



MERCERS' SCHOOL,

BARNARD'S INN, HOLBORN.

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDINGS,

ON

TUESDAY, September 11th, 1894.

THE MASTER OF THE MERCERS' COMPANY (G. T. LANE, Esq.),

presiding.

MEMBERS OF THE COURT OF ASSISTANTS

OF THE

MERCERS' COMPANY

DURING THE

Erection of the New Buildings of Mercers' School,

IN THE YEARS 1892 TO 1894.

EDWARD HOWLEY PALMER.
THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF SELBORNE.
WADHAM LOCKE SUTTON.
REV. MARKLAND BARNARD.
THOMAS JOHN WATNEY.
DANIEL WATNEY.
MORRELL DORINGTON LONGDEN.
JOHN WATNEY.
MARKLAND BARNARD.
CAPTAIN P. B. BICKNELL.
GEORGE PENN ASTON.
COLONEL FREDERICK PALMER.
NORMAN WATNEY.
GEORGE PALMER.
REV. ALGERNON EMERICK CLEMENTI SMITH.
ARCHDALE VILLIERS PALMER.
WILLIAM WALLIS ASTON.
MAJOR-GENERAL PERCY LEE HOLMES.
REV. HERBERT CLEMENTI SMITH.
REV. CHARLTON GEORGE LANE.
RALPH CHARLTON PALMER.
COLONEL MONTAGU CLEMENTI.
CHARLES THOMAS LANE.
REV. JAMES BADEN POWELL.
HERBERT WATNEY, M.D.
SIR CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH, G.O.M.G.
REV. MEYRICK JOHN SUTTON.
GREVILLE HORSLEY PALMER.
WILLIAM WARD LANE-CLAYTON.

Members of the Building Committee.

COLONEL MONTAGU CLEMENTI.

CHARLES THOMAS LANE.

REV. JAMES BADEN POWELL.

REV. MEYRICK JOHN SUTTON.

NORMAN WATNEY.

HERBERT WATNEY.

SIR CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH, G.C.M.G.

Architect.

THOMAS CHATFIELD CLARKE, F.R.I.B.A.

Builders.

E. LAWRENCE & SONS.

Masters in the School from 1892 to 1894.

THE REV. DOUGLAS L. SCOTT, LL.D. . Head Master.

S. BARLET, B-és-Sc. Assistant Master

C. B. WHEELER, M.A. " "

F. S. BALLARD " "

J. DOWSETT, M.A. " "

C. COLLIS, M.A. " "

A. CRAVEN, B.A. " "

F. W. POOL, B.A. " "

W. GRANT, M.A. " "

G. F. DANIELL, B.Sc. " "

A. E. WALSH, B.A. " "

L. GREEN, M.A. " "

The Mercers' Company have for a long time felt that the building used for Mercers' School, in College Hill, Cannon Street, was not suitable for the purposes of the School, and that a new site should be found and new buildings erected, which would be more worthy of the Company, and in which a better education could be given than was possible in College Hill.

Before proceeding to detail the steps taken for the erection of the new School, it will be desirable to give a slight sketch of the history of the old School.

It is probable that a school was attached to the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon, which stood on the site of Mercers' Hall, from the time of the foundation of the hospital about the year 1190, but 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 on Cornhill and St. Mary Colechurch, the latter being also Master of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon, praying that the above Rectors might in their respective parishes set a person sufficiently learned in grammar to hold and exercise a school in the

same science of grammar, and there to teach all that would learn. The prayer of the petition was granted by an Act of Parliament passed in the 25th year of King Henry VI., 1447, and one of the Schools, afterwards Mercers' School, was kept in the Hospital of St. Thomas until the Reformation.

The Hospital was dissolved and its property surrendered to the Crown in the year 1538, and the Company purchased the Hospital buildings with other property in the neighbourhood from King Henry VIII, and covenanted with the King, by deed dated the 21st April, 1542, among other things, to find and keep a Grammar School within the City of London perpetually, with a sufficient master to teach 25 children freely in the same continually for ever.

This School was kept in the building called Mercers' Chapel, and so obtained the name of Mercers' Chapel School or Mercers' School. In the Fire of London Mercers' Chapel was burnt, and the Company built a School upon the site of the church of St. Mary Colechurch in the Old Jewry, which was not rebuilt after the fire. About the year 1787 the Old Jewry was widened and the School pulled down, and the Company then removed the scholars to a house belonging to them, No. 13, Budge Row, and afterwards to a house opposite St. Antholin's Church in Watling Street.

The School was then carried on in temporary rooms in Red Lion Court, Watling Street, and in the year 1808 was removed from Red Lion Court to a house nearly on the site of Sir Richard Whittington's House and College in College Hill, and the number of free scholars was shortly afterwards increased to 35. In 1829 the Company rebuilt Mercers' School on the same site in College Hill, and in 1832 the number of boys was increased to 70, the Masters then in the School being: the Rev. Isaac Hill, Master, and John Wills, Writing Master. The education given consisted of a general classical education, but mathematics and merchants' accounts were also taught.

In 1876 the Company, during the Mastership of Lord Selborne, imposed a capitation fee of £5 per boy on all boys to be thereafter admitted except the 25 free scholars whom the Company undertook to teach when they purchased the hall and contiguous premises from 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 25 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 for their accommodation.

There are attached to this School, Exhibitions originally founded in the year 1672 by Thomas Rich, a Mercer, who by his will bequeathed to the Mercers' Company, after the death of his wife, certain hereditaments in St. Mary Axe, now numbered 52, in the parish of St. Andrew Undershaft in London for ever, upon trust amongst other things to pay out of the rents and profits thereof two Exhibitions of £6 apiece to two poor scholars taught in Mercers' School, and from thence sent to one of the Universities. For many years after the testator's death the exhibitions were seldom applied for, and large accumulations arose in respect thereof.

When the Company determined to discontinue the study of Greek in the School, the Charity Commissioners, on the application of the Company,

published 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 the 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 awarded and held under such regulations and conditions as the Company should think fit.

Amongst the distinguished scholars who received their education in the Mercers' Chapel School were Dr. John Colet (Dean of St. Paul's and Founder of St. Paul's School), Sir Thomas Gresham (Founder of the Royal Exchange), 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 Company, who are now living.

To return now to the circumstances under which the School has been removed to its New Site. 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 feet superficial, 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."

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, have been removed to make way for the New School, and the Hall has been repaired and will be used by the boys as a dining room.

Immediately after the purchase was completed the Court of Assistants of the Company appointed a Building Committee, to whom the duty of getting plans for the new buildings and of carrying these plans into effect was entrusted. The Building

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 the 25th July, 1893.

The buildings are faced with red bricks with Ancaster stone 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, with Kitchens, &c., 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 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 Laboratory 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, placed backing into Fetter Lane, contains the Chemical Laboratory and the Drawing School.

The whole of the buildings are fireproof throughout, and have been fitted with fire hydrants and with the electric light. There is accommodation for 300 boys, exclusive of the Lecture Room, Laboratories and Drawing School. They have been erected to the entire satisfaction of the Company by Messrs. E. Lawrance & Sons, of Wharf Road, City Road, under the direction of 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 and Wardens, several members of the Court and Livery of the Company, and a distinguished assemblage.

The following pages give an account of the opening ceremony.

The proceedings were opened with a short service conducted by the Archdeacon of Lewes (the Ven. Robert Sutton), of which the following was the special prayer.

O Eternal God, from Whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Who, in Thy mercy, hast protected and blessed this School during the years that are past; We humbly beseech Thee to grant Thy special blessing on this our new endeavour to increase its usefulness to Thy honour and glory. Pour out, O Lord, Thy grace and favour on all who shall teach and on all who shall learn within these walls; grant to these, by the wisdom of instruction, by the gentle firmness of discipline, and by the influence of example, to train and fit all those committed to their charge for usefulness in the life of time, and for happiness in the life of eternity; and give to all who shall here learn, to grow up to true manliness, the manliness of purity and truthfulness, of humility and earnestness of purpose, so that there may ever issue from this ancient School, generation after generation, those who shall be duly qualified and fully purposed to serve God and their country in that station of life to which it shall please Thee to call them, and to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all

things. Grant this, O Merciful Father, for the merits, and through the mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The CHAIRMAN: We are assembled here together to-day upon this occasion, an occasion which the Mercers' Company regard with so much importance, and that is the opening of the New Buildings for their Old School. I shall have to ask Lord Selborne—who has kindly come here to do so to-day (applause)—to declare these buildings open; but before I do so, perhaps it might be well that I should give some little account of the history of this ancient School. In the early part of the twelfth century we believe that the Mercers' School, as it was then constituted, was actually in existence. And in the fifteenth century, on the petition of the Rector of St. Mary Colechurch (a church close to Mercers' Hall), it was recognised by Parliament as a seminary in which children should be taught. And so it went on, under the guidance, somewhat, of the Mercers' Company until the sixteenth century, when King Henry VIII., as he did with many other hospitals, dissolved that which was in existence in Old Jewry, St. Thomas of Acon, and appropriated it for his own purposes. The Mercers' Company then undertook to educate twenty-five boys free perpetually in the City of London, and have fulfilled that condition up to the present time. In the Fire of London,

the School was burned down and a new School was built on the site of St. Mary Colechurch in the Old Jewry. In the eighteenth century, the Old Jewry was widened and the School was pulled down, and was then removed to another place in Watling Street. After that it had to migrate at different times, and ultimately it found a home, under the auspices of the Mercers' Company, in a house on the site of Whittington's House and College, in College Hill, and this was in the year 1808. In 1829 the School had got into favour, and the Company found that the then buildings were not in any way adequate for what was required, and they accordingly spent somewhere about £5,000 upon the buildings there. They carried on the School from that time until recently on that footing, spending money of their own upon these buildings in order to adapt them to the requirements of the School from time to time. In 1832 the School was increased to 70 boys. In 1876, under the auspices of Lord Selborne—who was then our Master, and who naturally impresses everything that he has had to do with, with some good—the School was enlarged to meet the further requirements of 100 boys. The list of 25 Foundation Scholars was filled up by competitive examination for all boys under fourteen, and then, as it was found impossible that Greek should be taught to some and not to others, the study of Greek was altogether abolished. In 1880 the School was in-

creased to 150 boys, and that number of boys has been taught up to the present time. The School has no endowment of any kind or sort, but the Mercers' Company charge the sum of £5 for the education of each boy in the School, except the 25 free Scholars. That, as you may know, is in no way adequate to meet the expenses of the School. Then, in the seventeenth century, a Mercer of the name of Rich, gave some Exhibitions for the Mercers' boys, and under a scheme of the Charity Commissioners in 1882 these nine Exhibitions of £25 each were established for the Mercers' boys, for all boys who had been five years in the School and had been admitted under twelve, and they are tenable for three years at any place of higher education approved by the Company; or, if it is so desired that the boy should have one payment of £60 instead of £25 annually for three years, then, if the income should prove sufficient to meet this demand the sum is paid down for the boy, for the purpose of education simply. The Company are well fitted, I think, to have a School of their own, considering the schools that they are connected with. In the first place they are connected with St. Paul's School which, as you know, under their auspices, has increased so enormously in wealth, and also in prosperity. And it is also connected with the Dauntsey School, which is an Agricultural School now recently established in West Lavington. And it is also connected with

the Colliers' School, which was founded by a late Mercer, at Horsham; and so, what with this School and the other Schools, the Master of the Mercers' Company, who naturally has to do with them all, may be said to be going to school almost continually; and, although the boys here—our young friends in the corridor—may not believe it, I can assure them that that is a position of considerable happiness. The Mercers' Company have felt that this School, which has risen so much in the public esteem, has demanded many more vacancies than we could possibly supply, and they were determined that in this year of their quingentenary some object of thankfulness should be given for all the mercies that have been bestowed upon the Company. They thought it would be fitting and proper that a great deal should be done for this School, and ultimately, after considerable thought they came to the conclusion that the School had better migrate altogether from premises which were not adapted for an increase in the number of boys, and go elsewhere to larger premises. Obtaining a site for a School is by no means an easy matter, and particularly within the City of London, and the number of sites that were proposed and looked at, I should be sorry to tell you. But, at all events, after a great deal of consideration, they purchased the site here at the considerable cost of £43,000. And here I may mention that it is one of the pleasant marks

connected with this School and the opening of the New Buildings, that one of our Mercers, Mr. Norman Watney, following the traditions of our forefathers, has come forward most handsomely and given us £3,000 towards the purchase of the site of this School. The new buildings, will have cost somewhere between £20,000 and £30,000, so that altogether we may consider that the buildings and site have cost here between £50,000 and £70,000. The School in the past has had its reputation, and it has added to the number of men of importance in the history of England. And I cannot pass by this fact without mentioning the names of Dean Colet, the Founder of St. Paul's School; Sir Thomas Gresham, who was the Founder of the Royal Exchange; Sir Lionel Cranfield, who was the Earl of Middlesex and Lord Treasurer of King James I., and the various other men whose names were important at the time, but whose names would not be well known now. There were also various members of our Company who have been educated here, and amongst them my predecessor in the office which I now hold. The Mercers' Company have desired all through their connection with education, to make it of the best possible character, and with regard to the Mercers' School, they have, having abolished Greek, wished as far as possible to sever it from the Universities, so that it should be of a strictly

modern and commercial character. And they have carried out that principle in the best possible way. Too high praise cannot be given to the Masters who have carried out their behests—Dr. Scott and his colleagues. And while we, as Mercers, can say to Dr. Scott and to his colleagues, "You must do this and that, in order to carry out our desires," it is another thing to have them done; and certainly the way in which they have entered into their work is beyond praise. And now the applications for admission to this School, which has been conducted under most disadvantageous circumstances on College Hill, make it very necessary that we should be careful how we enlarge the School from time to time to the full complement of 300. However, we have arranged that they shall be gradually increased every term until the full complement of 300 boys is provided for in this School. We hope now that the larger School, with the necessarily larger staff, will give greater facilities to the boys to learn; and I am quite satisfied of this, that the Mercers' Company will grudge no expense and no trouble, in fact, nothing that they can command, in order to make this the very best School that can be had of the character they desire. And they will not only do that, but they will expect that the education, and the tone of the education, should be such as their own children would be satisfied with, and they will provide for the education of the

children as if they were their own. And now, my Lord, I shall not add any further remarks as to the history of the Mercers' School and what it has done, but I will ask you, as one of our own body, and one who has risen to the highest rank in England, and you have not only done that by your own talents and abilities, but you have done something far greater than that amongst us, for by your kindness and gentle character you have endeared yourself to us all, and when anything of importance occurs in our Company, we are only too thankful and grateful to you if you will kindly assist us in doing it.

The EARL OF SELBORNE (who was accorded an exceedingly enthusiastic reception) said:

Master, Wardens, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am asked to perform a duty similar to that which I was called upon to perform ten years ago, when St. Paul's School was opened in its new position; and I cannot help, in my own mind, linking together both occasions and both Institutions. Both can boast of antiquity. The Master has given you an outline of the history of Mercers' School, part of which is unquestionably historical and authentic, because, from the reign of Henry VIII.—more than 350 years ago—this School has been established, not only as a Grammar School in some way more or less connected with the Mer-

cers, but as what it now is, the Mercers' School. And to establish that connection a sum of money, by no means inconsiderable at that time, was laid out by the Mercers' Company, to acquire the site on which certainly the same or a similar School had been previously carried on, with the other property of the dissolved religious house of the Hospitallers of Acon. I think, when we get beyond that, the facts are not quite so clear, though it is probable enough that they are such as the Master told you. We know for certain that from the reign of Henry VI., in 1447, a School was carried on in the same place, the place which is now—at least, which was in an older building—the Chapel of Mercers' Hall, and which had belonged to the dissolved Hospital. Whether it was carried on by the Hospitallers or by the Parochial Clergy, I won't trouble you with enquiring; but, at all events, it was upon the petition of the Parochial Clergy of four Parishes in London, one of whom was at that time Master of the Hospital, that the Crown granted a license to establish four Grammar Schools for those parishes, of which this was one. Everything beyond that, of earlier antiquity, is perhaps a little hazy; and yet it is highly probable that that was not the first School carried on upon the same site, and under the same auspices. How far the Mercers' Company had to do with it I should not like dogmatically to say; but it is quite certain that it

belonged to a class of Grammar Schools of which the history will probably, in the present curious 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 are most familiar are those which were endowed in the reign of Edward VI. out of the funds arising from some of the dissolved chantries or monasteries; and many people imagine—or perhaps do not trouble themselves much to think about it—but the impression exists, that this was the origin of our Grammar Schools; but that is a mistake. Not only does the history at an earlier time of the Mercers' School, and the schools which preceded it, show that grammar schools were previously known, but there is abundant proof that schools of the same general character existed, and were carried on very efficiently, and produced very great men, throughout the middle ages; and in this country, under the auspices of the most honorable of all the religious orders, the Benedictines, from Saxon times, as early at least as the second century after the planting of Christianity by the Roman missionary, Augustine, in this island. Therefore, the institution is one going back to a very remote antiquity indeed, and that it was efficient in times a good deal earlier than the times of King Henry VIII. or King Edward VI. is clear from one single instance—the instance of the great man who

founded Winchester College, and was Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England, and one of the greatest, and I must add, most liberal statesman of his day,—William of Wykeham. He was certainly educated in one of those Grammar Schools, very much upon the same principles on which Mercers' School is now carried on. Latin was taught, no doubt; grammar was taught; and other things useful and practical were taught, such as geometry and the elements of mathematics, which were in him, no doubt, the foundation of his great eminence in architecture, which lead to all his eminence in life. What the Grammar School was at which he was educated has been a subject of controversy. Some think it was the School of the Benedictine Monastery at Winchester. Others deny that, and believe it to have been a School of the Corporation of the City of Winchester. But whichever it was, it is an instance of the manner in which, from very early times, Grammar Schools existed, substantially and with reference to those times, of the same character with Mercers' School now. And your Master has mentioned Dean Colet as having himself been educated at this School, as it existed between the reign of Henry VI. and the reign of Henry VIII.—a very great name indeed, not only to all Mercers, with whom his connection is one of their greatest honours, but also in the history of this country,

and especially in the literary and religious history of the country; and in this Mercers' School, after it had become unquestionably, and to all intents and purposes, the School of the Mercers, we have been also told by your Master that another truly great man, Sir Thomas Gresham, was educated. If, therefore, we are obliged to prove our title to public respect by the fruits and results of the teaching which has been given in our School—small in numbers as the Mercers' School was then, and very limited in numbers as it has since continued to be—still, we have no reason to be ashamed of the work which it has done, or of the fruits which it has produced. Well, the School was practically stationary till the beginning of this century. Its progress from time to time since then has been certainly, I think, interesting and very honourable to the Company. It did good work when only the limited number which it was bound to maintain, of 25 free scholars, was taught in it. Probably that limited number would have been enlarged long before it was, but for the disaster of the Fire of London, and the difficulties in which the Mercers' Company and other bodies in the City were placed in consequence of that fire. But the progress and enlargement began in 1808, or immediately afterwards, when the Foundation Scholars were increased to 35. Then, 24 years afterwards it was increased to 70; 44 years after that I myself had the gratification of taking part

in the further increase to 100, and two years later it was increased to 125; then, in 1880, immediately afterwards, to 150, and now we hope to see it increased to 300. Well, that is a satisfactory rate of progress, and perhaps a man may be pardoned if he now and then indulges in a small piece of egotism, and I will mention one thing which has interested me in the retrospective history of the School, of which a printed sketch was circulated among the Members of the Company some time ago. In that it was stated that in 1832, the year in which the numbers of the School were enlarged to 70, Mr. Hill was the master of the School, and Mr. Wills was the writing master. That name struck me. I am convinced I was taught writing by that Mr. Wills. When I was a boy some eight or ten years old, my father used to take me to London to a relation for a sufficient time in every year for me to walk daily to Kentish Town, where Mr. Wills, my writing master, lived. Well, I never before enquired how my father came to choose Mr. Wills; but now that I see he was the writing master of the Mercers' School ten years afterwards, I am perfectly sure, as my father was a Mercer and one of the Gresham Lecturers also, I am perfectly sure that was the reason why he was chosen, and that I am indebted for that part of my education to the writing master of Mercers' School. And now we come to the present time. The Mercers'

Company, as your Master has told you, attained their 500th year—not from their origin, which was much more remote, but from their legal incorporation—in the spring of the present year. 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, and to maintain 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 in 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 little result. Now, I have very little doubt that the Grammar Schools which I have mentioned, 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 to which I referred 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. Well, 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 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. Well, 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 to which the Master has referred, I think the Mercers' Company may well hope that this School will be a twin-brother to St. Paul's—sister perhaps I ought to have said; I think that is, perhaps, the most usual way of expressing such an idea—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, which very few indeed approach to. The Mercers' Company may well be proud that, having been chosen by Dean Colet to be the repositories of his trust, they are

now so 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 this 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. And now, with that expectation for the future I think I may close the address which I have made to you. 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 rest upon this School, and that this day may be remembered with thankfulness by future generations. I now declare these New Buildings open. (Loud applause).

The CHAIRMAN: My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, —I now beg to offer our congratulations to the Rev. Dr. Scott and to his colleagues on coming into these new buildings, and in doing so perhaps I ought to draw your attention to these papers that are put about the room describing the new buildings, and also to say, on the part of our Company, that they meet with our entire approval. And we regret very much that on this occasion we are not able to see our architect amongst us, Mr. Chatfeild Clarke. He has worked hard and faithfully for us in the erection of these buildings, but he has been assisted by his son and partner, Mr. Howard Clarke, whom we have lately seen, and who represents his father on this occasion. His father, unfortunately, is very unwell, and is not able to be present to-day. However, you will have an opportunity of walking round the buildings, and they will speak for themselves; and in moving into them we heartily congratulate

Dr. Scott and his colleagues. Well, then I have also to congratulate him upon another matter. His Lordship has referred to the great achievements of St. Paul's School in classical knowledge in this year. They have beaten the record of their own School, and that of any other School in the Kingdom this year. And this year Mercers' School has achieved an importance. Its scholars have achieved positions which are beyond any that have been achieved before, and on that account I beg to congratulate Dr. Scott and his colleagues very sincerely. The names of those who have been successful in their different walks of life are so numerous this year that I must not read them to you, and I should not like to refer to some without referring to all; but you may take it from me that the list is so large that I cannot read them all, and you must consider that the achievements are most important upon that I have to congratulate Dr. Scott, and I hope that he and his colleagues will long be spared to administer the affairs of this School.

The REV. DR. SCOTT (the Head Master), who was very enthusiastically received:

Worshipful Master, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is with the greatest pleasure that I rise to accept the charge which is to-day put into my hands; only on doing so the pleasure, perhaps, is but one of a multitude of emotions that come

into one's mind, which are simply overwhelming. If it be quite true that "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," there are times when the heart is too full and the mouth won't speak; and I simply am unable to find words adequate to express all I should like to say with regard to the event of to-day, and the buildings in which we find ourselves. It is a great crisis, doubtless, as we have already been reminded, of education in the City of London; it is a great crisis in the history of Mercers' School; I will be chary of attempting to suggest that it is a great crisis in my own life and career, and a great crisis in the life and career of those lads who are sitting yonder. But many points of coincidence come in one's mind to-day, some of them very marvellous and very interesting. We are told in that paper that the old Barnard's Inn Hall which now exists, and is a part that will be used as a dining hall for the boys, was founded in the year 1454, some few years only after the petition had gone up to Henry VI. that those four schools should be allowed to continue to exist for the advancement of learning in their day. It is something remarkable, perhaps, that a providence of 500 years has brought us to occupy now the building which, was so soon erected after that petition was offered. Four schools were petitioned for by the Rectors of St. Mary Colechurch, of All Hallows, of St. Andrew, Holborn,

and of St. Peter, Cornhill. Of those four we are the only one that at present exists. It is, in fact, not known whether the petition was so far granted that all the four were allowed to continue; but, at any rate, looking upon ourselves, St. Mary Colechurch gave us a site after the Fire of London. All Hallows has but recently been connected with St. Michael, Paternoster Royal, which has practically given us our site for the last 80 or 90 years. We have now come to reside in the parish of St. Andrew, Holborn, and the fourth Rector is Rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill, who is with us to-day, as he naturally would be with us in the City in any work of kindness and goodness, and above all in any work of education. But the Rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill—he will excuse me for reminding you—by his name, reproduces a great light of five centuries ago. When we receive his congratulations, it is Richard Whittington who is congratulating us upon our New School. And it is Richard Whittington whose house, or the site of whose house, we have been occupying hitherto, and from which site it is that we have just migrated into these new buildings. As we look about in these buildings the thing that strikes me, and the thing that will strike you when you perambulate, is the fitness, the solidity, and the extremely good work that has been put into every part of it. I feel that this is an omen to which we

have to look, and by which we have to do all that is put in our charge. When we see the good, sound, solid work—no superficial veneer, but good, sound, solid work—of the material building, it gives us, as it were, a motto for the mental work which we are to impart to the boys who are to be placed under our care.

*"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime."*

And when we look back and keep in memory the fact of these two names, to say the least of it, that we have had mentioned this morning—that Mercers' School had the original inspiring of Dean Colet's mind, over whom is shed the greater lustre from all the glory of St. Paul's School, and over the mind of the merchant, Sir Thomas Gresham, who not only is to be recollected with regard to the Royal Exchange, but I venture to think that many in this room will agree with me, will be hereafter recollected as giving his name to a great University—when we consider that Sir Thomas Gresham and Dean Colet, the scholar and the merchant, took their first teaching in the Mercers' School, we can, I hope, in all humility, trust that we in our generation too may be able to serve God and our country, and "leave behind us, footprints in the sands of time." My Lord, I thank you for your very valuable words. Worshipful Master, I thank you for the kind way in which you have spoken of myself and my col-

leagues. I accept this charge which you put in my hands, with all humility. At the same time, I can promise for myself and my assistants, that we will so carry out the work which this day is put into our charge as to show ourselves mindful of the traditions of the antique, and able, perhaps, to build up a part in a very creditable history in the time to come.

Mr. NORMAN WATNEY: Master, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,—After the very eloquent and stirring speeches that we have heard, I should not venture to speak to you at all, except it is to ask you to join with me in a most hearty vote of thanks to Lord Selborne, who has been good enough to come here to-day—one of the many things he has done for the benefit of the Mercers' Company. We have often trusted to him, and he has helped us in our difficulties, and helped us in many ways, and this is the last one; we hope that many more may succeed, that we may have the benefit of his assistance and his wise counsel, and we thank him. I call upon you to give him a hearty vote of thanks for his kindness in giving us so interesting an account of the Mercers' School as it has been, and for so kindly being here to-day to open this New School, which I hope may be to the advantage of many generations. Those who are in favour of a hearty vote of thanks to Lord Selborne, please to signify the same in the

usual manner by holding up their hands. My Lord, I beg to tender you the hearty thanks of the meeting.

The EARL OF SELBORNE: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am extremely obliged to you for so kindly appreciating my endeavour to help you duly to celebrate this occasion. 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; and I may add, as a Mercer, that 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 CHAIRMAN: The buildings are open now for inspection, and anybody who likes to go round, I am sure any one of us will be very happy indeed to show them.

The proceedings then terminated.