

## THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GROCCERS.

*Read to the Society at the Company's Hall, 26th April, 1919.*

BY

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ONE of the most important of the early city guilds was that of the Pepperers; we hear of them first in 1180, when the *Gilda Pipariorum* is mentioned with others in the Pipe Rolls as being fined sixteen marks, as an illegal association, that is for not having paid for the king's license. Between 1231 and 1345 nine Pepperers served the office of Mayor, beginning with Andrew Bokerel—a member no doubt of the Boccherelli family of Pisa—whose residence, Bokerel's Bury, still gives its name to a street, Bucklersbury, and who held the Mayoralty, probably on the nomination of the king, for seven years in succession, 1231-37. Sir John Gizors, John de Grantham and Andrew Aubrey were other distinguished Pepperer Mayors, the last-named notable for the vigour with which he repressed a riot between the Skinners and Fishmongers, taking upon himself to execute two of the latter company who resisted him, an act which was formally approved by the king.

Following the usual practice of those days for those of the same trade to congregate together, the Pepperers inhabited Soper's Lane (now Queen Street), and probably attended service in the church of St. Antholin that formerly stood at the junction of that street with Budge Row and Watling Street. They were officially connected with the duty of weighing in the city; the Pepperers with the Ropers

and Apothecaries nominated the officer to have charge of the king's beam, who was then admitted by the sheriffs, the king's officers. This beam weighed by the *aver-de-pois* weight or *peso grosso*, and it is not unlikely that the term *Grossarius*, not yet the title of any guild, took its origin from the use of the beam that dealt with heavy merchandise. The *tron*, by which wool and "*speciaria*" were weighed, was in the hands of the Woolers and allied trades.

The Pepperers' trade was of much importance; the demand for spices of every kind in mediæval days was out of all proportion to that of the present time, the unsavoury food of our ancestors demanded condiments to make it palatable, and the discomforts consequent on their domestic habits and sanitary conditions were mitigated by the use of aromatic preparations.

In the early part of the reign of Edward III the guild of the Pepperers disappears; it seems likely that some of its prominent members were ruined by the exaction of forced loans to enable the king to carry on his war with France, an enterprise which, however splendid and even remunerative at one period, was financially ruinous in its early stages. In 1345 the Italian bankers, who had been financing the king, failed; the merchants of London, who had provided liberal supplies, were threatened with further demands; the war was still unsuccessful; and it may be fairly conjectured that a sense of dejection and insecurity prevailed in the city. It was a time when men trusted for safety and success more to mutual support and combination than to the arm of the law or State assistance. The Guild was the natural outcome of that feeling; in cities every trader and craftsman had his guild, and the guild was an essential part of his life.

On the 9th May, 1345, the archives of the Grocers' Company record the foundation of a fraternity, which, in due time, grew into the company. "To the honour of God, the

Virgin Mary, St. Anthony,' and all saints, the 9th day of May, 1345, a Fraternity was founded of the Company of Pepperers, of Soper's Lane, for love and unity, to maintain and keep themselves together; of which Fraternity are sundry beginners, founders, and donors, to preserve the said Fraternity." Twenty-two names are attached to this document, headed by that of William de Grantham; and on the 12th June following twenty of the number dined together at "The Abbot's place of Bury," that is the town house in St. Mary Axe of the Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds. There they chose two wardens, Roger Oswyn and Lawrence de Hollywelle, and drew up ordinances. Membership was limited to "Pepperers of Soper's Lane, canvassers of the Ropery and spicers of the ward of Cheap or other people

<sup>1</sup> The adoption of St. Anthony as the patron of the Company has led to an interesting but rather fantastic attempt to connect the Guild of Pepperers with the trading lay monks of Egypt. St. Anthony of Coma, a Copt, born in the middle of the third century, by divesting himself of his property and retiring into the desert became, without any conscious design, the founder of monasticism. His disciples and imitators following his example earned their living by labour, and sold their superfluous produce; ultimately they engaged in trade, and may have extended their traffic beyond the sea. *It is alleged that they can be traced through the Mediterranean, round the coasts of Spain and France, and even so far north as Scotland, by churches dedicated to St. Anthony.* But direct evidence is wanting to support the theory that the trading monks of Egypt were the carriers of Eastern spices to the ports of the North Sea. *It must be remembered that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries St. Anthony of Coma—not to be confounded with St. Anthony of Padua, a Franciscan of much later date—was a popular saint; he was credited with the power of curing skin diseases, an attribute which greatly commended him to mediæval man, whose methods of life caused him to be much afflicted by the penalties of uncleanly habits; our forefathers knew srysipelas as "St. Anthony's fire"; his monasteries, always with hospitals attached, were numerous all over Western Europe, and his monks were specially privileged. The church of St. Antholin—another form of the name—at the south end of Soper's Lane, was the Pepperers' church, and it does not seem necessary to go to Egypt to find a reason for the adoption of that saint as the patron of the new fraternity.*

of their mystery wherever they reside''; they were to contribute to the common fund, to wear a livery, and to submit disputes to the arbitration of the wardens; they were to maintain a priest, to attend one another's funerals; members falling into poverty were to be assisted out of the common fund; and on St. Anthony's Day they were to attend mass at St. Anthony's monastery (in Threadneedle Street) and dine together afterwards. Three years later they dined at the Rynged Hall in St. Thomas Apostle, and attended the adjacent church of St. Anthony, and later on the Cornet's Tower, Bucklersbury, became the place of meeting.

For twelve years the records continue to describe the doings of the fraternity, but in 1358 there is a break, and when in 1373 the tale is resumed the fraternity has become the Grocers' Company (*Compagnie des Grossers*).

In the interval two notable men had become members of the fraternity: John Philipot and Nicholas Brembre served as wardens in 1369; in 1372 they were sheriffs; in 1381 they were both knighted by King Richard, with William Walworth, for services rendered at the Wat Tyler riot. They were the leaders of the king's party in the city, John Northampton, a draper, being the head of the Lancastrian faction. Philipot was Mayor in 1378 and died in 1384.

At the accession of Richard, the grant of a subsidy to the King was made conditional on the appointment of two treasurers to superintend the application of the money, and the King appointed Philipot and Walworth; Philipot used part of the funds thus placed at his disposal to render eminent service to the growing trade of the country by fitting out a fleet which swept the Channel and North Sea clear of pirates. Brembre, who had been Mayor in 1377, was elected in 1383; John Northampton was imprisoned, and Brembre continued to hold office for two more years; but in 1387 he was involved in the ruin of the king's friends when the Duke of Gloucester seized the reins of government,

and in the following year he was one of the victims of the Merciless Parliament, and died at Tyburn.

At this time the weigh-house and the superintendence of public weighing in the city came under the control of the Company. John Chircman, a grocer, built a house on Woolwharf Key for the tronage or weighing of wool, and was appointed public weigher for life; he seems to have made over his rights to the Company, who thus obtained the management of all the weighing in the Port of London, a right which they retained until the end of the eighteenth century.

The management of the Company's affairs rested at first with two Wardens or Purveyors. An ordinance made in 1376 provided for the appointment of three Wardens. It was ordained that all the Company should assemble once in the year, in the month of May, and dine together, the dinner to be provided by the Wardens, and after dinner—"when the mangerie was ended" in the original—the Wardens were to come with garlands on their heads and the Company were to choose for their three Wardens for the year following "those upon whom the aforesaid garlands shall be set," and to them should be delivered all money papers, etc., which belonged to the fraternity. The ceremony of crowning the newly-elected Wardens still takes place at the Election Feast of the Company every year. The Charter of Charles I enlarged the number of Wardens to four.

In 1379 it was resolved that "at the first congregation of the Wardens there shall be chosen six of the Company to be helping and counselling of the same Wardens for the year following"; and as the Company grew in numbers and importance more Assistants were added. The Charter of 1607 vested the government of the Company in three Wardens and thirty-three Assistants; that of 1640 increased the number of Wardens to four and of Assistants to fifty-one.

The number of Wardens remains the same to the present day, but about thirty Assistants are considered sufficient to manage the affairs of the Company.

When the records again take up the story they show the fraternity to have grown rapidly in size and strength. The city authorities look to them to protect the interests of their trade, directing them to watch for merchants, being foreigners, or non-members of the Company, bringing spices or such goods into the City, and to see that they sold them within forty days of their arrival, and did not buy or sell among themselves. At the request of the Company regulations were made in the City for "garbling" merchandise such as spices and drugs, and sold by weight, that is for checking fraud by compulsory cleaning such goods, and in 1447 the Company were appointed by the king to be the official "garblers" for the whole kingdom outside the City, where the Court of Aldermen had the privilege of appointing the "garbler."

In 1411 the members, feeling justified in acquiring a permanent home, purchased the chapel belonging to the family mansion of Lord Fitz-Walter, the hereditary standard-bearer of the City, and in 1412 the mansion itself. The property extended from near the present Old Jewry to the bank of the Wall brook, which then ran through the middle of the site now occupied by the Bank of England, and discharged itself, as it still does, where now stands the Cannon Street Railway Station, formerly the site of the steelyard, the old home of the German Merchants' Guild. The approach was by Coneyhope Lane, now Grocers' Hall Court.

The foundation stone of the Hall was laid on the 8th May, 1427, and by 5th February in the following year the building was sufficiently advanced to allow of the members dining together, which they did, at a cost of £5 6s. 8d. The building consisted of a great hall for the meetings of

the Company, a parlour for the use, presumably, of the wardens, a buttery and pantry.

The garden seems to have been laid out and maintained at considerable cost, and was the resort, not only of members of the Company, but of neighbours living in the Poultry or the vicinity. They played bowls and other games, and the Court minutes contain many entries relative to the management of the garden by the clerk or beadle. A tower, probably a remnant of the old Fitz-Walter mansion, stood in the grounds, and was the only part of the building which survived the Great Fire of 1666. The Company continued to enjoy their garden until the end of the eighteenth century, when the formation of Princes Street and the enlargement of the Bank of England necessitated the alienation of a large part of it.

The year (1428) which saw the completion of the Hall was further notable for the grant of the Company's first Charter. By this Charter the Company became a legal corporate body, with power to hold land, within the city and the suburbs, to the value of 20 marks, "towards the support of the poor of the Company, and of a chaplain to pray for the King while living, and for his soul when dead, likewise for all persons of the said mystery and commonalty, and their souls and the souls of all faithful deceased." This right of holding land, in spite of Mortmain Acts, was extended by the Charter of James I, in 1607, to the value of £200, and by that of Charles I, in 1640, without limit; but it has always been held that the privilege applies only to land within the city.

The Grocers' Company immediately on its foundation assumed a prominent place among the City Guilds. During the fifteenth century the office of Lord Mayor was twenty times filled by Members of the Company, Sir Thomas Knolles, Sir Robert Chicheley, and Sir William Sevenoakes being conspicuous among them. With the majority of the

citizens of London they took the Yorkist side in the Wars of the Roses, and two of their number, Sir John Young and Sir John Crosby, were knighted by Edward IV for military services.

The troubles of the Reformation period did not affect the City Companies, who avoided the confiscation which destroyed the Guilds, with few exceptions, throughout the country; whatever the individual opinion of the members may have been, the Companies, as such, conformed sufficiently to the law for the time being to escape interference. But the Grocers' Company, at least, in the person of Richard Grafton, one of their members, can claim to have had some share in forwarding the work of the Reformation. Richard Grafton, who was apprenticed to John Blage, a grocer trading in a large way in Cheapside, in 1526, became free of the Company in 1534.

Coverdale's English translation of the Bible, which was published in 1535, was pronounced by the anti-reforming party to be inaccurate and unsatisfactory. Thereupon Convocation, on the motion of Cranmer, instigated thereto by Thomas Cromwell, petitioned the King to authorise the issue of a new and more correct rendering; and in the year 1536 there was published a new translation, consisting mainly of Tyndale's text, edited by John Rogers, and known as Matthew's Bible; on the title page appeared the name of Richard Grafton, as the printer. At this time Grafton was not actually engaged in the printing trade, but he now set up a printing press, by leave of the King, in the Grey Friars, and from that press issued in 1540 a new English version, revised by Coverdale, known as the Great Bible, and the order having been made for placing a copy of the Bible in all churches, a new edition was brought out by Grafton the following year for that purpose. Between the issue of these two editions Cromwell had fallen, a fact significantly indicated by a blank space on the title page of the 1541 Bible in the place where Cromwell's arms had appeared in the



previous edition. To Grafton the death of Cromwell meant the loss of a powerful protector, and his life during the reaction marked by the enactment of the Law of the Six Articles was in great danger. Some powerful influence seems to have been exercised on his behalf, for almost alone among those concerned in the production of the English version he escaped unpunished. Grafton was instrumental in securing the great religious houses of Grey Friars, St. Thomas, Bethlehem, and Bridewell for the service of the poor and their utilisation in the various forms of a school, a hospital, an asylum, and a house of correction. He survived well into the reign of Elizabeth, and was Master of the Company in 1563. Latterly he fell into evil days and was compelled to ask for relief out of the Company's funds.

In the year 1558 Queen Mary demanded a loan from the city, towards which the Company had to find £7,555. This was the first of many similar compulsory loans. Queen Elizabeth more than once demanded money, but it remained for the Stuart family to make this burden really onerous; large sums were required on loan and were not always repaid. The Company supplied the money first from their common stock, and then by assessment, at first voluntary, subsequently compulsory, of individual members. In 1642 it was the turn of the Parliament, and the Company was called upon for £9,000. To such straits were they reduced by these exactions that they had to sell their plate to make up the money.

The last loan was probably granted without much grudging. The City staunchly supported Parliament in their constitutional contest with Charles; in 1641, after the attempted arrest of the five members, the *Committee of Safety*, appointed by Parliament to watch over the interest of the nation, held their meetings in Grocers' Hall. In the early days of the Rebellion the City Trained Bands were the best disciplined force at the disposal of the Parliamentary

generals and at the first battle of Newbury they saved the army of Essex, and checked the King at a critical moment when the result of the war hung in the balance. But the city was mainly Presbyterian in religion and moderately Liberal in politics, and when the Independents and the Army gained the upper hand and broke up instead of restoring the Constitution, they did not carry the citizens with them. It is true that the Corporation entertained Cromwell and Fairfax at a banquet in Grocers' Hall in the year following the execution of Charles, but the guests were by no means generally welcome in the city.

In the course of ten years public opinion in favour of a restoration of the old dynasty and the old Constitution had become paramount in the city, and the Grocers' Company acted clearly in accordance with the trend of public opinion when they invited General Monk, whose intention of promoting the recall of the King was then apparent, to a banquet at the Hall on the 8th February, 1660, and made him free of the Company; the first instance of the bestowal of the honorary freedom in recognition of public services. On the 29th May the King made his State entry into the city, conducted by the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Alleyn, a member of the Grocers' Company, at whose request Charles accepted the office of Sovereign Master of the Company. He was never formally admitted, but the Court in their enthusiasm ordered that the Feast hitherto held during the month of May, but on no fixed day, in commemoration of St. Anthony, should in future be held on the 29th and be called the Restoration Feast.

The Grocers, owing to the extortions of Kings and Parliaments, were not in a satisfactory financial position at the time of the Restoration, but six years later there fell upon them a calamity so terrible as to come very near extinguishing the Company.

The Great Fire in 1666 not only utterly destroyed the Company's Hall and its contents, melted such plate as

remained to them and left them homeless, but it reduced to ashes their entire property. The Company had no money to rebuild, and the sites had to be let off on building leases at ruinous rents; the Hall was a heap of ruins; the individual members were impoverished and unable to help; there were no funds to provide for the obligatory payments under the trusts affecting their property. For almost a century onwards the history of the Company is that of a continuous struggle to maintain its existence.

The Fire destroyed not only the Company's Hall, but their property in the City from which they derived their income. By a singular piece of good fortune, a turret, standing in the garden, probably a remnant of the old Fitzwalter Mansion, in which were stored the archives and title deeds of the Company, escaped the flames. Here the Court met on the 9th November following. The destruction of the Hall and property was not the full measure of the calamity; the Company, owing to the exactions of the Government, were heavily in debt; the main resource for providing funds, the fines levied on the reletting of houses, now failed them; in the general ruin caused by the Fire the value of building sites fell to nothing, the rents obtainable were not sufficient to meet the payments for charitable objects charged upon them.

The rebuilding of the Hall was held to be vital to the interests of the Company, and an attempt was made to raise money by a personal appeal to the members. The amount collected by this means, £700, was wholly insufficient, and little could be done beyond re-roofing the old walls which had resisted the Fire. At this crisis the loyalty and liberality of Sir John Cutler proved invaluable to the Company; besides contributing considerable sums from time to time to the common fund, he rebuilt, at his own expense, the dining-room and parlour, and thus provided a home and meeting-place for the members. The unscrupulous malice of Pope has defamed the memory of

Cutler by representing him as a miser; beyond the grateful testimony of his fellow-Grocers inscribed on his statue and on the panelling of the Court Room, there is ample evidence to show that he used his wealth generously and wisely. Gresham College, the Royal Society and the College of Physicians, were all indebted to him for assistance, and his general charities were on a scale of great liberality.

In spite of Cutler's munificence, it was found to be impossible to raise sufficient funds to complete the rebuilding; the Company were being sorely pressed by their creditors, and a climax came when in June, 1672, the Governors of Christ's Hospital, to whom the Company were liable for annual payments charged on properties bequeathed to them by Lady Conway and Lady Middleton, took possession of the Hall as security for arrears due to them. For seven years the Company were excluded from their premises. At last, with great difficulty, sufficient was raised, mainly by personal contributions from members of the Court, to satisfy the creditors, and the Company resumed possession.

A great effort was now made to complete and enlarge the Hall, in the hope that it might become a source of revenue. Sir John Moore led the way by a liberal contribution; others followed his example, and the Hall was restored and made fit for the use of the Lord Mayor, for which purpose it was frequently hired. The Company are greatly indebted to the members of that date for their loyalty to their Guild; men of sterling worth they were, but apparently somewhat lacking in refinement, if we may judge by a minute which appears in the Court Records for the 8th July, 1670, and which runs as follows:—

“Upon complaint and observations of the unseemliness and disturbance by taking tobacco and having drink and pipes in the Court Room during Court sitting, and for the better order decorum and gravity to be observed, and the readier despatch and minding of debates and business of the Court, and avoiding

the occasion of offence and disgust, it is agreed that hereafter there be no taking of tobacco or drinking used or permitted in the Court Room during the sitting of the Court, and if any person have a desire to refresh himself by a pipe of tobacco or cup of drink, at a convenient time or interval of serious business, to withdraw into some retiring room more suitable and fit for the purpose. Any person infringing this rule to fine five shillings for each offence to the poor-box."

The records clearly show that the existence of the Company was saved by the personal exertions and private liberality of its members, in order, as stated in a minute dated the 18th August, 1687, that "it might again become, as it once was, a nursery of charities and a seminary of good citizens."

But now came an event which proved a turning point in the fortunes of the Company. In the year 1694, the Act was passed establishing the Bank of England. The Bank commenced business in June of that year in the premises of the Grocers' Company, Sir John Houblon, a member of the Grocers' Company, being the first Governor. In October the business was transferred to Grocers' Hall, under an agreement which provided for a tenancy of the Hall, as usually let to the Lord Mayor, for eleven years, on payment of a fine of £500, and the granting of a loan of £5,010. The Bank continued to be the Company's tenants until 1734, when the house and gardens, once the property of Sir John Houblon, in Threadneedle Street, were bought, and a new building erected on the site. By that time the Company was relieved of its embarrassments; the records show that in the year 1730 they had a cash balance of £3,000 available for investment.

For nearly a century the history of the Company was uneventful. With great difficulty they had regained a condition of solvency. For a long time they could not do more than pay their way and discharge their obligations

under their trusts, but by the end of the 18th century they had sufficient surplus income to enable them to contribute a considerable sum to public charities.

They were jealous of encroachments on their rights as citizens: they opposed the Corporation when that body in 1770, under the inspiration of Wilkes, undertook to remonstrate with the King and to demand a dissolution of Parliament, and refused obedience to a summons from the Lord Mayor calling on them to attend at Guildhall in support of the movement. The Goldsmiths' Company took the same line, and their Master, Alderman Plumbe, was made defendant in a test case by which the Corporation attempted to assert their rights over the Companies. A decision in favour of the Corporation given in the Mayor's Court was overruled by the Superior Court, and the right of the Lord Mayor, representing the Corporation, to summon the Livery to Guildhall was limited to the proper business of such meetings.

Fourteen years later the Company gave a further indication of their political leanings by offering their Honorary Freedom to William Pitt at the crisis of his career, and supporting the Coalition when he took office in the face of a majority in the House of Commons. On the 14th February, 1784, Pitt was admitted a Freeman, and on the 28th was entertained at the Hall. His reception in the City afforded striking evidence of the feeling in his favour and greatly strengthened his position. It is a source of pride to the Company that their action contributed something towards his success in holding the position he had so boldly accepted.

During the 19th century the increasing prosperity of the Company enabled them to extend their benefactions beyond the gifts to hospitals and other charities connected with the Metropolis which had hitherto received their surplus income. They were not among the wealthiest guilds, but being little encumbered by trusts, and involved in no special

obligations by connection with any trade or craft, they could deal freely with the funds they possessed. Continuing to render generous aid to hospitals and other agencies for the relief of poverty and suffering, they recognised that in the advancement of education and of scientific discovery lay the best hope of diminishing these evils and promoting national health and prosperity; they have given practical effect to their views by the establishment of schools, the provision of scholarships at the Universities, and the endowment of scientific research. Scholarships for the assistance of poor students at Oxford and Cambridge are awarded, not by competitive examination, which is apt to result in the success of those whose means enable them to command the best "coaching," but by selection, regard being had to character and intellectual promise, as well as to pecuniary needs.

On the passing of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, the Company proceeded to avail themselves of the provisions of that measure to appropriate some of their obsolete charities for educational purposes. By this means the sum of £30,000 was raised and applied to the establishment of a middle class school at Hackney Downs, which was opened in September, 1876. The immediate success of the school showed that it supplied a want. The fees charged were below the cost of the price of the education given, and a large subsidy was voted every year by the Court out of the funds of the Company to make up the financial deficit; but the quality of the teaching, tested by the Cambridge Local examinations, was excellent, and thoroughly justified the expenditure which brought a sound commercial education within the reach of a large section of the population of London for the first time. When the Education Act of 1902 imposed the responsibility for Secondary Education on Local Authorities, it became evident that the era of private undertakings was passed: the Company came to an arrangement with the London County Council, under which the

School, with its buildings, was transferred to that body and merged in their system.

The Company have always taken the view that London has the first claim on their benefactions, but their connection with the town of Oundle, in Northamptonshire, through a trust committed to them by one of their members in the 16th century, led them to found at that place a Secondary School, which has secured a prominent position among the public schools of England. Sir William Laxton, who was six times Master of the Company, first in 1536 and last in 1552, by his Will, left certain house property to the Company, charged with the payment of £38 for the maintenance of a Grammar School and Almshouse at his native town of Oundle. He directed the Company to acquire the guild house at that place and adapt it for a school and an almshouse, and to pay annually £18 to the master, £6 13s. 4d. to the usher, £12 2s. 8d. to the seven almsmen, and to set aside 24s. for repairs. The property bequeathed was then worth about £50 per annum. It is a coincidence that Sir William Laxton and Lawrence Sheriff, the founder of Rugby, sat together on the Court of the Grocers' Company.

The Company took possession in 1573; they regularly visited the School, and reports thereon frequently appear in the records of the Company, until the Great Fire reduced them for a time to poverty and impotence. A century later, with returning prosperity, the Company's interest revived; they increased the salaries of the master and usher, and repaired and added to the buildings, and the School did good work of the ordinary grammar school type. In 1875, upon the retirement of Dr. Stansbury, who had been for 27 years Head Master, the Court decided to embark on a larger scheme, with a view to provide an education of the best public school standard on a scale of charges which would render it accessible to parents of moderate means. The School was now divided; the trusts of Laxton's Will were fulfilled by a school carried on in the old building, and



adapted for the children of farmers and tradesmen of Oundle and the neighbourhood. Alongside the old foundation was built up a new undertaking, under the name of "The Grocers' Company's School, Oundle." A block of class-rooms was erected and a house for the Head Master, and the private boarding-houses connected with the old school were taken over.

The new venture achieved, at first, only a moderate success as a first-grade classical school; but the Court, as they gained experience, formed the opinion that the want of the day was a school of the highest grade, making a special feature of the teaching of modern subjects, and the present Head Master, who was appointed in 1892, has organised the School on those lines with marked success. Modern languages, science, and engineering are treated as subjects of equal importance with classics; ample laboratories and workshops have been built, and it is in contemplation to add more, in view of the increased numbers in the School, and to meet the demand for space necessitated by the Head Master's method of instruction, of which the dominant idea is teaching by doing. Experiments and practical "live" work in workshops, under the guidance of skilled mechanics, lead up to the study of science and mathematics. Twenty acres of land, devoted to agricultural experiments and the study of practical cultivation, are instrumental in the teaching of chemistry, physics, and biology. The position of the School in the Higher Certificate Examination of the Oxford and Cambridge Board, wherein, last year, it headed the list of public schools, and the scholarships and distinctions gained at the Universities, testify to the soundness of these methods. The development of Oundle has been a heavy drain on the resources of the Company, but the severest critic of the Livery Guilds would hardly say that the money had been misapplied, or that Laxton's confidence had been misplaced.

No account of the Company would be complete without a reference to the part they have taken in the endowment of research. In 1883 the Court founded scholarships for the encouragement of research in sanitary science. Discoveries of no inconsiderable value have resulted from the work of Grocers' scholars, and not a few of those who have earned distinction in that branch of science have been helped on their way by the Company's endowments. It is sufficient to mention such names as Woolridge, Woodhead, MacFadyen, Rose Bradford, Starling, and Bullock to show that the Company have been well advised in their selection of scholars. When the scheme for founding, in this country, an Institute of Preventive Medicine was delayed in execution by want of funds, the Grocers' Company, by timely financial help, relieved the promoters from their difficulties, and facilitated the establishment of a foundation, now widely known as the Lister Institute, which has greatly enlarged our knowledge of the causes of disease.

London in 1919 is a very different place from the London of 1345 that witnessed the foundation of the Fraternity of St. Anthony, which grew into the Grocers' Company; but the Company has continuously adapted itself to its environment, and has never ceased to find useful duties to discharge: it is still, as it was of old, "a nursery of charities and a seminary of good citizens."