinge to Schole nor at any other tymes do plaie either at ball or at any other Spote in the said Church or Church porch or use any quarellinge, fighting or making any great noise, but quietlie to passe to and from the Schole, without tarryinge or making any Abode in the said porche or boddie of the said Church.”

Nicholas Augar succeeded Levesley as Master of Mercers’ School. At the election of a High Master

of St. Paul's School on Dr. Gill's dismissal, he was a candidate but only stood second to the one elected. After twenty-four years' service he resigned the mastership of Mercers' School, and was succeeded by Samuel Cromleholme, who was elected in 1647 Sub-Master of St. Paul's School, and High Master in 1657. Robert Green came next, and dying, after he had been eight years master, was buried in Mercers' Chapel.

On Green's death Thomas Almon was elected master, with an annual allowance of £20 for teaching the scholars and assisting the Minister in the Chapel, £15 in lieu of a house, and £10 for an Usher. He appears to have been prevented by ill-health from regularly attending the school, on account of which he was dismissed, and John Bancele, or Boncle, put in his place.

By the Fire of London in 1666 the Mercers' Schoolhouse and all the neighbouring buildings were consumed. The restoration of the Royal Exchange and St. Paul's School were the first objects of the attention of the Company; but when these works had been nearly completed, they set about rebuilding Mercers' School, applying to Parliament for a grant of the site of the Parish Church of St. Mary Colechurch in the Old Jewry, for this or other purposes. The first Act for rebuilding the City (19 Car. 11. c. 3) provided that the sites of such of the parish churches, as should not be rebuilt, should be sold by the Mayor and Aldermen towards the building of the new churches or laid into the streets. The Mercers therefore applied to Parliament to obtain this site; and accordingly the additional Act for rebuilding the City (22 Car. 11. c. 11), (by which the parish of St. Mary

Colechurch was united to that of St. Mildred in the Poultry), after reciting that the Mercers were

“seised in fee of the rectory and Parish Church impropriate of St. Mary Colechurch, the said Church being an upper room about ten feet higher than the street and lying over certain rooms and arched vaults or cellars of the said Wardens and Commonalty, upon the site of which Church they had designed to build a free school and other buildings, and to remove the dead bodies and bones of those who had been buried upon the Arches into their Chapel”

settled the site of this Church upon the Company ; only providing that they should contribute towards building a church for the united parishes. A new house for the school and schoolmaster's residence was accordingly erected at the back of the site of St. Mary Colechurch in the Old Jewry. It appears to have been four stories high with the upper stories projecting, and an area behind for a playground. The school was re-opened under Mr. Boncle at Christmas, 1671.

Mercers' School was, about this time benefited, and the Master's salary (then amounting to £40 a year, including the allowance for an Usher) augmented, by the gift of Thomas Rich, who had been educated at this school. By his will, proved in the Archdeaconry Court of Essex, 21st August, 1672, Rich gave to the Master and Wardens of the Mercers' Company, after the decease of his wife, all his tenements in St. Mary Axe, on condition that they should yearly pay amongst other things two exhibitions of £6 a year each to two poor scholars taught in the Mercers' Chapel School, and thence to be sent to the University. He also devised his house and grounds at West Ham to the Company in trust (after meeting certain small payments and providing for the repairs of the house) to

pay one moiety of the net income to the Master of Mercers' School for his better maintenance and encouragement in its management, and the education of the scholars; and to apply the other moiety to the education of poor children of Lambeth. The exhibition fund accumulated during the last and part of the present centuries, and a Scheme was made in 1882 by the Charity Commissioners for its better management, about which I shall refer to later. The house at West Ham was sold in 1844, under the compulsory powers of an Act of Parliament, to the Eastern Counties and Thames Junction Railway Company, and the purchase-money invested in Consols. Half the dividends on this stock is still paid to the Master of Mercers' School.

On the death of John Boncle, after he had been Master of Mercers' School for eighteen years, his son Seth Mountney Boncle, who had been his father's assistant, appearing able and diligent, was elected to succeed him, the Company stipulating that he should allow his mother to remain in the School house during her life. He continued Master until his death, when John Killsby was elected; and he also continued Master until his death in 1710, and was buried in Mercers' Chapel, the Company's fees being specially remitted.

William Baxter, nephew to Richard Baxter, the celebrated nonconformist, himself eminent as a scholar, a linguist, and an antiquarian, was the next Master of Mercers' School. He was born at Lanhigan in Shropshire in 1650, and when he went to Harrow at the very late age of eighteen, he could neither read nor understand one word of any language but Welsh. He soon, however, acquired much classical learning.

His first book was a Latin Grammar, but he made his mark by his "Anacreon," published in 1695, which carried his name not only over England but into Germany and Holland. In 1701 appeared Baxter's celebrated "Horace," which Bishop Louth pronounced "the very best edition of 'Horace' ever yet delivered to the World." He was appointed Master of Mercers' School on the 28th April, 1710, having previously kept a boarding school at Tottenham High Cross. In 1719 he published his Dictionary of British Antiquities under a title of "*Glossarium Antiquitatum Britannicarum sive Syllabus Etymologicus Antiquitatum veteris Britanniae atque Iberniae temporibus Romanorum.*" The work was published by the Rev. Moses Williams, when the author was in his 69th year. To the same editor we owe Baxter's posthumous work, a glossary or dictionary of Roman antiquities, under the title of "*Reliquiae Baxterianae sive W. Baxteri opera posthuma.*" It, unfortunately, only went through the letter A, but there is a fragment of the life of the author, written by himself, accompanying it. Baxter is said also to have been versed in the British, Irish, Northern, Eastern, Greek, and Latin tongues. But, notwithstanding his scholarship, Mercers' School decayed under his management, and in 1721 only four or five scholars remained, whereupon the Company, attributing the decay of the school to his great age and infirmity, induced him to retire on being paid his full salary during life; and he soon afterwards died on the 31st May, 1723.

Robert Swinburne succeeded Baxter, but without salary during Baxter's life. He was elected to hold the office only till the next St. Paul's School Apposition day, on which he was to resign, or his place was

to be declared vacant ; but if he discharged himself to the satisfaction of the Company, the Apposition Court were empowered to re-elect him for one year, and so on. For many years after this the master was elected only from year to year. A similar practice, grounded on an ordinance of Dean Colet, had prevailed as to the High Master of St. Paul's School, and the decay of Mercers' School under Baxter probably suggested its adoption with regard to the master of this school. Swinburne appears to have been re-elected annually until his death in 1729, when the Rev. Christopher Morrison succeeded him. In his time the prayers of Mercers' School appear to have been altered from Latin into English by the Company's desire. One of the prayers was as follows :—

“O almighty and merciful Father, maker of Heaven and Earth, who, of Thy goodness and mercy, givest grace, wisdom, and understanding to all that ask it of Thee in the full assurance of faith, deliver us this day from every evil, sanctify our thoughts and intentions, enlighten our minds and give unto us wisdom and understanding, not only to comprehend those things which may be for our present happiness and welfare, but also with full purpose of heart to abide and persevere in the same, so that, increasing daily in godliness, wisdom, and righteousness of life, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally obtain Thy everlasting blessings, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

On his preferment to the living of Tottenham he was dismissed from the office of schoolmaster, the Company at that time considering the mastership of Mercers' School incompatible with the cure of souls.

The Rev. John Brown was the next master. In the year 1743, on his objecting to admit a scholar who

had not been taught Latin, on the ground that at a free grammar school only Latin and Greek should be taught, the Company determined that he was bound to teach all whom they chose to send either Latin or English, especially as he then had several English scholars, and had caused to be written over the door in gold letters that English, Latin, and Greek were there taught. Not long after this it was determined that, according to ancient usage, the Renter Warden should have the appointment of the twenty-five scholars of Mercers' School. Brown continued master until he died in 1771, having held the office for thirty-three years.

On the death of Brown, the Rev. John Waterhouse was elected Master, and was soon afterwards appointed the Company's Chaplain; thus the offices of School Master and Chaplain were again held together. At this time it was ordered that the scholars should be publicly examined every year previous to the Master's re-election. Waterhouse held the Mastership until 1804, when he died, after thirty-three years' service. In his time the Master's salary was gradually augmented from £40 to £100 a year, and besides an annual gratuity of £50 was added from the year 1800 on account of the high price of provisions, making up, with the moiety of the income of Rich's estate, an income of about £160 per annum.

The principal event during Waterhouse's mastership was the removal of the school from the Old Jewry, which was widened in the year 1785, the buildings to the West and North of it, including Mercers' School, being taken down. The school was then temporarily removed to No. 13, Budge Row, a house belonging to the Company. The school

continued in Budge Row until shortly before the death of Mr. Waterhouse, when, the house being in a dilapidated state, the school was removed for a time to a house opposite St. Antholin's Church in Watling Street. On the death of Mr. Waterhouse, the school was suspended for a time, and while the Company were considering whether they should repair the house in Budge Row, or build a new school house, an adjoining house took fire, and the house in Budge Row was burnt down.

On the death of Waterhouse the Rev. Isaac Hill, who had been for some years second Master of St. Paul's School, was chosen Master of Mercers' School, also succeeding Mr. Waterhouse in the office of the Mercers' Chaplain. By desire of the Company he hired temporary rooms at 20, Red Lion Court, Watling Street, and there re-opened the school on the 13th August, 1804, with only one scholar, but on an extended system. Although English appears to have been taught in the school from 1743, or perhaps earlier, yet the masters had actually taught little but Latin or Greek, so that the teaching was insufficient for the instruction of children destined for mercantile pursuits, while it wanted advantages to make it desirable for those who were studying for the learned professions. Thus the school, according to Carlisle, was so little in request, that not one of the former scholars claimed re-admission at its re-opening. But "It has now," he writes, "endeavoured to meet the wants and improvements of the times, and to institute a school which should comprehend in itself both the ornamental and the useful part of education, and so to prepare youth for any or every department of life, whether literary or mercantile."

In the year 1803 the Company determined that a master should be appointed to teach writing, arithmetic, and merchants' accounts, attending in the afternoons of four days in every week, at a salary of £80 a year; that the salary of the Head Master should be raised to £120 a year; that the admission of scholars should be in the Master and Wardens for the time being, and that they should be requested to undertake the management and ordering of the school.

John Wills, who, as Lord Selborne said at the opening of the new school in Barnard's Inn, taught him writing, was accordingly chosen Writing Master, and the school was opened upon the extended system. The mornings were now appropriated to the Greek and Roman classics, and the afternoons to writing, arithmetic, and merchants' accounts.

Under this system the school was soon filled with scholars. In the year 1808 it was removed from Red Lion Court to a house (nearly on the site of Whittington's House and College) on College Hill; and shortly afterwards the number of free scholars was increased to thirty-five, and the salaries of the Masters were augmented. In 1814, on the presentation of a book called "Enchiridion Lyricum" by Mr. Hill, the sum of £10 a year was ordered to be laid out in books for the school, thus laying the foundation of a useful library much prized by the scholars.

In 1820 it was ordered that £10 a year should be given to the scholars in rewards, £6 to be distributed by the Master, and £4 by the Writing Master, and the rules for the governance of the school were placed on a board in a conspicuous part of the school-room.

About the year 1820 the school-house at College Hill was repaired by the Mercers' Company, and soon

afterwards the Company, believing that the system of education pursued in the school was well calculated to produce the greatest benefit to the boys who had the happiness to be placed there, and seeing that the two masters were diligent and faithful in the discharge of their duties, while the applications by parents to obtain admission for their children were much beyond what could be accommodated there, determined to build a new school-house. Mr. Smith, the Company's Surveyor, was ordered to prepare a plan and estimate for the building, and a new school was erected at a cost of between £4,000 and £5,000. The school was carried on during the rebuilding at a house on St. Peter's Hill, Doctors' Commons, and on the 6th June, 1832, the new school-house on College Hill was opened by the Master and Wardens, with much ceremony, an appropriate address and orations being delivered by the scholars, many of the parents of the boys, with other visitors, attending. The new school-house was a Doric edifice, occupying about 58 feet of frontage on College Hill, by 110 feet in depth, including a school-room, in which we are now assembled, large enough for seventy scholars. It was built upon columns, like the then existing St. Paul's School, over an open paved area used as a playground, with an adjoining residence for the Head Master.

Having traced the history of Mercers' School so far, perhaps I may be pardoned a little digression, considering the place in which we are assembled. On this spot Sir Richard Whittington, famous in the history of the City, and four times Mayor of London, lived. This is not the place to repeat the nursery tale of Whittington and his cat, nor his

charitable gifts to the City, from which he derived his fortune, nor his honesty and public spirit in the office of Mayor, evidenced by his prosecution of the London brewers for forestalling malt and selling dear ale, for which interference with their proceedings, as we may well imagine, the brewers were very wrath with him. These, and many more incidents in his career, may well be left to the chronicler. Here, as I have said, Whittington lived, and here he died about March, 1422-23, and was buried in the adjoining church under a fair monument. In the reign of Edward VI, Thomas Mountain, Master of Whittington College and Rector of the Church, is said, to his shame, to have taken up Whittington's body in the expectation of finding treasure with it, and, disappointed in that expectation, to have stripped it of its leaden sheet. In the reign of Mary, the parishioners were compelled to wrap him in lead again and restore his monument, and a goodly monument of white marble was afterwards set up. Thus his remains rested after being thrice buried, till the Fire of London destroyed the church. Since that time his monument has never been restored, nor is there stone or inscription to mark where the ashes of this merchant prince rest. In the original epitaph he is called *Richardus Albificans Villam, Flos Mercatorum*. Perhaps the punning Latin translation of his name may have stirred him or his executors to many of the good works which he, and they at his behest, carried out.

Whittington rebuilt the Church of St. Michael and founded the College of Priests in it, and the Alms-house which for many centuries adjoined it, obtaining a license for the foundation of the College in the 11th year of Henry IV., and from the City in the

following year a vacant site for its erection. Both these foundations he directed should be finished by his executors.

His executors obtained a Royal license on the 12th May, 1423, to pull down and rebuild the Prison of Newgate, which was then decayed and was so small and infected that many prisoners died in it. They built or repaired the two City conduits, contributed largely to the building of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and of the Guildhall, and jointly with the executors of William Barry, built a handsome library for the Corporation of London, and jointly with Dr. Winchelsey a magnificent library for the Grey Friars.

Their chief works, however, in the opinion of the Mercers' Company, weré the foundation of the College and Almshouse. By Letters patent, dated 18th November, 3 Henry VI., 1424, they obtained the King's license to found the College and Almshouse. They also obtained the license of Archbishop Chichele, and from the Prior and Chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury, a grant of the right of nominating the Master of Whittington College to the Rectory of the Church of St. Michael.

They founded, by deed of the 18th December, 3 Henry VI., 1424, the College in the Church of St. Michael, to consist of five secular chaplains, one of whom should be Master, two clerks besides the Parish Clerk, and four choristers. It was endowed with a rent of £63 out of the estates left by the founder.

The Almshouse was founded by deed of the 21st September, 1424, for thirteen poor men, one of whom was to be Tutor, and endowed with a rent charge of £40 per annum. Of both of these foundations the Mercers' Company were trustees. The College

shared the common fate at the suppression of Colleges and Chantries in 1548, and the Almshouses, after having been burnt in the Great Fire and afterwards rebuilt by the Mercers' Company, were removed by them in the year 1824 to Highgate Hill, where they now exist, for a Tutor, Matron and twenty-eight Almswomen.

Mercers' School being established in the new house, the number of scholars was increased to seventy, the Rev. Thomas Hill, son of the Head Master, was elected Assistant Classical Master with a salary of £120, and Thomas Patrickson, Assistant Writing Master, with a salary of £80. It was at the same time ordered that a register of the scholars should be kept at Mercers' Hall; and also that the presentation of the scholars should belong to the members of the Court of Assistants in rotation according to seniority; only that the Master and Wardens should take the first four presentations after their coming into office, in addition to such as they might be entitled to in rotation, and that a preference should always be given to the sons of Mercers. The age of the scholars to be admitted was not limited, but to prevent scholars from other schools gathering a benefit intended for the scholars of this school, it was ordered that no boy admitted after twelve years of age should be allowed to enjoy one of Rich's exhibitions.

Mr. Wills having resigned the office of Writing Master, Mr. Patrickson was elected in his place, and on the 19th July, 1839, the Rev. Isaac Hill, the venerable Head Master, who held the office longer than any one of his predecessors (nearly thirty-six years), gave notice of his desire to retire on account of the infirmity of increasing years.

A memorandum prepared by Mr. Hill of the system of instruction at Mercers' School in his time has been preserved, and I gladly give it here. He says :

“ Although many of the scholars are of late admission, and some of slender capacity for learning ; though much of their spare time is lost owing to the distance from which some of them come ; and though the parents of many most reluctantly supply them with books, or expend anything on their education, yet the school is producing great and beneficial effect. Of this the good order, the regular attendance, the moral habits, and the willing obedience of the scholars, are evident proofs ; and it cannot be doubted but that the instruction which the school imparts and the impressions which it produces, will attend and benefit every scholar, that partakes of them, to the latest period of his life.

“ The morning studies ” he proceeds, “ which always commence with Prayers, read by one of the Senior Scholars in rotation, are English, Latin, or Greek, with just additions of religious and moral instruction as the illustration of these subjects may require, and part of every Wednesday and Saturday is appropriated to general instruction.

“ The present course of reading and lecturing in the three upper classes on those days is Geography on the Wednesday, Roman History on the Saturday. In the lower classes Tuesday and Friday are similarly devoted to Repetitions, Examinations, and other things suited to their age and understanding. When this course is concluded, either the comparison of English Grammar with the Greek and Latin, or Classical Antiquities or Ecclesiastical and Civil History, follow in an appointed order and succession.

“ The afternoon studies are Writing and Arithmetic, with Merchants' Accounts, and the Elements of Mathematics, if the stay and talent of the scholar permit.

“ The seventy scholars are nearly equally distributed into six classes, under two Classical Masters in the morning, and under two Writing Masters in the afternoon.

“ The Exercises are prepared at home in the evenings. For Latin Grammar, Lily's is used as a basis, and the Eton where improved.

“ In addition to these studies, which are performed in the School under the inspection and direction of the Masters, there is a lending Library from which the scholars receive books to read at home suited to their different ages.

“And when any of the scholars have made sufficient progress in their learning, and are desirous of proceeding to the University, there are two Exhibitions of fifty pounds a year each, for the term of five years, attached to the school. These were continued to former scholars for seven years, and I think it is to be regretted that the benefit has been diminished. For there is so strong a hope and expectation in the mind of every University scholar, from long custom, from example and from necessity, to hold his School Exhibition until his Master’s Degree, that it appears to him like violating nature to abridge the term. Neither is it politic in the present times to increase the number of students at the University, by a forced growth up to a particular period, and then leave them to fade and dwindle before they have attained to full age and maturity. Besides which the extreme difficulty of obtaining admission into the Church, after the conclusion of their studies, ought to cause every reflecting person to pause before he increases the number of candidates by presenting a fallacious inducement to one while he abridges the means of another.”

Mr. Hill expressed a hope

“that these observations will be received with kindness and indulgence, and that this outline of the discipline and studies of Mercers’ School will give a correct idea of its value, and show that no patronage can be more likely to pass uninjured and unsullied through the ordeal of these perilous times.”

Mr. Hill resigned in the year 1839, and in the beginning of 1840 the Rev. John Smith, who was a Mercer, was elected Master, holding office for twenty years, when he resigned, and the Rev. Foster Stable Barry was elected on the 7th November, 1861.

In 1876 the Company, during the Mastership of Lord Selborne, and by his advice, imposed a capitation fee of £5 per boy on all boys to be thereafter admitted, except the twenty-five free scholars whom the Company undertook to teach under their covenant with King Henry VIII. They also raised the number of boys in the school to 100, and directed that learning Greek should not be required of any scholars in

the school whose parents or guardians did not desire it, but that the school should be conducted on the principle of giving in it the best possible modern and commercial, rather than a classical, education. The places of the twenty-five foundation scholars were to be filled by competitive examination, open to all boys in the school under fourteen years of age, and to be so conducted as to make the scholarships prizes for superior industry and merit. It was, however, found impossible in so small a school to allow some of the boys to learn Greek and others to abstain from learning it, and the Company accordingly, in the year 1878, discontinued the teaching of Greek in the school.

The school was increased in 1879 to 125 boys, and in 1880 to 150 boys, and alterations were made in the old school-house for their accommodation.

In 1879 Mr. Barry resigned, and his place was taken by the Rev. Douglas L. Scott, the present Head Master.

There are attached to this school exhibitions originally founded, as I have before mentioned, in the year 1672, by Thomas Rich. For many years after the testator's death these exhibitions were seldom applied for, and large accumulations, which arose in respect thereof, enabled the Company to augment the amount of the exhibitions, until they reached £50 per annum. When the Company determined to discontinue the study of Greek in the school, the Charity Commissioners, on the application of the Company, made a scheme on the 29th June, 1882, providing that at least nine exhibitions or scholarships should be formed, each of the value of £25 per annum, to be competed for by boys who had for at least five years been in Mercers' School, and had been admitted thereto under

the age of twelve years. Subject to these conditions, the exhibitions were to be tenable for three years at any place of higher education approved by the Company, but the Company were permitted, if they thought fit and the income at their disposal was sufficient, to make to any holder, in respect of his exhibition, one payment of £60, to be applied towards his professional training or advancement in life, instead of three yearly payments of £25 each. The exhibitions were to be tenable for the purposes of education only, and to be awarded and held under such regulations and conditions as the Company should think fit.

Amongst the distinguished scholars who received their education in Mercers' School were, according to tradition, Dr. John Colet (Dean of St. Paul's and founder of St. Paul's School) and Sir Thomas Gresham (founder of the Royal Exchange), and also John Young (Bishop of Rochester in 1589), John Davenant (Bishop of Salisbury in 1641), Sir Lionel Cranfield (Earl of Middlesex and Lord Treasurer to King James I.), and Walter Wren (Bishop of Ely in 1667), as well as several members of the Mercers' Company, who are now living.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of the granting of the first charter to the Mercers' Company by King Richard II. in 1394, the Company determined to remove Mercers' School from the building in which we are now assembled, and which was much too small for the increased number of boys who were being taught in it, and to increase the number to 300 boys. It was necessary, to comply with the terms of the covenant of the Company with King Henry VIII., that a site should be sought for the new school within the limits of the City of London, and considerable

difficulty was experienced in finding a suitable place. However, in the year 1892 the Company were able to purchase Barnard's Inn, Holborn, with an area of 27,000 superficial feet, including the buildings standing on it.

Barnard's Inn was an Inn of Chancery, and was dependent on Gray's Inn. It was anciently called Mackworth's Inn, as belonging in the time of King Henry VI. to Dr. John Mackworth, Dean of Lincoln, and was given by Dr. Mackworth to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, to find a chaplain to celebrate Divine service in the Chapel of St. George in Lincoln Cathedral, where he was buried. It was, however, shortly afterwards converted into an Inn of Chancery, and called Barnard's Inn, from its being then in the occupation of one Barnard, and the Dean and Chapter granted leases of it to the Ancients of the Inn until a few years ago, when the freehold was purchased by the then trustees of the Inn. The arms of the Inn, which appear in the hall and also on the buildings outside in Holborn, were those of Mackworth, party per pale, indented ermine and sable, a chevron gules, fretted or, and the motto "Regi Regnoque fideles;" with the Company's "Honor Deo"—fitting mottoes for the new school.

The hall was probably built in the reign of King Henry VI., although it was altered greatly, if not entirely rebuilt, in the reign of Henry VIII. The original louvre, or lantern, in the centre of the roof still remains, recalling the time when a fire was lit in the middle of the floor and the smoke escaped through the roof. It is 36 feet long, 22 feet wide, and 30 feet high, and formerly contained fine portraits of Lord Chief Justice Holt (who was Principal of the Inn),

Lord Burleigh, Lord Bacon, Lord Keeper Coventry, and others. The Inn escaped the Great Fire of London, but suffered severely from the fire by which Langdale's distillery, which adjoined it on the east, was destroyed during the Gordon Riots at the end of the last century. Some of the chambers were burnt and other parts of the Inn damaged, but the hall was, happily, untouched. The chambers, except some quaint old houses fronting Fetter Lane, were removed to make way for the new school.

Immediately after the purchase was completed a Building Committee was appointed, to whom the duty of getting plans for the new buildings, and carrying these plans into effect, was entrusted. This committee instructed Mr. Thomas Chatfeild Clarke, F.R.I.B.A., to submit plans to them, and the first stone of the new buildings was laid by Colonel Clementi, the then Master of the Company, on 25th July, 1893.

The buildings are faced with red bricks with Ancaster dressings, but are, unfortunately, hidden from view, as the entrances from Holborn and Fetter Lane are so narrow. There are two entrances to the main block of buildings, and one of these is surmounted by a clock-tower, in which a clock has been placed through the liberality of one of the members of the Court of the Company. Approaching the building from Holborn, after leaving the hall, which is used as a dining-room for the boys, with the kitchens, etc., in close proximity, and the library, which has been adapted for a Head Master's room, adjacent to the hall, the main block of buildings follow. On the ground floor is a large assembly hall (70 feet by 40 feet), with an arcade on its western side, and on the same floor a large lecture-room, and also a physical labora-

tory and Science Master's room, and a class-room for the Head Master, Dr. Scott. On the first floor are six large class-rooms, and on the second floor a similar number. These rooms are lofty and well lighted, and are fitted with open warm-air stoves. At the south end of the block a covered playground has been provided for the boys' use in bad weather. A separate building of three floors, near Fetter Lane, contains an excellent Chemical Laboratory and the Drawing School. There is accommodation for 300 boys, exclusive of the lecture-room, laboratories, and drawing school. The whole of the buildings are fireproof throughout, and have been fitted with fire hydrants and with the electric light. They have been erected to the entire satisfaction of the Company by Messrs. E. Lawrence and Sons, of Wharf Road, City Road, under the direction of the late Mr. Chatfeild Clarke, and of his son, Mr. Howard Chatfeild Clarke, and have, with the purchase-money of the Inn, cost nearly £70,000.

The Earl of Selborne, a member of the Court of Assistants of the Mercers' Company, opened the school on the 11th September, 1894, in the presence of the Master (Mr. Charles Thomas Lane), the Wardens, and several members of the Court and Livery of the Company, and a distinguished assemblage.

The building in which we are, after being used as a school for upwards of sixty years, will now be devoted to other purposes.

In concluding this paper, which it has been my pleasure and privilege to read before the Society, I cannot do better than quote, even at the risk of wearying you by some repetition, part of the speech of the Earl of Selborne

in opening the new school in Barnard's Inn, to which I have been much indebted in the course of my remarks.

His Lordship said that :—

“The Mercers' Company attained their 500th year—not from their origin, which was much more remote, but from their legal incorporation—in the spring of 1894. They celebrated it, as it was fitting they should, with worthy solemnities at Mercers' Hall. They recounted the glories of the Mercers of past time, and we were all very well pleased to think that we had so good a retrospect and history. But if that had been all—if we had only celebrated it by a dinner and by speeches—it would have passed by and might not have left much impression behind it. But the Mercers have done much better. They have chosen this way of showing their gratitude for all the good which they have received, and all the honour which they have been enabled to obtain during those 500 years, by resolving to double the numbers, to improve the accommodation, and otherwise to increase the efficiency of Mercers' School. Upon that they have expended a very large sum of money. I do not know the exact figure, but I know it was very large ; and it was with much gratification that I heard your Master refer to the addition made by an honoured individual member of the Court of Assistants, Mr. Norman Watney, to that fund—the very munificent donation of £3,000—to which also he has added the clock which will adorn the clock tower of this school. Well, you are now assembled in suitable and spacious buildings. You are in a way to obtain numbers which, in my judgment, are not much short of the greatest number that can be well and conveniently taught in a single school, and by the same staff of masters ; at all events, numbers sufficient to make the school of infinite use to those who profit by the teaching, and to hold out every prospect of producing men of great and increasing eminence in all walks of life. Your Master told you that Greek had been abolished ; not altogether, I hope, for in suitable places I hope it will always be cultivated, and remain and flourish ; and any tendency to drive Greek out of the field where it can be taught to the advantage of the class of boys who are pupils, I should most strongly deprecate. But I think it was quite right here, because there are, and there ought to be, two aims in all good schools. The greatest and the highest is common to them all, whatever be the class of

boys who come to them ; I mean that aim which those who followed the prayers with which we began to-day's business will understand : the object of making good men, virtuous men, men fearing God and serving man ; and that, whatever be the kind of teaching, is a result which may be obtained and will be obtained by the effect of good instruction, good discipline, good manners, and good principles in teachers and in taught. That is common to all schools, or ought to be so, and it is the highest thing of all. But there is also the preparation for the business of life. All people have not exactly the same kind of business. Schools which teach the very highest and most advanced branches of learning in language and other things supply the teachers for the community, the rulers, the statesmen ; and in all classes they supply something which enables work to be done of a kind to which all men are not equally called. On the other hand, the ordinary business of life, to which all are called, may sometimes be unsuitable to the teaching of things for which there is comparatively little demand and from which there is little result. Now, I have very little doubt that the grammar schools, which were founded by King Edward VI., or in his reign, suffered in point of usefulness by the attempt to realise in them the same ideal standard of teaching, which is aimed at by our great public schools : the teaching Greek, for example, as well as Latin, as a matter of necessity. That was not done in the old times before the Reformation ; in point of fact it could not be done, because nobody knew Greek at that time. It was not till after, or about, the time of the Reformation—the time called the Renaissance—at which Greek learning was again introduced. It is not at all surprising that when it was introduced there was a great love and passion for it, and a desire to promote it, and the consequence was that the old grammar schools which were content to teach Latin, the then universal language, and things practically useful, fell out of line, and instead of them, in these new grammar schools, an aim too high for their usefulness in most places where they were established came in, and the end was that many of them fell into a state of utter decay. That has now been remedied. Where they are fit to be first-class schools, teaching Greek, and the boys are likely to find a career in life with that as its preparation, they are still maintained on that foundation. In other places they have been accommodated to the local wants of the people, and it has not been attempted to encumber the teaching with that which is suitable only to some few of the boys ; it would be suitable to so few that it would stand in the way,

practically, of the rest. At the time that the Mercers' School was increased to 100 the idea was entertained that while Greek should not be required from any boys, yet those who wished should be taught it. The Head Master soon found that to be an impracticable method, and the result is that it is not now taught here at all ; and with all my love for Greek learning I think that is quite right. Latin is taught, for Latin has its uses still to a considerable extent in many of the occupations which boys, trained for the ordinary practical business of life, may have to enter into. For instance, it is very useful to lawyers of all grades, and I have very little doubt that in intercourse with learned men and scientific men of every country the power of reading books in that language is of importance ; at all events, no necessity has yet been found for dispensing with some knowledge of Latin. The other things taught—mathematics, geometry, history—are of practical importance to everybody. The result is, I think, that the school has been put upon a sound footing in that respect. It is a restoration of the footing on which it stood before the introduction of Greek into the grammar schools of this country ; and now, with what has been done in the way of building, in the way of increase of numbers, with the exhibitions attached to it, I think the Mercers' Company may well hope that this school will be a twin-sister to St. Paul's, and the Mercers' Company may be proud of being associated with both. St. Paul's is one of the first, if not at this moment the very first, in the efficiency of its teaching on the highest system, sending every year to the Universities young men who attain there the greatest distinctions—distinctions which no other school at present surpasses—to which very few indeed approach. The Mercers' Company may well be proud that, having been chosen by Dean Colet to be the repositories of his trust, they are now associated with the management and with the government of so great a public school as St. Paul's. And I know no reason why Mercers' School—this day expanded and enlarged—should not be as much at the head hereafter of the great commercial schools of England as St. Paul's is now of the great classical schools. I am encouraged in the hope that it may, perhaps, be so by other things. In the first place I have known of late years something of the inner working of the school. Those for whom I very much cared, have desired to send their sons to it, have done so, and the sons, as turned out from it, have soon found their way into very honourable positions in life. I know it is in great demand, and I feel sure that, with the improvement which we this day inaugurate,

the demand for it will increase. Then I know that Dr. Scott and his assistants are men who will not lose their opportunity of improving and enlarging the school in everything in which it is capable of improvement. They are men whom I congratulate sincerely upon this extension of their opportunities, and in whom I have the most perfect confidence that the fruit will be great. I hope that in the future the boys who come from this school will attain success and excellence in all the walks of life for which they are preparing. I hope, still more, that they will set such an example of virtue and good manners, and of sound religious principles, as may throughout the sphere of their usefulness extend and advance those principles. I hope that every blessing which we have prayed for to-day may be remembered with thankfulness by future generations."

Lord Selborne, in acknowledging a vote of thanks to him for opening the School, said :

"I can assure you that no one owes more to his education than I do, and therefore no one can be more strongly sensible of the duty of doing what is in each man's power to promote the cause of sound and Christian education. As a Mercer, nothing ever gives me greater satisfaction and pleasure than to see the Mercers' Company prominent in good works of this kind, and in supporting with great liberality and generosity all the institutions for the purpose of education which are committed to their charge."

The voice which then spoke to us is hushed, but the words will live in the memory of all who heard them, as those of a great and good man, perhaps one of the greatest and best men of this century. May his precepts and his example be an incentive to the Mercers and all the Companies of this famous City to persevere in the noble works of education and of charity which have always distinguished them.

MASTERS OF MERCERS' SCHOOL.

When Elected.	Name.	How many years Master.	Cause of Leaving.
Mich., 1542	Thomas Freeman	7	Preferred
20 Dec., 1549	Thomas Prince	4	Resigned
1553	I. Gonalwyn	1	Dismissed
6 June, 1554	Dr. Gammounde	2	Dismissed
1556	Sir Thomas Shackspeare	2	
1558	Sir Thomas Augustine	—	
1559	William Alexander	—	Resigned
27 Sept., 1559	Richard Langhorne	1	Resigned
25 Sept., 1560	Thomas Michell	2	
27 Sept., 1562	Richard Martindale	5	Dismissed
1567	John Long	1	
5 March, 1568	Richard Martindale	6	
1574	Richard Wilkinson	21	
1595	R. DREWEN	4	
9 Jan., 1599	Richard Levesley	21	Retired
24 May, 1620	Nicholas Augar	24	Resigned
1644	Samuel Cromleholme	3	
1647	Robert Green	8	Died
1655	Thomas Almon	5	Dismissed
3 April, 1661	John Boncle	18	Died
17 Feb., 1679	Seth Mountney Boncle	15	Died
22 March, 1694	John Killsby	15	Died
28 April, 1710	William Baxter	16	Retired
18 April, 1721	Robert Swinburne	11	Died
18 April, 1729	Rev. Christopher Morrison	8	Dismissed on obtaining pre-ferment
18 May, 1738	Rev. John Brown, M.A.	33	Died
22 March, 1771	Rev. John Waterhouse, M.A.	33	Died
12 April, 1804	Rev. Isaac Hill, M.A.	35 $\frac{3}{4}$	Resigned
10 Jan., 1840	Rev. John Smith, M.A.	20 $\frac{1}{2}$	Resigned
7 Nov., 1861	Rev. Foster Stable Barry, M.A.	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	Resigned
24 July, 1879	Rev. Douglas L. Scott, LL.D.		