Birmingham institutions : lectures given at the University / edited by J.H. Muirhead.

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Muirhead, John H. 1855-1940.

Publication/Creation

Birmingham, Eng. : Cornish, 1911.

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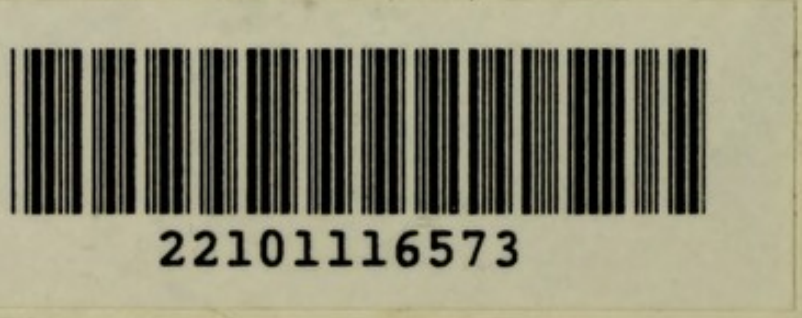
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BIRMINGHAM INSTITUTIONS

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BULL RING, FROM A SKETCH BY DAVID COX.

BIRMINGHAM INSTITUTIONS

Lectures given at the University

Edited by

J. H. MUIRHEAD LL.D.

Professor of Philosophy in the University of Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM

CORNISH BROTHERS LTD.

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37, NEW STREET

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE lectures in this volume followed the series on Nine Famous Birmingham Men given in Session 1909–1910 under the auspices of the Social Study Committee. A member of the audience was overheard to remark in explanation of the apparent falling off in the numbers attending them that "men are more interesting than things." It is quite true that institutions are not men. On the other hand living institutions, and it is only of such that we are speaking, represent the past efforts and the present co-operation of many individuals directed to a single and continuous purpose, and on this account may claim an individuality of their own of even a higher kind than of any single person. Of the institutions of Birmingham it is particularly true that as a whole they stand for a record of public-spirited endeavour on the part of its own citizens to which it would

be difficult elsewhere to find a parallel. The nineteenth century was in a special sense the age of the reform of old institutions and the formation of new ones to meet the growing wants of a democratic community, and in this movement Birmingham was admittedly in the van. These lectures have given us the opportunity of getting the story in many cases at first hand from men in whose memories it is still fresh.

The committee naturally sought to obtain the assistance of representative men. It is an inevitable disadvantage of the success which attended this choice that the part, which many of the lecturers have themselves taken in establishing or carrying on the tradition of the institutions they represent, remains unrecorded. To some of the writers we owe a further debt of gratitude for having, by the free gift of their illustrations, made it possible to issue the present volume at a popular price. Among these the admirable maps of the town and district in early times specially prepared for Mr. Walter Barrow by Mr. J. Bernard Benton deserve particular mention.

THE UNIVERSITY,

December, 1910.

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THE TOWN AND ITS INDUSTRIES

By Walter Barrow

THE TOWN AND ITS INDUSTRIES

By Walter Barrow

Birmingham in its beginning was undoubtedly formed by a settlement of Anglo-Saxons, who found rich pastures and abundant water in the valley of the Rea. Drayton in his *Polyolbion* many hundreds of years later speaks of the "lively tripping Rea" and we must picture to ourselves a clear swift stream meandering through green meadows instead of muddy waters at the bottom of a brick invert as we see it now. Little part as the Rea now plays in the life and industries of Birmingham, yet it was undoubtedly the cause of the town springing into existence. The name of the town is Saxon and tells us its origin. It was the ham or home of the ingas or descendants of a Saxon chief named Berm or Beorm. The name is not unique as there is a Burmington on the Oxfordshire Stour near Shipston. There are many places in this district ending in "ingham"

or "ington" e.g. Nottingham, Erdington, Tibbington (or Tipton).

Mr. G. Bernard Benton of the Birmingham School of Art, probably the greatest authority on Roman remains in this district, has been good enough to prepare for me maps, which are I believe unique, of the Birmingham district showing the Roman roads and other ancient tracks. A knowledge of the position of Birmingham relatively to these roads is of great importance to us in studying its early growth. The little hamlet was not actually on any of the great Roman roads, but was easily accessible from the Ryknield Street. This street runs south from Lichfield crossing Watling Street at the Roman town of Etocetum, which still bears the name of Wall from the remains of old Roman earthworks. A little north of Birmingham the street passed through the important Roman military camp of Perry. The line of Ryknield Street runs through the modern city of Birmingham, being called in part by the name of Icknield Street. It ran along Monument Road and thence probably by Chad Valley and Richmond Hill to Bournbrook whence it continued over the Lickey

to Droitwich (which the Romans called Salinae or the Salt springs) and Worcester. At Bournbrook the road threw off a branch called the Hadyn Way. This proceeded viâ Stirchley (probably Streetley as until quite recently it was known as Strutley) Street and Lifford to the foot of Weatheroak Hill, whence the old road can still be traced leading to the Roman Alauna (now Alcester). The direct line of Ryknield Street would have passed almost through the site of old Birmingham, but as it approached Birmingham it deviated to the west, doubtless in order to keep on high ground and avoid the swamps and marshes along the course of the Rea, which lay near Pershore Road and which have only been drained of modern times. The villages to the east of Birmingham ending in "don," such as Elmdon and Sheldon, almost certainly were of British origin.

The second map shows on a larger scale the ancient roads in the immediate neighbourhood of Birmingham. One of the earliest tracks from the little group of timber houses and huts on the rising ground above Deritend Bridge led away up Edgbaston Street, Smallbrook Street, and Holloway Head (so called because it was

hollowed out between banks of soft sandstone on either side) to join at Edgbaston (Egbald's Ton) the Ryknield Street on its way south. Roman coins have been discovered near Smallbrook Street, so that the district was certainly known to the Romans.

There was much forest along the hills on which the modern centre of the town lies, and all round was an unbroken chain of heaths—open sandy spaces among the woodlands covered with heath and bracken. Their names are well known to us in modern times, though alas they are no longer open spaces, e.g. King's Heath —Small Heath—Birmingham Heath—Balsall Heath. There were also "greens" or bits of common grass land, examples of which are Gosta (or Gorsty) Green so called from the yellow gorse which bloomed there, and which is still an open space, Nechells Green, Winson Green and Moseley Wake Green. Probably one of the earliest acts of the Saxon settlers was, for purposes of defence, to cut the wide circular moat which surrounded the little stockaded fortress close to the Rea whose position is well shown on Westley's plan of 1731. The moat was supplied with water from the numerous springs and

probably also by a stream which came down the hill from Edgbaston in the direction indicated by the roads now known as Spring Road and Spring Vale. The line of the old moat is indicated by Moat Lane and Moat Row. Within the moat was built the timber house of the Saxon chief to which succeeded the Manor House of the family of the de Berminghams.

The earliest mention of the town is to be found in the Domesday Book. This was a survey of all England made by order of William the Conqueror at a Witan or Council held at Gloucester in the year 1085, at which it was determined to learn "all about this land, how it is peopled, and by what men." For the purposes of this survey officers called the King's Justiciaries were appointed and visited each county. There is a short entry with regard to "Bermingeham," the name being almost identical with that now used. From it we learn that the then owner was named Richard, that there were four hides or about 480 acres of cultivated land with six ploughs, and a wood half a mile long and two furlongs broad. There were five freeman workers on the land and four of a rather lower position in the social scale,

making nine in all. Assuming each of these to be the head of a family, and a family to consist of five, and adding ten for Richard who held the land, his family and retainers, we arrive at a total population of fifty-five. The land is stated to be worth 20*s.* per annum, or in its modern equivalent about £30. No slaves (although slavery was very general in those days) are mentioned, probably because the hamlet, as its name shows, was formed by a small family union. In this fact one may see even in those early days a glimmering of that love of liberty and freedom for which Birmingham afterwards became famous and which, in spite of occasional outbreaks of petulant intolerance, still exists as strongly as ever. There is no mention of either a church, or priest, or of a mill. Aston (or the east town from Birmingham) had however all three ; it was then double the extent and was worth five times as much as the place which has since left it so far behind in growth, wealth and power. The overlord of Birmingham was then William Fitz-Ansculf, one of the Conqueror's followers, whose principal seat was Dudley Castle.

The next item of interest in the history of

Birmingham, is one of great importance to its fortunes. It is the grant in 1160 (about seventy-five years after Domesday Book) by Henry II to one Peter son of William of the right to have market on Thursday at his castle in Birmingham. This charter was confirmed by Richard Coeur de Lion, while Henry III also granted the right to hold a fair to last four days, to wit on the Eve of the Lord's Ascension, and three days following. We find, moreover, that in the thirteenth year of Edward I the right of the Lords of Birmingham to a gallows was recognized. It is a most interesting fact that the great Smithfield Vegetable Market of the city stands on the very site of the castle at which the right to hold market was granted 750 years ago. The market and manorial rights were acquired by the old Birmingham Commissioners in 1824 for £12,500, and are now among the most valuable of the city's assets. Other towns have had to pay between a quarter and half a million for their markets.

We do not know exactly when the Mother Church of St. Martin's was built, but it was in existence in 1290. It was built of soft sandstone which weathered so much that it had

centuries later to be cased in with a hideous brick covering. There were two chantries or chapels, one founded by the Clodshall family, and one by the Gild of Holy Cross—the first of Birmingham's many charities—from which sprang our noble Grammar School Foundation. The interior of the church was decorated with frescoes illustrating the life of St. Martin. The Church, though entirely rebuilt in 1873, still contains the oldest work of men's hands in Birmingham, in the shape of four very fine altar tombs of members of the De Bermingham family. On the shield of the earliest, Sir Wm. de Bermingham, may be seen the armorial bearing of the "bend lozengy" which forms part of the city's arms. Another of the figures is probably that of another Sir William de Bermingham who lived in the reign of Edward II. The latest and finest of the effigies is that of an ecclesiastic, probably of canonical rank of the reign of Henry VII. I am in this lecture dealing with the town rather than men, but I may mention that in 1537 Edward de Bermingham was unjustly deprived of his estates and shortly afterwards died childless, and his property escheated to the Crown.

We hear practically nothing of Birmingham till about the middle of the sixteenth century, when John Leland visited it. The name of the town is given in a map of the time of Edward III, on which Coventry, Warwick and Stratford are marked, but not named, so it was evidently growing in importance. At first it was purely the centre of an agricultural district and a market. Its earliest trade was, I think, undoubtedly the manufacture of leather. The cattle market provided the raw hides, the forests the oak-bark, and the little river the water so necessary to tanning, and at an early period tanneries were established on its banks. Then at a later period the fact that iron and coal could be readily obtained from South Staffordshire encouraged the manufacture of small articles of hardware in the town. Moreover from very early times iron had been available, having been smelted in considerable quantities on the edge of the dense woodlands a few miles south of the town which supplied abundance of charcoal.

John Leland was a Commissioner appointed by Henry VIII to report on the condition of the country. For six years he rode through

the land taking notes which enable us to see England of the sixteenth century through the eyes of a living witness. His memorable visit to Birmingham was paid in 1536. He says—

"I came through as pretty a street as ever I entered into Birmingham town. This street as I remember is called Dirtey (a mistake for Deritend). In it dwells smithes and cutlers and there is a brook that divideth this street from Birmingham. . . . There is at the end of Dirtey a propper chappell and mansion house of tymber hard on the ripe as the brooke runneth down, and as I went through the ford by the bridge the water ran down on the right hand and a few miles below goeth into Tame. This brook above Dirtey breaketh into 2 arms that a little beneath the bridge close again. . . .

"The beautie of Bermingham a good markett-town in the extreme pts of Warwickshire is one street going up alonge almost from the left ripe (or bank) of the brooke up a meane (or low) hill by the length of a quarter of a mile. I saw but one Parroch Church in the towne.

"There be many smithes in the towne that used to make knives and all manner of cuttinge tools and many lorimers that make bittes and a great many naylers so that a great part of the towne is maintained by smithes who have their iron and sea cole out of Staffordshire."

Birmingham in the days of Leland was indeed a charming village climbing from the little river in the valley up the hill above St. Martin's Church. Deritend ran between an avenue of trees behind which lay half-timbered gable-ended houses at the back of which were gardens running down

to the brook. Instead of the present dingy brick building which forms the Church of St. John's,

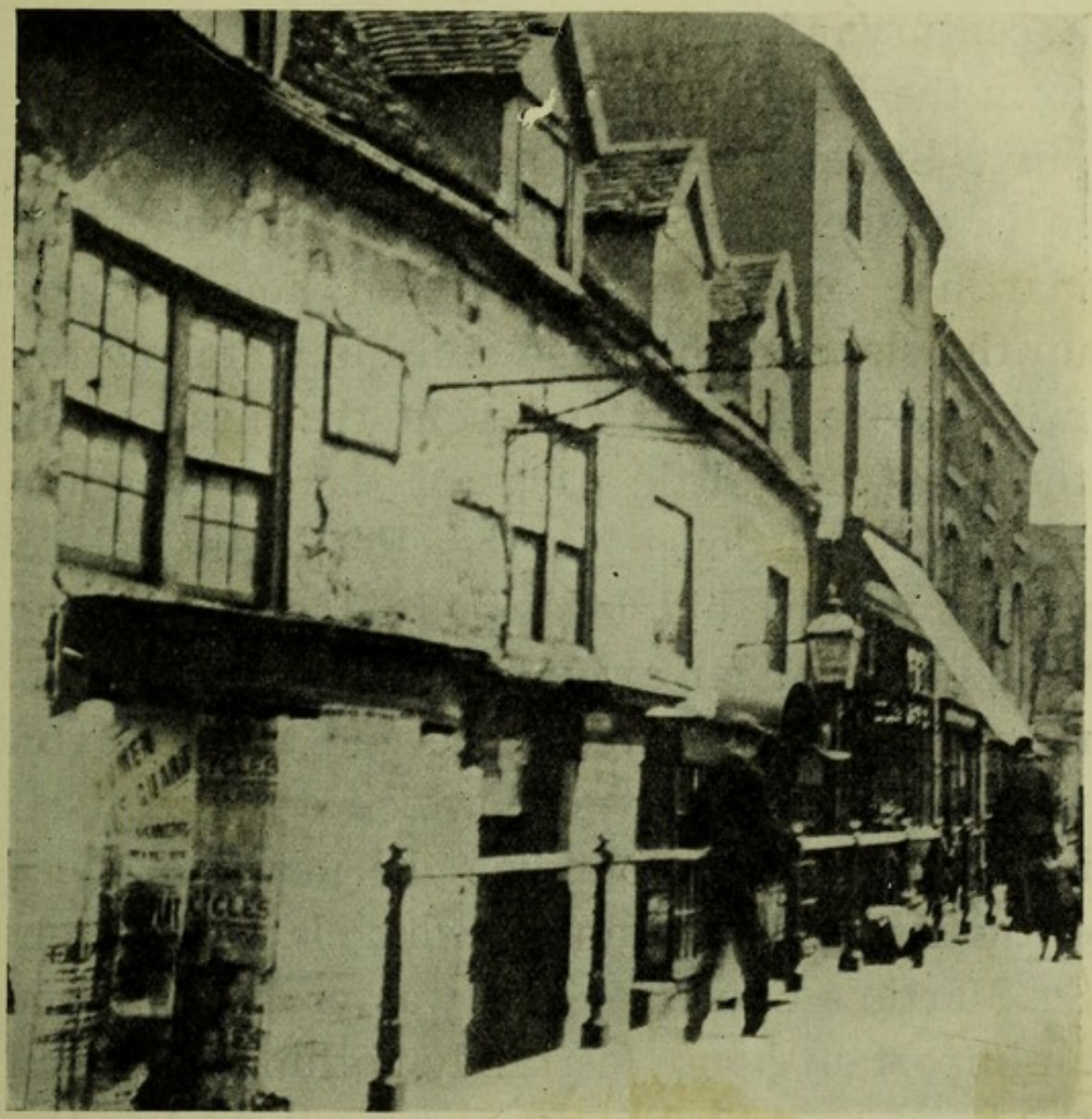


HALF-TIMBERED HOUSES, DERITEND.

Deritend, was a picturesque chapel erected in 1375 of wood with tiled roof and a little belfry at one end. The houses which lined

the roadway were built not of brick or stone, but of timber frames filled in with plaster laid on laths, or as it is usually called wattle and daub. Many of the houses had half open fronts shaded by penthouse roofs. Here the smiths and nailers carried on their work, and made the street noisy with the clang of their hammers, and at nightfall there would be a picturesque glow from their hearths. Some few of these old houses survive to the present day, but the half-timbered house, known as the old tripe shop, the old Leather Bottle, and many others have passed away. Leland saw the fine mansion house of timber (happily preserved and now known as the old Crown House), from the gardens of which a path led to the river passing through other gardens and meadows. Leland, who was on horseback, crossed the river by the ford. Before the river was dammed back for mill purposes, it was doubtless so shallow as to be usually crossed by stepping stones. But after it was deepened by damming, several little timber bridges were erected in succession, their cost being defrayed in the first instance by the Gild of Holy Cross or out of the charity estate left by William Lench, who lived in the

sixteenth century in Moor Street, his house being on the site of the present *Woolpack Hotel*, which still belongs to the Charity established by his will.

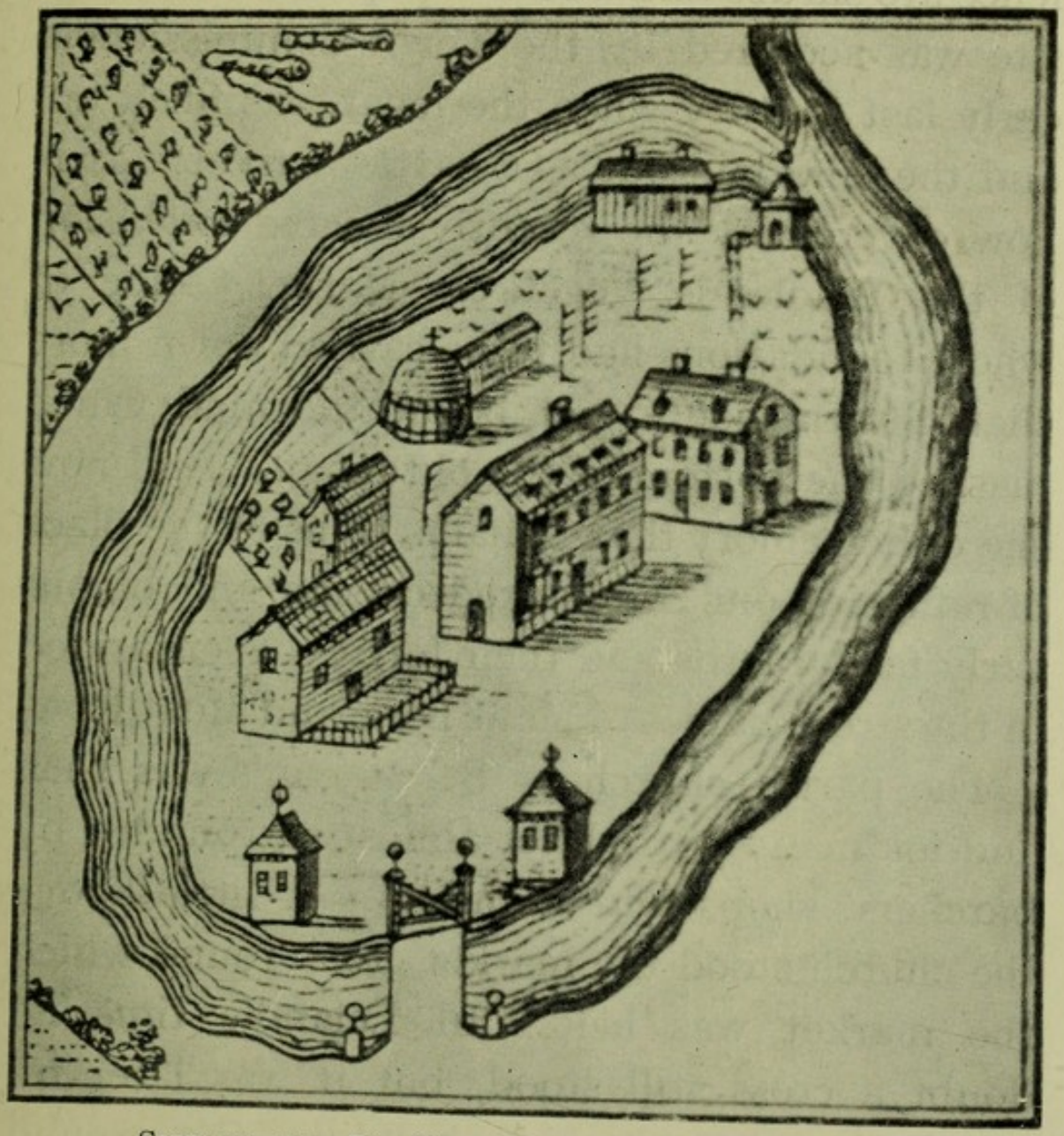


THE "LEATHER BOTTELL," DERITEND.

These rude, wooden bridges, easily washed away in the winter floods, were barred and locked and had an attendant bar keeper. In the seventeenth century they gave way to one of stone.

The earliest view we have of Birmingham is given by Dugdale in his Warwickshire, published in the middle of the seventeenth century, about a century after Leland's visit. It is taken from the Ravenhurst (a house to which Ravenhurst Street owes its name). It shows the little chapel of St. John, the church of St. Martin's, and a few scattered houses rising up the slope of the ridge and quite embowered in trees—to the left and right the meadows of the great and little parks of the Lord of the Manor slope down to the Rea. As Leland passed up the hill leading to the church, he would see not far away, at the end of what is now Edgbaston Street, the old Rectory by which ran a clear stream which emptied itself into the moat, surrounding the mansion house of the Bermingham family, which lay just below St. Martin's Church. This was probably never an important house (certainly nothing like what the word castle brings to our mind), and in the middle of the sixteenth century the buildings were fast falling into decay. Westley's plan of Birmingham shows what the site of the old house looked like about 180 years ago. The buildings were then mean and of comparatively recent

date. No doubt they were built after the fall of the De Bermingham family. In later cen-



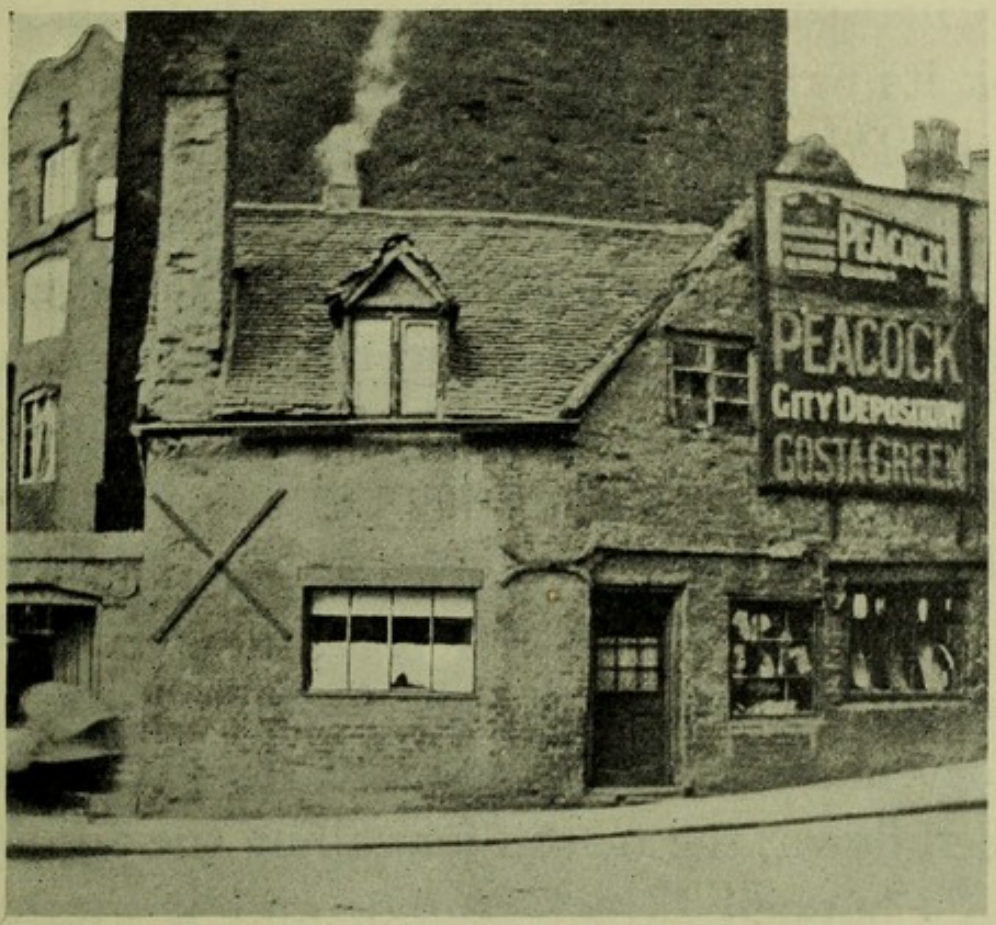
SITE OF THE DE BERMINGHAMS' MANOR HOUSE.
(Enlarged from Westley's Plan of 1731).

turies the moat was the cause of frequent accidents. We have a pen and ink sketch taken by W. Hamper, the Antiquary, in 1814, which

shows rails along the road side of the water, and a close fence on the other side—within the fence are shrubs and a row of poplar trees. The site was acquired by the Town Commissioners early last century when the moat was filled up, and the land laid out as a cattle market. It is now covered by the recently erected extension of the Wholesale Vegetable Market, some of whose foundations had to be carried down more than fifteen feet to get below the mud which masked the bottom of the old moat. And now the only memory that remains to us of the place of refuge of our Saxon predecessors and of our early feudal lords and their fortress is enshrined in the street-names of Moat Lane and Moat Row.

The parish church of St. Martin's was then and for many years later almost surrounded by butchers' shops and shambles. A little above the church stood the market cross round which the market was held. In Leland's time no doubt a cross still stood, but it was later replaced by a two-storied building, the ground floor of which was open and in which the market women could shelter in wet weather. The upper story was used as a place for public meetings and was the town hall of the day,

the building still retaining the name of the English Cross. Similar market buildings still exist in many places, e.g. Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock. There was a fringe of houses along the sides of the Bull Ring and along High



CORNER OF MOOR STREET AND DALE END IN OLD BIRMINGHAM.

Street to another market cross at the junction with Dale End, known as the Welsh Cross, because that was the exit towards Wales. When the Welsh Cross fell into decay there was erected a building very similar to that in the Bull Ring but smaller. Here High Street

forked into Dale End and Chappell Street (now Bull Street). Dale End, like Holloway Head and many other roads of the period, ran between steeply sloping sides of red sandstone which centuries of traffic on an unmetalled road had carved into a ravine. Chappell Street took its name from the public chapel belonging to the Priory or Hospital of St. Thomas which lay between Dale End and Priors Conygre (or Rabbit-warren) Lane. The Priory was a small convent of monks and the roadway called the Minories takes its name from the Minorites, as the Franciscan friars were called. The name of Priors Conygre Lane was afterwards changed to Steelhouse Lane on account of Kettle's steelhouses which stood there. After the Priory had been abolished and the little chapel pulled down, the reason for calling the adjoining road Chappell Street ceased, and it gradually acquired the name of Bull Street from the *Bull Tavern*, a well known inn in the street. Sandy Lane, now known as Snow Hill, led towards the great pool at Hockley on which, as I learn from a letter I recently found from a great-uncle of mine, skating took place well on into last century. The Prior's Conygre or rabbit-warren probably

extended all along the north side of what is now Colmore Row and Congreve Street (a comparatively new road leading north from the Town Hall) is probably a corruption of Conygre Street.

New Street had doubtless been made as a means of approach towards Edgbaston as an alternative road to the ancient way up Edgbaston Street and Smallbrook Street, but the approach to it from High Street was for centuries blocked by houses. The only important building in it was the Guild Hall, used later on as a schoolhouse and the site of the present King Edward's Schools. High Street was connected with Moor Street or Le Molle Street by a steep narrow lane called Goddes Cartes Lane, probably because it was there that was kept the hand cart in which the priest bearing the sacred vessels was borne round the town at times of processions. The modern name is Carrs Lane. Below in the valley were open meadows and trees forming the Little Park of the De Berminghams. Hence the names of Little Park Street and Park Street which also no longer bring to the mind visions of green leaves, but of squalid houses. But until quite

lately were to be seen in Park Street fine old-fashioned Georgian houses, relics of the time when it was an attractive residential road abutting on beautiful gardens. Until the beginning of last century Birmingham was a little country town embowered in trees and interspersed with gardens.

In the early part of the eighteenth century as the town extended northward in the direction of the site of the Council House, the need was felt for a new church in the High Town, and Robert Phillips, an ancestor of the Inge family, gave a field called the Barley Close as the site of a new church and churchyard. Birmingham is none too well off for open places in its midst, and it is a matter of congratulation that the highest point of the centre of the town is by means of St. Philip's Churchyard preserved as a breathing space for us and future generations.

St. Philip's Church (now the pro-Cathedral) was begun in 1711 in the Italian style and like many of Birmingham's early buildings was of such perishable stone that it has since had to be rebuilt piecemeal. The north prospect of the church appears in a well-known print of Westley's published about 1730. On the left may

be seen the Blue Coat School then newly erected, and in the background are the houses on the south side of Temple Row, which had shortly before been laid out as a more convenient way from Bull Street to the new church. Some of



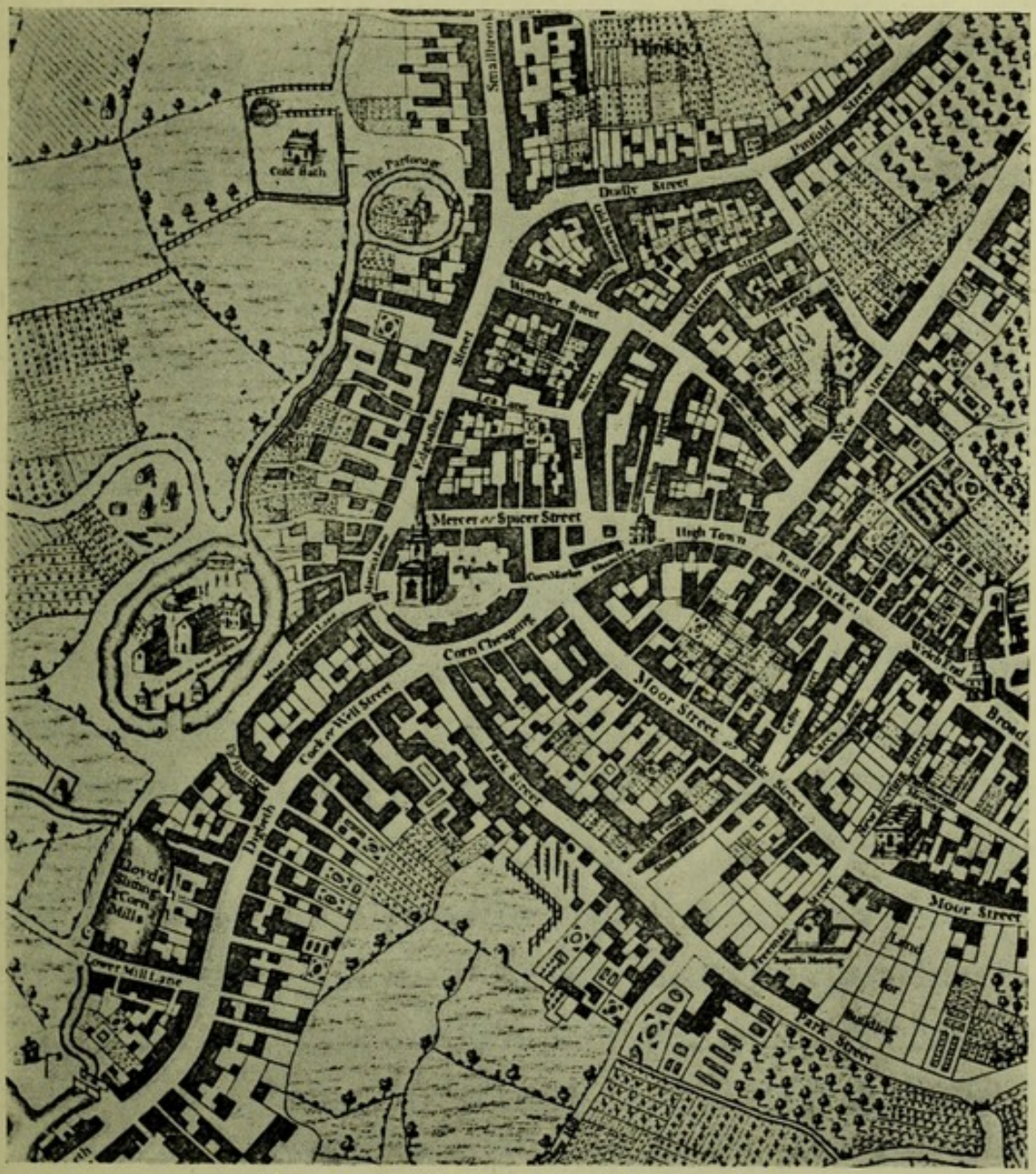
THE OLD SQUARE AND UPPER PRIORY.

these dignified old-fashioned houses still remain. About this time the Square, afterwards known as the Old Square, was laid out with a railed-in garden and lawns in the centre. It is shown in the top left-hand corner of Westley's view.

For a long while it remained a fashionable residential quarter and its vestiges remained even to the days of my own childhood. The Old Square came to an end with the Improvement Scheme; the photograph shows the side of the Square looking towards the Upper Priory. The only part of old St. Philip's which remains to us is the tower, the stones of which are unfortunately showing signs of decay.

The general lie of the town is well shown in Westley's plan of 1731. St. Martin's is still hemmed in by butchers' shops, the lower part of the town sloping to the river is still fields and gardens, while there are several cherry orchards in what is now the centre of the town. Just below the Parsonage (which is surrounded by a moat) are the Lady Well and the Cold Bath. The Lady Well was the most important source of Birmingham's drinking water in early days, and it continued in use until well on into last century. Water used to be carried from this and adjoining wells to various parts of the town in a large hogshead drawn by a horse. I have seen this being done, and I am not certain whether it does not still continue. At any rate, Goffe's well is still used for the making of aerated waters.

A south-west prospect of Birmingham was published by J. & N. Buck in 1731. In it we see the



PART OF WESTLEY'S PLAN, 1731.

bridge over the Rea, the moated Manor House and Parsonage and Digbeth and Deritend appear as a mere fringe of houses running through

fields. To the left of St. Martin's, we see the beginnings of Smallbrook Street which appears to have taken its name from a landowner named Smallbroke.

In the western portion of the prospect we see on the horizon the tower of the Grammar School in New Street, the imposing row of houses just built in Temple Row, St. Philip's Church (towards which Temple Street rises like a stair) and New Hall the residence of the Colmore family. In the middle distance is Holloway Head, climbing the hill towards Edgbaston, the site of the Town Hall and Council House is an open field, while the spaces between New Street and the lower part of the town are filled in with gardens and orchards. At this date (1731) the population of the town was about 23,000, in 1700 it was about 15,000. Some of the fine old houses in Temple Street, which date from the early days of the eighteenth century, are still standing. Perhaps, however, the finest house of this date which remains to us is Galton House, Steelhouse Lane. It takes its name from an old Quaker family of the town.

A very fine south-east prospect of the town, of which one print only is known, and is exhibited

in the Reference Library, was published by Jackson & Bradford in 1752.

I must now speak of the development of Birmingham industries. Most of the early trades of Birmingham have gone. We still have a certain amount of leather goods made, but for the most part the saddlers and bridle cutters have gone to Walsall and the nailers to Halesowen, Cradley and Bromsgrove. The trade in "knives and cuttinge tools" has gone to Sheffield and only heavy edge tools such as matchets and cutlasses (used in tropical plantations) are still made in Birmingham.

It was not until the seventeenth century that we have the real beginning of Birmingham's industrial fame. A topographical work published at Oxford in 1627 mentions "Bremicham inhabited with blacksmiths and forging several kinds of iron utensils." Camden speaks of "Bremicham (as) swarming with inhabitants and echoing with the noise of anvils (for here are great nº of smiths)." Birmingham was strongly attached to the cause of the Parliament in the civil wars in the reign of Charles I. At Mr. Porter's sword mill by the Rea 15,000 swords were made for the Parliamentary General the

Earl of Essex, and the sturdy Birmingham men of those days declined to make weapons for the Royalists and spurned their money. In revenge Prince Rupert, when he sacked the town after the skirmish at Camp Hill, pulled down and destroyed Mr. Porter's blade mill. In later years Birmingham manufacturers were not always so scrupulous, for at the times of the wars with France at the beginning of last century, it seems clear that some Birmingham manufacturers were not above selling arms indirectly to the French if sufficient inducement offered. There is a mention of Birmingham in 1690 in Missen's travels from which we learn that other trades than swords and pike heads had sprung up. He speaks of fine works of rock crystal, swords, heads of canes, and other fine works of steel which he had seen at Milan but adds, "they can be had better and cheaper at Birmingham." The manufacture of firearms was begun here sometime in the seventeenth century, though the exact date cannot be given. However, we know that in 1692 the gun manufacturers of Birmingham were able to enter into a contract with the Government for the supply of 200 "musquets" a month for twelve months from

the date of the contract, the "musquets" to be 3 ft. 10 ins. long with walnut-tree and ash stocks. After the Peace of Amiens the small-arms manufacturers doubtless turned their attention to fowling pieces. Until 1813 the Birmingham gunmakers proved their own barrels, but in that year a public proof house was established here and it was made compulsory to prove all barrels either at the Proof House of Birmingham or of London. The manufacture of small arms is still one of Birmingham's staple trades.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the fashion for wearing buckles was revived, and for nearly a century they were almost universally worn by all classes of the community on the knee and the shoe. Though they were first made at Bilston, Birmingham soon took the lead, and the trade was carried on with extra-ordinary success. They were of all sizes from the small one on the hatband to the huge shoe buckle which nearly covered the foot. The prices ranged from 1*s.* to five and even ten guineas per pair, and as the buckle fashion was almost universal not only in England but in America and on the Continent, and as Birming-

ham supplied most of the demand, the trade was a most important one in the town. In the eighteenth century that misdirected ingenuity which procured for the town its nick-name and gave to things which pretended to be what they were not the questionable title of Brumagem extended to buckles as well as to counterfeit halfpence. An anecdote illustrating this was given by the late Mr. M. D. Hill.

"In the days," he writes, "when buckles were an important branch of trade in Birmingham, large quantities were made of a white alloy, bearing some slight resemblance to silver, popularly called 'soft tommy.' The workmanship was on a par with the material. Each was so thoroughly vile that the artisans, though well drilled in such contemptible handicraft, were for once ashamed of the products of their labour. A manufacturer, it is said, entered a workshop unseen by his men heard one of them who had just finished a buckle throw it down with a hearty curse on the wearer who was to be. 'Why this profanity, and why imprecations on our customers?' was the master's natural inquiry. 'Because,' answered the man, 'I am sure he'll curse the maker as soon as he puts it on, and so I made up my mind to be beforehand with him.'"

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the progress of Birmingham trades was simply marvellous. We may well inquire why was this? What advantages had Birmingham

over other towns, which, although centuries ago of much more importance than Birmingham, have been far outstripped in the race for commercial fame? As a partial reply to this query I cannot do better than quote some words of the late Sam Timmins:—

"Our town seemed to have the power of attracting with its boundaries artisans of every trade and every degree of skill. Although not situated on any of the great highways of the land, it was near enough to be easily accessible. It awarded almost perfect freedom to all who chose to come. Dissenters and Quakers and heretics of all sorts were welcomed and undisturbed so far as their religious observances were concerned. No trades unions, no trade gilds, no companies existed, and every man was free to come and go, to found or to follow, or to leave a trade just as he chose. The system of apprenticeship was only partially known and Birmingham was emphatically the town of 'free trade,' where practically no restrictions, commercial or municipal, were known. Coal and iron were easily obtainable from the growing mines and ironworks of Staffordshire, and every facility was afforded by such proximities and by the numerous water mills and the central position of the town for the rapid extension of the hardware trades."

I should explain that the very fact that Birmingham had no corporation till last century was the reason of its openness to Dissenters. An Act passed in 1665, known as the Five Mile Act, prohibited any dissenting preacher from living

within five miles of a corporate town. The Act did not apply to Birmingham, not being corporate, and it therefore became a haven of refuge for Nonconformists. After the Toleration Act of 1689, meeting-houses began to be erected, but although the town was open to Dissenters and to Roman Catholics, it would not be true to leave you with the impression that the townspeople as a whole were favourable to them. They were not, and on more than one occasion meeting-houses and Roman Catholic churches were burnt down and destroyed in wild riots of the Birmingham lower classes, who shouted themselves hoarse in favour of Church and State.

To Sam Timmins's reasons for Birmingham's success, I will add some which have suggested themselves to me.

The first is that the town and its district were not under the domination of any great landowners, and land was readily available for building purposes. The second, which may seem more fanciful, is that Birmingham stands higher than almost any other large town in this country and I cannot but believe that its healthy and bracing climate has played a considerable part in producing those keen public-spirited

business men and alert artisans who have been the real foundation of the town's progress. Also by the end of the eighteenth century, Birmingham was the centre of a great canal system, which afforded cheap transit to the sea and most parts of the country, while in later years it became the centre of a network of railways providing easy access to all parts of England.

It is curious how many of the early industries of the town have gone. At the end of the eighteenth century steel was made at Kettle's steel-houses, which gave Steelhouse Lane its name, but this industry has almost died out, though I believe within the last two or three years it has been revived on a very small scale. The steel trade has gone with the cutlers to Sheffield. Then again in the eighteenth century, the weaving of hemp and cloth was a considerable industry in this district. In 1748 there was a meeting of master weavers at Camp Hill to fix minimum prices for their goods. Again it is not generally known that the first thread of cotton ever spun mechanically by rollers (by the means subsequently perfected by Arkwright) was made at Sutton

Coldfield in the year 1700. In 1741 the invention had made further progress, and yarn we are told "was spun by an engine turned by two asses walking round an axis in the large warehouse near the Well in the Upper Priory in Birmingham." Wyatt the inventor and his partners were, however, unsuccessful and lost their money. Nevertheless the spinning of cotton by rollers was carried on by various persons on the same spot in the Upper Priory, and with equal want of success, until the end of the eighteenth century. Since then spinning and weaving have absolutely died out in Birmingham. It would be interesting to endeavour to find out why, but the fact is undeniable. John Wyatt was not only the inventor of cotton spinning, he invented also the compound lever weighing machine for weighing carts and waggons, which is almost identical with those now used. He died in 1766, and his tombstone may still be seen in St. Philip's Churchyard.

In 1790 the fashion of buckles went out; the effeminate shoe string, as it was contemptuously called, taking the place of the buckle. Thousands of workpeople were thrown out of work. In 1791 and again in 1792 the buckle makers

petitioned the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York who asked their gentlemen and servants to discard shoe strings at once. But to quote the words of the petitioners, " Fashion was void of feeling and deaf to argument." Buckles had had their day, and a great staple trade of Birmingham died with the eighteenth century. They are, however, now made in Birmingham in considerable numbers chiefly for use in connection with braces and ladies' belts.

The button trade, however, increased rapidly in the latter half of the eighteenth century, growing as the buckle trade declined. In 1790 was invented the art of gilding buttons by dipping, and a good deal of deception was practised. To protect metal button makers, Acts of Parliament had actually been passed, imposing penalties on those who made buttons covered with cloth. But little by little, in spite of statutes and deputations to Royalty, the use of metal buttons went out ; fashion preferred cloth-covered buttons, and the metal button trade fell into decay. Yet mankind always wants buttons of some kind, whether cloth-covered, of metal, bone, china or wood, and the button trade is still one of Birmingham's greatest industries.

Buttons of every shape, size, and material are made here in vast quantities.

John Baskerville came to Birmingham and set up as a writing master in 1726. A slate which he cut to serve as a window sign (now preserved in the Reference Library) with the inscription "Gravestones cut in any of the Hands," gives evidence of that skill and sense of proportion which he manifested in later years in the manufacture of type and which entitles him to rank among the great printers of the world. His early inclination was in the direction of painting, and his japanned trays and waiters which he made in Moor Street became greatly admired as works of art. In 1750 he began to make experiments in type founding, in which Hutton tells us he sank £600 before he could produce one letter to please himself, and some thousands before he began to make a profit. His first venture was an edition of Virgil, which was followed by Milton's Poetical Works, the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer—by series of classics, an edition of Shakespeare and many other works, which will for centuries keep alive the fame of the Baskerville press. As Sam Timmins says: "There are few nobler chap-

ters in our local story than those which recorded how in a material and commercial age John Baskerville made our town famous throughout the civilized world, for the production of the best and greatest works of man, in a style which has rarely been equalled and even now has never been surpassed."

In the industrial history of our town, two names will always be remembered. They are those of Boulton and Watt. James Watt was not the first to discover that machines might be driven by steam, but he made such improvements in the steam engine that he may be regarded as its real inventor. He was a timid, retiring man, who suffered from ill health, but with Matthew Boulton formed an irresistible combination in the commercial world.

In 1769 was established the famous Soho Foundry, where the works of Boulton & Watt were carried on. Boulton was a man of great energy and hopefulness and undoubtedly a commercial genius. He deserves to hold the first place among the industrial heroes of Birmingham. Long before Soho was founded he set himself to show that the vulgar prejudice against Brummagem wares was wholly undeserved.

His buckles, his clasps, his chains, all that he produced were designed in the best fashion of the day, and worked out by the best men he could procure. It was well said of him that he "would buy any man's brains," and that was the secret of his success. His pleasant manners, his genial temper, his unflinching justice made him honoured, loved and feared. He exacted the best of everything—the best of material, the best of work, the best powers of his men; and he reaped his reward. He was the father of Soho, of which we may glean an idea from some extracts from Swinney's Birmingham Directory of 1774—

"The place is situated in the Parish of Handsworth in the County of Stafford, two miles distant from Birmingham. The building consists of four squares with shops, warehouses, etc., for 1,000 workmen, who in a great variety of branches excel in their several departments, not only in the fabrication of buttons, buckles, boxes, trinkets, etc., in gold and silver and a variety of compositions, but in many other arts long predominant in France who lose their reputation on a comparison with the product of this place. The number of ingenious mechanical contrivances they avail themselves of by the means of water mills, much facilitates their work and saves a great portion of time and labour. The plated work has an appearance of solid silver—their excellent ornamental pieces in ormolu are allowed to surpass anything of the kind made abroad. The environment of this building was seven

years ago a barren uncultivated heath, though now it contains many houses and wears the appearance of a populous country."

Not only was Boulton a commercial man, he also possessed much mechanical and engineering skill. He devised machinery for minting coins, which is still used with but small alterations. The copper coin of that day had become bad and debased and was much counterfeited. At last his firm was appointed to mint copper coins, and they made that beautiful coinage known as the Boulton copper. These coppers were very solid, the penny pieces weighing one ounce and the two-penny pieces two ounces each. For many months between 700,000 and 800,000 coins were struck every week. The Soho foundry produced in large numbers steam engines and pumps. The excellence of the work is shown by the fact that some of their steam engines for pumping worked for over a century. I saw one of these at work in the Birmingham Canal Company's pumping house at Ocker Hill; it has been replaced only within the last few years.

Under Boulton's management, Soho absorbed the best talent of the land—even Flaxman and Chantry provided designs for their manu-

factures. Experiments in artillery, in clock making by machinery, in telescopes, were made and always with success. But in spite of Boulton's practical skill and Watt's inventive genius the resources were rude and the machinery imperfect as compared with our own day. Nearly all depended on the individual workman's skill, and the Soho workmen achieved a fame which spread over the whole country.

Another engineer whose name may worthily be coupled with those of Boulton & Watt was William Murdock, also associated with Soho. He will always be remembered as the first man to show in practice the possibility of using coal gas as an illuminating power. The first public exhibition of what could be done with the new illuminant was the lighting of the front of the Soho foundry in 1802 to celebrate the Peace of Amiens. The claims Murdock made of what could be done with gas were received with general incredulity. "Do you mean to tell us, my friend," said a member of a Parliamentary Committee to Murdock, who was being examined before it, "that it will be possible to have a light without a wick?" "Yes, I do indeed," answered Murdock. "Ah, my friend," said

the legislator, shaking his head sadly, "you are trying to prove too much."

The great Soho factory was the forerunner of a great change which was during last century to come about in the industrial life of Birmingham and of the country at large. Until then, goods had been manufactured by a great number of small makers occupying small premises and employing a few hands only. Few manufacturers had used power, and those who had were dependent on water power, meagre in quantity and apt to disappear altogether in summer. But with the advent of the steam engine, whose power could readily be transmitted by means of bands and shafting into all parts of a factory, and with the increasing tendency to sub-division and specialization of labour, has come the great modern factory with its wonderful organization and system. Changes in this respect have come about more slowly in Birmingham than in other manufacturing towns. Probably nowhere else will be found at the present day so large a number of small manufacturers carrying on business in little workshops tucked away in courts and employing but few workpeople. Such manufacturers are

sometimes contemptuously called garret masters, and yet I believe their existence has been and is a healthy thing for the town. The variety of the Birmingham trades and the possibility of starting in many of them in a small way without much capital, have enabled many a capable artisan to rise in the world, and have created a larger lower middle class than in most large towns in England.

But the greatest developments of Birmingham took place in the nineteenth century. When it began, Birmingham had a population of about 70,000 and was still a comparatively unspoiled country town abounding in gardens and closely surrounded on all hands by open country and fields. When the nineteenth century closed Birmingham had swallowed up the green fields and its population had risen to half a million. The growth of population is vividly shown by the chart. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the buildings in the centre of the town were small and unimportant. The Town Hall did not then exist ; it was not built till about 1834. Gardens still filled in the space between New Street and St. Philip's Churchyard. Corporation Street did not exist

and Cornish's well-known bookshop in New Street formed part of an old building set back from the street with a row of dormer windows.

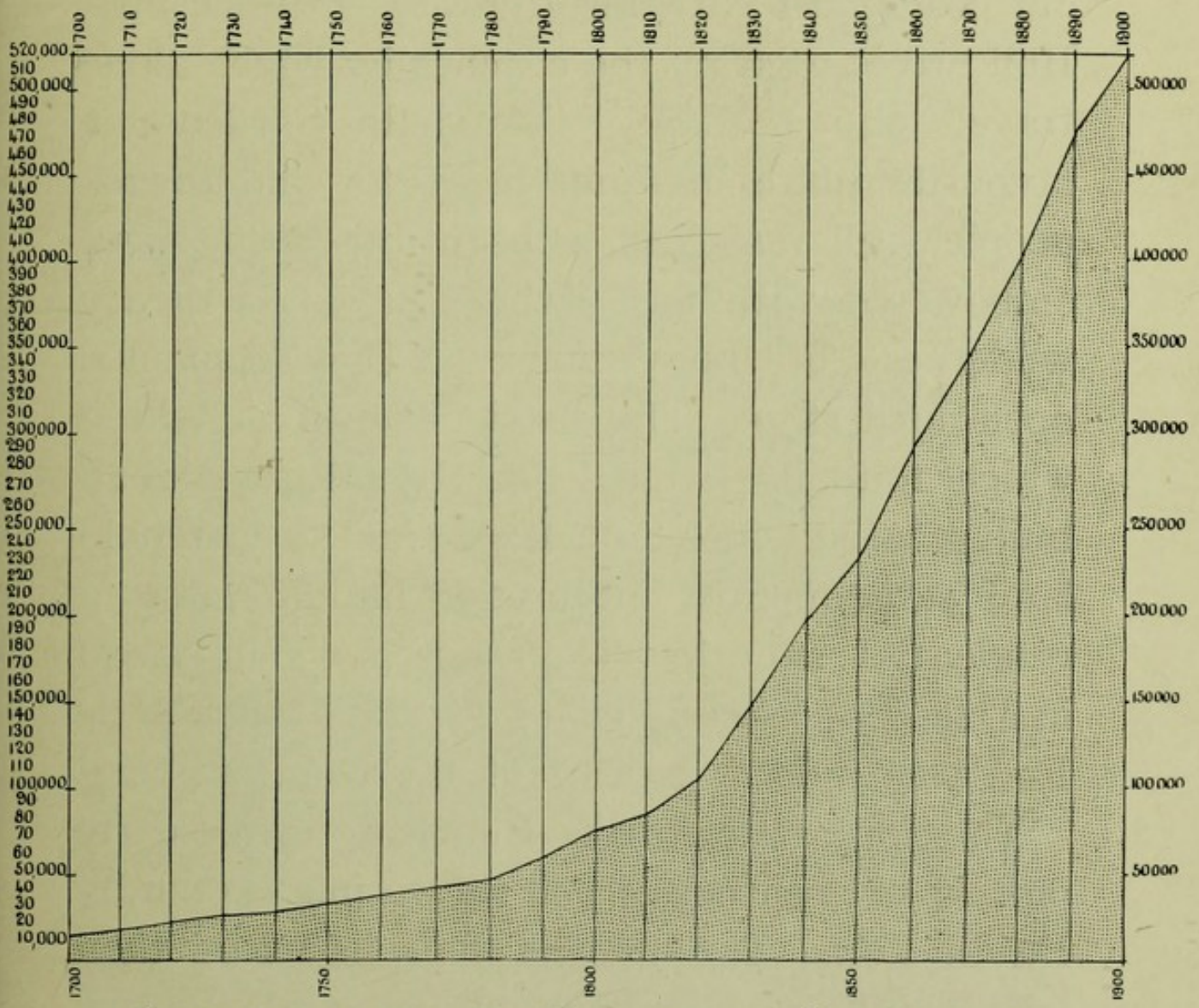


CHART ILLUSTRATING THE GROWTH OF THE POPULATION OF BIRMINGHAM BETWEEN 1700 AND 1900.

Further down New Street stood the old Grammar School with its tower and turret, later on to be replaced by the present Gothic building designed by Barry, the architect of the Houses of

Parliament. Beyond it was that fine old coaching inn, the *Hen and Chickens*. On the site of what is now Dalton Street was a picturesque old coachyard with an archway entrance into Bull Street used by the coaches by which alone travel was possible. Vauxhall Gardens, a favourite place of amusement for the townspeople, still remained a beautiful open space embowered with trees, where now is a dreary wilderness of dingy houses. They remained open until 1850. The district known as Ashted which took its name from Dr. Ash, who had built a large house on a large tract of leasehold land subsequently cut up for building, was a residential suburb. The houses which stood in Dale End were relics of the days when Dale End was indeed a piece of the country.

The appearance of the Bull Ring in the early part of last century is well shown in a sketch by David Cox. The market hall had not then been built and the vegetable and poultry market was held in the open space at the top of the Bull Ring. St. Martin's Church had not then been rebuilt and in the distance we see that Small Heath is still open country. Early in the last century the Market Hall was built



Cornish's Book Shop in Olden Days.

by the Town Commissioners and was the first really important building the town possessed.

Early in the nineteenth century Bingley House, the residence of Charles Lloyd, was still standing and had a park in front of it (now the site of the Prince of Wales Theatre) in which rabbits were still to be seen. There was a turnpike gate at the Five Ways, and I remember hearing from my grandmother how on wintry nights they took lanterns with them when they walked up Broad Street to her father's house in Islington Row. This was on the edge of the country and had an unbroken view over the fields towards Edgbaston Church. As the years of last century passed, streets were made and small houses were built in all directions. Unfortunately there were then no building byelaws and Town Planning Acts were not even dreamt of and people built as they thought fit. Thousands and tens of thousands of back-to-back houses were built in courts often approached from the street by a tunnel entry, sanitation as we now know it was not thought of and the unsalubrious midden reigned supreme. Of all these things we are reaping the fruits to-day.

The evil has been intensified by the pre-

valence of the system of long leaseholds which has been almost universal in Birmingham. In many instances land was let for 99 years for building in large plots of perhaps an acre. These plots were divided up and sub-let and again divided and underlet. The original ground landlord knew nothing of his sub-under-lessees and lost what little control he ever had or power of enforcing repairing covenants. Many of these long leases are now expiring and in many cases demolition and rebuilding are absolutely necessary. The lessees have got all they could in the shape of rent, and having regard to the fact that their interest in the property had nearly expired, have spent as little as they could in repairs. To an audience of Birmingham men it is unnecessary to elaborate this theme—you know it too well. But on the other hand I think it is only fair to point out that Birmingham owes its most charming suburb to the fact that it has been in the hands of one owner who has declined to sell and who has kept it as a purely residential district by letting it on building leases, containing stringent covenants as to the purposes for which the land may be used. Edgbaston began to be developed by Lord

Calthorpe for building in the early part of the nineteenth century, when it consisted of open fields. No town in the country possesses a suburb which is so truly a garden suburb as Edgbaston. One result has been that the Birmingham middle classes have continued to reside in the city and within a mile or two of its centre. They have therefore continued in close touch with the public life and charitable institutions of the town; the result has been wholly beneficial and I believe that much of the public spirit on which Birmingham prides itself is due to the fact that the wealthier inhabitants do not cut themselves off from the city by residing at a distance.

As regards the other outskirts, such as Saltley, Balsall Heath, Sparkbrook, Bordesley and Rotten Park, which of recent years the ever-growing population of Birmingham has covered with houses, they do not differ from the suburbs of most large English towns. For the most part the builder has put as many houses on the ground as the byelaws would permit, so that the ground landlord might get the maximum ground rent. In many of the roads a deplorable uniformity of style prevails, one house being



NEW STREET, BEFORE CORPORATION STREET WAS CUT.

like every other. The result is drab and monotonous in the extreme and accentuates the natural dullness of the suburbs of a large town. But I believe the spirit of the age is now against such things. The garden village of Bournville has taught us a lesson in this respect, and it is now being followed in some new building schemes within the city. One fact in the development of Birmingham is worth signalizing, and that is that its inhabitants cling to self-contained dwelling-houses and consequently there are but few of those monstrous tenement-houses which are to be found in such towns as London, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Within the last thirty years the centre of Birmingham has been opened up and vastly improved by the Improvement Scheme which gave us Corporation Street, the finest street in the city, and swept away a great quantity of squalid and insanitary property. We owe this scheme mainly to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, but also in some degree to the late Alderman White on whom most of the detail work fell. The Improvement Scheme swept away the last vestiges of those gardens in the centre of Birmingham

which were once so marked a feature of the town. One of these gardens was at the back of 93, Bull Street, which belonged to my father. It was grimy and unkempt, but a poplar tree was green in spring-time and there was a



GARDEN AT BACK OF 93, BULL STREET, NOW PART OF CORPORATION STREET.

summerhouse at the end in which we sometimes played as children when we came into town.

The central shopping and office district of Birmingham is, I am told by surveyors, the smallest of any large town in England. It

is bounded by New Street, High Street, Bull Street, and Colmore Row. Outside that area the value of land drops enormously. On the south side the great mass of New Street Station and its approaches prevent the spread of the shopping area, but on the north side the office and professional area is beginning to extend beyond Edmund Street. Such a street as Bread Street, formerly one of the most squalid and disreputable streets in Birmingham, has changed its name and exchanged its slums for palatial offices and buildings. It seems likely that the large number of Arcades in the centre of the town has been brought about by the need for increasing the number of shops in the very restricted shopping district.

I propose now to conclude this address by dealing with the development of some of Birmingham's principal industries within comparatively modern times. And I think I shall be right in giving first place to manufactures connected with a metal pre-eminently used in Birmingham. What Manchester is in cotton, Bradford in wool and Sheffield in steel, Birmingham is in brass. Its articles of cabinet and general brass-foundry, its gas and electric light fittings and bedsteads,

are to be found in every part of the civilized world. Its solid drawn brass tubes in myriads of boilers assist in generating the steam which drives the railway train across the land and the ship over the sea, while much of the yellow metal sheathing and bolts of the ships are made in this neighbourhood. The first Atlantic cable was made at Hay Mills, near Birmingham, and enormous quantities of telegraph and telephone wires are produced here.

Brass was not manufactured in England till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and articles of brass began to be made here in the seventeenth century. In 1740 the first "brasshouse" where brass (an alloy of copper and zinc) was made, was established by a Mr. Turner in Coleshill Street. It is difficult to explain why the trade should have so developed in Birmingham, a place remote from mines of either copper or zinc. The town, however, possesses fine beds of casting sand well suited for making moulds, and no doubt the possession of a body of artisans well trained in working metal was an important factor in the settlement of the brass trade in this district.

The jewellery trade also has its seat in Birming-

ham. One must admit that the reputation of the town for jewellery was not at one time of the best, and some of its products merited the term "Brummagem." It used to be said that if you gave a Birmingham jeweller two old copper kettles and a sovereign he would soon make you £100 worth of jewellery. But the day for these taunts is largely past. The establishment of the School of Art and the Jewellers' School has assisted in improving the class of goods made, and there can be no doubt that there is now more jewellery of the very highest quality produced in Birmingham than in all the rest of the country. Although the high class jeweller in the West End would not care to admit it, at least half of his stock of gold and silver goods and jewellery comes from Birmingham. In addition there is of course an enormous output of articles of almost incredible cheapness at manufacturers' prices, which are very different from those charged by the retailers. The trade employs many thousands of hands; it is located entirely in a part of the town known as the Jewellers' Quarter, near St. Paul's Square. The business is peculiar in its excessive sub-division—one man will make nothing but rings, another

specializes in gold or silver chains, another in watch cases and so on. The sale and distribution of the articles made are largely carried out by factors who collect goods from the manufacturers and whose travellers are in touch with the retailers throughout the country. There is a Birmingham Assay Office where gold and silver wares are assayed and marked. This was established in 1773 on the petition of Matthew Boulton on behalf of himself and other Birmingham manufacturers of silver ware. Closely connected with the trade of jewellery is that of electro-plating. Plating or covering copper with silver has been an important business in Birmingham since Boulton established his manufactory of plated goods in 1764, and many beautiful articles were made of sheets of copper on the surface of which a thin sheet of silver had been laid and bedded together, partly by mechanical compression and partly by heat. In 1840, however, Messrs. Elkington invented the process for electrically depositing silver on copper and other metals and this very rapidly revolutionized the trade. The process of plating with silver or nickel is used at many hundreds of works in the town. Mr. Baker,

the principal of this department at the Technical School, told me that he himself knew of at least 600 works which did electro-plating.

The steel pen trade deserves a few words of special mention. The development of the trade in its modern form dates from about 1830 when steel pens began to be made by presses, and the cost of producing rapidly diminished. The first steel pens cost 1*d.* each. Sir Josiah Mason (to whom we owe the Mason College) was one of the first to learn the way to turn out steel pens of first class quality and the establishment of the trade in Birmingham will always be associated with the names of Mason, Perry and Gillott. Birmingham certainly may be called the pen shop of the world and its output is prodigious.

Other trades peculiarly associated with Birmingham are the manufactures of pins, screws, iron and brass bedsteads, hollow-ware, heavy edge tools, coffin furniture, steam and electric machinery, machine tools of all kinds, and in recent years cycles and motors. There are of course in addition an almost infinite number of small trades, which time will not allow me to touch on.

Birmingham has always been a great banking centre, and at least four of the great joint stock banks of England owe their origin to Birmingham. These include the two largest English banks, Lloyds, and the London City and Midland.

It is an impossible task to crowd into a lecture of an hour and a quarter anything approaching an adequate account of the development of the streets, buildings, and industries of the town. I have been able to give you in merest outline only an account of how there has come together this vast aggregation of buildings and men in the midst of which I stand. There is much in our city and its inhabitants, in its many sordid streets and degraded lives, to call for our blame and our tears, and the thought of Birmingham should bring to all of us—and I am sure it does to this audience—a burning desire to do what lies in us to make the city and the lives of its inhabitants, healthier, brighter and more beautiful.

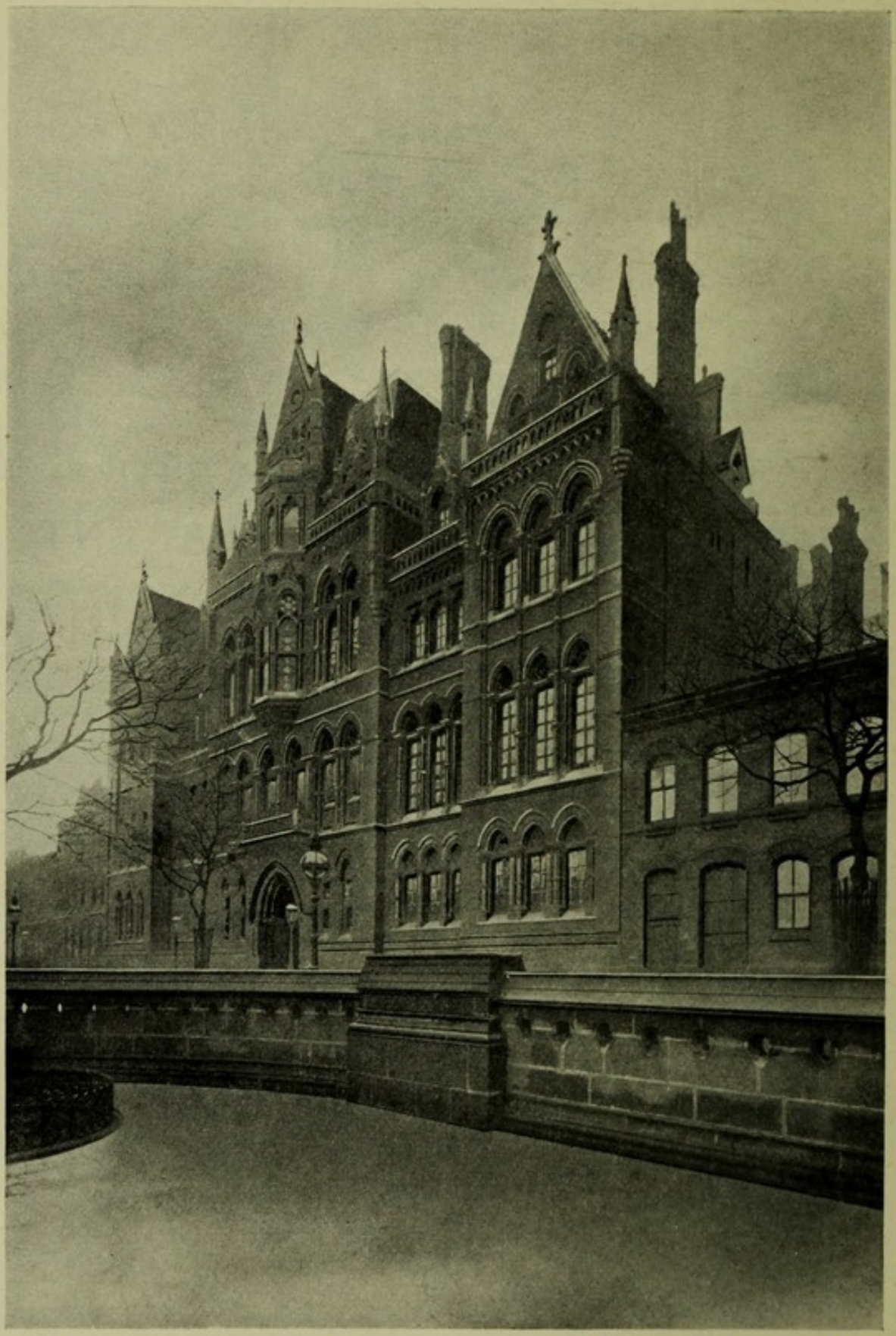
It seems likely that before long the area of Birmingham will be extended and that many of the surrounding districts, whose populations are already so intimately connected with

the City, will be welded into it. "Union is strength," and we may confidently hope that in the "Greater Birmingham" of the twentieth century will be manifested the same civic enterprise, desire for its welfare and jealousy for its honour, as have in the past distinguished the Capital of the Midlands.



EARLY HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS PARENT INSTITUTIONS

By Sir Oliver Lodge



THE MASON COLLEGE BUILDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE CENTRE OF THE CITY.

Occupied by the Faculties of Arts, Medicine and Commerce, together with the Biological Departments.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS PARENT INSTITUTIONS

By Sir Oliver Lodge

Queen's College.

Fifty years ago the educational institutions of Birmingham—always excepting the ancient foundation of King Edward's School, whose history is a much more serious piece of work—were limited to the Midland Institute on the one hand, and Queen's College on the other.

The Midland Institute started about the year 1850, and has continued its beneficent work under conditions but slightly changed ever since. It may be regarded as a precursor of the Technical School in Suffolk Street, and as the nucleus of the School of Music of the University, but otherwise it can be regarded as a separate and supplementary and co-operative institution.

Queen's College, which has now been com-

pletely absorbed, was, however, the older of the two, for it started under that name in 1843, and before that had a primitive history which may be briefly sketched thus :—

It appears that in November 1825 an announcement was made in the following terms :—

" Mr. Wm. Sands Cox will commence a course of Anatomical Lectures, with Physiological and Surgical Observations, on Wednesday, December 1st, 1825, at 12 o'clock. The course will be continued during the ensuing winter on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, at 24 Temple Row."

This at that time constituted the Birmingham Medical School,[1] which in 1826 was incorporated as "The Royal School of Medicine and Surgery in Birmingham" by William IV. It was housed in one room.

In 1829 Mr. Sands Cox offered to build a set of rooms (to hold a museum and library, to be raised by subscription) on condition that the body of *Lecturers* should guarantee rent. This they did ; so rooms were built in Snow Hill. In 1833 Snow Hill was bought by the Great

[1] It ought to be said, however, that medical instruction had been given before that date in the General Hospital.

Western Railway, and the School moved to Paradise Street.

Now we come to the first extensive benefactor, Dr. Warneford, LL.D., Rector of Bourton-on-the Water. In 1838 he became interested in the welfare of the school, he converted it into a residential College of the Church of England, and in the ensuing seventeen years had given to it and to Queen's Hospital together no less a sum than £27,150. In 1843 it was incorporated as Queen's College, and Queen's Hospital was built. In 1846 it began to prepare students for a London Degree in various subjects, and among other Chairs there was one of Pastoral Theology and one of Law. The Chair of Law was at one time held by our friend Dr. G. J. Johnson.

In 1852 a Professor of Classics, and another of Mathematics, was appointed. But, says Dr. Windle, "In spite of donations and subscriptions, Queen's fell into difficulties—debts and quarrels prevented any hope of its becoming a University (which is what Chancellor Law, who has written material for a history of the College, wanted)."

In 1851 a rival institution was started, in connexion with the General Hospital, by the

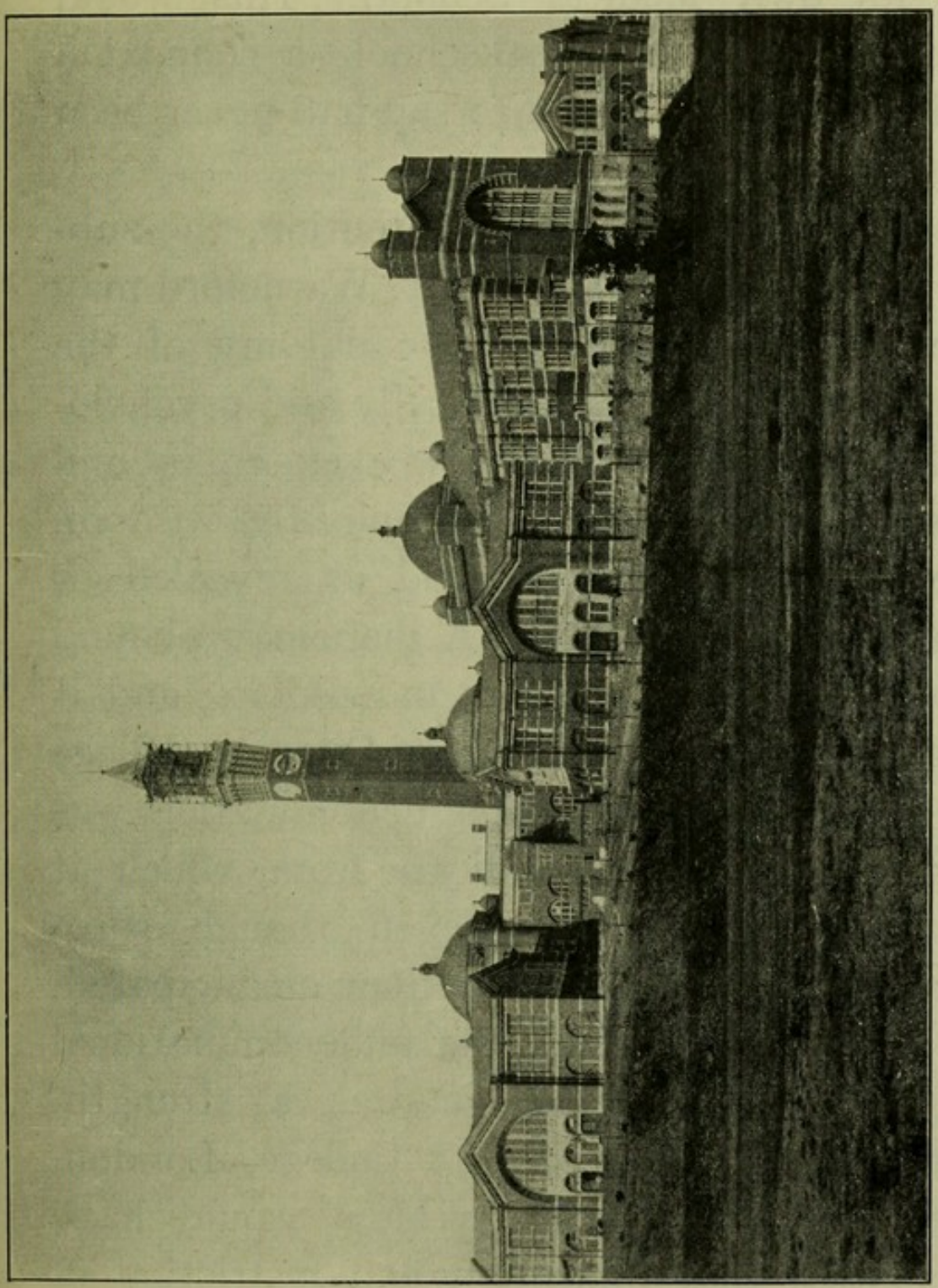
name of Sydenham College. This was conducted entirely by the medical practitioners of the town and district, whereas Queen's College was governed by Queen's Governors, and was mainly theological till 1867. At that date the Charity Commissioners removed most of the religious stipulations, and in the ensuing year the two colleges were amalgamated.

Bennett May and Bostock Hill were Professors in 1876.

But in 1880 the more important foundation of Mason College was opened, and in 1882 the Governing bodies of Queen's College and Mason College arranged (under sanction of the Charity Commissioners) that the Chairs of Chemistry, Physiology, and Botany (afterwards also Physics and Comparative Anatomy) should be held by the same Professors for both institutions. The Medical Staff of Queen's accepted the same posts in Mason College, except three, and those three were then filled as follows :—The vacant Chair of Medicine by Dr. Saundby ; the Lectureship on Ophthalmology by Mr. Priestley Smith ; the Lectureship on Dental Surgery by Mr. F. E. Huxley.

In 1892 the Medical Faculty of Queen's was

transferred to Mason College ; for, as Dr. Windle



General View of the New Buildings of the University at Bournbrook, Edgbaston.

Taken from near the Power Station. The highest building is the Great Hall with Students' rooms and Refectory below.

says, "The Medical Faculty at Queen's had outgrown its buildings. Mason College offered to

take it over (as Manchester had already done with its own Medical School). This would divorce it from theological school—a connexion which it is not too much to say had never been to its advantage."

In illustration of this contention, the subjects set for prize essays by Dr. Warneford may serve as an example: "the anatomy of the fifth pair of nerves anatomically and psychologically considered, with a view to exemplify and set forth, by instance or example, the wisdom, power, and goodness of God as revealed or declared in Holy Writ." A man may abound in goodness and be deficient in wisdom; and it is clear that the association of Queen's College with a particular religious denomination was a weakness and a handicap from which it never wholly recovered, even though some years later it was to some extent emancipated. And on the other hand, the undenominational condition of Mason College was a strength. So it has been with King's College, London. Experience proves, what wisdom would have anticipated, that limitation and restriction of the spirit of religion are obstructions and not aids to educational institutions.

So the Medical Faculty in Queen's College henceforth became the Queen's Faculty of Medicine in Mason College. At the present time it is one of the full Faculties of the University, and the name Queen's has ceased to have any but an historical significance.

Mason College.

Now we take up the history of the foundation known as Mason College, which was endowed by its founder with property amounting to £200,000, and cost £60,000 to erect and equip.

Josiah Mason was born in 1795 a poor boy in Kidderminster, who earned a precarious livelihood by selling cakes about the streets. At the age of 20 he came to Birmingham, which is thus described :—

" A town of 100,000 inhabitants, fast rising in population, wealth and influence ; an industry varied beyond computation, and embracing every kind of metal work, from the great engines made at Soho (Boulton and Watt) to the steel trinkets forged and filed and polished in some garret in a by-street ; an army of workers, energetic, ingenious, and inventive in the highest degree, capable of independent exertion, and at the same time of adapting themselves to the higher organization of large factories.

" The factors and merchants were prepared to buy goods offered to them by little garret-masters—workmen who employed a few boys with perhaps a man or two—and the

large manufacturers had usually in association with them some of these 'out-workers,' as they were called."

His adventures in Birmingham must be read in Mr. Bunce's *Life of Josiah Mason.* His first successful work was in connexion with split-rings for holding keys, and he subsequently took up both steel pens and electro-plating. Steel pens had been known before, but he made such improvements in them that they gradually ousted the old quill for ordinary use; though in my youth I remember hearing elderly people abuse steel pens as new-fangled and uncomfortable things.

In 1869 he opened his Orphanage at Erdington for 300 girls and boys, and endowed it with £200,000 worth of land. He encountered considerable difficulties in getting the Orphanage approved, partly because in his Trust Deed he insisted that no catechism distinctive of any religious sect should be taught. On the other hand, he wished that the children should be carefully taught Scripture. And inasmuch as he is frequently referred to as if he wished his foundations to be atheistic or godless, it is well to quote the following provision:—

"The trustees shall make such provision as they shall

from time to time think fit for the assembling of the children for Divine worship in the institution ; having regard, as far as possible, to the earnest desire of the founder that the children may be trained up as simple and sincere followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, without reference to sectarian distinctions and prejudices."

Whatever may be the rights or the wrongs of this position, it clearly dates from a time when alarm at the narrowness and bigotry of theologians was widely prevalent. Many early trust deeds bear the impress of this disastrous period, when the discoveries of Darwin were hailed with anathemas, and when the feeling existed which was expressed by a member of an Adult Sunday School class, " It would be a good thing if this here science was suppressed." How utterly different the times are in which we live the breadth and liberality of the leading clergy to-day make manifest to all. The atmosphere of bigotry subsists only among the illiterate and the obscure, just as the germs of typhus now flourish only in the filth of the slums.

On the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of Mason College on the Founder's eightieth birthday, February 23, 1875, Josiah Mason handed in a most interesting autobio-

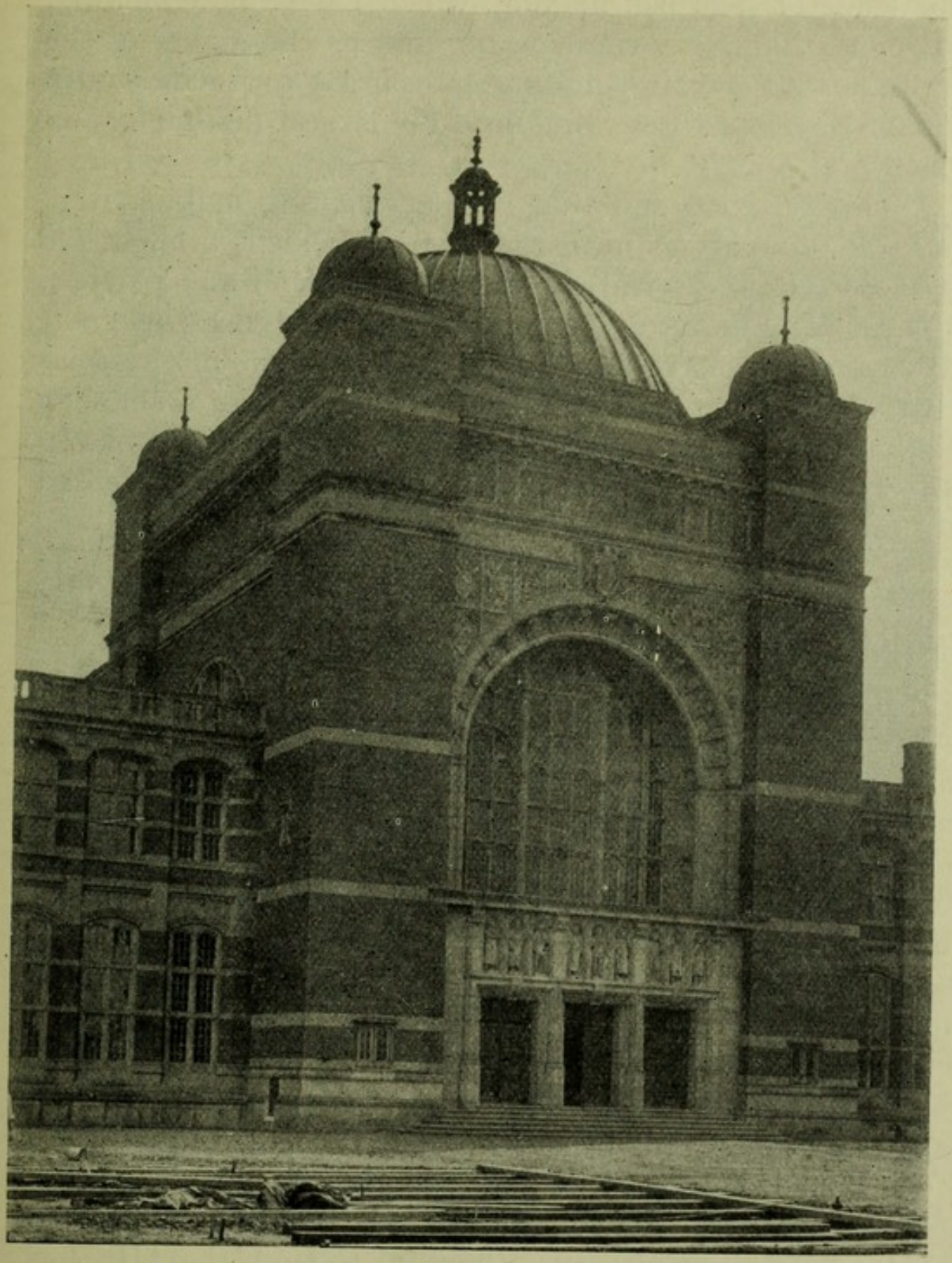
graphical sketch—from which I will make a few extracts—supplemented by a statement of his hopes and ambitions for the College which he foresaw rising in the cleared space near Edmund Street :—

" When I was a young man," (he said)—" it is so long ago that while still living in this generation I can recall the memories of a time long past—there were no means of scientific teaching open to the artisan classes of our manufacturing towns ; and those who, like myself, would gladly have benefited by them were compelled to plod their weary way,under disadvantages and through difficulties of which our young men of this day can form no adequate idea. Schools at that time were few and poor ; there were no institutions of popular teaching, no evening classes to which youths might go after their day's work was ended. Whatever I learned I had to teach myself in the intervals of laborious and precarious occupations, first at Kidderminster, my birthplace, and later in Birmingham, the home of my adoption, and the place where sixty years of my life have been spent. . . .

" At thirty years of age, with twenty pounds of savings as my whole fortune, I was brought into association with one of the most honourable, industrious, and ingenious of men, Mr. Samuel Harrison, the inventor of split-rings, whom I served for a time, and to whose business on his retirement I succeeded. Mr. Harrison was no common man ; he was a friend of Dr. Priestley, whom he assisted in many of his philosophical experiments, and for whom, I may mention, as a matter of interesting local history, he made the first steel pen that ever was made in Birmingham.

* * * * *

" To the business I received from him I afterwards added



MAIN ENTRANCE DOME OF THE GREAT HALL.

the trade of steel pen making, which I have now followed for more than forty-seven years, first as the maker of the well-known Perryian pens, and later in my own name, until I have developed the works into the largest pen factory in the world. . . .

"This business and that of the split-ring making were my sole occupations until 1840, when accident brought me in close relations with my late valued friend and partner, Mr. G. R. Elkington, who was then applying the great discovery of electro-deposition; and through my association with him in this undertaking I may claim a share in the creation of a form of scientific industry which has so largely enriched the town of Birmingham, and increased its fame throughout the world."

And then he goes on, in memorable words which may be thus abbreviated :—

"The scheme of the College is a large one, and I have sought to make it as liberal as possible in the character and extent of the teaching, the system of management, and the mode and terms of admission. The trustees are authorized, and indeed enjoined, to revise the scheme of instruction from time to time, so as to adapt it to the requirements of the district in future years, as well as at the present time. I have great, and I believe well-founded, hope for the future of this foundation. I look forward to its class-rooms and lecture halls being filled with a succession of earnest and intelligent students, willing not only to learn all that can be taught, but in their turn to communicate their knowledge to others, and to apply it to useful purposes for the benefit of the community. It is in this expectation that I have done my part, thankful to God that He has given me the means and the will to do it; hoping that from this place many original and beneficent discoveries may proceed; trusting that I, who have never been blessed with

children of my own, may yet in these students leave behind me an intelligent, earnest, industrious, truth-loving and truth-seeking progeny for generations to come."

From the earliest calendar of Mason College we learn that the founder took the keenest pleasure in the progress of the work, visiting the building almost daily, inspecting every detail, and giving from time to time most valuable help in the way of suggestion. His one desire was that the place should be in all respects worthy of the town, and of the purposes to which it was to be devoted, and, we may venture to add, worthy also of the feeling in which the work originated. In one respect, and of that of vital consequence, Sir Josiah Mason was singularly fortunate, namely, in the choice of Mr. J. A. Cossins as his architect. His labour in connexion with the building has been beyond praise. It has indeed been with him a labour of love. In order to prepare himself to make an adequate plan, he visited, at the request of the trustees, all the principal scientific colleges on the Continent and in our own country. In the work of building, also, Mr. Cossins undertook labours of an unusual kind; for the College was erected without making a

single contract. The architect himself laid out the work, and saw personally to the execution of every detail.

I am in hopes that the old and well-known name of "Mason College" may once more be applied to this building—the Mason College Building of the University—and that the more splendid buildings in Edgbaston may be known by some other distinctive name. I cannot predict the future of this central place, but I do not anticipate that it will ever cease to be an educational establishment. Nor do I regard further expenditure on fitting it for that work as likely to be thrown away.

Josiah Mason died in June 1881. He must have been a very remarkable man. His biographer, Mr. Thackray Bunce, whose *Life of Josiah Mason* is exceedingly well worth reading, makes the following statements regarding Mason's attitude towards religion:—

The dogmatic and ecclesiastical aspects of religion were repugnant to him; but for all this he was a sincere believer in Christianity, especially in its practical aspects. Faith was much with him; but not faith without works. Of one thing he was firmly persuaded—of the

direct interposition of the Almighty in the lives of men. He believed and reverently declared his own life to have been frequently guided in this way at critical periods. His meeting with Mr. Harrison is one of the instances



INTERIOR OF THE GREAT HALL, ARRANGED FOR EXAMINATIONS.

Showing Organ presented by members of the family of the late Charles Harding, and window presented by Sir John Holder.

he was accustomed to cite in proof of this belief; his preservation from falling a victim to a railway collision in France, by a seemingly accidental delay of his journey, was another; and the impulse which led him to think of

establishing his Orphanage was a third. He not only believed in direct interpositions of Providence in individual cases, but he also believed it to be possible to receive communications from another world. He often mentioned, with much solemnity, and with absolute conviction, an instance which he alleged to have occurred to himself. It happened on the evening of September 22, 1865, and the narrative is now given, as nearly as possible, in his own words :—

" My partner, Mr. Elkington, was ill at Pool Park, where he lived, in Denbighshire. I was in my study, at Norwood House, at Erdington (the place in which the writer, Mr. Bunce, heard the narration). I had got up from the table to put away some papers, when I heard a strain of music, very sweet and solemn, and unlike anything I had ever heard before. It began with a low note, then swelled out louder, continuing for some time, and then dying gradually away. It seemed to come from the chimney-piece. I listened, awe-struck and silent. In a few moments it was repeated, just the same as before—first a low tone, then a fuller one, and then dying away. I went, in a little while, into the dining-room, where my wife was sitting, and I said, ' My dear, Elkington is dead ; I am sure he is.' The next morning, when I went down to Lancaster Street, I had not been there long when Mr. Ryder (a gentleman employed by Elkington and Mason) came in with an appearance of distress.

" I said, ' Ryder, I know what you are come for ; you need not tell me—Elkington is dead ; I knew it last night '."

It is interesting that a form of telepathic impression now fairly generally recognized as possible, should have occurred to and been recorded by so matter-of-fact a man as Josiah Mason.

Recognition of his eminent services and especially of the wise clause conferring elasticity for future development upon the undertaking —a clause in which I think I detect the hand of his friend and adviser, Dr. G. J. Johnson—was conveyed by the trustees to whom the gift was made, in a reply which contained the following words :—

" You have ordered the method of administration on the most liberal scale—providing that the benefits of both Orphanage and College shall be open to all, without distinction of sex or restriction of class, birthplace, or creed. You have also, in regard to the College, made special provision that the instruction to be given within its walls shall not be stereotyped in range or character by the will of the founder, but shall be revised at specified intervals, so as to adapt it to the growing requirements and changing circumstances of future times. While providing for perpetuity you have thus ensured the renewal and development of healthy life."

Nothing could have been truer than the forecast of events suggested by this sentence ; and we may re-echo the words of the obituary notice in the second Mason College Calendar :

"His name will stand among the highest of those who, by their foresight, self-sacrifice, and generosity, have advanced the cause of the higher education among their fellow-citizens."

At the luncheon which followed the laying of the foundation-stone in 1875, speeches were made by Professor Huxley, Professor Max Müller, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Bunce, Dr. Dale, and others; and some of the utterances of Professor Huxley on that occasion have been specially worthy of attention ever since. It is difficult to realize the hesitation that there was, even in those days, about emphasis on Physical Science in a liberal education, whereas nowadays the danger of over-emphasizing it to the exclusion of older subjects may be not insignificant. Against both errors Huxley warns us :—

"From the time that the first suggestion to introduce physical science into ordinary education was timidly whispered, until now, the advocates of scientific education have met with opposition of two kinds. How often have we not been told that the study of physical science is incompetent to confer culture; that it touches none of the higher problems of life; and, what is worse, that the continual devotion to scientific studies tends to generate a narrow and bigoted belief in the applicability of scientific methods to search after truth of all kinds. Nevertheless, I am the last person to question the importance of literary education, or



THE CHAMBERLAIN MEMORIAL TOWER OR CAMPANILE.

Taken before the neighbouring buildings were finished. The Clock and Bell were presented by the Contractor for the Main Buildings, Mr. Rowbotham.

to suppose that intellectual culture can be complete without it. An exclusively scientific training will bring about a mental twist as surely as an exclusively literary training. The value of the cargo does not compensate for a ship's being out of trim ; and I should be very sorry to think that the Scientific College would turn out none but lop-sided men."

The original professors at Mason College in 1880 were Professor Hill, now Vice-Chancellor of the London University ; Professor Tilden, now Professor of Chemistry at the Royal College of Science ; Professor Bridge, now unhappily deceased ; and Professor Poynting.

Professors Sonnenschein, Lapworth and Hillhouse were appointed only a year or two later.

Following up the history of Mason College—the notable services of Dr. Heslop, especially in connexion with its library, must not be overlooked. He seems to have been constantly in attendance, and, on the strength of both work and donations, can be regarded almost as a second founder. Among other donations "A Birmingham Manufacturer," who I believe was the venerable Mr. Follett Osler, gave funds amounting to more than £6,000. The labours of Dr. Windle, and of others, some still with us, who ought to be mentioned, contributed to the

rapid development which set in during the latter years of last century.

In 1896, the first period of fifteen years since the death of the founder having expired, the trustees incorporated Mason College as a University College, with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain as President, Dr. Heath as Principal, and Alderman Clayton as Chairman of Council. A year or two previously the Day Training College for Teachers had been transferred to it. In this Training College George Dixon was specially interested. He offered £1,000 towards a Chair of Education, and another £1,000 for a Chair of Economics. And Sir George Kenrick gave £5,000 to endow this branch of College work for the training of teachers.

Birmingham University.

But following soon after this—even as early as 1897—a movement began for converting the College into a University, and in 1897 or 1898 the President and members of the Birmingham Clinical Board forwarded a resolution passed in July, urging the pressing necessity for obtaining degree-granting powers ; "because Birmingham students are placed in an unfair position as

compared with those of other institutions which can offer greater facilities for obtaining degrees." In November 1898 the Council recommended the Court of Governors to authorize them to prepare a petition to Her Majesty in Council praying that a royal Charter may be granted, establishing a University in Birmingham.

So now then we come to recent times. A subscription list was opened, headed by George Kenrick's name for £10,000—it will not be forgotten that as Lord Mayor he recently gave another £10,000. Mr. Chamberlain warmly took the matter up, collected £50,000 from Mr. Carnegie, another £50,000 from an anonymous donor now known to be Sir Charles Holcroft, who has since given a sum of equal magnitude, stirred enthusiasm in the idea of creating a University in this city, raised the standard of aim from £100,000 to a quarter of a million, which ultimately became something more like half a million, and with unexampled speed and dexterity obtained a Royal Charter; so that in 1900 the University was fairly launched, beginning its career full-fledged and working before the twentieth century opened in January 1901.

What has happened since then—how great the services of the Vice-Chancellor have been, the number of new Chairs that have been established, and a fresh Faculty created—it would be long to tell. But the present state of the calendar indicates what has been done, and suggests the opportunity for a great deal more.

Buildings are visible to the eye, but endowments which have entailed much sacrifice in their collecting are less conspicuous, and only bring in a small income. Perhaps it is hardly realized how small a proportion the fees which students are called upon to pay bear to the whole necessary income. The expenditure overpowers such available sources of income four-fold, so that whereas a great public school can be self-sustaining and may be even a profit-making concern, a University or University College subsists almost entirely at the goodwill of the citizens who support it.

While expressing our recognition of the disinterested services of founders, workers, and benefactors, we must not fail to urge that continuous liberality on the part of the Municipality and of the National Exchequer is necessary—in this county as in others—if full use is

to be made of the beginnings of opportunity thus provided. Some day the nation will realize that it can now gather in and assimilate the fruits of the nineteenth century era of discovery, an era happily not yet over ; then it will determine to make the necessary outlay, and will insist that the youth of the next generation shall be really taught something of the mighty mass that is now known by a few, and so shall be better and more substantially educated than the youth of any previous generation in the history of the world.

BIRMINGHAM CITY GOVERNMENT

By E. V. Hiley.



ART GALLERY, BIRMINGHAM.

BIRMINGHAM CITY GOVERNMENT

By E. V. Hiley

So intricate and interesting a subject as the City Government of Birmingham cannot be adequately dealt with in an hour's lecture. Fortunately other lecturers are to deal with various branches of it, so that we can confine our attention to the functions of the City Council, and the Justices.

Boroughs, generally speaking, derive their primary governing powers from charters granted by the Crown. Some of these documents date back to early Norman times and confer widely different powers. In feudal times, when a town belonged to some great lord, and had gradually sprung up near to his castle, smaller charters or grants were made by the lord to the town, generally of market rights or tolls or of pasturage. These ancient charters, though of

interest to the antiquary, are of no practical importance nowadays. At the present time, boroughs are governed by a council which is generally the creation of a charter, but the powers of the councils are conferred by acts of parliament, some of which are applicable to all towns in the country, and others are purely local, having been passed by parliament at the instigation of the council itself with the consent of the ratepayers.

Boroughs are divided into two classes—county and non-county boroughs—the distinction being that the latter are subject to the control in many things of the county council and are not therefore completely autonomous. Boroughs become cities either upon the creation of the see of a bishop or by grant from the Crown.

Turning to Birmingham, we may note that the City Council owes its existence to the charter which was granted by the late Queen Victoria on October 31, 1838, and although it has been in existence for only seventy years, the Council has developed the science of municipal government to such a degree as to excite the admiration of economic students at home and abroad.

Government of Birmingham prior to 1838.

Before describing the constitution of the Council, it will be interesting to take a short survey of the state of local government existing in Birmingham prior to the year 1838. Unlike many cities, Birmingham has very little municipal history. The town possessed no corporation owning valuable land and enjoying privileges of market rights and trading; in fact, until nearly the close of the eighteenth century it was ruled chiefly by the lord of the manor through his two manorial courts. In the Court Baron, byelaws for local government were made and local business was transacted. In the Court Leet certain judicial powers were exercised, stewards were appointed to look to the lord's interest and to collect his dues, bailiffs were elected to oversee the fairs and markets, and constables to apprehend criminals and maintain order. The churchwardens and the overseers administered the affairs of the ecclesiastical parish and managed the relief of the poor; and the surveyors of highways, who were chosen at parish meetings, were responsible for the condition of the roads.

Of the two manorial courts the Court Leet

was the more popular, for by its jury at its annual meeting it appointed the steward, the bailiff and the constables for the ensuing year. The duties of these various officers appear in the minutes of the Court Leet which was held on October 20, 1779. The High Bailiff was required to see that the fairs were duly proclaimed and that order was maintained in the fairs and markets, and he had further to inspect the weights and measures used by the shopkeepers and ascertain that they were of legal standard. The Low Bailiff had to summon the jury of the Court Leet, and to act generally as a sheriff of the manor. The constables and the headborough preserved the peace and apprehended felons. Ale Tasters were appointed to see that the beer sold in the manor was of good quality and free from unwholesome ingredients. The flesh conners or low tasters supervised the food offered for sale, while the searchers and sealers of leather inspected the tanned leather brought to market and ascertained that it was of good quality. The leather trade was at that time considerable, and the Leather Hall, the meeting place of the trade, was a room erected over a gateway which

formerly blocked the entrance into New Street. For many years, by an unwritten but unbroken rule, the High Bailiff was a churchman and the Low Bailiff a nonconformist, and frequently, also, there was a political distinction between the two officers. These forms of government were in a sense systematic though quite irregular.

The first regular local government was created by an act passed in the year 1769, by which certain Commissioners were appointed to have charge of the lighting and cleansing of the streets in the parish of Birmingham, with power to levy a rate to defray their expenses. The powers of these Commissioners were extended by four other acts of parliament between 1769 and 1828. Under the last act the Commissioners were authorized to build a Town Hall, the use of which was to be reserved at special times for the musical festivals held for the benefit of the Birmingham General Hospital. The special arrangement with regard to the use of the hall for the musical festivals is continued to the present day. It is not without interest to note, as indicating progress in public opinion, that when the

arrangement was first embodied in the act of 1828, a number of persons in Birmingham petitioned the Commissioners against it on the strange ground that oratorios were a profanation of religion.

The hamlets of Deritend and Bordesley were dealt with in the year 1791, when Commissioners, similar to those for the parish of Birmingham, were appointed for lighting, cleansing and watching, and the suppression of nuisances, while the hamlets of Duddeston and Nechells were provided with similar Commissioners under the two acts passed in 1829 and 1845 respectively. The state of government may therefore be summarized as follows :—The powers of the manorial officers were still exercised, justice was administered by county magistrates holding their petty sessions in the town, and the lighting, paving, sewering, and other sanitary work was in the hands of the Commissioners. It should be stated that these Commissioners were practically a self-elected body. The first list was named in the acts, and any vacancies from death or otherwise were filled by the remaining Commissioners, so that the people had no voice in their election.

Incorporation of Birmingham.

Such, we may say in brief, was the state of government in the City of Birmingham in the year 1838. In the year 1832 the great Reform Act had been passed, and Birmingham had become for the first time a parliamentary borough returning two members of parliament. The extension of the representative principle from national government to local government was but a natural step ; men who had struggled to obtain parliamentary reform were not likely to remain content with the ancient forms of local government then existing. For the general welfare and progress of the people the one reform was little less important than the other ; indeed, the reform of local government had a more direct bearing on the lives of the people than that of national government.

So chaotic was the condition of local government, so bristling in anomalies, and so degraded by corruption in many towns, that parliamentary action was inevitable. In the year 1833 a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the whole subject, and in their report the Commissioners stated that :

"The greater number of the governing charters of corporations was granted between the reign of Henry VIII and the Revolution: the general characteristic of these documents is that they were calculated to take away power from the community and to render the governing class independent of the main body of the burgesses. Almost all the councils named in these charters are established on the principles of self-election." Another significant statement in the report is that "it has been customary not to rely on the municipal corporations for exercising the powers incidental to good municipal government. The powers granted by local acts of parliament for various purposes have been from time to time conferred, not upon the municipal officers, but upon trustees or commissioners distinct from them, so that often the corporations have hardly any duties to perform. They have the nominal government of the town, but the efficient duties and responsibility have been transferred to other hands."

This was the condition of things which the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 was designed to remedy. It was a bold and far-reaching measure and carried out practically

all that the warmest reformers desired. It established for the first time representative local government, and it conferred on corporations a large number of additional local powers, including in particular the institution and control of a police force. The Act, however, did not formally incorporate any of the large towns, and consequently Birmingham was still without a charter and still without a town council. Definite steps were taken in the year 1837 to petition the Crown for the grant of a charter. A circular was issued by Philip Henry Muntz convening a meeting which was held on March 1, 1837, at the Public Office. Mr. Muntz stated that he had sent out invitations to Whig, Tory, and Radical indiscriminately, because he did not consider the question to be one of party. It was one involving the interest of all parties, and he considered it right that all parties should have a full opportunity of considering the merits of the subject. All parties, however, did not combine, and in fact the charter was not granted without considerable opposition from a section of the townsfolk. Representations were then made to Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, and a town's meeting was held in the Town Hall

on October 30, 1837, presided over by Mr. William Scholefield, the High Bailiff. The meeting was called by advertisement, to which 600 names were appended, amongst which may be found such well known names as Middlemore, Muntz, Martineau, Ryland, Osler, Peyton, Wills, Beale, Colmore, Pemberton, Bragg, and many others, and it was resolved to present a petition to her Majesty for the grant of a charter. Counter meetings were held and counter proposals were made, personalities were indulged in, and deputations for and against the proposal waited upon the Privy Council. Eventually commissioners were appointed to inspect the town, and on April 27, 1838, the Privy Council agreed to recommend the Queen to grant a charter. The necessary preparations were ordered for the assignment of the wards of the borough, and the completion of the formal business incidental to the grant. The charter was not sealed immediately, and in the interval a petition against it was presented to the House of Lords through the Earl of Ripon. This caused further delay, but eventually the document was sealed on October 31, 1838. It constituted a Town Council consisting of a mayor,

forty-eight councillors and sixteen aldermen. It divided the borough into thirteen wards, ten of which returned three councillors, and three returned six councillors each.

The first Town Council.

The preparation of the first burgess list was begun on December 11 in the same year, and the first election of councillors took place on December 26, the returning officer being Mr. William Scholefield, while the first meeting of the Council was fixed for December 27, when a mayor and aldermen were chosen. This meeting took place in the committee room of the Town Hall, Mr. William Scholefield presiding, and he was subsequently elected first Mayor of Birmingham. The office of Town Clerk was also filled.

The form of oath required at the time to be made by each councillor caused a good deal of difficulty, for the deponent was required to testify upon the true faith of a Christian that he would do nothing to injure or weaken the Protestant Church, as it is by law established in England, or to disturb the said Church or the bishops or the clergy of the said Church in the

possession of any rights or privileges to which such Church or the said bishops and clergy are, or may be, by law entitled. Several of the new councillors were unable to take this oath. One gentleman, being a member of the Hebrew community, was unable to testify on the true faith of a Christian, while others, being members of the Society of Friends, or Roman Catholics, had conscientious objections to the clauses relating to the Church. Eventually these gentlemen were permitted to take their places in the Council Chamber without taking the oath—a situation which was not without precedent, as it had already occurred in London and Southampton where Jews had declined to take the oath.

In the year 1839 a separate Commission of the Peace was granted for the borough, a Court of Quarter Sessions established, and the first Recorder (Mr. Davenport Hill) was appointed, with a Clerk of the Peace, and a Coroner.

Period of Conflict and Inactivity—1838-1870.

The grant of the charter did not remove all difficulties with regard to the good

government of the town, for its validity was assailed and made the subject of litigation in the courts of law, and was not finally established until the year 1842, when a special act of parliament was passed confirming the charter. In the interval stormy scenes were enacted in the borough, which exhibited Birmingham in an undignified and unenviable light to the country at large. The Municipal Act invested the Town Council with the control of the police force by means of a Watch Committee, but no steps were taken by the Council to appoint constables. In July 1839 Chartist meetings were held which culminated in riots, rendering it necessary to take exceptional steps to protect life and property. As there were no police in Birmingham, except a few watchmen, the magistrates applied for the assistance of the London police, and a detachment was despatched to Birmingham. The magistrates also pressed the Town Council to constitute a permanent local force. The Council had not, however, the necessary funds at their disposal, and although some members advised recourse to the bankers, that would have involved personal responsibility which the members of the Council shrank

from undertaking. It was finally resolved not to take any further measures in connexion with the matter until the Council should be in actual possession of the funds adequate to the accomplishment of so important an object. Heated debates took place in parliament over the state of the town, and ultimately the indignity was placed upon it of having a special act of parliament passed by which a Police Commissioner, who was the agent and servant of the Home Office, receiving his appointment from the Government, and responsible only to the Secretary of State, was appointed, and authorized to appoint constables and exercise all the powers of the police Acts to the entire exclusion of the Town Council and any local authority whatever. The money for the inauguration of the police force was advanced by the Treasury at interest. This act of parliament remained in force until 1842, notwithstanding the protests and indignation of the Town Council and inhabitants. Looking back, it cannot be said that the Town Council were entirely without blame, for their inaction and irresolute proceedings placed the peace of the town in danger, and local jealousy gave

direct rise to the passing of the special police act. However, in the year 1842, when the charter was confirmed and the special police act expired, the Town Council proceeded to appoint constables and to levy a rate to cover the necessary expenses. Between the years 1842 and 1851 the position of civic government was therefore as follows :—The Borough Magistrates and the Borough Quarter Sessions administered justice, the Town Council maintained the police force, the Birmingham Street Commissioners superintended the cleansing and regulation of the streets and performed some of the ordinary duties of a sanitary authority in Birmingham, while similar duties were performed by Commissioners in Deritend and Bordesley, and Duddeston and Nechells, and in addition there were three sets of surveyors of highways. Without any exaggeration the condition of affairs can only be described as chaotic.

In the year 1851, the Birmingham Improvement Act was passed, by which all three sets of Commissioners were abolished and their powers transferred to the Town Council. This act may be said to be the foundation of our modern system of government.

If the period between 1838 and 1851 may be described, as it is by Mr. Bunce, as that of conflict, the years from 1851 until 1870 may not unfairly be termed a period of inactivity. The dominant idea of the party in power was to spend nothing, and therefore to do next to nothing for the improvement of the town, and a stage was reached at which some of the ablest of the citizens held themselves aloof from the Council to such an extent that the Council became, according to Mr. Bunce, a by-word, and an object of aversion and even of contempt.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain enters Council.

The year 1869 was, however, marked by the entrance into public life of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and with his election for St. Paul's Ward there appears to have arisen a new era of municipal activity and civic patriotism. Without doubt it was the conjunction of "the hour and the man." The hour was favourable for a great forward movement, and the man was the ideal one to seize the opportunity and turn it to the best possible account. Mr. Chamberlain was elected mayor in the year 1873, a position to which he was twice re-elected.

During the time that he was Chief Magistrate of Birmingham a complete revolution of civic ideas took place, and work was accomplished which raised the town from a distinctly mediocre position to one of great prominence in the municipal world. His mayoralty, signalized by the acquisition of the gas and water undertakings and the commencement of the improvement scheme, the leading feature of which was the clearance of a large area of old and insanitary property and the construction of Corporation Street, has placed this town under a lasting debt to Mr. Chamberlain and his supporters.

From this period to the present time the government of the city has been maintained at a level of excellence which cannot be disputed. It would weary you to recapitulate all the events which have taken place since 1875, but you will find them mentioned in the chronological table which I have prepared and circulated. (See Appendix, page 140.)

Having given this short summary of the history of the local governing bodies and having traced the devolution of pure administration until it became centred in the

Town Council, it now seems right to describe the constitution of the present Council, and give some account of the method by which it carries on its work. Before doing so, however, it would be well to say a word or two about the functions of two public bodies who are intimately connected with the life of the city, viz., the Justices or magistrates and the Drainage Board.

The City Justices.

The city justices are over 100 in number, and are appointed by the Crown, with the exception of the Lord Mayor, who is ex-officio chief magistrate of the city. Next to the Lord Mayor ranks the Recorder who presides over the Court of Quarter Sessions. The Justices sit every day in three courts for the trial of prisoners and for the granting and hearing of summonses which may be dealt with under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts. Children and juvenile offenders are dealt with in a separate court. The Justices, by a Licensing Committee, are responsible for the licensing of all places for the sale of intoxicating liquors and for music and

dancing, and as the delegates of the City Council they license all theatres and places for the performance of stage plays. No person can be removed to a lunatic asylum until he has been certified as insane by a justice, and certain magistrates are appointed a committee to visit periodically the gaol at Winson Green. The jurisdiction of magistrates is limited to offences committed within six months prior to the apprehension of the offenders, and in some cases the prisoner must be sent to the Assizes or Quarter Sessions. The Court of Quarter Sessions (so called because it sits quarterly), may be described as an intermediate Court constituted chiefly to deal with criminal cases and coming in between the Petty Sessional Courts and the Court of Assize. In Birmingham, and most large towns it is presided over by a Recorder, who is appointed by the Crown. In many instances there is an appeal from the magistrates in Petty Sessions to the Recorder in Quarter Sessions, but in all licensing cases the appeal lies to the County Quarter Sessions at Warwick.

The Drainage Board.

The other body, viz., the Drainage Board, which is concerned in the government of the city, is a joint board with an imposing title—"The Birmingham Tame and Rea District Drainage Board." The Board consists of twenty-three members, fourteen from the city, two from Aston Manor, and one each from Smethwick, Sutton Coldfield, Erdington, Handsworth, King's Norton and Northfield, Perry Barr and Castle Bromwich. The Board was formed to treat the whole sewage of a district comprising the places just mentioned. It has acquired a large tract of land in the Tame valley, containing 2,800 acres, and has constructed about 50 acres of bacteria beds and a number of septic tanks with a large basin to take the first rush of storm water. The system of purification is a biological one by means of septic tanks and percolation beds with subsidence at different stages of the process. The Board is not responsible for the sewerage of the several districts in its area, but is only required to treat the sewage when it is delivered at the sewage works at Saltley.

The Constitution of the City Council.

Having thus briefly considered the functions of the Justices and the Drainage Board, we may pass on to an examination of the City Council, upon whom the bulk of the work of city government devolves. The Birmingham City Council consists now of seventy-two members, divided into eighteen aldermen and fifty-four councillors. The qualification for a councillor is that he should be a fit person who is on the burgess roll and entitled to be so enrolled. The expression "fit" means legally fit, i.e., not disqualified by statute or by a judgment of the High Court. The special disqualifications are: (1) being an elective auditor, (2) holding an office of profit under the Council, (3) being a minister of religion or in holy orders, (4) being directly or indirectly by himself or his partner interested, except by holding shares in a limited company, in any contract or employment under the Council, (5) an army officer on the active list, (6) a felon. The councillor cannot reside more than fifteen miles from the city, and must if living more than seven miles off be entered in a special list, and have certain

property qualifications. The councillors are elected by the burgesses and three are returned from each ward, and they hold office for three years. They do not retire in a body, but one councillor from each ward retires every year and there is a ward election on November 1. The aldermen must possess the same qualifications as the councillors, and are elected by the Council. They hold office for six years, and it is so arranged that one half of the aldermen retire every three years. The Lord Mayor is elected each year on November 9 by the aldermen and councillors.[1] He must be a fit person and entitled to be a councillor. The Lord Mayor, aldermen and councillors form the Council of the City. They are frequently called the Corporation, but this is a misnomer. The Corporation is the whole body of the Lord Mayor, aldermen and burgesses.

The work of the Council is carried on by very simple machinery; it is too large for detail

[1] Since this Lecture was delivered the passing of the Municipal Corporations Amendment Act, 1910, has made an alteration in the law relating to the election of Aldermen and Mayors. The Act prohibits Aldermen from voting in the election of an Alderman, and prohibits outgoing Aldermen from voting in the election of Mayor.

administrative work and has therefore the power of appointing committees for special purposes. There are at the present time nineteen standing committees of the Council, and in addition a local Pension Committee established under the Old Age Pensions Act. As a rule each committee has eight members appointed by the Council with the Lord Mayor as ex-officio member. There are, however, a few exceptions to this rule. The General Purposes Committee consists of a representative of each of the other committees, with the Lord Mayor as Chairman, and the ex-Lord Mayor and the Chairman of the Drainage Board, as additional members. The Lunatic Asylums Committee has twelve members, while the Education, Distress, Free Libraries, and Museum and School of Art Committees have respectively thirty-two, forty, fourteen and sixteen members, some of whom are not members of the Council. The committees are appointed annually by the Council, and their powers and duties are defined. In some cases power is delegated to them, and they may act as they may determine, but in most instances they must obtain the sanction of the Council before

they can put a scheme into operation. In every case where a loan is required, the approval of the Council must be obtained, and the actual arrangements for the loan are entrusted to the Finance Committee, and every rate must be made by the Council. It would weary you if I attempted to describe in detail the work of each of these committees. I therefore propose to explain broadly the method by which the Council deals with the following subjects which nearly, if not completely, cover the whole of its work: public health, streets and buildings, recreative institutions, trading undertakings, public safety, finance. I shall not touch on the very important questions of education—the art gallery and the school of art, the free libraries, and the relief of distress, for each of these will be dealt with in a separate lecture in the course of this series.

Public Health.

The safeguarding of the public health is, of course, one of the primary and most important duties of a Town Council. The administrative work to this end devolves principally on three committees, the Health, the Public Works,

and the Housing, and the magnitude of it can only be appreciated by those who are really conversant with the duties of local government, but it is not too much to say that any neglect of duty is at once felt by the community at large. In the first place it is requisite that all nuisances should be promptly detected and steps taken to secure their abatement. Think for a moment what is comprised in the term nuisances—black smoke, rubbish heaps, defective drains, ashpits, and smells of all kinds and degrees. All these annoyances have to be investigated and remedied. Then persons carrying on certain offensive trades must be licensed, and their premises kept under observation. The house refuse has to be collected and taken to the destructors and burnt. Canal boats must be inspected and certified. Common lodging houses, and houses let in lodgings have to be periodically examined. Shops have to be visited and care taken that the young persons employed do not work more than the statutory number of hours. The streets must be swept and the courts cleansed. All these things make for our comfort and convenience and are most important, though time does not permit of a more detailed

examination. We must pass on to the questions of the prevention of infantile mortality, the treatment of infectious disease, drainage, and the safeguards against impure and adulterated food.

The growing interest in the protection of infant life has led to the Council being invested by parliament with new powers and duties. Every midwife must be certified and care is taken that they shall be capable and efficient and thoroughly cleanly in their work. Soon after a birth is notified in any of the poorer quarters of the town, a health visitor goes to the house and gives advice, if necessary, as to the feeding of the child. These health visitors are women who work under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health, while a fully qualified lady doctor is employed in superintending this work in two of the poorest wards in the city.

The method of dealing with infectious diseases is comprehensive. Whenever a case of one of the infectious diseases scheduled by the Town Council occurs, it is the duty of the doctor in attendance to send notice of it to the Medical Officer of Health. Then in the case of the more infectious diseases, smallpox, scarlet fever,

diphtheria and typhoid fever, unless means of isolation exist at home, the patient is removed to one of the isolation hospitals provided by the Council. There are three of these hospitals —one kept for smallpox and two for the other infectious diseases just named. These hospitals are carefully arranged with a separate medical staff and requisite nurses. For the treatment of diphtheritic patients an arrangement has been made with the University for bacteriological examinations, and the free supply of anti-toxin serum to medical men for patients in the city. Mention should also be made here of the effort which has been made to deal with the ravages of phthisis. A sanatorium with the necessary medical staff has been equipped at Salterley Grange on the Cotswold Hills where patients in the early stages of consumption are sent for treatment. It is not too much to say that the appliances for dealing with infectious diseases in Birmingham are thorough and up to date.

The purity of food has the careful attention of the Council. A City Analyst has been appointed, and a regular staff takes samples of food and milk, and if the food is found to be in any way deficient the offenders are prose-

cuted. But the purity of food is not wholly protected by detecting adulterators. Milk and meat are two most important articles of diet. To thoroughly regulate the sale of milk it is necessary that cowsheds and dairies should be well inspected. They have of course to be registered, as also have milk sellers, but this is not sufficient. Arrangements have accordingly been made by which any cow exhibiting signs of tuberculosis is isolated, and no milk from it is supplied by the farmer, and by this means a grave danger to the young is removed. The method of dealing with the supply of meat is not so complete as it might be and offers opportunities for danger. The Council have established public slaughterhouses where all meat is thoroughly inspected, and they have very vigilant officers who examine what is exposed for sale in the shops. Nevertheless there are cases in which diseased meat from animals killed just outside Birmingham is smuggled into the city, and though sometimes it is detected, there must be cases in which it is sold to the public. Moreover there are many private slaughterhouses, some registered and some licensed, which are not capable of complete

inspection. This state of things is not peculiar to Birmingham. There is consequently a growing opinion that England must adopt a system of public slaughterhouses similar to that existing in Germany and other continental countries. It would of course be ridiculous to suggest the establishment of public slaughterhouses for rural districts or small places, but in large towns there can be no doubt that it would be of great advantage to the public health.

A very gratifying result of all the public health work in Birmingham is to be seen in the large reduction in the death rate. In the five years 1870-1874, it averaged 24·5 per 1,000, and a death rate of 26 per 1,000 was not unusual. For the past five years (i.e. 1905–9) it has averaged 16·8 per 1,000. Last year it was under 16, the lowest rate ever recorded in the city. This means the saving of some thousands of lives in a year, and of much suffering in thousands of homes.

Water Supply.

An absolute necessity to the health of a large city is a good water supply. Birmingham, together with a large surrounding district, is supplied with water by the Corporation and

a short account of the undertaking may be given. After two prior abortive projects, the Birmingham Waterworks Company was founded by act of parliament in the year 1826. The sources of supply were then the river Tame and the Hawthorn Brook. In 1831 Mr. Dalton, the famous chemist, described the Tame water as follows.—"This is a good river water. It contains nothing injurious either for domestic or other uses. It is very soft and fit for washing, brewing, baking, and for making tea, coffee, etc." The use of water from the river Tame continued until the year 1871. In the interval, however, fresh sources of supply from the Perry Brook, Plant's Brook, and the rivers Blythe and Bourne had been granted to the Company and wells had been sunk at various points. In 1851 the Town Council obtained power to buy the undertaking from the Company. This power was, however, allowed to lapse. In 1854 a further attempt to obtain power was rejected by Parliament. In 1869 another attempt was made on the suggestion of Alderman Avery, but again without success. Meanwhile the town laboured under very serious disadvantage, for the chief source of supply, the river Tame,

was grossly polluted, while many of the private wells were so contaminated as to be unfit for use. In 1870 a report was presented to the Corporation by Mr. Hassard, C.E., recommending a scheme for taking water from the rivers Teme and Ithon in Mid Wales, but no action was taken upon it, and in the following year Mr. Rawlinson recommended the Council to impound the upper waters of the Elan and Claerwen and bring them by a conduit to Birmingham, supplying the towns *en route*. The Council, however, decided that they must, before proceeding to any such comprehensive scheme, first buy out the Company. In 1875 this desirable object was attained—again by the instrumentality of Mr. Chamberlain. The transfer was effected, but not until a special act had been obtained after a prolonged fight in parliament. The works were from time to time extended, the last addition being the Shustoke reservoir, which in the view of Mr. Gray, the engineer, "would make an ample provision for the water supply of the borough and the surrounding districts for many years to come." This reservoir was opened in the year 1883. Nevertheless in the year 1892,

owing to the constant fear of pollution and the shortage of the supply, the Council were obliged to obtain power to inaugurate a new source from Mid Wales. The scheme was devised by the late Mr. James Mansergh, and was based on the original idea mentioned above which Mr. Rawlinson formulated twenty years before. After much anxious labour and many unforeseen difficulties, arising from the geological formation of the district, the works were completed and opened by the King in the year 1904. The water is brought in an aqueduct over 73 miles long to Frankley and is thence distributed over the area of supply. To guard against any pollution the whole gathering ground of over 41,800 acres has been purchased, and the cost of the scheme has been about £6,100,000. The total capital invested in the undertaking is over £8,000,000. The great cost of the Welsh scheme involves an annual charge on the rates of £65,000. Nevertheless it is believed that the ratepayers know the extent of their burden, and if the supply to the city of Coventry, which Birmingham undertook in the year 1908, can be extended, some relief may be expected. At the time of the purchase of the water under-

taking Mr. Chamberlain laid it down as an axiom that no profit should be made on the supply of water as it was a necessity of life, and this rule has been rigorously adhered to.

Drainage.

The drainage of the town is of necessity an important consideration. The sewage is disposed of by the Drainage Board, as has been already mentioned, but the internal sewerage of the city is the work of the Council. Let us look back for a moment at the state of the drainage of Birmingham fifty years ago. In 1859 a report was presented to the Council which stated :—

"There are several offensive open sewers within the borough of which the one between Cecil Street and Cleveland Street, receiving most offensive matters from the General Hospital, and those in George Street and Frederick Street, Edgbaston, may be taken as examples, and there are also many streets in which the drainage from houses, water closets, courts and yards is allowed to flow over the surface. It is hardly to be expected that the health of the inhabitants will be benefited by a partially carried out system of sewerage whilst nuisances of this character are allowed to remain in the midst of densely populated districts. It is no unusual thing to find house drains constructed in such a manner as to act not only as conduits for the passage of water from the houses, but also as ven-

tilating pipes conveying into houses most deadly gases generated in the sewers. No register is kept of these nor are they laid down according to any system. The first pipe only is laid by the Corporation and afterwards the owners of property are allowed to construct their drains as they think proper.

What is now the state of drainage? Three main arterial sewers have been constructed, one down the valley of the Hockley Brook, a second down the valley of the River Rea, and the third down the Cole Valley. All the subsidiary drainage is connected to one or other of these sewers. Moreover in all the newer parts of the town and the older parts which have been resewered, a separate system of drainage has been provided for storm water, by which the surface and storm water is kept distinct from the foul sewers, and is conducted to the nearest watercourse. The drains from houses are constructed in accordance with plans approved by the Council, and every drain is completely inspected by the City Surveyor and his officers during construction and before it is covered in.

Housing of the poor.

One of the most serious duties devolving on the Council is that of superintending the

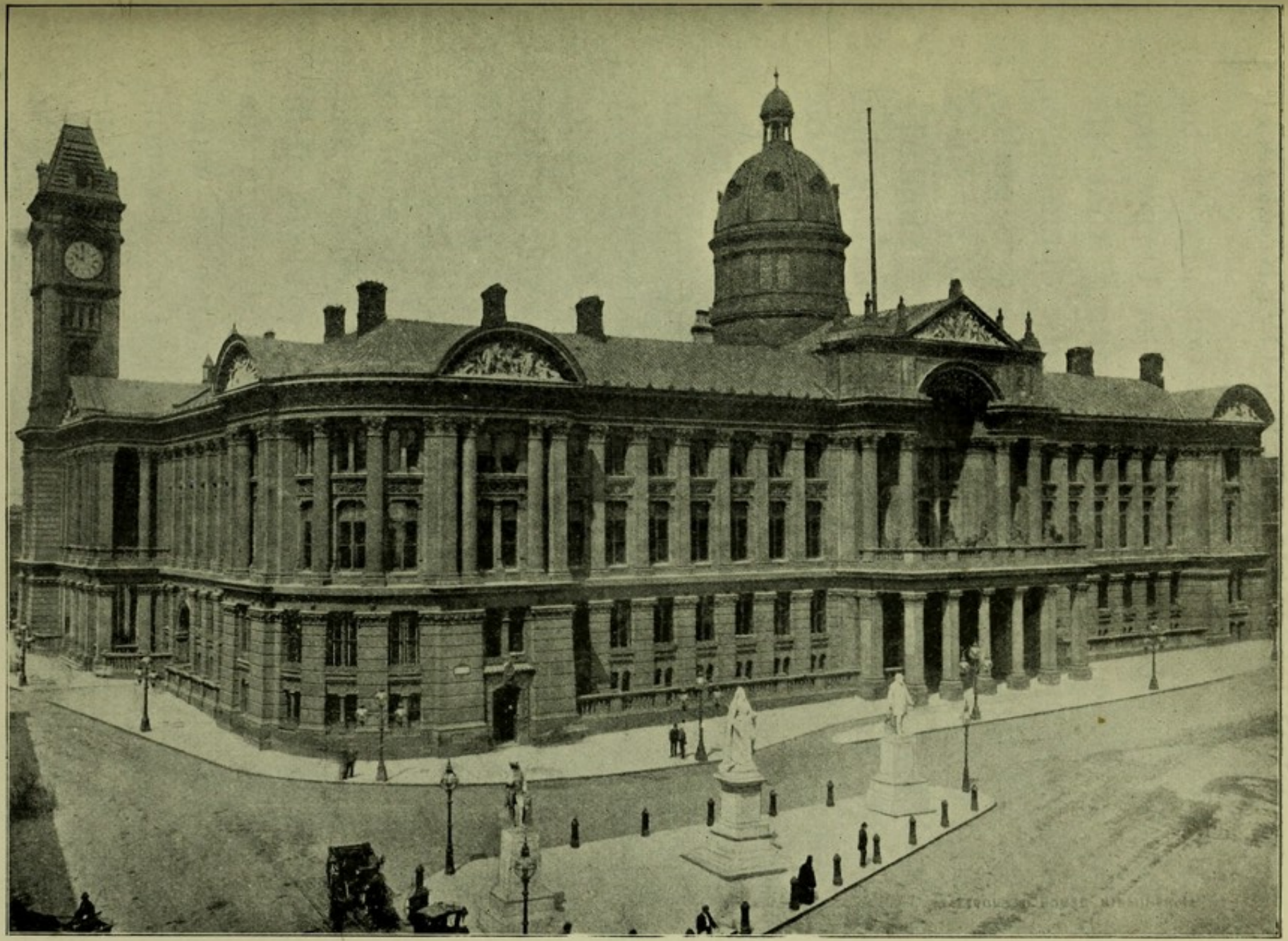
housing of the working classes. Considerable attention has been directed to it recently by the energetic operations of the Housing Committee. The Council have not pursued a policy of municipal house building. The only dwellings erected by the Council are those in Lawrence Street, built in connexion with the Corporation Street scheme, and those in Milk Street constructed in consequence of the clearing of an insanitary area in that neighbourhood. The housing question in Birmingham has been and is a most difficult problem. The methods of bygone generations, in constructing thousands of narrow courts which were not open to the streets and were ill ventilated and without proper conveniences, have produced evils which would doubtless have caused a sense of shame to the builders had their short-sightedness and selfishness permitted them to think of the future. The Housing Committee has done much good work in improving these courts by removing obstructive buildings, opening courts to the streets, and thus converting them into terraces, and by compelling the provision of sanitary conveniences and water supplies. Moreover, the majority of these courts are now

lighted, and their state to-day is a marked improvement on the conditions prevailing a few years ago. The provision of model dwellings such as those at Bordesley Green by the Ideal Benefit Society, and at Harborne, by the Harborne Tenants, and at Bournville, by Mr. Cadbury, are instructive examples of what can be done in housing the working classes on the garden city principles, whilst the recently erected houses at Small Heath and Saltley show that, with the aid of the tramcar, fitting homes can be provided for working men not too far from their work.

For the health and recreation of the people the Council have established six swimming baths and two open air swimming baths, and have also provided Turkish and cottage baths; and from time to time no less than 561 acres of land within or near to the city have been given or purchased, and are now maintained as parks and recreation grounds.

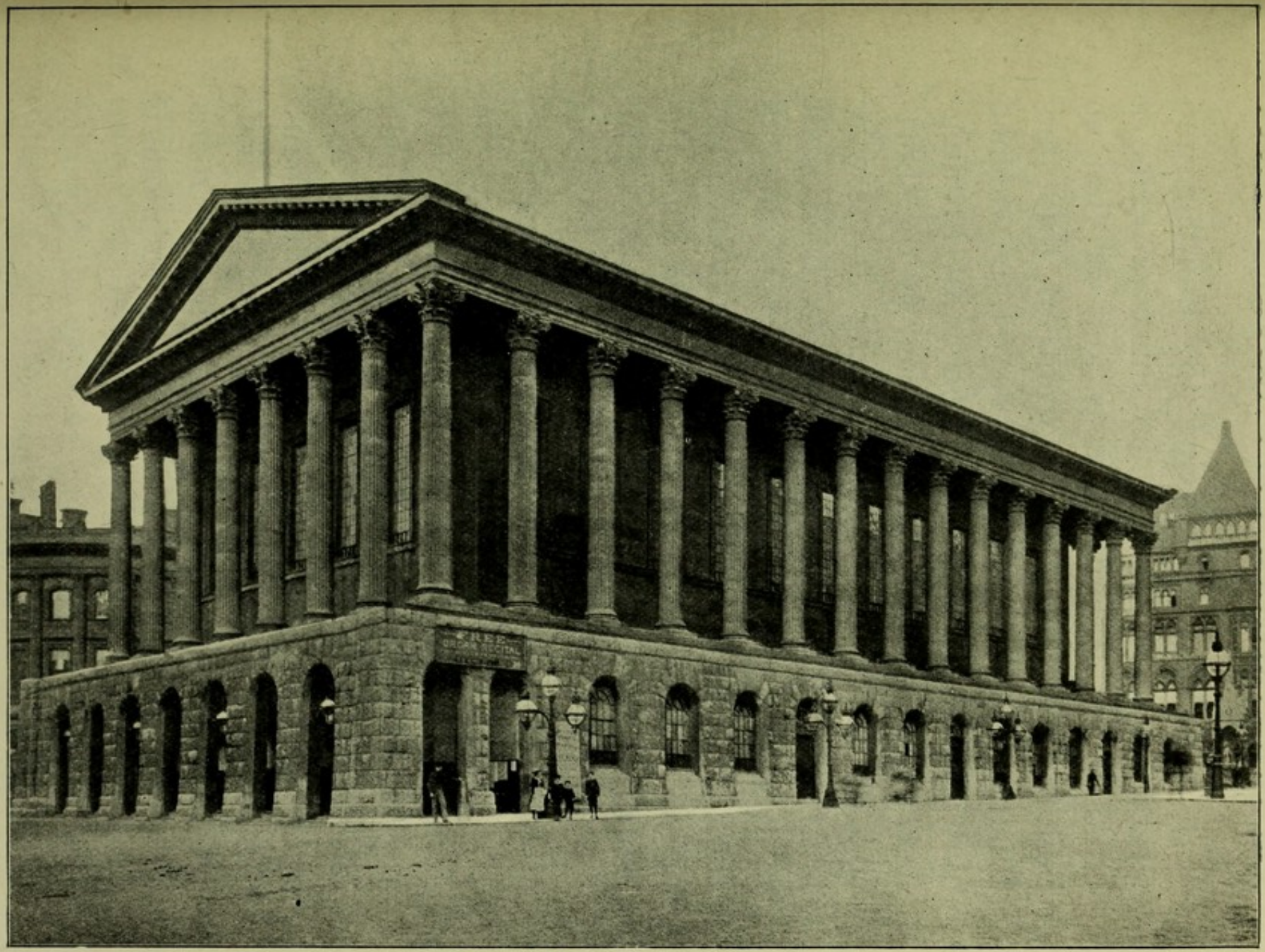
Streets and Buildings.

It is easy to pass from the consideration of workmen's dwellings and garden cities to the question of the general regulation of the con-



COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM.

struction of the streets and buildings in the city. The primary duty of the Corporation is to make byelaws for ensuring that the various buildings, whether of the domestic or factory class, shall be erected so as to be stable, and to afford the requisite amount of air space and ventilation for the occupants. Similarly, regulations must also be made to provide that streets shall be of a proper width and reasonable construction. It is regrettable that the Council are not allowed more discretion in these matters, instead of being obliged to conform to the requirements of the Local Government Board, who have prepared a model set of byelaws for all urban districts. Experience shows that the needs of different localities vary, and it is to be hoped that before long sufficient trust will be placed in the Birmingham City Council to enable them to provide a set of building and street regulations which may be made to fit in with the needs of the various districts in the city. This can only be done by giving a wider discretion to the Council than the Local Government Board seem at present disposed to confer. This discretion goes to the root of town planning.



TOWN HALL, BIRMINGHAM.

In addition to enforcing the building and street byelaws, the Council must prescribe a building line in suitable cases and see that no buildings are erected in front of this line. Further than this, old streets have to be widened and improved. The development of Birmingham has been immensely retarded by the short-sighted manner in which the older streets were laid out. Thousands of pounds have been spent in making good the mistakes and parsimony of the past. Traction of all kinds has been impeded, the appearance of the town and the health of the inhabitants have been marred by the haphazard construction of narrow tortuous streets instead of wide straight thoroughfares. The fine wide roads which converge on Birmingham all become constricted when they approach the centre of the city, and a person journeying along them is literally, as Mr. Vince aptly says, "insinuated" into Birmingham. Gradually the town streets are being widened, and it is to be hoped that in time the roads will be improved and made equal to modern needs.

Trading Undertakings.

The question of roads naturally brings us to a consideration of tramways. It may be of interest in view of what has transpired during the past few years, and is probably in the recollection of most persons in this room, to state that the first tramway was projected in Birmingham as far back as 1860, when a licence was granted to an American inventor, Mr. Train, to lay a tramway along Paradise Street, Easy Row and Broad Street to Five Ways, with an extension up the Hagley Road to the corner of Monument Lane. This line was never laid, and the question of a tramway up Broad Street has aroused popular excitement at intervals ever since. It is unnecessary to dwell on the monstrous engines which traversed several of our roads for years, except to marvel at the patience exhibited by the public during a period of grave discomfort. Happily in the year 1903 the Council acquired power to work tramways, and two years later the old steam tram abominations were banished and the present system of commodious vehicles, electrically propelled, was substituted. The tramways are now worked

by the Corporation, and cover over 34 miles of track in the city. There are 300 cars, and capital of over a million sterling has been expended. In 1911 the remaining lines to Handsworth and Selly Oak will be worked by the Corporation. Since the inauguration of tramway working by the Council, sums amounting to £76,490 have been contributed to the relief of the rates, while £83,099 has been put into a reserve fund, and the wages of the men have been raised and their hours shortened.

The power for the tramways is supplied from the electric supply station in Summer Lane. The electric supply undertaking was acquired by the Corporation from the Birmingham Electric Supply Co., Ltd. The Company had been supplying electricity for lighting and power in certain parts of the City since 1891, but on January 1, 1900, the undertaking was acquired by the Corporation at the price of £420,000, and the area of supply was extended to the whole city. Since that date the undertaking has been greatly developed; the large new station at Summer Lane has been erected, the supply for lighting has been trebled, and the use of electricity for power purposes has been

fostered. The use of electricity is a boon to the public, for it minimizes the nuisances of black smoke from which we all suffer. The electric undertaking in Corporation hands has been successful. A reserve fund of over £70,000 has been built up, and this year a sum of £10,000 was contributed in relief of the rates. Moreover the charges to the consumer have been several times reduced. In 1899 the cost for lighting ranged from *7d.* to 4½*d.* per unit; now it runs from *4d.* to *2d.*: the price for power in 1899 was *2d.* per unit, but now it is 0·7*d.*

It is an easy transition from electricity to gas. In the year 1875, through the ability and foresight of Mr. Chamberlain, the Corporation acquired the gas undertakings of two companies—the Birmingham Gaslight and Coke Co. and the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gaslight Co., at a price equivalent to £2,076,125. The districts supplied by these companies were very large and at intervals the Corporation have sold the right to supply to the respective local authorities in Walsall, West Bromwich, Tipton, Oldbury, and Smethwick, Parliament having given these places the right to purchase portions of the undertakings. There is no

doubt that the Birmingham gas undertaking is one of the best managed and most successful businesses in this country. The price of gas for lighting has been reduced from a minimum of 3*s.* in 1875 to a minimum of 1*s.* 10*d* to-day, while now there is a special rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* for power and heating. In the meanwhile sums of £1,108,566 have been devoted to the relief of the rates, a reserve fund of £100,000 has been built up, and a large sum devoted to public lighting. Moreover the payments to sinking fund and interest have been over £3,000,000, and plant and fittings have been written down. In addition a large sinking fund has been provided for the redemption of the gas annuities. The undertaking has a stability which is not excelled by any business in this country, and forms an asset of immense value to the town. There is a growing desire to avoid raising fresh loans for gas purposes, and if it be possible to continue this policy the undertaking will be absolutely free from incumbrance in 1944.

The only other trading undertaking to which special attention need be directed is that of the markets within the city. The market

rights were acquired by the Street Commissioners from the lord of the manor so long ago as 1824. Since that date the markets have been greatly extended, and now there are markets for all kinds of food, and for pigs, cattle, horses, sheep, etc.

In the year 1893 the market rights of the Corporation were seriously attacked by the establishment of a rival pig market by certain pig dealers in Birmingham. The establishment of this institution was no doubt due to misunderstandings which ripened into a violent local quarrel between the Council and the pig dealers. The Corporation were obliged to institute legal proceedings to vindicate the market rights of the citizens, which they succeeded in doing, and an injunction was granted against the proprietors of the rival market. Eventually an agreement was arrived at and amicable working was restored. The rents and tolls for the year ending March 31 last produced nearly £40,000, and allowed a sum of nearly £4,000 to be carried to the relief of the rates.

In connexion with the meat market, the Corporation have established a very complete

system of public slaughterhouses and also slaughterhouses which they let off to private salesmen. These institutions are among the best in the country, and mark a very distinct step in the progress of sanitary administration.

Public Safety.

With reference to the safety of the public, we may point out that there is a police force in Birmingham consisting of about 950 men with a central police station, and 4 divisional and 9 sub-stations. Two other stations are to be shortly erected. The police force is under the command of a Chief Constable, and is appointed and controlled by the Watch Committee of the City Council, and it should be here remarked that as regards police administration the Watch Committee is independent of approval from the City Council. The only function which the Council as a body performs in connexion with the police is to supply the funds for carrying on the work, and it is only this hold on the purse strings which permits the Council to have any voice in police administration.

The fire brigade is distinct from the

police force, though under the management of the same Committee, and is thoroughly well equipped, and comprises over 100 men who devote their whole time to their duties. There is a central fire station and district stations and sub-stations, and there are no less than seventy street fire alarm boxes in various parts of the city.

For the public safety and convenience two lunatic asylums have been erected with accommodation for over 2,000 patients. The first of these asylums was erected at Winson Green, and the second at Rubery on the Lickey Hills, to which, in course of time, a large annexe was added at Hollymoor.

This lecture would be incomplete without a reference to the arrangements which have been made for dealing with the dead. For cases of fatal accidents, and for the reception of bodies upon which an inquest must be held by the Coroner, a fully equipped public mortuary has been erected, while the Corporation, as the Burial Board of the city, have established a large cemetery at Witton which has sections reserved for Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Nonconformists, and Jews. The City

Council have not erected a crematorium, one having been provided by a private company which is available for public use.

Finances of the City.

It would be well now to say a word or two about the finances of the city. While the quoting of statistics and columns of figures is wearisome, the examination of finance without taking account of figures is impossible. I shall be as brief as I can, and quote as few figures as will permit me to give any sort of explanation. The average citizen is always anxious to find out the purposes for which he is rated and the manner in which his contributions are disbursed, and as the subject is extremely complicated, it is not surprising that there is a good deal of misapprehension and ignorance existing. The chief principles governing the finance of the Corporation are these :—capital expenditure is defrayed out of moneys which are borrowed either by the issue of stock or of mortgages, these constitute a charge on all the property of the Corporation, and on all the rates which may be levied on the

inhabitants of the city. All other expenditure is defrayed out of the revenues of the Corporation, which are derived from the following sources, viz :—income from the trading undertakings, grants from the Imperial Exchequer, rents of corporation properties, charges for particular services such as baths, etc., fees, fines, etc. Finally the balance is made up by rates levied on occupiers of property in the city.

Out of these revenues provision has to be made for the payment of interest on money borrowed and for the redemption of the debt within the periods authorized by Parliament or the Local Government Board, each fund or rate being debited with the proper amount having regard to the sums raised. Revenue has also to provide for the payment of wages and the maintenance of the various undertakings of the Corporation, as well as the administration of justice and the local government of the city.

There are two rates levied in Birmingham, the Poor Rate and the Improvement Rate. The Poor Rate is levied by the Overseers and includes a certain sum of money required by the

Council in respect of the Borough Fund. The Improvement Rate is made by the Council itself, and is required to make up the deficiency on the Improvement Account. All the rates are collected by the Overseers. The rates are assessed on the net annual value of the properties in the town, but in respect of the Improvement Rate an allowance of 75 per cent. is made in respect of railways, agricultural land and the like.

The Improvement Rate is the same in each parish of the city, but the Poor Rate varies because it takes a higher rate to provide the requisite sum in a poor parish than it does in a rich parish, owing to the allowances that have to be made on small house property; for instance, the Poor Rate in Balsall Heath this year is 6*s*. in the £ because the value of the property is not so great as that in the parish of Edgbaston, which during the same period required to raise a Poor Rate of only 5*s*. 8*d*. This question of rating is of great importance, for we all know that the rates have to be paid, but there are few of us who fully understand for what we are paying. I have not troubled you with many figures, but the average rate

over the whole of Birmingham this year may be taken at 8*s.* 0½*d.*, divisible as follows :—

	s.	*d.*
Poor Law Overseers' expenses	1	5½
Borough Rate (excluding education) . . .	2	8
Education expenses	1	8½
Free Libraries Rate	0	1½
Improvement Rate	2	1
	8	0½

It only remains, perhaps, to indicate what is paid out of these respective rates. Out of the Borough Rate are paid the expenses for the police, for the administration of justice, and for the officers' salaries, the maintenance of baths and parks, expenses of the weights and measures department, the city cemetery, infectious hospitals, the deficiency in the water account, the expenses of the free libraries, the school of art, the lunatic asylums, education, and the Council's share of the expenses of the Drainage Board. Out of the Improvement Rate is defrayed the cost of maintaining roads and sewers, the fire brigade, the interception of sewage, and the expenses of the Housing Committee. This allocation is peculiar to Birmingham. In other towns where there is a general

district rate and not an Improvement Rate, some of the charges that fall on the Borough Rate in Birmingham are paid out of the general district rate.

From the account of our city government which I have attempted to give you, incomplete and sketchy though I know it to be, I trust that you may have gleaned some information which will enable you to better understand the town in which we live.

It must have struck you, however, that the whole success of administrative work depends entirely on the ability, the zeal, and the integrity of those to whom it is entrusted by the burgesses. For the last thirty years there is no question that the administration of Birmingham has been conducted on a very high level, and this has been entirely due to the unselfishness with which many of its prominent citizens have devoted the best of their energies and their time to the service of the town. Instead of the Town Council being a by-word, it has been the pivot upon which the whole life of the community has turned. The Mayor or Lord Mayor has in very truth been the Chief

Magistrate and the first person in the town. He has always been treated with the respect and deference due to his rank, and whatever may have been his calling in life so long as he occupied the mayoral chair he has received the support of all classes of the community.

This spirit has permeated the whole town, and is the mainspring of all that is good in local government in the city.

The men of Birmingham do not hold themselves aloof from local affairs, and it is this tradition—for now it has become a tradition—which prevails in Birmingham that excites the admiration of the inhabitants of other places. May I remind you of the words of the King when he visited Birmingham recently: "Fortunate is the city which can obtain for its government the spontaneous services of so many able and conscientious citizens. Birmingham is the home of the best traditions of municipal life, and I am well assured that these traditions will be upheld in the future as they have been in the past."

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM.

Chronological Table of Noteworthy Events.

1769. Act passed "for laying open and widening certain ways and passages within the Town of Birmingham, and for cleansing and lighting the streets, ways, lanes and passages there, and for removing and preventing nuisances and obstructions therein." First Commissioners—fifty in number—appointed by the Act.

1773. Act passed conferring additional powers.

1791. Act passed for better cleansing, lighting, watching, and street regulation in Deritend and Bordesley, and appointing Commissioners.

1801. } Acts passed giving additional powers to Com-
1812. } missioners of Birmingham Street Acts. Act of 1812 gave power to Commissioners to purchase Market rights.

1824. Market Rights purchased by Street Commissioners from Lord of the Manor.

1828. Act passed giving additional powers to Street Commissioners, including authority to erect Town Hall and Market Hall.

1833–4. Erection of Market Hall.

1833–5. Erection of Town Hall.

1829. } Acts passed with regard to local government
1845. } of Duddeston and Nechells, and appointing Commissioners.

1835. Municipal Corporations Act passed, providing uniform system of Municipal Government.

1838. Charter of Incorporation granted to Birmingham : validity of this Charter was disputed.

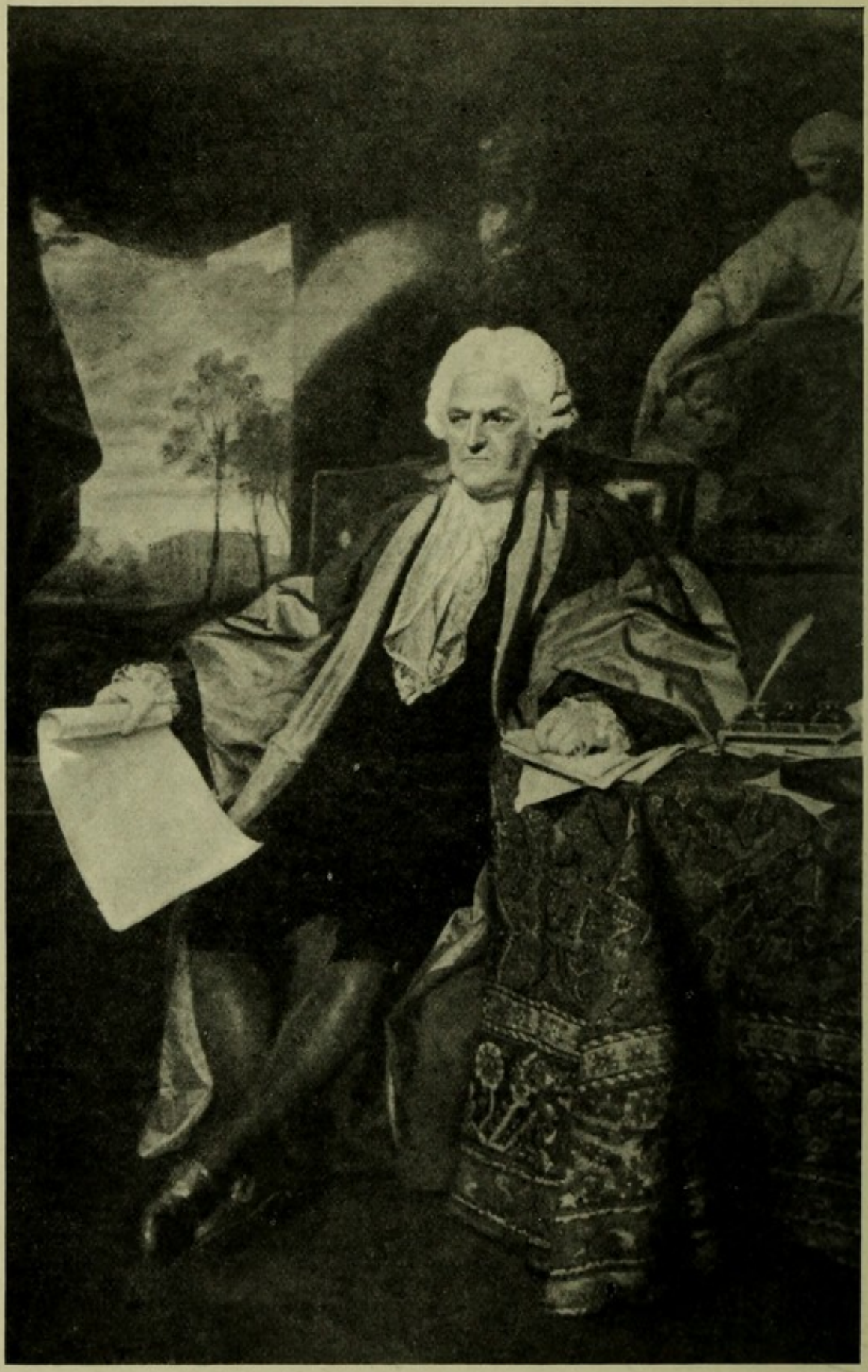
1839. Grant of Quarter Sessions made. Recorder, Clerk of Peace, and Coroner appointed.

1842. Act passed confirming the Charter of 1838.
1851. Birmingham Improvement Act passed transferring to Council the powers of the various Street Commissioners, and conferring additional powers for government of town.
1861. Another Improvement Act passed.
1865. Central Free Lending Library opened.
1874–9. Erection of Council House.
1875. Acts passed for purchase of Gas and Water Undertakings.
1875. Improvement Scheme commenced. Chief feature of scheme was clearance of insanitary area and formation of Corporation Street.
1877. Act passed constituting Birmingham Tame and Rea District Drainage Board.
1879. Free Library destroyed by fire.
1881–5. Erection of Art Gallery.
1882. New Free Library opened.
1884–5. Erection of School of Art.
1884. Birmingham constituted an Assize Town. First Assizes held in August.
1885. Extension of Parliamentary area and increase of Parliamentary representatives from three to seven.
1886–91. Erection of Assize Courts.
1888. Birmingham made a County Borough by Local Government Act, 1888.
1889. Birmingham raised to rank of City.
1891. Boundaries extended by inclusion of Balsall Heath, Harborne, Saltley and Little Bromwich.
1892. Birmingham Corporation Water Act passed authorising Welsh Water Scheme.
1896. Title of Lord Mayor conferred on Chief Magistrate.

1899. Electric Supply Undertaking acquired.
1902. Education Act passed making Council the Education Authority for the City.
1903. Birmingham Corporation Act, 1903, passed, under which Corporation took power to work Tramways.
1904. Inauguration of Welsh Water Works by Their Majesties the King and Queen.
1905. Birmingham Corporation Act, 1905, passed, giving Corporation power to construct additional Tramways.
1909. Parish of Quinton added to City.

THE HOSPITALS

By John Henry Lloyd



JOHN ASH, M.D. 1723–1798.

By SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

THE HOSPITALS

By John Henry Lloyd

Among the institutions of Birmingham, there is none that appeals so widely to its inhabitants, both for voluntary work and financial assistance, as its hospitals.

To-night we are to trace their history—past, present and future—and we may take as our starting-point an early year in the reign of George III, who came to the throne in 1760.

There was then no hospital in Birmingham, all the institutions so familiar to us having grown up in the last hundred and fifty years, largely in the last twenty years. They now provide 2,787 beds, without reckoning the Institutions for the Blind, and Deaf and Dumb, or the hospitals for the insane.

Early Foundations.

In earlier times, it is true, there existed "The Hospital of St. Thomas the Apostle," also

known as the Hospital of St. Mary the Virgin and St. Thomas the Martyr, the first accredited reference to which is in 1285 or 1286, and of which there is an interesting account in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire,* published in 1656. During the reigns of King Edward I and King Edward III, gifts of land of over 120 acres in Aston, Saltley and Birmingham had been presented to it. Situated "at that end of the town towards Wolverhampton and on the right hand the road almost opposite to the sign of the *Bull* (i.e. at the top of Snow Hill) the grounds extended to where the Old Square was afterwards built and its memory is still recalled by the name of the street we know as 'The Priory.'" The hospital or priory was a religious house with a priest, whose duty was to celebrate divine service daily in the church of the same hospital for the souls of Will le Mercer, Margery his wife, and certain others. Originally a hospital was a wayside shelter for all comers and served both as a guest house and infirmary. Doubtless such simple care as they could give, was given by the fraternity of St. Thomas' Hospital to the bodily, as well as spiritual, needs of those who might claim assistance at

its portals; but the hospital had been destroyed in the reign of Henry VIII, when its clear yearly value was stated to be £8 5*s*. 3*d*. and Sir Edward Toft was Chantry Priest. William Hutton, the Birmingham historian, found fragments of the "venerable edifice, which once stood the monument of ancient piety, the ornament of the town and the envy of the priest out of place."

In mediaeval times hospitals were synonymous with abbeys, priories, and monastic institutions. Each had its infirmary for the sick, aged and infirm, tended by the brethren with all the means at their disposal. Care of the sick remained with the clergy until Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. To his credit be it said, he handed over two in London (St. Bartholomew's, and St. Mary of Bethlehem) to the citizens for hospitals, the latter for the insane. St. Thomas' was purchased by the Lord Mayor and citizens a few years later. "Barts" in 1658 was still conducted on the strictest monastic lines. No incurable patients were to be admitted, none rejected that were curable. The surgeons were not permitted to introduce any patient already treated by them, if they had to that

day received either money or fee, on pain of dismissal. No drinking of any sort was to be allowed in the house, which was said not to be for drunkards or "unthankful persons." Out-patients were treated once a week, on Fridays, and in the Orders a suggestion was made that to prevent fraudulent disposal of the drugs ordered, the patient should be made to swallow the dose prescribed in the presence of the doctor. The porter was empowered to set in the stocks any swearer or "irreverent user of his mouth," a contemner of the matron or other officers, or any patient who refused to go to bed at the appointed hour. Disinfecting processes are indicated by the order for "incense, juniper, and ashes to buck the clothes."

William Hutton, in his *History of Birmingham in 1782*, states that the destruction of religious houses by Henry VIII in 1536, shut the door of charity, against the impostor, the helpless and the idle, who had found here their chief supply and gave rise in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to what he called "that most excellent institution" the law which obliged each parish to support its own poor.

So when George III came to the throne, the

workhouse erected in 1733 was the only place to which the sick could go for assistance.

It was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century that the great building of hospitals began. In 1700 there was hardly a hospital outside London, and even there scarcely more than the three already named. Within twenty-five years other great London hospitals—Guy's, Westminster, St. George's, London Hospital and Middlesex were established. The first provincial hospitals were at Cambridge (1719), Bristol (1735), Winchester (1736), York (1740), Exeter (1741), Northampton (1745), Liverpool (1745), Worcester (1746). and Shrewsbury (1755), but at first these institutions were no unmixed boon. Lack of sanitation, overcrowding and the absence of disinfectants made the death rate in some hospitals, even up to the middle of last century, startlingly higher than among the cases treated at home, notably in amputations and in women lying-in. When one remembers that patients were treated entirely without classification of disease, that beds were made to accommodate four or even six patients, that drugs and diet were of the most homely and inappropriate description, one is not surprised.

What would you think now of treating a case of small-pox with a decoction of crabs' claws boiled in syrup ; or scrofula with burnt sponge and conserve of roses ; or of giving an asthmatical person mint water with Jamaica pepper and squills ; or rheumatism with a concoction made from pigeon's dung ; or an hysterical one a tincture of iron filings steeped in spirit of salt ?

The food for hospital patients in 1710 consisted of beer for breakfast, beef for dinner and cheese for supper. In some cases the allowance of beer per day for a patient was half a gallon. Ventilation was quite undreamed of, for was there not a tax on windows ? " Gaol fever " was as universal in hospitals as in prisons and the need of washing and personal cleanliness was quite unrealized.

Foundation of the General Hospital in 1765.

The fifth year of George III's reign, 1765, seems to have been a memorable one for Birmingham, when its inhabitants were prosperous and signs of new life were stirring.

The population of the town would probably be under 30,000 ; beginning at Deritend Bridge,

it would extend to Bromsgrove Street, Horse Fair, Holloway Head, Newhall Street, Snow Hill, Steelhouse Lane, Coleshill Street and Park Street, but even within this area there were gardens and orchards, and Birmingham then must have been what we now call "A Garden City."

In 1765 the "Lamp Act" was promoted for "repairing, cleansing and enlightening the streets of this town," and though its provisions were very crude, it was the first attempt to deal with the problems of town life as a community.

John Baskerville was busy with his printing press, Matthew Boulton was making steel toys, so-called, in Snow Hill, Taylor & Lloyds were opening the doors of the first real Bank in Birmingham, and last, but not least, Dr. John Ash was pondering over the necessity of a Hospital for the sick and lame.

On November 4, 1765, this advertisement appeared in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* :—

"A General Hospital for the Relief of the Sick and Lame situated near the Town of Birmingham, is presumed would be greatly beneficial to the populous Country about it, as well as that place. A Meeting therefore of the Nobility and Gentry of the neighbouring Country

and of the Inhabitants of this Town, is requested on Thursday, the 21st instant, at the *Swan Inn*, at eleven in the forenoon to consider proper steps to render effectual so useful an undertaking."

The following resolution was passed at the meeting which ensued :—

"That a building for the reception of proper objects be erected within a measured mile of the Town of Birmingham with all convenient speed and that the Society for the conduct and support of this Hospital be known and distinguished by the name of 'The Trustees of the General Hospital of Birmingham in the County of Warwick, for the relief of the sick and lame.'"

Within a fortnight £2,200 was promised in donations and over £600 a year in subscriptions.

Next year, in 1766, the site of the old hospital in Summer Lane was purchased for less than £1,000 at £120 per acre, then pleasantly situated among fields, and a building to hold 100 beds was begun, to be provided at a total cost of £3,000.

This same year, the left wing was added to the Workhouse in Lichfield Street, which was called "The Infirmary" and faced Steelhouse Lane. It only cost £400, but may have helped to delay the building of the General Hospital.

At any rate, within twelve months building operations were suspended, the building being

only half-finished. Unfortunately, "an appeal," says Mr. J. Thackray Bunce in his book on the General Hospital, "for more subscriptions fell very flat; so did another appeal in 1768 though it was announced that the building was covered in and that rooms for patients were being fitted up."

This year also £299 7*s*. 4*d*. was received as "benefit of an oratorio," the precursor of the Musical Festivals.

In 1769 apparently the best friends of the hospital had lost heart, they resolved to sell the remaining building materials, insure the unfinished structure and stop all operations until the advent of better days.

Mr. Bunce points out that all the interest of the wealthier inhabitants was just then centred in the Birmingham Canal; money, too, could be found for a second theatre which formed the subject of a poem by Mark Wilkes, a clerk in a merchant's office, supposed to be a dialogue between the hospital and new playhouse, of which the following extract will give some idea:

Hospital.

Hail, Playhouse, hail! thee I congratulate,
Whilst I bemoan mine own bewildered state;

Near seven years were my foundations laid,
Ere thine were dug, or aught about thee said,
Yet I've been long abandon'd human thought,
Whilst thou, in haste, art to perfection brought.

Playhouse.

Cease, Hospital, why shouldst thou thus repine?
Though thou art neglected, 'tis no fault of mine;
Thy use is hospitality, I know,
Or thou'dst been finished many years ago;
My use thou know'st is different from thine;
In me the rich and opulent shall shine;
But halt, and lame, and blind must be thy guest
And such as are by sickness sore oppress'd.

It is possible, however, the delay may have been partially caused by increased knowledge of the bad results in hospitals, for in 1771 a doctor reflects on the melancholy fact that hospitals, which are intended for the health and preservation of mankind, may too often be ranked amongst the causes of sickness and mortality. Another doctor of the same time complains of the poisonous air as a result of patients being crowded in a room just large enough to hold their beds.

In 1776, eleven years after Dr. Ash had called the first meeting, expenditure had amounted to £6,853 while the receipts were £2,883 less and

£1,000 was also needed for furniture. In 1778 further donations and subscriptions were received, another Musical Festival was held at St. Philips' Church, the hospital and St. Paul's Church sharing the profits, and on September 20, 1779 (fourteen years after its erection was first proposed) the General Hospital was opened with forty beds instead of 100, with four physicians—Drs. Ash, Smith, Withering and Johnstone; four surgeons—Messrs. Ward, Kennedy, Freer Junr., and Vaux—and a staff of four nurses at four guineas each per annum with one guinea for tea and sugar and a promise of one guinea additional, "if they behave well." A barber was engaged to shave the patients twice a week, at a salary of 10*s*. 6*d*. per quarter. In the accounts for 1781 (the second year of the hospital) small farming operations were evidently carried on, £12 12*s*. being paid for pigs and £7 7*s*. for a cow and calf, and there is an item of £3 12*s*. for washing women, etc., with which we may compare the £1,238 paid last year. Soon afterwards there were 100 beds for which accommodation had been provided, and thirteen years later in 1792, thirty were added. In 1842 the number was raised to 222

and in 1857, 1865 and 1870 there were further additions.

At the close of the year 1885 severe pressure upon the hospital was to some extent relieved, and its work rendered more efficient, through the provision by the late Sir John Jaffray, Bart., of "The Jaffray Suburban Branch Hospital" at Gravelly Hill, about three miles from the centre of the city. This institution, which was opened by our late King Edward VII—at that time Prince of Wales—contains fifty-six beds, and is used for the accommodation of cases needing prolonged attention.

Removal to Present Situation.

Despite this relief it was found that the hospital in Summer Lane, having done a century's work, was worn out. It was insufficient in accommodation, out-of-date in character, and its surroundings had become insanitary. A higher and healthier, and at the same time, more central site was selected, and upon this was erected the new hospital, which on July 7, 1897, was opened by H.R.H. the Princess Christian, on behalf of the late Queen Victoria. Those who attended the great meeting in the Town

Hall on January 29, 1891, will not easily forget the occasion, when politicians of every shade, ministers of religion of every class, and citizens representing all kinds of social standing were present to promote the rebuilding of our old well-known and much-beloved General Hospital. Donations amounting to £75,105 were announced from three hundred and twenty donors, and within a few weeks £84,000 had been promised. This hospital, designed by Mr. Wm. Henman, F.R.I.B.A., is one of the finest buildings of the kind in the kingdom, and is supplied with every appliance which can contribute to the comfort of the patients and their recovery to health. It is arranged upon the pavilion system, i.e. with main corridors from which pavilions radiate giving ready access to each floor and more plentiful supply of light and air. It contains 349 beds for in-patients, together with a large out-patient hall, and the necessary suites of casualty and consulting rooms. Adjacent to the main building, but detached from it, are small isolated buildings for infectious cases. The Nurses' Home, containing 156 bedrooms, is also a separate building, but connected with the hospital by a conservatory and covered way.

The total cost of site, buildings and complete equipment was £219,459 6*s.* 7*d.*

Last year 5,526 in-patients and 65,551 out-patients were treated. Of these 4,948 in-patients and 43,897 out-patients were treated as free and urgent cases without tickets.

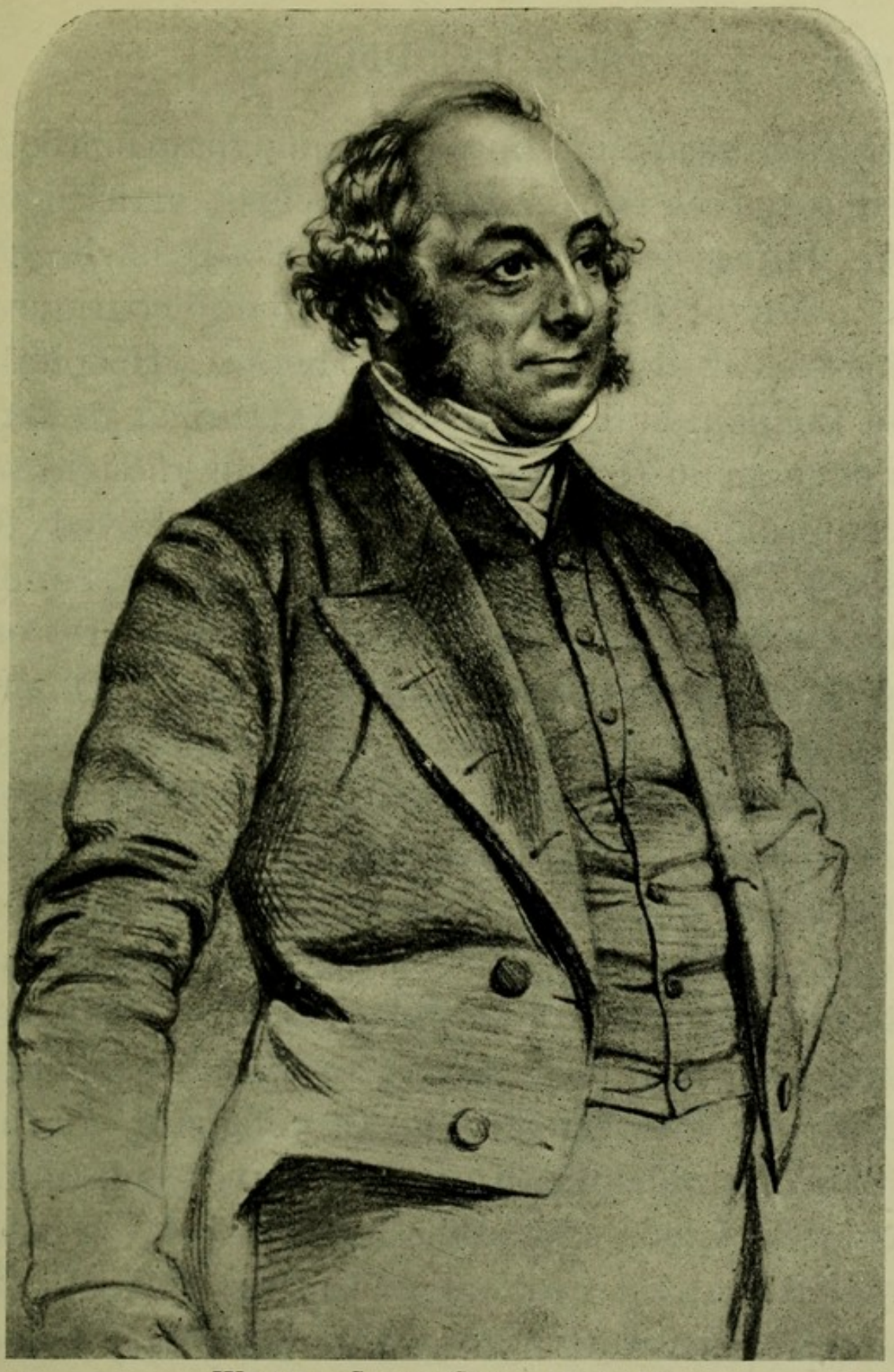
Average expenditure during last three years £26,222 annually, average receipts £23,971 (including half the legacies received), giving an annual deficit of £2,251, with an accumulated deficiency of £11,427 19*s.* 6*d.*

The Queen's Hospital.

This great hospital is the second general hospital in Birmingham. It was founded in the year 1840 in connexion with the Birmingham School of Medicine and Surgery ; a school which in 1843 became incorporated under the name of the " Queen's College."

It has a large acting medical and surgical staff, consisting of three physicians, three surgeons, two physicians for out-patients, three surgeons for out-patients, an ophthalmic surgeon and an obstetric officer.

To William Sands Cox is due the merit of establishing the Queen's Hospital. He was a



WILLIAM SANDS COX. 1802–1875.

Yours faithfully
William Sands Cox

remarkable man. Born in Birmingham in 1802, educated at King Edward's School, articled to his father, (a Birmingham surgeon), he began to study at the General Hospital and continued his studies at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospitals in London, and at Paris. He returned to Birmingham in 1825, and giving up all thought of acquiring a large general practice resolved to start a School of Anatomy of his own. Sands Cox soon began his first course of "Lectures on Anatomy with Physiological and Surgical Observations" at his residence in Temple Row to a class of nineteen pupils, including Oliver Pemberton, Dickenson Crompton and Bell Fletcher.

He then formed plans for extending his scheme to the formation of a regular School of Medicine, and in 1828 it was decided to form a School of Medicine and Surgery in Birmingham on the plan of similar institutions at Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and other large towns. It was stated that the hospital and other medical and surgical institutions of Birmingham possessed advantages of clinical instruction scarcely inferior, out of the Metropolis, to any in the kingdom.

The school was transferred to Snow Hill by Sands Cox at his own expense, and was removed to Paradise Street in 1833—the beginning of what afterwards became Queen's College.

In 1838 Sands Cox succeeded in interesting the Rev. Dr. Warneford, Rector of Bourton-on-the-Water, who contributed no less than £27,150 in fourteen years.

The promoters desired a clinical institution in which they might individually take some part, and over which they could exercise more or less control.

An appeal for a clinical hospital was forthwith made which was responded to by munificent donations from the Dowager Queen Adelaide downwards, and in June 1840 the foundation stone of the Queen's Hospital was laid by Earl Howe. It was opened in 1841 with seventy beds, and soon afterwards the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Victoria was obtained, with permission to adopt the title of "The Queen's Hospital"; which Queen Alexandra has continued. H.R.H. Prince Albert also accepted the position of President of the hospital.

In 1880 Mason College was opened as a Science College. Later the classes of Physiol-

ogy, Chemistry and Botany were transferred to Mason College, and eventually in 1892 the Medical Faculty of Queen's College became the Queen's Faculty of Medicine in Mason College. It is now part of the University of Birmingham.

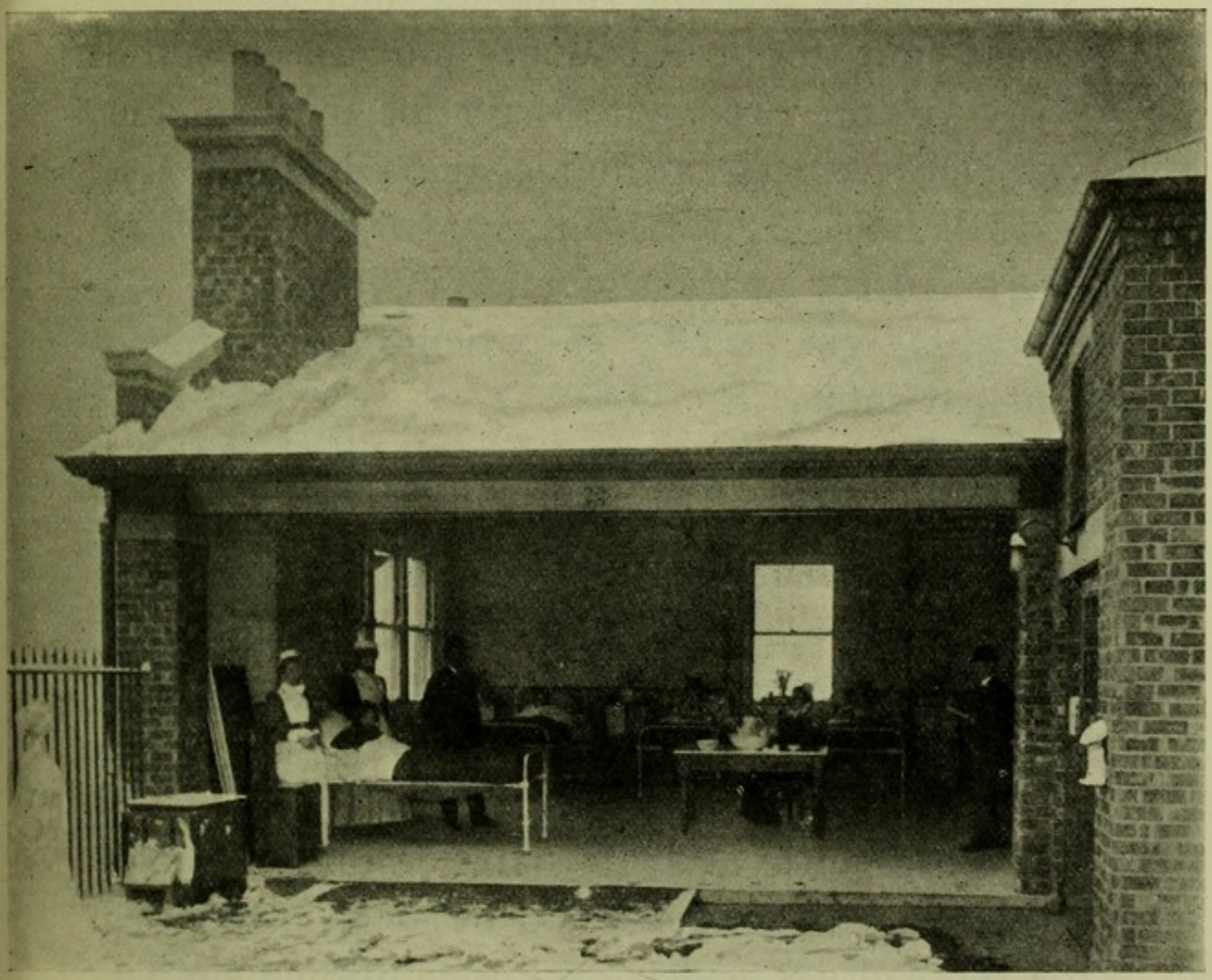
Queen's Hospital was soon enlarged; by 1845 detached wards for the reception of infectious and contagious cases were added, accommodation for twenty-eight additional beds being provided.

In 1847, by a penny subscription, a sum of £905 1*s.* 3*d.* was collected and handed over as a free contribution to the Queen's Hospital. This collection gave the idea from which the Hospital Saturday Fund was eventually evolved.

In 1867 the adjacent St. Martin's Rectory grounds were purchased and a Working Men's Extension Fund for the Queen's Hospital was begun, in order to provide a new out-patient department.

Originally, admission was by subscriber's ticket, but in 1875 the Queen's became a free hospital, the Governors giving up the right to nominate patients. A small registration fee of one shilling is charged, but is remitted in a large number of cases.

Lord Leigh laid the foundation stone in 1871 when a hymn was specially written by the Rev. Charles Kingsley and sung by a thousand chil-



QUEEN'S HOSPITAL. ROOF WARD IN WINTER.

dren from the "Birmingham Schools Choral Union."

Various improvements and additions were made from time to time, and in 1908 an entirely

new block was opened with wards on three stories as well as a roof ward for six patients, the first of the kind in Europe. The accommodation of the Nursing Home was increased from thirty-four to seventy-four and the hospital beds are now 178, viz. sixty for medical and 118 for surgical, including the Obstetric and Ophthalmic Departments. In 1877 there were 16,117 patients, and in 1908 39,483 patients, viz. 2,685 in-patients and 36,798 out-patients.

Average annual expenditure during last three years £14,729, average receipts £10,778, giving an average deficit of £3,951, which has been deducted from the Legacies and Exceptional Donations account.

The Homœopathic Hospital.

Homœopathy, as its name implies, is the "system of curing diseases by small quantities of those drugs which excite symptoms similar to those of the disease" or to express it colloquially "like curing like." It is nearly 100 years old, having been begun by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, who published a book on the subject in 1810. Cullen had tried to explain how

cinchona bark cured intermittent fever. Hahnemann felt that Cullen's explanation really explained nothing. It occurred to Hahnemann that he might learn something if he took a dose of the bark when he was quite well. The result was that the bark gave him an attack of fever. Hahnemann was quick to perceive the significance of this fact—he had found the key to the language of drugs. The way to interpret the power of drugs was by testing them on healthy people, and noting the symptoms they produced. He therefore set to work to test drugs in this way, and the homœopathic *materia medica* is the result.

In 1845 Dr. Fearon practised Homœopathy in Birmingham, and in 1847 a dispensary was established in the Old Square on homœopathic lines ; twelve years later a hospital was added and in-patients were received.

The Homœopathic is a general hospital and has departments for in-patients, out-patients and home-patients. The in-patient system is different from that of most general hospitals, a certain number of beds being reserved for patients who can afford to pay for the benefits they receive.

In 1908 there were 4,698 patients, of whom 403 were in-patients.

The General Dispensary.

It is said that the first dispensary in this country was founded in London in 1790. Its success was no doubt an object lesson to Birmingham and other towns. Early in 1793 a Society was formed which carried on the work in a private manner and a few months later Matthew Boulton, James Watt's partner, joined the Board and became its Treasurer.

The first Annual Report presented in November 1794 shows that 325 patients had received medical attendance in their own houses.

Its first home was a house in Temple Row, but in 1806 the foundation stone of the well-known building in Union Street was laid and it was opened in 1808, over 100 years ago.

By 1871 part of its original work had been given up, viz. the vaccine inoculation cases, vaccination being compulsory and where necessary undertaken by the Guardians of the Poor, and also the care of midwifery patients in their own homes. The first branch at Camp Hill, now the Highgate Branch, was opened in Feb-

ruary 1871, where about as many patients are now treated as were treated at Union Street when the branch was opened, i.e. over 10,000.

In 1876 the Nechells Branch was opened, and in 1883 another branch was opened in Ladywood—with the largest attendance of any of the dispensaries. Ten years later a branch at Lozells was opened; in 1896 one at Small Heath, and recently a branch at Smethwick.

Last year, 1908, the number of patients admitted by ticket was 58,977 and the total number of cases dealt with (including teeth cases and accidents without ticket) were 74,695 at the average cost per patient of 3*s.* 5*d.*

The Dispensary is therefore exceedingly popular in Birmingham, being largely taken advantage of by working men.

The Orthopædic Hospital.

The word orthopædic is derived from two Greek words meaning "straight child," i.e. to cure deformities.

In 1817 the Royal Orthopædic and Spinal Hospital was started in a small way, and even forty years after its foundation it had only twenty subscribers and an income of £40 a year.

First in New Street, then in Great Charles Street, and Newhall Street, it was moved back to Great Charles Street in 1858 whence its progress and prosperity may be dated.

In 1859 at a meeting, with Lord Calthorpe in the chair, it was agreed to reinaugurate the institution.

There are deformities of almost every part of the human body, so that there is wide scope for the hospital's usefulness. There are about 300 in-patients a year, largely children, and for the last three years the new cases have averaged 1,366 and the operations 540. Last year the attendances were 12,080.

With an expenditure, a great part of which is incurred in the provision of instruments, of a little over £3,000 a year, there is an adverse balance of £1,200.

Eye Hospital.

In 1823 the High Bailiff presided over a meeting when it was resolved :—

"That it will be highly beneficial to the labouring classes of this populous town and neighbourhood that an Institution should be formed for the relief of the poor afflicted with diseases of the eye."

The Eye Hospital was founded in 1824 and commenced its operations in a humble manner in Cannon Street. It then migrated to improved premises in Steelhouse Lane. In 1861 it found a third home in Temple Row, and in 1884 a new hospital was erected and opened in Church Street capable of accommodating seventy beds. In 1895 a new wing was opened and in 1908 the adjoining block which had formerly belonged to the Girls' Friendly Society was acquired at a cost of £6,500 in order to provide improved accommodation for nurses and servants.

The Birmingham and Midland Eye Hospital is one of the best special hospitals in the provinces. It has not only been of incalculable service to the poor of the town and neighbourhood, but it has founded an important school of ophthalmic science in the Midland district.

The expenditure is about £7,500 a year and has a very good subscription list of about £4,500 a year.

Hospital Sunday and Hospital Saturday.

At this point it will be convenient to refer to these two great institutions—the Hospital Sunday Fund and the Hospital Saturday Fund.

The greatest difficulty with hospitals is to find the necessary money to carry them on; it is easy to spend large sums advantageously, but how to raise the amount guinea by guinea from private individuals is a different matter.

Some Birmingham men, among whom the Rector of Birmingham, Dr. J. C. Miller, deserves honourable mention, endeavoured to solve the difficulty. The clergy and ministers of religion, assisted by prominent lay townsmen, determined to organize a general collection in all the churches and chapels of the town and neighbourhood for the benefit of the "Local Medical Charities."

Thus originated *Hospital Sunday*, which became very popular, and the example set here was imitated by the Metropolis and by the larger towns and cities of England. In 1859, the first year, £5,200 was raised for the General Hospital; in the following year the collection was for the Queen's Hospital; and next year for the Amalgamated Charities; and this order was continued till 1904, since which date the collection has been made each year for all the hospitals, and usually amounts to between £5,000 and £6,000.

Hospital Saturday Fund.

It was felt too that the great body of the artisan population were able and willing to do something for the support of the great institutions founded almost wholly for their benefit. As early as 1869 Birmingham men were contributing small sums to a fund inaugurated by Mr. Sampson Gamgee, a well known Surgeon, and in 1873 the Hospital Saturday Fund was begun, £4,705 being obtained. Weekly collections are now made in most of the manufactories and large workshops in the town and district. This fund has been gradually increasing till it has reached £20,000 a year. Up till 1891 the money collected was handed over to the hospitals, the fund thus being a mode of collecting contributions to the various medical charities. Since 1891 £10,000 has been given to the hospitals of Birmingham, the balance being devoted to other purposes, such as the Convalescent Homes of Tyn-y-Coed, Marle Hall and Red House, respectively for men, women and children, which have been organized by and are supported entirely by the Hospital Saturday Fund. In 1891, when £10,000 was first given to the hospitals, their expenditure was only £61,168 a year,



MARLE HALL.

now it is £96,125, or more than half as much again. It is obvious therefore that if the Hospital Saturday Fund could now increase its grant to the hospitals proportionally to the increased expenditure, it would be an enormous help to them.

Lying-in-Charity.

The Lying-in-Charity was founded as a Lying-in Hospital in the year 1842. Its original managers endeavoured to deal not only with lying-in cases in the wards of the hospital but also with the ordinary diseases of women and children. This was not a success, chiefly because they attempted too much. Moreover, when the statistics of such hospitals came to be examined it was discovered that the mortality of patients treated in hospitals was greater than of those treated in their own homes. In 1874 the system was remodelled, a large building was abandoned and patients were attended only at home.

The change proved eminently successful. But now with modern methods a small new hospital has been built in Loveday Street for difficult cases and also for the training of mid-

wives, a duty which is now enforced on the community by Act of Parliament.

There is a story told of a veterinary surgeon long years before, who was remarkably successful with his operations on animals. He would never reveal the secret of his success, but on his death-bed told his son "I biles my tools." By thus boiling his instruments he had thoroughly disinfected them, thus anticipating Lord Lister's discoveries. It is by such methods of absolute cleanliness and sterilization, now known as "aseptic processes," that modern surgeons can operate with so much less risk to life, and in ways unheard of thirty years ago.

The Ear and Throat Hospital.

The Ear and Throat Hospital was founded in November 1844.

After several changes of locality, the hospital remained in Great Charles Street until 1891, when the present hospital in Edmund Street was opened for out-patients. In 1894 an in-patient department was opened to the limited extent of ten beds. Now there are forty-one beds and 7,827 patients with an expenditure of over £3,000 a year, and 1,200 subscribers.

The Dental Hospital.

The Dental Hospital was founded in 1859 on a small scale in Broad Street; in 1872, its expenditure was only £72 a year. Ten years later it was removed to Newhall Street, and a few years ago a commodious hospital was erected in Great Charles Street on land leased from the Colmore Trustees.

Over 30,000 dental operations are reported to take place annually, or about 100 a day.

Over 2,000 children from Summer Lane and Bristol Street Council Schools were treated last year, an examination of the children showing that over 96 per cent. had defective teeth. As a School of Dental Surgery it is important in connexion with the University of Birmingham which now grants degrees in dentistry.

The Birmingham and Midland Free Hospital for Sick Children, known as THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, has been one of the most successful ever founded in Birmingham. It is a general hospital so far as regards disease but a special hospital so far as regards age.

It was founded in 1861 and opened January 1, 1862. Dr. Heslop and Mr. C. E. Mathews were

its founders and devoted workers on its behalf. Not only was it the first free hospital in the town but it was established on principles which were then considered novel, but which have since in part at least been adopted by other institutions.

For instance the tenure of office by physicians and surgeons is limited, and the medical officers though absolute in their own department cannot sit upon the Board of Management. This hospital claimed to be the first in Birmingham to make an honest effort to limit the relief given, to the *hospital population* only, that is, to those who were above pauperism but below the capability of paying for medical advice. Here too the system was first adopted of paying the junior members of the medical staff and here also was the principle first laid down of vesting the election of medical officers of the charity in a large and representative committee. The detached wards were at first used for scarlet fever cases but after the Corporation built a fever hospital, it was decided to use them for other purposes. The existing hospital in Broad Street is very crowded and the time has come when a new hospital is required.

The lease of the site will shortly be expiring and land has been purchased in Ladywood Road on which to erect a new hospital when money for building is forthcoming. £50,000 is asked for.

Birmingham and Midland Counties Sanatorium at Blackwell.

At the time of the cotton famine, a local Committee raised £15,000 and with the assent of the donors £4,500 was devoted to the building of a sanatorium for Birmingham. Miss Ryland offered free tenancy of a house at Spark Hill, or £2,000.

The buildings were taken over temporarily in 1866, having been previously similarly lent to the General Hospital as a house where patients could regain health and strength before taking up their life's work again.

In 1868 the Committee purchased land near Blackwell Station, on the Midland Railway, for £1,250, considered to be an admirable site, facing south, on the south side of Bromsgrove, Lickey.

A sanatorium was built for twenty-five male and twenty-five female patients at a total

cost of £16,800 and opened in 1873; in the course of a few years thirty beds were added (making forty for males and forty for females).

Through Colonel Wilkinson's generosity two new dormitories with accommodation for twenty patients have since been added, thus making 100 beds.

A guinea subscription admits a patient for a fortnight or for three weeks in the four winter months.

Birmingham District Nursing Association.

Although not a hospital, the work of this Association is so closely connected with our subject that it must be mentioned.

Some forty years ago Mr. Timothy Kenrick and others were responsible for one nurse in the Ladywood district, and in 1870 the Nursing Society was formed.

In 1908, 1,800 visits a week were paid by the staff of nurses at Summer Hill and Moseley Road. By visits of trained nurses to the homes invaluable help is given, not only by dressing wounds but by alleviating suffering in a great variety of ways.

The work of the Society is limited only by its

subscription list and the Committee continually appeal for further funds.

Birmingham and Midland Hospital for Women.

The Women's Hospital is a valuable and important institution founded in 1871. When the Lying-in Hospital gave up the treatment of women's special diseases and devoted itself exclusively to midwifery, there was an opening for an institution for the reception and treatment of women afflicted with diseases peculiar to their sex.

The foundation stone of the present hospital with fifty beds was laid in 1904; more than £32,000, or four-fifths of the amount required, had already been raised and the still more difficult task of raising the other £8,000 was accomplished before the opening ceremony, in September 1905.

New cases in 1908 were 3,573 with 18,845 attendances. There were 719 serious operations, 386 of which involved abdominal section.

The Women's Hospital League is the latest development in connexion with the Women's

Hospital. Its objects are fully set forth in the recently published *History of the Hospitals and other Charities of Birmingham* by its Organising Secretary, Mr. J. Ernest Jones.

This book gives many facts in connexion with the hospitals of Birmingham and can be recommended as an interesting book to those who wish further details of our hospitals.

Birmingham and Midland Hospital for Skin and Urinary Diseases.

The Skin and Lock Hospital founded by Dr. Heslop was opened in 1881 for the treatment of Skin and Lock Diseases.

There was ample room for it, no special department for cases of this kind existing in any of the general hospitals of the town.

The hospital in John Bright Street was opened free of debt in 1888 and in 1890 in-patients were received, and medical and other baths were added.

A few years ago the treatment of "lupus" and other skin diseases by electricity was introduced into the hospital, necessitating further enlargement in 1904.

The Moseley Hall Convalescent Hospital for Children.

The Children's Hospital had a small Convalescent Home at Arrowfield Top, Alvechurch, from 1878 to 1892.

The late Richard Cadbury wrote to the then Chairman of the Children's Hospital offering Moseley Hall for a Convalescent Home for Children. His daughter, Mrs. Alexander, tells the story in her *Life of Richard Cadbury of Birmingham*. They had enjoyed living there and he desired that large numbers of the children of Birmingham and district should have benefit and pleasure at the beautiful house and gardens. The Children's Hospital Committee visited Moseley Hall and it was arranged for the Arrowfield Top Home to be given up, and for its organization to become the nucleus of the much larger establishment at Moseley Hall. Richard Cadbury not only gave the house and grounds but added a sum of money, making the total gift £30,000.

As a Convalescent Hospital receiving children from the hospitals of Birmingham, and others needing care and attention in the country, it has done much to enable the hospitals to



Moseley Hall.

pass on their patients more quickly and thereby to admit a much larger number of children.

In 1908 954 children were admitted with a daily average of 56 patients, the average length of residence being about three weeks.

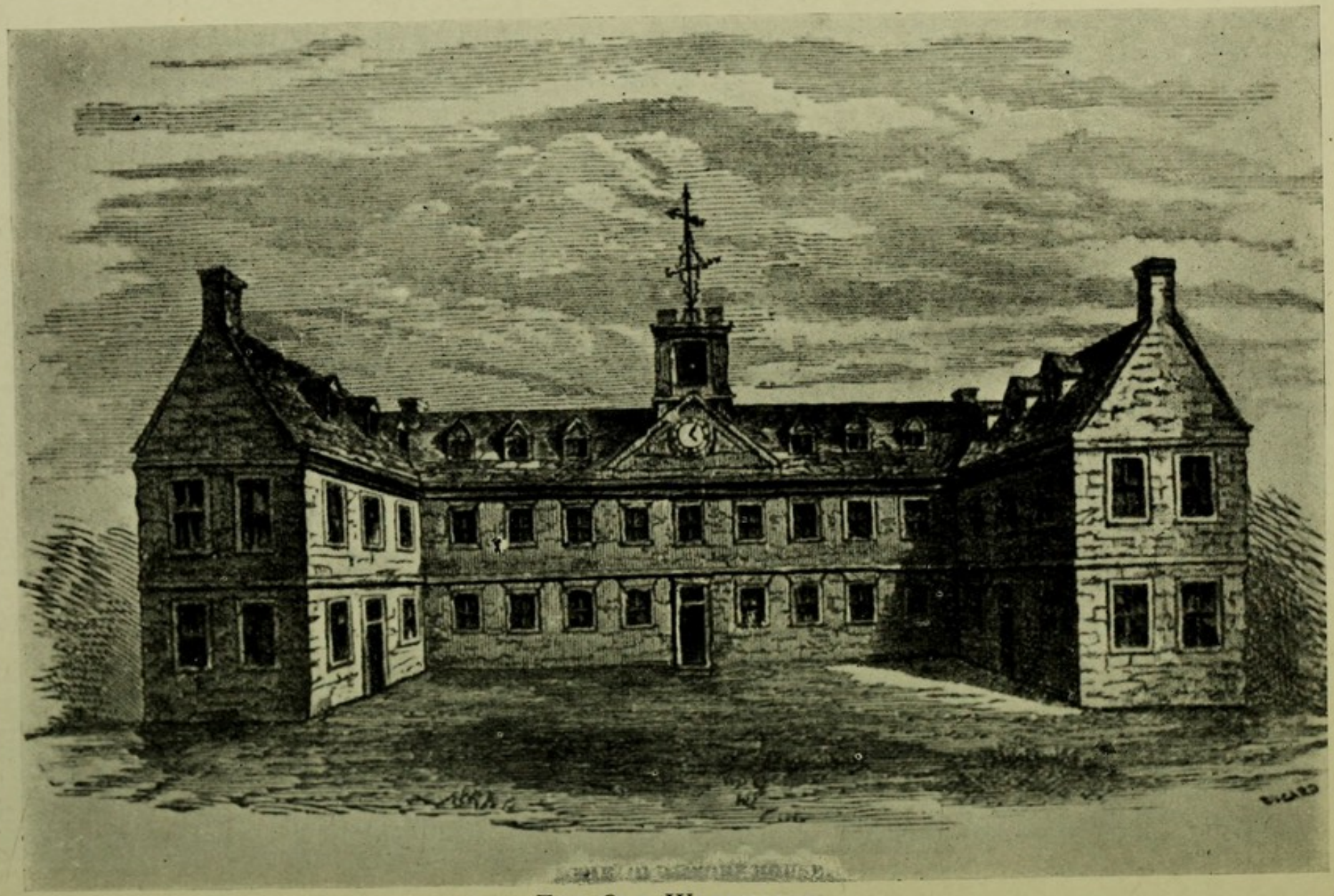
The Birmingham and District Cripples' Union for Children and Adults.

During the present year Mr. and Mrs. George Cadbury have handed over "The Woodlands" at Northfield as a Home for Crippled Children. The garden grounds have been re-arranged, so as to make them an ideal playground for the children; and every provision is made for the fresh air and absolute rest which are so necessary to reduce deformity to a minimum.

Here our list of what are known as Voluntarily Supported Hospitals ends but any account of Birmingham Hospitals would be incomplete without some allusion to those hospitals which are supported by the rates.

The Birmingham Infirmary.

First among these for size we must place The Birmingham Infirmary, opened January 1889, which is the largest hospital, having



THE OLD WORKHOUSE.

no less than 1,100 beds, viz. : about 800 medical and surgical beds, and 300 for epileptics, with 125 nurses and probationers and 27 sisters. The epileptics have now gone to Moneyhull, which is maintained jointly by Birmingham, Aston and King's Norton. Altogether there are over 2,000 beds for three City Unions—Birmingham, Aston and King's Norton.

In addition to the large Hospitals for the Insane at Winson Green, Rubery and Holly Moor, the Fever Hospitals are under the care of the City Council.

The first public provision for the treatment of infectious disease in Birmingham was made by the Board of Guardians, who erected wards for the treatment of small-pox patients in Western Road during the great epidemic of 1871. All patients admitted were technically paupers, and owing to this objection the Health Committee took over the wards in November 1874. At that time the cases removed to the hospital were not very numerous, only about half the small-pox cases being treated there.

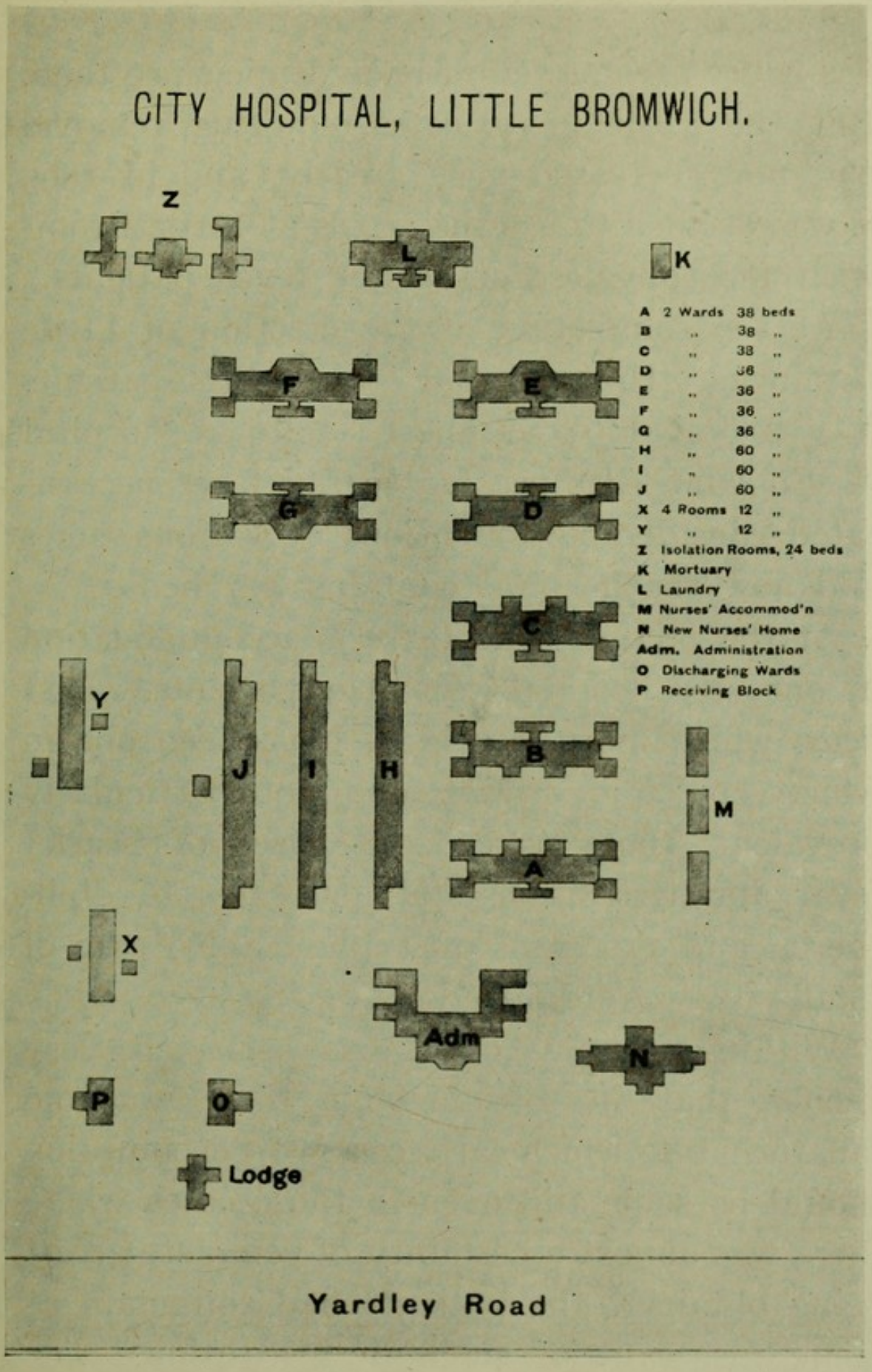
By the Public Health Act, 1875, power was given to build hospitals, or to contract for the use of hospitals, and in the same year provision

was made for a small number of scarlet fever patients, but at first there was little disposition on the part of the public to make use of these wards. Gradually the popularity of the hospital increased, and in 1883 the Health Committee found it necessary to build a separate hospital for scarlet fever in Lodge Road.

During the past twenty-six years, a number of additions have been made to the original buildings, so that Lodge Road Hospital now contains beds for 252 patients, and at the present time is used for the reception of cases of typhoid fever and diphtheria, and a certain number of cases of scarlet fever.

During 1893 and 1894 the town suffered from another epidemic of small-pox, which caused so severe a strain on the hospital accommodation as to make the Health Committee advise the building of a separate hospital at LITTLE BROMWICH for small-pox and the extension of the Lodge Road Hospital so as to give accommodation for 300 patients. In 1894 the first portion of the Little Bromwich Hospital was commenced, but by the time it was completed the small-pox epidemic had died away, and it is gratifying to know that the disease

CITY HOSPITAL, LITTLE BROMWICH.



has never become seriously epidemic since then. But the scarlet fever cases requiring removal had now increased very greatly, and in 1895 it was decided to use the wards at Little Bromwich for convalescent scarlet fever patients.

At the completion of the erection of Little Bromwich Hospital for small-pox patients it was probably the finest small-pox hospital in England. Its use for scarlet fever necessitated considerable extensions at various times and now the hospital contains 477 beds.

At the present time there is accommodation in our city hospitals for 849 patients. Last year, which may be said to have been one in which epidemic disease was not particularly prevalent, there were 2,062 cases of scarlet fever admitted to hospital, 466 cases of diphtheria, and 110 cases of typhoid. No case of small-pox was admitted.

Within recent years it has been felt very keenly that in Birmingham there was no sanatorium to which early cases of consumption should be sent, and even in those cases where there was almost a certainty of complete arrest being obtained, the patients had to remain at home for want of such an institution. The



SALTERLEY GRANGE.

Health Committee has therefore purchased an estate on the Cotswolds, and erected buildings for the accommodation of forty patients. The situation of these buildings is an excellent one, the air is good and in addition to the fresh air and sunshine which is obtained, there is a complete change from the conditions existing in the city.

The Right Use of Hospitals.

The right use of hospitals is a question of considerable importance. During the present year Mr. Neville Chamberlain has devoted much time and thought to a Provident Dispensary for Birmingham.

A man who goes to a hospital and is treated there for a minor complaint, such as could easily be dealt with by a private practitioner, is really abusing the hospital quite as much as the man, who goes into it concealing the fact that he has a substantial income.

To obtain the most efficient work from our hospitals, it is necessary that they should be relieved of a large part of the work they now do in the large out-patient departments for much of which they are not specially adapted and

which can be done equally well by other agencies. A hospital should be much more of a consultative institution both for out-patients and in-patients. The direction, therefore, to which workers should turn their energies is that of persuading people to think of the hospitals *last* instead of first when they are ill, and to begin by going to a private practitioner.

If they cannot do so, and very many cannot, let them join an institution like the Provident Dispensary, the fees for which are a very small burden when they are well and by which they are assured of proper medical advice and treatment when they are ill.

Dr. McVail in his Report to the Poor Law Commission expresses the opinion that one result of establishing medical provident institutions on a national scale would be a fundamental reform in the work of the general hospitals, at least as to their outdoor departments. The present system of hospital dispensaries in all the great towns throughout the country is a subject of constant animadversion by medical men, and by those of the public who have given thought to the matter. The abuse of these dispensaries by the well-to-do public is an

admitted scandal. Tens of thousands of people who are perfectly well able to pay for advice degrade themselves, injure the medical profession, and make a serious call on the funds of the hospitals to which the dispensaries belong. If medical provident institutions were available everywhere, it would be possible to curtail to a mere fraction of its present dimensions the work done by these dispensaries; indeed, excepting with regard to special departments, Dr. McVail would look forward to their ultimate closure, or to their partial transfer to the medical provident institutions, the hospitals continuing only as institutions for the indoor treatment of the sick. The saving which would be thus effected in their out-patient work of hospitals would enable them either to greatly extend the good work which they accomplish in their wards, or place the institutions on a sounder financial basis than many of them at present occupy.

The Future of Hospitals.

One often hears people nowadays suggesting handing the hospitals over to the rates, their idea being not so much that the sufferers would

receive any greater attention, but that everyone would have to pay his share instead of leaving those who are benevolently disposed to support them alone and it would no longer be necessary to obtain admission by subscriber's ticket.

The problem is a practical one, which will have to be faced before long. Surgical and medical treatment with skilled nursing have advanced rapidly, so that the cost has become very heavy. The question is, in the administration of medical relief ought a large place still to be left to voluntary institutions and voluntary arrangements on the part of individuals ? or, is medical treatment of sickness and disease so vitally and peculiarly important from a public point of view that it ought to be taken over by the Public Health Authority ?

In the evidence given in connexion with the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, an interesting suggestion was made by the Hon. S. Holland, who gave evidence with regard to the London Hospital :

" I think," he said, " the finances of the hospitals are in a very serious condition ; many of them really are hardly able to go on, and we are doing such onerous work of the State that I think some recognition might be made by the State. We are training all the doctors for the

army, the navy, the Local Government Board, the sanitary inspectors, the medical officers of health and the whole of the profession, and we are also treating a vast number of people who would become paupers if it were not for the hospitals. I therefore think it would not be unfair that the State should contribute."

He also pointed out that in Australia for every pound the public gave, the State gave a pound, which stimulated giving in some cases. The State might say: "You are doing a great deal of national work: we will give you so much in proportion to what you are doing." A strong argument in favour of some such compromise is the effect upon public interest and attention. Each hospital has its separate Committee, which offers an opportunity to many to learn to take an intelligent interest and pleasure in helping others. They see what is required and are more willing to give generously themselves and to interest others in the work.

Enough has been said to show that the community already contributes from the rates through the City Council and the Board of Guardians, and without their help the voluntary hospital system would already have broken down. It is moreover undoubtedly the fact,

that some parts of the country are much better provided with hospital accommodation than other parts, and there is therefore some force in the argument that people everywhere should have an equal opportunity of being treated in a hospital when necessity arises.

Undoubtedly voluntary work in hospitals is good both for those who give and those who receive, and it is doubtful if work would be so well and economically done if all voluntary work were superseded and County Councils and City Councils were given the sole responsibility.

On the whole, therefore, probably the Hon. S. Holland's ideal is in the right direction, viz., that the State should supplement what is given voluntarily but with some elected representatives on the Committees, with or without Government inspection.

Meanwhile let us continue our help in service and in cash to deserving institutions, improving them as far as possible, avoiding overlapping, refusing unsuitable cases, enabling all suitable cases to obtain relief without great difficulty, grading the patients to the most suitable hospitals, supporting provident dispensaries and

confining the use of hospitals to those for whom they were intended.

We must not close our resumé of the Hospitals of Birmingham without a tribute of heart-felt praise to the physicians and surgeons, (visiting and resident), to the matrons, nurses and staff generally and to all who contribute either by management or financially to the great work that our hospitals are doing for the suffering, and to express the hope that whatever changes the future may bring, nothing may be done to decrease the personal exertions of so great a number for the welfare of their fellow-citizens.

ADULT SCHOOLS

By Mrs. George Cadbury

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What is an Adult School?

"The ultimate purpose of the whole work of the Adult Schools is 'to intensify the social spirit by associating men together for the free study of the deeper problems of life, viewed in relation to the ideal of manhood set before them in the Gospels.' The distinctive marks of the movement are the brotherly spirit which unites the members, and the simplicity, reality, common-sense and mutual helpfulness that characterise its work"—so wrote Michael Sadler. "The schools give men something to live for other than mere self," said Will Crooks, and Mr. Jowett says: "This class of Christian work is helping to sweeten and enrich the life of the city."

"An Adult School is a society of men or women (over seventeen or eighteen years of age) formed for the purpose of mutual helpfulness.

"The basis of an Adult School is the practical teaching of Jesus Christ. It does not concern itself with the spreading of special theories, but aims at helping the members in their actual lives. . . .

"The free, but reverent and practical study of the Bible conducted in common with full opportunity for discussion, is deemed the centre of the School work. . . ."

Early History of the Schools.

It is generally believed that the Adult School Movement arose in Birmingham, but though the work on its present basis emanated from Birmingham and is largely the result of the success of the movement in that city, there were several earlier attempts to establish organizations on similar lines. In 1798 William Singleton, a Methodist, assisted by Samuel Fox, a Quaker, opened a Sunday school for adults in Nottingham, in which writing and reading were taught as well as the Bible. Samuel Fox kept a grocer's shop, and he closed it early on Saturday nights in order that all the shop assistants, men and women, should help in the schools on Sunday mornings. This school has continued without lapse to the present time.

In 1804 the Bible Society was founded and an effort was made to realize George III's desire that every subject in his dominions

might possess a Bible. It was soon discovered that a large proportion of his subjects could not read the Bible when it was given to them. Schools for grown-up people sprang up in Wales, followed very quickly by others in Bristol, Plymouth, Yarmouth, London, and other towns.

The Friends in Leeds started a school in 1816, a history of which was written by a Dr. Pole, who speaks of the "Beneficial effects produced on the moral character of the labouring poor,"—a remark not quite in accordance with the democratic atmosphere of the modern school. These classes were all undenominational; indeed, one writer says that their unsectarianism was so extreme that it seriously limited their usefulness. Dr. Pole was in advance of his times in urging that women should have the opportunity of attending school, and he remarks that he is "very desirous of cultivating the female mind," for "a woman's information influences the present comfort and future state of her family; if her house be well ordered, the husband forsakes the alehouse, and where there would have been want, there is plenty."

"In 1842, Joseph Sturge of Birmingham, a man of wide and profound sympathies, visited Nottingham on an electoral errand, and became interested in that pioneer Adult School. For three years the matter dwelt in his mind, and then he called some of his younger friends together—he was himself in middle age, and deeply immersed in affairs—and told them how he had grieved to see 'unwashed laziness lounging in narrow streets, troops of boys making mischief with trees, hedgerows and fences, or playing at "pitch and hustle" in the outskirts;' he laid before them the beneficent success of the Nottingham School, and asked if they would be willing to begin the same work in Birmingham. The thing being agreed upon, a class for lads over fourteen commenced in October of that year in the British School in Severn Street, from six to eight on Sunday evenings. The attendance declined so seriously in the following April, when the out-door attractions of spring evenings proved too strong for the lads that it was wisely and promptly decided to transfer the class to the early morning (7.30)."

It was difficult for some of the young men who were teachers to have breakfast at home in order to be ready at the early hour of 7.30, but

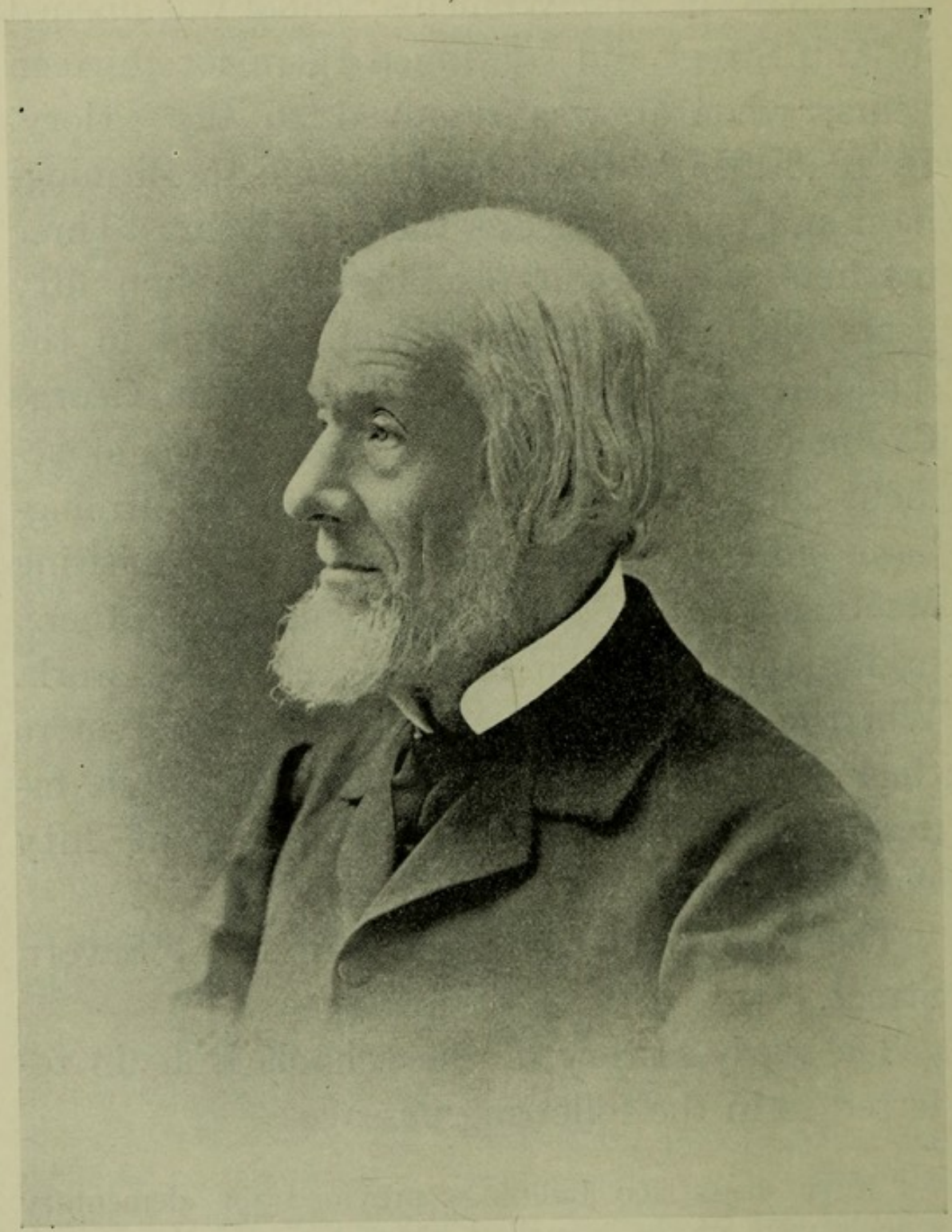
"Joseph Sturge arranged to provide a breakfast for the teachers near the school premises. He himself was present at these seven o'clock breakfasts, always setting the example of punctuality. He commonly accompanied the teachers to the schoolroom and commenced the business of the School by reading a chapter from the Bible. This breakfast has become one of the permanent institutions of Severn Street First-Day School as well as in its more recently instituted branch classes."

In 1848 the first Women's School was opened in Ann Street and continued there for thirteen years, when it was removed to the Priory. In 1848 also William White came to Birmingham and opened a class the same year. Three teachers who began teaching more than fifty years ago are still living and working in the schools, Samuel Price, Alfred Southall and George Cadbury. William White worked for the movement during the rest of his long life in Birmingham. He travelled about the country visiting Meetings of the Society of Friends and others, urging on them the importance of the work. When he began there were probably not more than five hundred members, soon after his death the numbers were estimated at fifty thousand.

The Classes met at first entirely at Severn Street.

The early history of the schools is again referred to in the following passage:—

"Fifty years ago buildings provided for elementary schools were of the homeliest character, and the British School for boys in Severn Street possessed few of the comforts and appliances now so liberally provided in our modern Board schools. It was a low one-storey building, having a large schoolroom and two classrooms;



WILLIAM WHITE.

the floors were of brick, the casement windows were draughty, the furniture of the roughest, and the rooms imperfectly warmed by stoves. But notwithstanding these obstacles, as soon as the early morning hour was adopted the numbers grew. Grown men of various ages also sought instruction, and their coming somewhat disconcerted the teachers, as it was soon felt that some of the methods adopted in teaching a younger class were unsuited for adults. What was to be done? For it was soon seen that men and boys could not suitably be taught in the same class. To solve the difficulty, a teacher who had just then joined the staff said: 'Give me the men, and a separate room, and I will see what can be done with them.' So the adult division was formed, with about fifteen members; but soon this number was doubled, and increased to about seventy at the end of the third year.

"The tea parties and occasional lectures, less common in those days than now, helped the movement, and brought teachers and taught into that feeling of mutual interest and friendly brotherhood which during half a century has been so constantly maintained.

"In 1847, eighteen months after the commencement of the work, the first report of Severn Street First-Day School was issued, and gave the number of adults and juniors in average attendance as eighty-four. In the following year the numbers had risen to 186. Mention, too, is made of a savings fund, in which £68 10*s*. had been deposited. In the Report for 1848, regret is expressed 'that more Friends are not willing to assist as teachers, especially as some of the classes are inconveniently large, and we have at present a list of fifty-six youths from fourteen to nineteen years of age who have applied for admission, some of whom have now waited three months.' A railway excursion is also spoken of 'to Blackwell and the Lickey, and the tea party in the winter.' At a teachers'

meeting, held at the end of the above year, two teachers were appointed 'to make the door of the adult school more weather-proof, and find a kennel for the dog!' (No caretaker then resided on the premises.) Another interesting arrangement was made at the same time by the division of the Adult section into four classes.

"One of the earliest testimonies as to benefits temporal and spiritual which Severn Street scholars professed to have received, may be seen in the following letter, dated 1851:—

"'DEAR SIR,—When I come to Severn Street School, at the beginning of the new year two years ago, I could not any more have wrote a letter than have flyed. But I am getting proud now of my performance, for when my wife was gone to Nottingham to take care of her mother, I was able to write and tell her how me and the children was getting on, and I thought, sir, you would like to see that Severn Street had done some good. I never thought a bit about religion till I went to school two years ago, and now, thank God, I know a little what it means. I've learnt this, anyhow, that if I am saved at last it must be by the goodness and favour of my Lord Jesus; but, knowing my own badness, I don't want to say too much now but only to pray and ask to know more and do better. But I do want to thank God and you for the kind lessons you have given me. And I hope, kind sir, you will forgive me for sending you this, for I do like you and my school very much, and that is the reason.—Your humble scholar, G. L.'

"At the end of the year 1847, a conference of teachers from most of the then existing Friends' First-Day Schools in various parts of England was held in Birmingham. One of the results was the formation of the 'Friends' First-Day School Association,' of which Joseph Storrs Fry was appointed secretary."

Growth of the Work.

As the numbers grew the classes, which in the course of a few years numbered eighteen, were obliged to move to other buildings. The Bristol Street Council School was taken by Class XIV and Classes IX and XVII. In succeeding years buildings of all kinds have been requisitioned, ranging from the commodious and extensive Hall in Moseley Road, built by Richard Cadbury, to converted public-houses and old workshops. One of these latter buildings was so old and worn, that it was discovered once, after a crowded meeting addressed by the lecturer, that two of the officers had been anxiously watching the floor of the room from below, lest the beams might give way and the assembly be precipitated into the lower room. The *Swan with Two Necks* is a typical public-house used now for uplifting instead of degrading its visitors.

But before speaking of the extension in later years we must give some record of the teachers and others connected with the schools.

Founders and Teachers of the Schools.

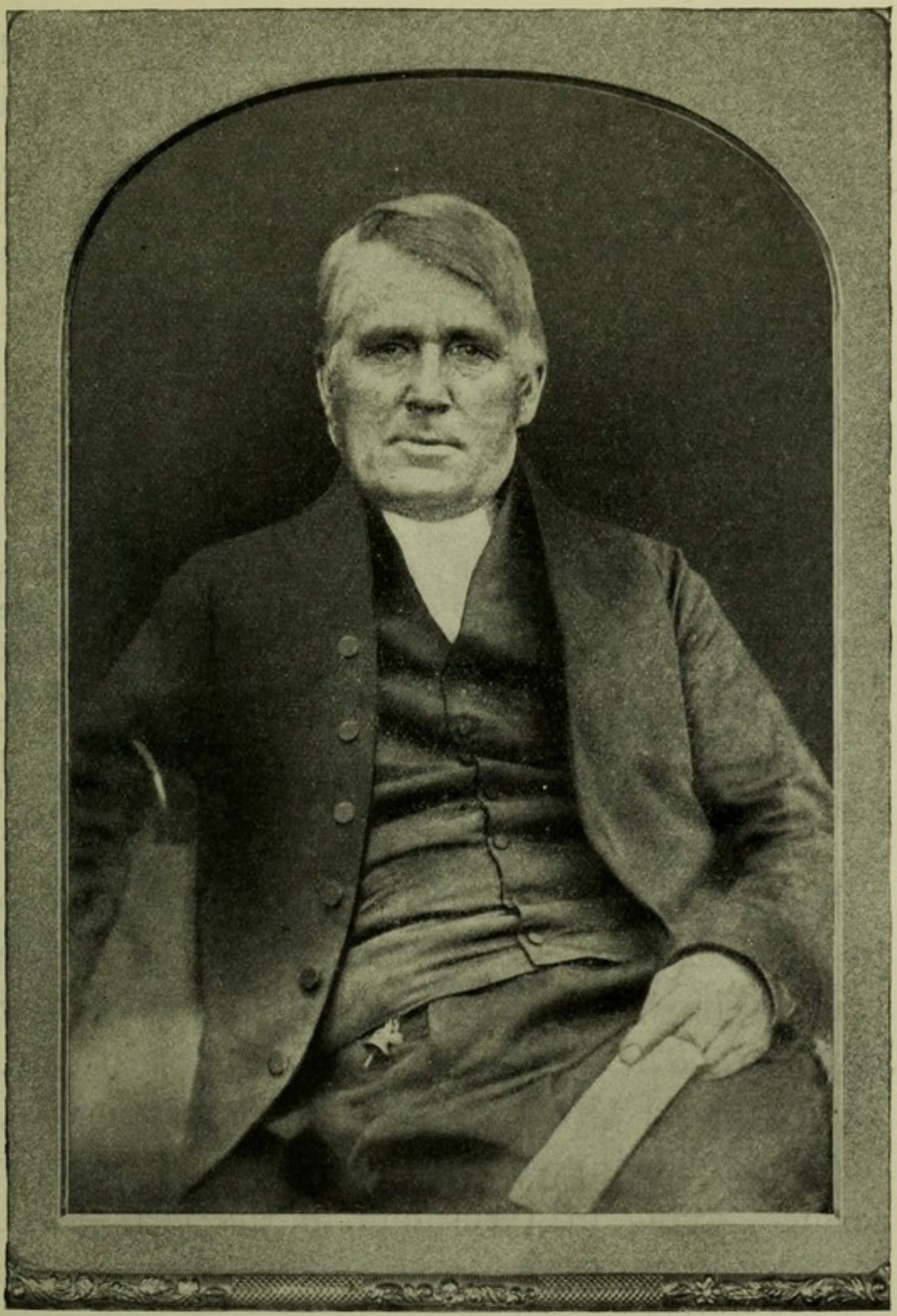
Joseph Sturge, the founder, was very successful in drawing other men into the work, though he did not himself take an active part in teaching. The last Sunday of his life he was at the Severn Street Schools and spoke to the scholars and read the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. He died a few days after, leaving many more monuments to his memory than the visible one at the Five Ways. John Bright visited the Schools in 1862 and spoke of his high appreciation of the movement. At the earnest wish of the teachers, Edmund Sturge succeeded Joseph Clark as superintendent of the Adult Division.

He was the youngest brother of Joseph and Charles Sturge, and like them lived many years in Birmingham, taking an active part in the religious and philanthropic work of the city.

His valued work in the Severn Street First-Day School had to be given up when he left Birmingham, in 1867.

Frederick Patching succeeded Edmund Sturge in the work.

Richard Barrow became superintendent in



JOSEPH STURGE.

1883. He was a native of Lancaster, but had settled in Birmingham in 1849. He filled successively the offices of Poor Law Guardian, Town Councillor, Alderman, and Justice of the Peace. In 1888 he was elected Mayor, and in this, as in all his other work, he won the esteem of his fellow citizens.

Joseph Clark, the first superintendent, worked for nearly twenty years—

> "In speaking, as he afterwards did, with thankfulness at having been permitted to engage in this work, he once remarked: 'Joseph Sturge little knew what he was doing for me when he almost forced the work upon me saying, "Joseph if thou thinks thou can't do any good, perhaps thou may'st get some."' He further added: 'I am afraid I have done but little, but how much I have received!'"

Richard Cadbury removed his class in 1880 to the Moseley Road School and Highgate Hall. The work here increased so successfully that in 1898 he built the Moseley Road Institute, and prepared with great zeal for further service, but the following year he was called to a higher service, dying in Jerusalem in the year 1899. It was a great and unexpected blow to his school, but his sons and daughters have nobly taken up the work of the ever increasing schools

and organizations connected with the parent buildings.

The Friends' Hall at Farm Street is the outcome of a class started in the schoolroom of the People's Chapel in Hockley, at the



Uffculme. The Adult School Hostel.
Given by Mr. Barrow Cadbury.

invitation of J. Skirrow Wright. He defrayed all expenses and continued to take an interest till his death. The present Hall was built in 1894. Another class was started in Soho, in the dining hall of the works of Messrs. Tangye Bros. Joseph Beardsley, a scholar in William

White's class, became one of the most zealous workers in this branch.

We have already spoken of William White. It is impossible to estimate the value of the work he gave to the movement. His sympathetic interest in each individual scholar, and his readiness to help existing schools or urge the establishment of new ones will long be remembered. William White also became an honoured and very useful member of the Town Council.

The following is interesting both as a permanent record and a picture of the early work of the Artisans' Dwelling Act in Birmingham.

"Early in 1875 the 'Artisans' Dwellings Act' gave, to the local authorities of towns of more than 25,000 inhabitants, the power to acquire property to enable them to deal with unhealthy areas by removing buildings unsuitable for habitation, and by letting the land so obtained for the provision of artisans' dwellings and for other improvement purposes; but without special authority from the Local Government Board the local authority had no power to build on land so obtained.

"A stranger coming to Birmingham in the early seventies would have seen a few busy, prosperous streets in the centre of the town, intersecting a large area of squalid, filthy slums, foul and insanitary in themselves and the source of contamination for the whole district. Joseph Chamberlain foresaw the advantage it would be to the town if its business centre could be cleansed and re-built,

and he recognized the immense knowledge that William White through his Adult School work had of the working classes of Birmingham, and the influence that he possessed over them, by proposing him as Chairman of the 'Improvement Committee' appointed by the Town Council in July 1875.

"As Chairman of this Committee, William White introduced its report to the Town Council. It was not as a mere theorist that he spoke, but from practical knowledge gained by personal visits to the ten thousand poverty-stricken inhabitants of the district in question (roughly, that part of the town lying between New Street and the far end of Steelhouse Lane). He described it as the worst district in the whole of Birmingham, and referred in convincing terms to the misery and degradation caused by the conditions under which thousands of their fellow townsmen had to live. As he passed from house to house he had constantly heard such remarks as—'No good trying to keep clean here, give it up as a bad job.' 'What have people got to do but drink here? It's their only comfort.' 'There's nothing but dirt and nastiness to live in, or stinks and smells; the only thing to make people jolly is a drop of drink.'

"William White said before the Council that he wished these details to go deep into their hearts as a claim upon them on behalf of such a district. 'The only prosperous people were the publicans, light and warmth were in their dwellings, if not sweetness, and they were the only escape of the people from the darkness of their lives.' 'The more misery, the fewer the bakers, and the more the publicans.' The floors of the houses were damp, some of them below the level of the courts, and they suffered through the oozing of filth through the walls, causing horrible stenches. The amount of sickness was enormous. He went from house to house seeing sickly people, hearing

such a story of illness and its attendant misery as would, even for this small district, fill a volume.

"The Report of the Committee recommended that the Corporation should acquire land and buildings in the centre of the town at a cost including that of making new streets of about £1,350,000, but the estimated value of the surplus land, after laying out of new streets and widening existing ones would reduce the net cost to £550,000.

"Mr. Chamberlain advocated the Bill before the Local Government Board, and it was confirmed in its entirety in the spring of 1876.

"The next few years saw William White almost continuously engaged in the work of the Improvement Committee, and the Scheme, which has largely transformed Birmingham from the 'great overgrown village' of the seventies to the fine city of the present day, was to a very large extent owing to his labour of love," and is an indirect result of the Adult School Movement.

William White was not the only man whose public work was aided by Adult School experience. George Cadbury, now for fifty years a regular and enthusiastic teacher, attributes his interest in Housing Reform to his knowledge of the conditions of life in the city. Bournville Village, with all its children, and even the last "grand-child" (as Mrs. Barnett calls the Hampstead Garden Suburb) must be counted as part of the history of the Movement. Mr. Cadbury soon saw the immense difficulty that the working man experienced in providing

suitable and healthy recreation for himself and his family. He is an enthusiast for gardens, and considered that if every man had a garden he would find plenty of occupation. He saw, too, how the stuffy, sunless, badly built houses undermined the health and subsequently the will power and finally drove both men and women to find solace or forgetfulness in the public-house. Some of the first tenants of the cottages built at Bournville were members of Mr. Cadbury's class.

There are many more names of public men connected with the Adult School Movement who might be mentioned—Sir William Cook, Lord Mayor of Birmingham and for twenty years Chairman of the Health Committee, was once a scholar in William White's Class ; John William Wilson, M.P. for North Worcestershire, was a teacher in the Schools ; Alderman George Lloyd, another Lord Mayor, was superintendent at one time, and his son Alderman J. H. Lloyd, also Lord Mayor, has been a teacher for many years, the Superintendent of the Association, and is now President of Class I. John Edward Wilson was also for many years a teacher. The names so far

mentioned are mainly of those who have passed away, or who have been working from the beginning, or connected with Birmingham public life. There are men and women in Birmingham and all over the country to-day who are doing noble work for the cause. It would be invidious to select a few ; it would be impossible in the short limit of this paper to do justice to all.

Extension of the Movement to neighbouring places.

Not only in the city have classes and schools flourished and increased, but in the neighbouring districts, such as Northfield, Selly Oak and Stirchley, schools were started by members of Class XIV under George Cadbury. There have been so many indeed in later years emanating from this Class, that they have started a Federation of their own, taking in several towns and villages in Worcestershire, such as Redditch, Bromsgrove, Rubery, etc. A country camp on the Lickey Hills is connected with this Federation, and there scholars may spend a few days or a week-end in the summer for a very small sum. Mr. Cadbury himself remains faithful to his original class, bicycling

into town from Northfield every Sunday morning at 6.15, but he pays occasional visits to the classes that have sprung from his own.

Some of the other centres are as follows: Hospital Street, Greet, Hay Mills, Rea Street, King's Heath, Holliday Street, Highbury (Graham Street), Acock's Green, Stourport, Halesowen, Quinton, West Smethwick, Prince's End (Tipton).

There are also the following converted public-houses in Birmingham where schools are held: *The Prince of Wales* in Hospital Street, the *Beehive* in Bath Row, *General Havelock* in Hope Street, *The Old Sportsman* in Icknield Port Road, *Coppersmiths' Arms* in Rea Street, *Swan with Two Necks* in Cheapside.

The Movement in other parts of England.

Though this is mainly a history of Birmingham Schools we must note how the movement has spread in other parts of England. To-day there are about 1,650 schools and over 110,000 members. Of these schools 400 have been opened during the past three years.

There are successful schools in all the big towns of Yorkshire. The rapid growth of the

movement in Leicestershire has been almost unique. Though there were schools at an earlier date in that county, the movement may be said to have been born again in 1899. A school was opened on January 1, which fell on a Sunday that year, and a second on February 1, also a Sunday. "Why not have a new school every month?" said the men, with the result that sixteen were opened that year. There are now 135 schools in the county, 83 for men and 52 for women, and in some villages every man is a member.

"Adult School Agencies."

We must now mention some of the agencies connected with the schools; they vary according to the need and demand in different places: Savings Funds, Social Clubs, Sick Clubs, Medical Clubs, Night Schools, Libraries, Mission Meetings, Lodging House Mission, Total Abstinence Societies, Mutual Improvement Societies, Lectures, Social Meetings, Social Study Circles, Book Clubs, Goose Clubs, Coal and Blanket Clubs, Tract, Peace and Missionary Societies, Employment Registries, Benevolent and Samaritan Clubs, Cooking, Dressmaking and

Handicraft Classes, Male Voice Choirs, Musical Societies of all kinds, Athletic, Cricket, Football and Cycling Clubs, Rambling Clubs, Flower Shows, Allotments, Ambulance Classes, Hand Bell Ringing.

To give an example of how some of the clubs



Adult School Camp.

are worked, we may mention a Coal Club worked by the Selly Oak, Raddle Barn Lane, Dawlish Road and Hay Green Schools. The men own their own trucks and carts, the labour is entirely voluntary and is on strict business lines. They buy the coal from the mines and have to deal with 800 tons or more a year.

No credit is allowed ; members contribute what they like a week.

At least eighteen Social Service Committees are at work in Birmingham at the present time; matters affecting the life of the community are



ADULT SCHOOL WORK FOR OTHERS. TEA FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN.

dealt with—a crusade against the sale of indecent publications has already helped to diminish this evil.

In Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and to a certain extent in Yorkshire, they have

Male Voice Choirs, often composed of men who knew nothing previously about music, and did not even know they had a voice. Competitions are arranged between the Choirs.

The need for further education having been felt by many of the scholars, Mr. George Cadbury, Junr., opened a settlement at Fircroft in January 1909, where working men may go into residence for a varying number of weeks, and study social and religious questions, and generally increase their knowledge and enlarge their horizon. The first group of students included a carpenter, a baker, a brass moulder, a shoemaker and a market gardener. This idea has been followed up by Settlements in York and Leeds.

Fifty Adult School Lecture Schools have been held in 1909. They generally last from 3.0 to 9.0 on Saturday, and from 3.0 to 9.0 on Sunday ; tea and supper are provided and times of fellowship are combined with study.

A great number of Birmingham scholars help most effectively with police court work, and are honorary members of the Society.

Men who have been helped by the Schools.

It may be interesting to describe a few typical cases of men who have been helped by the Adult School Movement :—

I. A young bank clerk, too strictly brought up, had "gone off" everything religious. He joined in a Church Parade and from that got an introduction to an Adult School. He found there an opportunity of teaching, quite apart at first from definitely religious matters. His life was completely changed by the Adult School, when he was promoted to a bank in another district. He called on every man in a hamlet near, chatted and smoked with them, opened a school in the hamlet and gradually drew every man living there into it.

II. A High Churchman of the old Tory type, when some men tried to start a school in 1896 in his village in Leicestershire, tried to prevent it, as he felt that members would not thereby be gained for his Church, but he was persuaded to attend one meeting. He accepted the office of treasurership. The spirit of brotherhood got hold of him—he had never really mixed among his fellow men before—now his wife says she can never get him away for a prolonged holiday, "he must come back and see the fellows." He is in love with all the people living in his town, and his own words are : "It's done more for me than for many a drunkard."

III. A Chairman of a Trades Council and a Labour Leader in a south-country town where a school was started just twelve months ago. Edward Brown and Edwin Gilbert arrived there on a pouring wet day and called at the Trades Council Office for the names of men on whom to call ; amongst others they called on the Chairman. He is a working bricklayer of about thirty-six, and he said :

"Oh! I'm not the man you want. I ran away from home when I was sixteen. I haven't darkened the door of a church or chapel since." He was finally persuaded to come to the inaugural meeting, and at the close moved a resolution that a school should be started. He gathered in all the Trades Union members and has been its backbone ever since. When lately he moved to Colchester, and Edwin Gilbert wrote asking him still to remain an Adult School man, he replied that "the Adult School was the last thing he would ever leave."

IV. Number four is one who says he has committed every crime except murder. He used to travel with a boxing booth, and was such a desperate character that he was watched out of London by detectives and told never to go there again; he also used to thrash his wife severely. Some Adult School men got hold of him and introduced him to a Social Club. About that time his wife bought two tickets at the Beehive to go and see the sacred picture "Ecce Homo." He says that when he got into the room he could not take his eyes off the Christ's figure; he got very nervous and uncomfortable and three times tried to leave the room, but it was just as if there was a brick wall. He was in the room an hour, and then went straight up to the Beehive and asked some one to witness him sign the pledge. Michael Sadler and Edwin Gilbert went one Sunday into the School at the end of a lesson on "Temptation" in the roughest class in the Beehive, and heard this man speak thus to the men:—

"When I first tried to do better I had great difficulty in passing the public-houses. My wife used to say to me when I got home (I used to thrash my wife, mates, but I wouldn't lay my little finger on her now) 'Well, Harry, what sort of a day have you had?' and I used to answer—'Well, I had a great difficulty in passing the

public-house,' and she would say: 'Come, come, Harry, my boy; it's the Lord's way of making a man of yer.'"

He was also heard at Easter commenting on the lesson on the Resurrection. He had heard it suggested that our Lord's body had been stolen from the grave. He drew the men's attention to the way in which the clothes were found neatly folded and said, "Do you think they'd 'ave found the clothes like that if it 'ad been a pinching job?"

V. The fifth case is a Leicester man who used to be a drunkard but is now a prison rescue worker. After joining an Adult School the first thing he did was to get into the prison and bail out his old pal, who was in for assaulting the police. In less than twelve months he added at least sixty or seventy men from prison or the police courts to the Adult School. He was a shoemaker, but gave up his shop and did repairs in his own house so as to give himself more time. He has attended the police court ever since for two hours each day quite voluntarily. All the officials help him in every way they can. He is not a probation officer but quite a voluntary worker. He is most successful with men who have seemed most hopeless. A "guest house" has now been started, where he brings men straight from prison to stay for a small charge until they can right themselves or get work.

Women's Adult Schools.

We must give a separate account of the Women's Schools, which, as already stated, started in Birmingham in 1848, the same year as the Men's, with nineteen teachers and twenty scholars. In 1861 the Priory Rooms were built, and in this building the Central Women's School

in Birmingham still meets, with an average attendance of 325. One of the teachers—Frances Ashford—was present on the opening day and still continues to teach. Hannah Cadbury also taught from the beginning till her death four years ago.

For many years the number of Women's Schools was small; now they are being organized all over the country, and an effort is being made to supplement every Men's School by one for women. Where these work in complete harmony a great mutual advantage is secured.

"Adult Schools for Women seek to develop and strengthen the life of the womanhood of the nation. About 600 of these schools are at work, 100 of which were opened in 1908, and whether in great cities, provincial towns, or in villages, they meet a need in women's life. In so far as they are SCHOOLS, England needs such to-day. Home-life, which is at the root of the nation's well-being, business life in which so many women are engaged, the Civic Life which offers increasing opportunities for women's work, the many Social Problems around us, which are connected so closely with the happiness of the home, all demand more knowledge on the part of our women."

The self-government of the Schools stimulates women's ability for management, and brings out much latent talent.

A great many Women's Classes which previously were branches of Men's Schools are now independent centres, with a corresponding increase of responsibility. Women are entitled to send an equal number of representatives to the County Unions. In every County Union there is now a fully recognized Women's Standing Committee, which takes upon itself the arrangement of conferences, lecture schools and opportunities for groups of schools to meet together for consultation.

The Committee of "Fircroft" have granted the use of the house for six weeks next year for Adult School Women, when it is hoped that weekly courses of study on Sociology, Women's and Children's Problems, Physiology and Hygiene, Biology, Literature, Biblical History and Study, will be arranged at such a figure as will bring it within reach of a large number of working women.

One of the most notable changes of recent years has been in the time of holding the Women's Schools. Up till four or five years ago a Women's School was rarely held except on Sunday morning or afternoon. Now they are mostly held on a week evening or afternoon.

One reason for this may be the altered character of the Sunday, which makes it less easy for a woman to be present in the afternoon, especially in cities ; also the growth of P.S.A.'s which both husbands and wives may attend. Another reason is the fact that women are more alert and can give more time to the larger programme, which the schools place before their members to-day, on a week evening. The Scripture lessons do not suffer from the change : indeed they seem more pointed when taken in mid-week. They have more effect on the daily life taken in conjunction with the study of other branches of women's life and work than when they were the sole lesson. The lessons used for Bible study are almost wholly those prepared by the National Council, and during the last year the Women's Committee of the National Council has issued questions on each lesson, which have been widely used and have encouraged much freedom of conversation in class.

All new schools open with the idea that they stand for education in the highest sense of heart and mind and soul, which ultimately must be returned to the community in service.

National Organization of the Schools.

Having dealt with the history of the movement, its numerous agencies and increasing developments, the work of the pioneers and the changed lives of the members, and the growth of Women's Schools, we must describe the organizations by which the schools are united all over England. To quote from the last report :—

> "From about the middle of the nineteenth century the work came to be organized under the Friends' First-Day School Association until the last decade when more national and less denominational organization seemed necessary. Thus it has come about that the country is now divided for the purpose of the work into District Unions which are all affiliated under the National Council of Adult School Unions, to which representatives from all Unions are elected."

In the Midland Union there are 261 schools, 202 for men and 59 for women. National Council Meetings are held quarterly with an Annual Conference, at which such subjects are discussed as : "Opportunities for Intellectual Advancement," "Adult School Opportunities for helping the Blind, Crippled, and Infirm," "Christianity in Municipal Life," "How to Interest Members in the Bible Lesson," "Prayer,"

"Man's Place in Nature," and many others. The different County Unions also have similar Council Meetings and Conferences.

The Adult Schools have a hymn book of their own called the *Fellowship Hymn Book.* It contains 336 hymns, and combines those of a devotional and ethical character. Sets of Bible lessons for the year are arranged and published, with helpful notes and lists of books of reference; also a plan of Daily Readings, illustrating the lessons. There is also a Magazine published entitled *One and All,* which gives news of the work in all parts of the Kingdom with helpful papers on Religious and Social Subjects, and weekly Bible lessons. It is published monthly, and last year over 300,000 copies were sold.

Edwin Gilbert, the vigorous secretary of the National Council, travels about the country inaugurating new schools. Last year he visited the Miners' Parliament in Newcastle, with the result that several new schools have been started and new workers found.

With regard to individual schools, they are each governed as much as possible by the members themselves. The only qualification for

membership is a wish to join. The members may belong to any denomination or to none.

The Aim of the Schools.

The Adult School lays great stress on comradeship and close personal friendship; it differs therefore in method from the P.S.A. Movement, as it is felt that these qualities are more easily fostered by men gathering in small groups than when assembled in large meetings. In the same way, individual character and thought are better developed in classes for mutual study than in listening to set addresses. The aim is not so much to feed as to evoke the finer qualities and awake latent talent, to teach men to think for themselves and to learn the value of personal service. They learn in discussion that there are generally two sides to a question, and to respect another man's convictions.

To quote again from the Report, one must feel "that this is the direction in which hopeful progress lies, that here may be found the fulfilment of Mazzini's ideal that by association and education the manhood of a nation can be best developed. Our time is one that calls for an immense advance in the training and equip-

ment of the great mass of the people, upon whom now falls not only the burden of labour but the added responsibility of citizenship. England has no greater need than Education—an education which shall be both wide and deep: wide in that it may include the varied and ever-widening interests and aspirations of men, deep in that its root may go down into the spiritual nature of man."

It must never be forgotten that the very centre of Adult School work, its reason for existence, is the development of the spiritual side of man. Its educational agencies stimulate the intellect; its doctrines of thrift and independence add to material wealth and comfort. Healthy exercise and legitimate sport aid physical development. But health, material comfort and increased intelligence would still leave the soul cold and unsatisfied. To have an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ is the desire of the true Adult School member.

I will conclude with the words of one of our leaders, George Newman, spoken in Birmingham a few weeks ago:—

"We believe that every man, be he who he may, has within himself some germ or seed or gleam of light which

is of Divine origin ; and that Jesus Christ, who came to reveal the Love of the Eternal, unveils that reality within us ; and that His Spirit, by whatever name it is known, and in whatever religion it appears, is able to touch and awaken that Divine element, so that it, passing from strength to strength, can transform us, and make us what we ought to be, changing the beast in us into man, bringing good out of evil, and light out of darkness, and life out of death, and so bringing us to some understanding and some doing of the will of our Maker—from Whom we came and to Whom we return.

"I have been told that it was a mistake on the part of our founders to make this Movement a religious one. I answer 'No—a thousand times No.' Religion is a growth out of the entire nature of man. It is organically a part of him, and in Jesus Christ you see the highest fruit and revelation of the religious spirit. Do you wonder that this great Movement was built on that supreme Foundation ? Ah ! what sweet music that Name brings to the human soul. Down to the depths He makes His appeal. Out of the depths we cry to Him, and He brings to us the answers of God."

"Christ is the end for Christ is the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM AID SOCIETY

By Professor J. H. Muirhead

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It may seem to some presumptuous in so juvenile a product of the civic spirit as the City Aid Society to claim a place among institutions so venerable as the King Edward Foundations or so well-established and representative as the City Council. I have in the Preface claimed for an "institution" that it represents something essentially stable and settled as contrasted with individuals who come and go. Comparing it with elements in the individual's own life, it resembles his character and habits rather than his more passing desires or purposes. But the Society of which I am going to speak can hardly as yet be said to have acquired the fixity of a habit. If it is an institution at all, it is only one in the making and, as we shall presently see, there are already those who deny

to it and its kind any permanent right to be at all.

Reserving the discussion of the latter point and assuming that the City Aid Society represents a permanent interest of civic life, we may perhaps find it to be none the less interesting because of the recency of its origin. For this enables us to see in it all the more clearly the mind and will of individuals at work on the problem of social well-being, and therewith recognize it as a definite element in the social will. It is true that the citizens as a body have not elected its members or as yet expressed any formal approval of its offices, but it is one of the discoveries of modern democracy that besides votes and personal declarations there are other equally conclusive ways in which a community may express its will. In the present case it is impossible to mistake the general endorsement of the Society's objects in the support both in subscriptions and in the offer of personal services which it has received from all classes, all religious denominations and all political parties.

In what follows I wish in the first place to speak of the origin of the ideas for which the Society stands; secondly, to inquire what

success it has up to the present achieved in carrying these ideas into effect and to what the failures it has encountered are due ; lastly, to say something on the more general question of the place of the voluntary effort which such societies represent in any future re-organization of the means we have of dealing with poverty.

I.

The Origin of the City Aid and Kindred Societies.

Under the first of these heads it is important to realize that the ideas for which the Society stands go further back than is commonly supposed, and that together with kindred societies elsewhere it is part of a larger movement which future historians are likely to regard as characteristic of our time.

Already in the middle of last century many thoughtful people were beginning to realize both what the existing Poor Law could and what it could not do. The reform of 1834 had withdrawn an influence which undoubtedly made against the fundamental social virtue of self-reliance, and so far had done good positive service. On the eve of revolutionary changes

in what has hitherto been known as the New Poor Law it is important to recognize the justice of this claim. The Old Poor Law had gone upon the principle that British industry was a permanent cripple and could only be got upon its legs and kept there by the aid of parochial crutches. The new law took its start from another and juster theory. Industry had not only the power but the duty to support itself. But in order to get it into the proper frame of mind and body, the first thing that was necessary was to remove the crutches. So far, well. What was wrong was that the new law, partly through lack of knowledge, but partly also through the influence of fallacious theory, instead of waging active war against the causes of poverty, contented itself with organizing receptacles for the wreckage for which other causes besides a mistaken Poor Law policy were responsible. By the middle of the century there were those who began to be conscious of this defect. One of the earliest writers to perceive it was Thomas Carlyle. Glancing over the state of society in the *Latter Day Pamphlets*, his eye was caught by the gigantic evil of Pauperism, and penetrated at once to its meaning. "Pauperism,"

he declared, "is the general leakage through every joint of the ship that is rotten. Pauperism is the poisonous dripping from all the sins. Workhouse Paupers, immortal sons of Adam, rotted into that scandalous condition. My friends, I perceive the quagmire must be drained, or we cannot live. On that Problem we shall find that innumerable things, that all things whatsoever hang." Looking round for the chief causes, Carlyle fastened the responsibility upon the Captains and Teachers of his time who had fallen away from their true calling. The remedy was a return to what he calls a truer captaining and a truer teaching. "Were the pretended Captains of the world at all in the habit of commanding, or were the pretended Teachers of the world at all in the habit of teaching, pauperism would lie far over the horizon." But Carlyle was not the man to dwell on partial causes or to fail to see that the defects of Captains and Teachers were the defects of all. "Were all men doing their duty," he concludes, "or even seriously trying to do it, there would be no pauper."

Just about the same time as Carlyle was writing these words, a pious German, known

to his neighbours as Daniel Von der Heydt, was meditating a not very different problem on the banks of the Wupper in Rhenish Prussia, —into whose head came something like the same answer as that which Carlyle had reached. New discoveries are not always the outcome of scientific knowledge. Columbus tells us he came by the thought of a new continent not from the study of geography or astronomy, but by the study of the prophecies of Isaiah, which told of a new heaven and a new earth. So was it with the pious Daniel. His idea came to him, he tells us, in reading Jethro's advice to Moses to share the responsibility of government with chosen leaders that he might "be able to endure" and all the people "go to their places in peace." "And Moses," he read, "chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard cases they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves."

He, too, had reached the idea of draining off the quagmire and of stopping the supply at the source. He differed from Carlyle in seeing that,

as a first step, it was necessary to appeal to the existing good-will of the community through a new form of civic organization. The result was the famous Elberfeld system which is now working not in Elberfeld alone, but in every part of Germany, including such great towns as Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig. The essence of the scheme is district division and individual responsibility for particular families. Elberfeld itself, with its 150,000 inhabitants, is divided into some 518 districts with over 500 helpers; Berlin, with a population of nearly 2,000,000, has over 4,000 helpers; Hamburg, with 700,000 inhabitants, has over 1,500; Leipzig, about the size of Birmingham, has 1,000 helpers, corresponding in general to the 37 or taking Greater Birmingham the 64 Guardians who might be said to bear the official burden of the same work amongst ourselves.

The history of the efforts directed to the more intelligent and humane treatment of poverty in England is interesting. I can only mention one or two of the more significant movements.

Already in 1860 there was founded in London a "National Society for the Relief of Distress." The objects of its leaders were: (1) the relief of

temporary as distinguished from permanent destitution ; (2) the appointment of visitors or almoners with specific districts ; (3) the opening of local offices for the reception and investigation of cases for relief; and (4) co-operation with the existing charities and the poor law authorities.

Though the thing was there, the programme here laid down just stopped short of the conscious recognition of the idea of prevention. This was to follow. In 1868 was formed the "Association for the Prevention of Pauperism and Crime." The circular setting forth its objects was mainly the work of Mr. Henry Solly, in these days a young man who saw visions : when I knew him some twenty years afterwards an old man who still dreamt dreams. The circular is particularly interesting for the wide grasp of the situation and the attempt to analyse it into its elements which it contained. It set forth that we were manufacturing paupers and criminals in a wholesale way, first, by our industrial disorganization ; secondly, by our existing system of licensing ; third, by the absence of opportunities of rational enjoyment on the part of the workers ; fourthly, by the defects of our educat-

ional system, which could only be remedied by a more thorough general and industrial training; fifth, by the condition of working class dwellings; and sixth, by indiscriminate charity and unconditional poor law relief.

Though it can hardly be said to have got beyond a programme, this was a notable scheme. The Society had upon its Council, among others, Cardinal (then Archbishop) Manning, Dr. Benjamin Richardson and Mr. John Ruskin, men who, probably, did not agree upon many things but were unanimous in a genuine hatred of existing methods of treating poverty and destitution. Comprehensible and practical as these ideas now seem to us, they soon showed themselves beyond the comprehension even of the members of the Society itself. First its action was restricted to propagandism, and then, as a sop to those who pressed for more active measures, to a concentration of the efforts of the Society upon the last of the above objects, the organization of charities. In accordance with this limitation the name was changed in 1869 to "The Society for Organizing Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity."

This was the origin of the better known "Charity

Organization Society," which thus in its inception was a deliberate and probably under the circumstances an inevitable adaptation of a more generous programme. The able and disinterested men who founded, and in several cases have since continued to direct the Society, had fixed upon one true cause of pauperism—indiscriminate and overlapping charity. They were the first clearly to recognize that merely sentimental and unthinking charity may be a curse and not a blessing, both to him who gives and to him who takes. But, in proportion to the growing success which they have achieved in bringing this home to the public, and so in realizing the second part of their programme, the repression of mendicity, it has come to be realized that besides lax administration of private and public charity, there are other wide-reaching causes of poverty which no modern community can safely leave to act unchecked upon its weaker units—chief among them the prolonged sickness or unemployment of the breadwinner and the unwholesome moral effects of street influences and unskilled employments upon the young. To the rise of these causes into prominence we owe the growing conviction

that no system, whether of public or private assistance, can be adequate which fails to take account of them, or is content to see individuals or families who are their innocent victims sucked into destitution from lack of timely aid. Charity Organization Societies have sometimes, I am told, opposed or failed to support, the extension of their work which thus seemed to be called for in a well-organized and readily available system of neighbourly help. If they have done so, I cannot help thinking that it is because they have forgotten the rock whence they were themselves hewn. In reality they have themselves been the pioneers of the new movement. The ideas of prevention and of the personal responsibility of the whole body of the more fortunate and the better-to-do to contribute what they can to it was latent in the charity organization movement from the beginning, and only required the stimulus of the suggestion from abroad to call them into active operation.[1]

[1] For a finely stated defence of the C.O.S. against uninformed criticism see the article in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. xx, No. 4 (July, 1910), by Professor Bosanquet, "Charity Organization and the Majority Report."

I have not been able to trace the particular channel through which Daniel Von der Heydt's ideas began to attract public attention in England. There is probably an interesting record of visits, investigations, correspondence, during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century lying somewhere to be discovered by the future student of important social movements. But it was not till 1904 that we have the first attempt in the foundation of the Guild of Help at Bradford actually to apply these ideas to our own conditions. Halifax followed in 1905. At the second conference held last year in Bradford thirty-four Societies were reported either as actually formed or as in the process of formation. At the third held in May of the present year in Sheffield no fewer than sixty-two, with 8,000 workers between them, were reported, and upwards of fifty were represented by delegates. These have the appearance of being a mushroom growth. I would rather compare them to the precipitation of a crystal long prepared for and only waiting for a nucleus. The aim of the Bradford Society is typical of them all. It is not to import the German system. The differences are too obvious: there

is here no access to public money; there is no way of compelling individual service; there is no trained body of workers; there is, as yet, no scientific machinery for dealing with the waste product of our industrial system. What is the same is the general object: "first, to prevent overlapping and waste of charitable effort; second, to provide a friend for all in need of help and advice; third, to secure timely aid for the suffering and the needy; fourth, to bring about lasting improvement in the condition of each case by patient study and wise methods of help; and lastly, to unite all in this work as a service owed by the citizen to his community independently of church, creed or political party."

The Birmingham City Aid Society was founded in 1906, but the first stone may be said to have been laid so early as 1891, by the foundation, under the Presidency of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, of the West Birmingham Relief Fund, and the materials for the building were brought together partly, as we have seen, by the Charity Organization Society, and partly by the various divisional and mutual aid societies which preceded it.[1] The ideas for which the Society

[1] As an illustration of the growth of public opinion I can

stands are thus expressed in its last Report:

1. That under present conditions, individuals and families are liable through no fault of their own to be exposed to circumstances which, except for timely aid, are likely to lead to destitution and consequent demoraliaztion.
2. That for the present at least, the duty of giving the required aid devolves upon voluntary associations.
3. That to prevent overlapping, and to secure that the aid be given with the fullest available knowledge and in a uniform manner, it is desirable to organize such associations as far as possible under a single civic administration, which shall undertake the responsibility of covering the whole ground.
4. That the present movement towards a better organization of medical and poor-law services will be greatly furthered by the enlistment and training of just such a body of voluntary helpers as this society aims at securing.

II.

The Working of the City Aid Society.

The main objects to be secured in the actual working of such a society are first, comprehensiveness; secondly, individual responsibility;

recollect that in 1898, when in a public address I happened to mention the need of confederation I was promptly rebuked by a leading evening paper, on the ground that it would diminish local interest and be a discouragement to local generosity.

third, uniformity of administration; fourthly, adequacy of resources. These several objects are provided for by the general constitution of the Society. With the view of covering the City the work is divided among seven branches, corresponding to the North, South, East, West, Bordesley, Central, Edgbaston divisions. The function of the Branch Officers is to secure that common principles shall be applied to the cases that come before the Society, but the actual consideration of these cases is in the hands of the smaller bodies or District Committees, three, four or five of which go to form the Branch. It is in these District Committees that the real work of the Society is done, every member being made to feel his individual responsibility by being called upon to consider each case in detail as it comes up. In cases where there is particular difficulty and the local captain feels unwilling to undertake the responsibility an Advisory Committee with its Mosaic chairman has been provided. Finally it is the duty of the Executive, consisting of the officers of the Society and the officers of the Branches, together with forty-one leading citizens, to provide by public appeals for the working expenses of the

Society and to see that under whatever general restrictions the Society may be compelled to work the cases which it actually undertakes shall be adequately assisted.[1]

What success has the Society thus constituted been able to achieve? What failures has it had to face? To what are successes and failures respectively attributable?

In one respect it may be said at once the Society has met with remarkable success. There has been no lack of helpers. Believers and doubters alike have been astonished by the readiness with which citizens of all classes have offered their services, the faithfulness with which they have visited and reported upon their cases, and the loyalty they have shown to the principles of the Society in the details of administration. What is chiefly wanted in this respect is greater diversity in the classes from which the district committees draw their members. We want more helpers from the

[1] For further details as to the organization and working of the Society the reader is referred to the Annual Reports, to be obtained at its Head Office at 145, Great Charles Street, to Mr. T. W. Trought's pamphlet, *The City of Birmingham Aid Society: A Retrospect*; and Mr. R. H. Best's *The City of Birmingham Aid Society: Its Future Aims.*

skilled artisans on the one hand and from employers of labour on the other. We want particularly more of the active assistance of the Churches. I am told that the working classes are coming to distrust denominational charity in all its forms, and that the place and influence of the Churches as centres of charitable effort are on the decline. If this is so ministers of religion have the remedy in their own hands. Let them join the district committees of the City Aid Society, where their knowledge and education will at once mark them out as leaders. In this way I venture to think that they will find opportunities of obtaining a working knowledge of their parishes and of exercising the right kind of influence both within and without their boundaries which have never hitherto been open to them.

Nor is there any sign of failure in the response the Society has met with in its appeal for funds. An ordinary income of £2,000 may apparently easily be reckoned upon, while in exceptional years like 1909 this may rise to £8,000.[1] What

[1] The advisability of having a common fund was hotly discussed at the recent Conference. If it were a question of giving or refusing to give material help in any form,

here also is wanted is wider support, and that subscription should not be considered the concern of the rich alone.

It is in the nature of the cases that come before the Society and the organized means available for the effective treatment of them that the limits to the usefulness of such societies must be looked for. A short analysis of some of the chief classes of need will best serve to make this plain. We may take first the two classes at opposite ends of the scale that cause least difficulty.

(*a*) There is the sponger and professional beggar. In dealing with him the Society may be said to have been fairly successful. If you ask what it can do for him, the most obvious answer is that it can find him out. That is a benefit both to society and himself. An association like this makes it wholly inexcusable to aid in the manufacture of this class by indis-

much might be said for the more Draconian policy. There would at any rate be a principle involved, but when the alternative to a common fund turns out to be the collection from private sources by the individual committee or worker of the material assistance required for approved cases the advantages of the Birmingham system in economizing time and effort seem sufficiently obvious.

criminate giving in the street. Until its foundation there were those who were willing to take the risk of giving to the undeserving rather than leaving the deserving unhelped. On the other hand there were those who, rather than give to the undeserving, would give to nobody at all. Societies like ours leave both without excuse. This is done *first* by means of the system of inquiry. The case paper with its column of questions has often been denounced as inquisitorial, but it is the bottom plank of the whole modern system of public and private assistance. It is remarkable that both the Poor Law Reports endorse this view; neither proposes to dispense with it; the schemes which both advocate are founded upon it. And *secondly*, by securing, for the first time, the rudiments of an effective method of co-operation between existing charities,[1] the foundation of which in Birmingham we owe to a large extent to the enthusiasm of the Vicar of St. Ambrose.

(*b*) At the other end of the scale the reports of our own and all other societies show that

[1] This is under a special Mutual Registration Committee.

useful work has been done in dealing with the good workman who is disabled, either by sickness or temporary unemployment. The kind of work that can be done in case of sickness I shall best illustrate by giving a couple of examples :

Man and one child in hospital ; wife (with baby) struggled on for five weeks and was 18*s*. behind in rent ; 5*s*. a week was granted by the District Committee during remaining weeks when man was still in hospital, and a loan of £1 made for rent, which was subsequently repaid ; the landlord remitting one week's arrears.

Man, girder-fixer (with five young children), ill with pneumonia ; 12*s*. from sick club only income ; rent, 6*s*. 6*d*. Half starved for want of food. Came to office and said had had no food for twelve hours. Immediate help given and continued until he got well. Employer promised to keep place open. Now doing well and has sent a letter of thanks.

(*c*) While the work of the Society is clear sailing in the ordinary cases of sickness, it is sadly hampered by the lack of suitable institutions at once for minor forms of physical weakness, for the more serious of incipient consumption, and more still for advanced cases which are a danger to the children. No proposals for reform in our methods of dealing with poverty will be at all adequate which fail to place in the forefront a far more abundant and accessible supply of such institutions.

(*d*) As to unemployment, we are in a more difficult position. No voluntary society nor I venture to think local public authority could wisely undertake to deal with cases of distress coming from chronic nder-employment or unemployment in the present state of the industrial world. It is for this reason that the Society lays it down that it will not deal with cases of unemployment unless there is a reasonable prospect of work in the immediate future ; but, lest this should rule out precisely the kind of case which the Society is founded to meet, it has rightly adopted a reasonable standard of what is meant by a "reasonable chance." [1]

It is under this ruling that the Society has offered, and is likely to continue to offer, substantial assistance both in kind and in other not less effective ways to this class of case. Again I shall best illustrate by one or two examples :—

Husband, painter, with wife and large family of young

[1] "No one will persuade me," said the Chairman of the Advisory Committee in a recent discussion of this point, "that a workman with a skilled trade in his fingers and in ordinary health has not a reasonable chance of employment, even in times of bad trade."

children, one in asylum for the blind. Fell out of work through no fault of his own, at the same time child returned from the asylum as feeble-minded. Applied, in great trouble, at the end of his thirteen weeks out-of-work-benefit from his society. Case helped in co-operation with a friend, a booking clerk at railway station book-stall, with 6*s*. a week for two months, friendship growing up between him and Helper. At the end of the time got good work.

Worker in electro-plate (when in work getting 30*s*.), with wife, both over 65. Room beautifully clean, well furnished. One son home from African war with ague. Large family, most doing well, but scattered and not in touch with old people. Foolishly dropped subscription a year before to union, of which a member for many years. Lost job owing to slackness of work and age. Society helped for six weeks, while correspondence opened with family, from one of whom 5*s*. a week sent for rent. Employer written to in May, and X. reinstated at 35*s*. Shortly after ceased work, but by that time both elegible for old age pension.

Not the least of the services which the Society can render to this class is in following up the cases by real friendly visitation as on the Elberfeld system, after the time of distress is over, with a view to re-establishing club payments and other forms of thrift.[1]

Other classes of cases, such as those of casual and under-employed workers or men who have lost their employment through some

[1] This department is under a special committee.

industrial or moral defect offer a wholly different problem and bring us to the limits of the Society's work. The universal experience of all our committees has been that a society like ours is nearly impotent in the presence of widespread under-employment and the industrial and moral defects or the various forms of physical weakness or actual sickness that are apt to go with it and to lead in the end to total unemployment or mere cadging. Until the community comes to our aid by adopting the methods of prevention and elimination that both the Poor Law Reports suggest, any attempts to deal with these classes will be made under much necessary discouragement, and in my judgment are nearly hopeless. We shall be always haunted by the idea that we are only adding another to the casual windfalls on which this class subsists. Before any real progress can be made, we require besides systematic prevention, *first*, an increased power of control vested in the hands of the community enabling it to deal according to their particular needs with these different classes which are actually on our hands at present; *secondly*, and going along with this, the supply of a

system of institutions adapted for this purpose. In reply to a circular letter which I addressed recently to the Chairmen of the District Committees, whose kindness in replying I here desire to acknowledge, the answers were almost unanimous upon this head. "The one outstanding, pressing need to my mind," writes one of our best Chairmen, "is the provision of such powers and institutions. All our efforts and plans are more or less nullified or rendered patchy and utterly unsatisfying by our inability to deal effectively with these classes" (the industrially and morally unfit). "They include such a very large proportion of those in need of real help adapted to their circumstances that one feels all the time that we are only touching the fringe, and often unable to deal with that effectively." He concludes, "Constructive work waits for this need to be supplied."

In spite of these obstructions, experience shows that some useful service may often be done short of money grants to cases of this kind, particularly where there is no moral defect. You may see that the children are put on the free breakfast list while the distress lasts and (as one

chairman suggests) see that they get their breakfast at home when it ceases. You may direct to the proper channels of assistance any case of sickness. You may give a note enabling the wife who is probably carding buttons meantime to get her work direct from the firm and not through the middle man.[1] If you are convinced of the respectability of the case you may get private aid to tide it over and keep it out of the workhouse. Even in the case of some flagrant moral defect, a committee may have a try. A man may be got to join a morning class. He may be put in the way of counter-attractions to the public house.[2]

[1] The middle man may seem to the district helper fair game and to be best dealt with by elimination. But the limits of this method are an interesting case of the danger of bringing doctrinaire sociology into practice. The middle man as often as not is a woman and may often have the will and the means to help the worker at a pinch. "You see she's a friend of mine," said a button-carder to the present writer, when a letter of recommendation for direct employment from the firm was pressed upon her. Naturally also the firm in time of slackness dismisses the individual outworkers first.

[2] A case in point came before my notice recently in which, after getting a man to sign the pledge, the committee thought it only right to supply him at home with a gramaphone to counteract the syren strains of a neighbouring public house.

"All," you may say, "wretched palliatives and stopgaps." I agree, but till the doctor comes palliatives have their place.

III.

The Place of Voluntary Charity in the Future.

If there is any weight in the unanimous recommendations of one of the ablest Royal Commissions which has ever sat, there is good hope that, within the next decade, an effort will be made to strengthen our methods of dealing with poverty in just these respects. What, we may ask, under such an organization will be the place of societies such as our own ?

As you are aware totally different views are here possible and have recently been advocated by the two Reports. The Majority looks to these societies to form an integral part—if not the backbone at least the heart and lungs—of the new organization. Having been faithful in a few things they are to be made rulers over many things and endowed with an authority parallel to that of the administrators of public assistance. On the other hand so far as their present functions are concerned they are re-

garded by the Minority as founded on a totally vicious principle. Under modern conditions the place of volunteer helpers is under the direction of public authorities. There is indeed and will always be a large place for voluntary liberality, but this is in the provision and administration of *institutions*. For the rest private societies and individuals must accept the position of camp-followers. Under no circumstances must they form part of the fighting line. Still more intolerable is their action as irresponsible skirmishers. Applying this view to the new type of society the Minority suggests "that it is just this association of voluntary workers with the responsible officials and the organization of the amateurs under the direction of the professionals—rather than the particular relief methods adopted by them—which is the essential feature of the so-called 'Elberfeld system' now being copied up and down Great Britain by the Guilds of Help and similar bodies." [1]

[1] In the Minority's Report for England and Wales there is a conspicuous absence of allusion to the new movement, but in the Report for Scotland the omission is rectified in the interesting passage from which the above is quoted.

It is no part of my intention to attempt any ultimate or conclusive answer to the question that is here raised. But there are one or two things that ought to be kept in view in approaching as we are now doing the public discussion of it.

It is a mistake to oppose, as is commonly done, public, private or voluntary social service. The more public organization that we have, the more imperative, I believe, will be the call for individual good-will and voluntary effort. All public organization in the last resort must depend upon voluntary service in the men and women who are called upon to work it. It is true that democracy, far more than we commonly recognize, is coming to be government by the expert and the official. This is all to the good. The expert and professional provide the element of permanence and continuity, of habit and consistency in such a system of government as our own. Democracy can only succeed, as Socrates long ago saw, if it can be combined with knowledge. But this light of knowledge must be reflected, as the white ray through the colour-giving medium, through the mind of the ordinary good citizen ;

and the effective working of the whole system must depend, in the last resort, on the amount of good-will that he voluntarily brings to the public service. More particularly there are three special ways in which privately initiated action will always be of service to the State.

(1) Public organization, however perfect, requires to be supplemented by services voluntarily undertaken. This is coming to be more and more obvious in the case of education, where the existence of efficient education authorities has not superseded, but has rendered more necessary, groups of voluntary managers. *A fortiori*, this will be the case in the work of the assistance of the poor. More than any other work, this must depend upon the leisurely and sympathetic treatment that is only possible through an efficient system of voluntary committees supplementing the work of public bodies.

(2) The second function is that of training for public service. It is through the avenue of these supplementary agencies that I believe the best candidates in future will be supplied for the public bodies of administrators. They

offer an unrivalled opportunity for acquiring first hand an intimate knowledge of the conditions and needs of the various classes the community seeks to benefit. I can conceive no better training for the work of any of the committees of the City Council, or for that matter for a Member of Parliament, than service under some of the district committees of such societies.

(3) It is to this system of supplementation that we probably shall have largely to look for the new ideas on which progress in administration will depend. It is in the freer atmosphere of voluntary work that experiments are made and new methods developed. Mrs. Cadbury quotes in her lecture the case of Mr. William White in order to show how it was his knowledge of social conditions, acquired in the services of a voluntary organization, that was the fruitful source of the best work of the Improvement Committee of the City Council. To this I would add that it is only through such a personal contact with the problem of poverty on the part of a large body of the citizens themselves that the way is prepared for reform of any kind. It is, I think, not

too much to say that the interest in the recent Poor Law Reports and the acceptance which their main ideas has met with in the country, are to a large extent due to the interest that these voluntary societies have aroused and concentrated.

But agreement in these general principles only brings us to the real issue which I have no desire to shirk. To one side the existence of such societies as our own is necessary as a means of assistance parallel to that of rate-aided authorities which can never safely guarantee the standard of any class in the community. To the other side it is not only an unnecessary but an intolerable excrescence seeing that it is intended and in actual working is bound to come between the individual and his right to public help. When the difference is put in this way, and to this way of putting it it is sure to come, I see no way of mitigating the theoretic antagonism but by an appeal to common sense and by the trite but no less true reminder that " rights " are no absolute entities but are always relative to circumstances and opportunities. As things are at present and are likely at least for some time to continue, no

responsible party advocates an unqualified right to any particular standard of living. When we have adequate, generally recognized methods of dealing with all classes of need it will be time enough to talk of the right of particular cases among them to be saved from dependence on any form of private charity. In the meantime so long as the existence of City Aid Societies is no obvious menace to the development of these methods and as shown above may be a valuable source of just the kind of insight and experience that is required to make men enthusiastic about them, it would be foolish to attempt any summary limitation of their activities.[1]

[1] As this lecture is going through the press the terms of a scheme of co-operation with the Guardians of the Poor, which has just been agreed to and may be of decisive importance as a precedent throughout the country, have been published. One of the chief difficulties in the work of the Guardians of the Poor in populous districts has been the impossibility of coming into personal contact with those cases in which something more than the visit of the relieving officer is required for efficient assistance. The growth of a large body of voluntary helpers in connection with the nearly-related work of the City Aid Society seemed to offer just the opportunity of remedying this defect and attaching to the Board of Guardians a strong auxiliary force, which might be used for this purpose. It only required a

Yet the questions of division of functions and the place of diverse agencies are to my sympathetic chairman to secure attention to the proposal which came from the Advisory Committee of the Society that negotiations should be opened with a view to discovering a basis of co-operation. The scheme provides that a certain number of voluntary helpers belonging to the City Aid Society shall be authorized to visit suitable cases receiving poor law relief, and that a representative of the Society shall be allowed to attend the Relief Committee of the Guardians.

The classes of cases which it is proposed should be visited by the voluntary helpers are the following :—

(*a*) When children are or might be neglected, or their condition and surroundings are capable of improvement.

(*b*) Where children are approaching working ages with the view of advising the selection of a skilled trade, and if possible of assisting in obtaining such work.

(*c*) Where the destitution is the result of misfortune.

(*d*) Where there is a reasonable prospect of raising the standard of life.

(*e*) Pregnant women or widows with babies with the object of advising as to their proper feeding and care.

(*f*) Where the distress is caused through the want of proper management of the home, and with the view of making the home more attractive and comfortable.

(*g*) Phthisical and other cases, especially children discharged from the Infirmary where it is of the utmost importance that hygienic treatment should be continued when they return home.

It is intended that each case which is undertaken

mind of altogether secondary importance. The main question is the spirit in which all work of this kind is undertaken. It can only succeed where it draws its inspiration from definite ideas and a genuine enthusiasm.

Some of you may have been reading recently as I have Mr. George Trevelyan's book *Garibaldi and the Thousand*. It is a wonderful story. It tells how the Italian patriot with a mere handful—barely exceeding a thousand—of untrained, badly accoutred troops, armed with old rusty guns, some of them without ten rounds of ammunition in their satchels, started upon two old crazy steamboats to capture Sicily from some twenty thousand of the best armed troops in Europe protected by a fleet of heavily armed cruisers ; and how, within a couple of months, in the face of incredible difficulty and by a series of brilliant exploits, they found themselves in possession of the Sicilian Capital and laid the foundation of the modern kingdom of Italy. What was it

should be visited by the helper at least once a fortnight, and that the helper should ascertain all the circumstances in connection with the whole of the family, and take a sympathetic interest in the welfare of every one of its members, reporting to the Guardians through the Society's representative upon the Relief Committee.

that enabled these men to achieve this miracle ? It was, I think, three things : First, the idea of a free and unified Italy ; secondly an enthusiastic love of their country ; and thirdly, going with that a profound faith in the better qualities and the future possibilities of a down-trodden nation.

What is required in those who would take part in the new campaign against poverty of which these movements alike of poor law reform and of voluntary association are parts is likewise three things. In the first place the idea of the possibility of putting an end to degrading want : if not of accomplishing this in our own time yet of setting on foot the agencies that will make it a compassable object to the next generation. Secondly, an emotion which can only be called by the old name of love yet is something different from mere natural affection for those who are nearest to ourselves or for the normal and normally placed human beings about us, seeing that it must include the power of being attracted by *humanity* in its more broken forms, under the eclipse of poverty and misfortune, incapacity and disease, even imbecility and vice. From this and from

nothing else that I know of will come the third requisite: the power of seeing with the eye of faith that strange longing for decency of life and the respect of one's fellows which haunts men and women even at their lowest and of exploiting it to the utmost in the service of a better form of family life. It is in the combination of these qualities that I see the elements of the new charity, not as something opposed to justice but as a new form of it: justice not so much to what men and women already are as to what they have the capacity of becoming.

BIRMINGHAM MUNICIPAL SCHOOL OF ART

By R. Catterson Smith

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Birmingham Work in the XVIIIth Century.

To give a true portrait of an individual you must show his origin and surrounding conditions. So it is with an institution. In order that you may know what the School of Art was, and is, I must tell you something of the conditions out of which it came and those by which it has been surrounded during its career.

The French traveller, Misson, visiting Milan at the end of the seventeenth century speaks of "the fine works of rock crystal, swords, heads of canes, snuff boxes and other fine works of steel" he saw there, but he remarks that "they can be had cheaper and better at Birmingham." A century later these wares still maintained their reputation abroad, for, according to a French Encyclopædia of Arts and

Crafts of that period, the "*toys*" imported from England, particularly those coming from Birmingham, were found to be, beyond dispute, superior in workmanship to those obtained in Germany or even to those of French manufacture. Though this is pleasant to read it is not gratifying to compare the present with the past. What can have happened that in 1754 a "Well Wisher" to Birmingham should have written to the *Birmingham Gazette* saying that the craftsmen of Birmingham were deficient in the art of "Drawing and Designing" and that some academy or school should be established to instruct "young persons" in those arts? Again, forty years later, another "Well Wisher" published a letter strongly urging the need of a school to teach "Drawing and Designing." Observe in each of these letters "*Drawing and Design*" is the one thing needed. It is not easy to understand what those "Well Wishers" were anxious about, for there was abundance of skill in the town and a very large output of work. The writer of 1754 considered that although the technical skill in Birmingham was as great as anywhere, the power of design—the expression of ideas

on paper, in other words drawing—was seriously deficient; so much so, that other places were able to compete successfully with it on that account. For in his letter he says: "It is a reproach to the manufacturers of this place (Birmingham) to have it declared and confessed that if a gentleman wants to be supplied with a pair of gates and a few palisades for his own use he must apply to Derby or Warwick to be supplied." I think that the writers of those letters had the mistaken idea that design and execution were two different things; that the executant needs a skilled hand and little invention, and the draughtsman an inventive brain but not necessarily practical knowledge of the material for which he designs. Through that view of the matter crawled in the separation between the designer and the craftsman which has been wrecking craftsmanship ever since.

The dilettante on the one hand and the general public on the other have been the source of much confusion in art matters—the dilettante ever trying to press upon the artist some foreign or ancient style, and the general public so ignorant of the underlying principles of craftsmanship that they are willing to accept

anything provided it looks new and is in the fashion. In this connexion the following piece of history is interesting. In the eighteenth century the shoe-buckle trade of Birmingham was enormous. It supplied all Europe and America. Suddenly the fashion for buckles went out, resulting in 20,000 persons losing their work. A petition was sent to the Prince of Wales asking

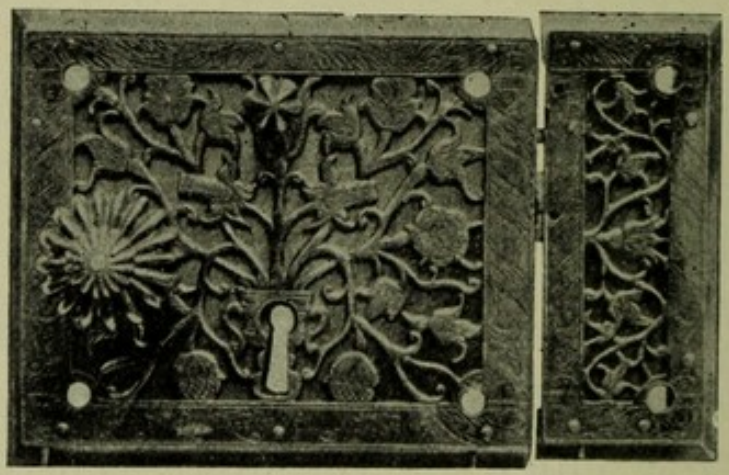


FIG. 1.

him to influence his Court to use buckles. In that petition the significant statement occurs —"Fashion is void of feeling and dead to argument."

Early Birmingham work must be extant but it is not easy to recognize. There is a lock plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum which appears to me to be full of character and original feeling (Fig. 1). It is signed Johannes

Wilkes, a Birmingham locksmith; it was made about 1700. But Birmingham work of the eighteenth century is not marked with individuality of design. That I think is not to be wondered at, for the whole of the centres of

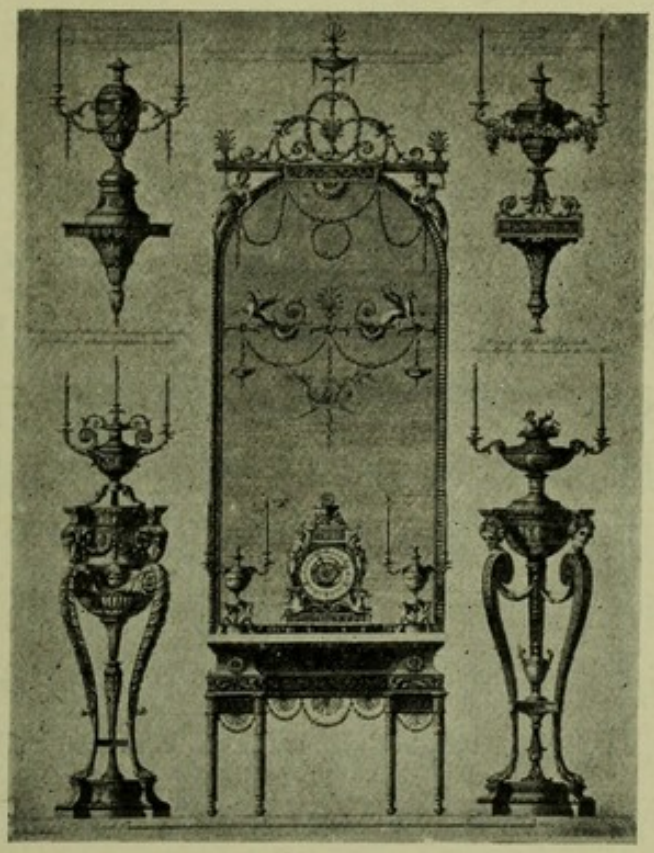


FIG. 2.
DESIGNS BY ROBERT ADAM, 1773.

society were following one fashion, a product of the head rather than of the heart, which had its origin in the luxurious and disproportionately cultured classes of Italy and spread from them to the rest of Europe, eating up before it all native art instinct (Fig. 2). I

refer to the watered-down classic Greek and Roman art which in the eighteenth century spread everywhere. Under its influence the craftsman became a mere tool and ceased to be creative.

This *heartless* art gradually died out, leaving nothing but its dregs behind, with the result (so little did it leave) that in the beginning of the last century we find skilled hands but no imagination. The dark ages of English craftsmanship! Yet I think I should say in passing that a certain amount of real craftsmanship still existed in out-of-the-way places where the current of fashion had no influence. Pieces of such work we occasionally find now and value highly. But that it is not the kind of work schools have aimed at cherishing. It is rather a natural growth, than a conscious artistic effort.

The Academy of Arts.

So, when the history of this School of Art begins we were, nationally, in a pretty murky backwater.

You must look, then, on the School as an institution started as a sort of hospital for a

maimed and crippled art rather than one to assist in the further development of an art that was flourishing. Whether the instituting of a School of Art, as we know it, was the best means to revive the decayed crafts may remain an open question. It might perhaps have been better to have subsidised a school for each trade with its own system of instruction and its own skilled craftsmen as instructors. That, indeed, appears to be what is likely to happen in the future.[1] However, I cannot help thinking that at that time, and for long after, the lesser artistic crafts were little thought of, but that painting and sculpture were looked upon as *The Arts*. So we find in the beginning of last century academies were being established in many places to encourage those arts in the hope (perhaps) that the lesser crafts would be improved too. But that was beginning at the top—reversing the process of the history of art, which commenced with the handicrafts and developed into the higher arts of sculpture and painting. Birmingham fell into line with other places by establishing its Academy of Arts

[1] It was what Mr. Ruskin had in his mind. See Cambridge School of Art Inaugural Address.

in 1814, a society composed of resident artists, amateurs and others. As Honorary Members of this Society occur the names of Sir Benjamin West, President of the Royal Academy of London, W. M. Turner, R.A., John Flaxman, R.A., the sculptor, who was employed by Wedgewood to design pottery—and that classical too! The Society invited for exhibition paintings, sculpture, architectural designs, engravings, miniatures, impressions from medals and from engraved precious stones. But there was no mention of works in gold, silver or iron.

Birmingham Society of Art.

The Society had a short life; it was a beginning however. I think it confined itself too exclusively to the higher arts. Something other than that was evidently hoped for in Birmingham as in 1821 a fresh effort was made in the establishment of the "Birmingham Society of Arts" "for the encouragement of arts and *manufactures*," which was to find accommodation for students and a museum for casts of the most approved sculptures, and of all works illustrative of the

different branches of art. It was also to hold exhibitions.

The museum was opened at the Panorama in New Street on May 4, 1822, with a collection of casts from the antique presented by Sir Robert Lawley, Baronet. Here is an extract from a letter of his dated October 1821, which is of interest as showing the way people thought of art teaching in those days.

"I shall be obliged also to you to inform the Committee for the Establishment of an Exhibition of Fine Arts that I consider it as the most essential and necessary part of such Establishment the formation of a general School for Drawing and Modelling under the direction of an able Professor; that my unalterable opinion is that unless such a measure be adopted the whole plan is nugatory and useless;—and that I shall not think myself in the least bound to proceed with my contributing other Casts than those already sent to it unless that the first and most essential part of my Scheme submitted to them be fully adopted.

"I have no person whom I now can recommend: the artist whom I have been educating for above three years has turned out dissipated and unworthy of such a confidence, and it appears to me the best way to select some young man of talent and genius from the Royal Academy of London and to send him to Italy to perfect himself. If this is consented to I desire you to put my name down to an annual subscription of £30 for such an object. The young man may be sent to me, I will undertake to attend to his instruction and he shall be accommodated with apartments in my house and maintenance at my table;

so that a very small salary will be sufficient to any enterprising youth who would be too happy to find such an opportunity of instruction, and by pursuing this my plan the Manufacturers of Birmingham might be put upon a Peace Establishment and furnish the Foreign Markets from which they are annually becoming more excluded.

"I hope this will be attended to. I have no personal view in proposing to the Town of Birmingham so important a Plan—the only view I have is the introduction of just taste and solid principles in the shape and construction of their articles, in which at present they are miserably deficient. If the Town losing this opportunity rejects my advice I do not conceive that any other is likely to be offered to it; nor will they easily find any gentleman so willing and, I may say, so able to carry this Plan into effect as myself."

Five years later (in 1827) the first exhibition was held. In a report of it we find it stated that "the chief object" of the "Society of Arts" was to "improve the taste and to provide facilities for the display of *native* talent; to combine, as far as may be practicable, the *beauty* and *grace* of Italian design with the unrivalled skill of British workmanship"—the italics are mine. It will be seen that it was considered necessary to inoculate the British craftsman with Italian grace, the idea clearly being that the only art worthy of recognition was classical. The dilettante again!

In the report we do not find any remarks

made about other exhibits than those of painting, and the names of several painters are given, showing that the art of painting was still considered the vital art. This Society apparently flourished, for we find a new building finished in 1839 with its facade in the Corinthian style[1] costing nearly £4,000.

But although there was a museum and an occasional exhibition the practical people of Birmingham were still not satisfied. Faults were found and money was needed to remedy the faults.

In 1841 the professional artist members of the Committee asked for more casts from the best Greek and Roman marbles and of architectural ornaments—candelabra, medals, intaglio, as well as a collection of works of the middle ages. The request for examples of the middle ages indicated a coming change, known as the Gothic Revival. They suggested that two nights should be devoted to the study of the antique figure ; two nights to the study of ornamental art ; one night to the study of geometry and per-

[1] Now standing in New Street. It is interesting that J. H. Foley, R.A., carved one or more of the capitals of the columns.

spective, with occasional addresses to the students. To carry out that plan an additional expenditure of £100 a year was needed. To get funds an appeal was made to the newly established School of Design Committee in London, which had been empowered by Queen Victoria to make grants in aid of Public Schools of Design, the only gratuity the Society could afford annually being £25.

It may be well to say in passing that the School of Design in London was at this time itself subjected to severe criticism from Mr. Welby Pugin, a designer, who threw himself into the revival of mediaeval art and worked a good deal in Birmingham. He said :—

"I do not use too strong language when I say that the School on its present system is worse than useless for it diffuses bad and paltry taste. I have not seen a single piece of ornament that had anything original or *National* about it ; nor do I see any practical smiths', glass-painters', brass-workers' or carvers' work produced. It is in fact a mere drawing school and does not improve the taste or knowledge of the operative in the least."

The fault condemned by him then has clung to the system more or less ever since.

The School of Design.

The London School of Design Council was

willing to assist the Birmingham school to the extent of £150 per annum on the understanding that the town would support the institution with an equal sum of money for three years. Certain other conditions as to the organization of the school brought on a disagreement between the professional and non-professional members of the Society which ended in their parting company. The professional members then formed the "Birmingham Society of Artists," which still exists as the "Royal Birmingham Society of Artists," and the non-professional section "The Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design"; that is to "The Birmingham Society of Arts" (established in 1821) was added "*School of Design,*" which defined the Society's object.

The first Head Master, W. C. T. Dobson, R.A., was appointed at this time. He was recommended by the London School of Design. He resigned the post in 1845 in order to study in Italy, and afterwards became a Royal Academician. He was followed by John Heaviside in 1845–46 and Thomas Clarke, 1846–51.

In 1851 George Wallis (father of Mr. Whitworth Wallis, Keeper of the Art Gallery)

was appointed Head Master. His appointment was coincident with the holding of the first great International Exhibition in London. It is very instructive to glance through an illustrated catalogue of that Exhibition. One



FIG. 3.
CARPET PATTERNS FOR INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1851.

can gauge the art taste of the time by doing so (Figs. 3 and 4).

But in spite of the prevalent poor taste Wallis had clear views upon the question of design for industrial purposes — if we may

judge from a passage of arms between him and Ruskin, which is interesting as it shows that Ruskin could—in debate—use specious arguments. Wallis having stated that it was

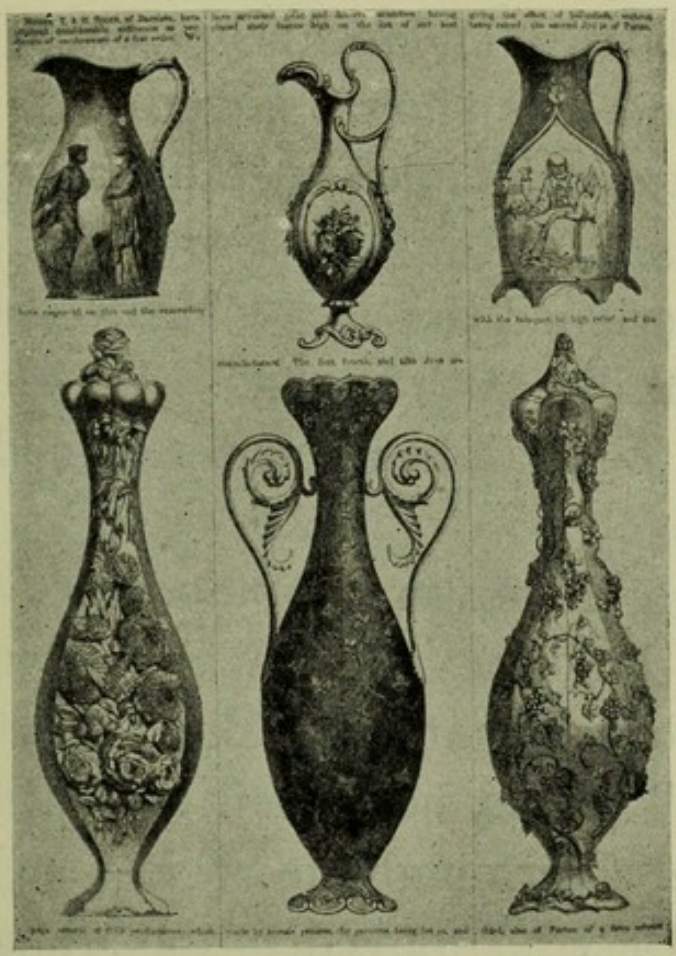


FIG. 4.
POTTERY IDEALS FOR INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1851.

bad taste to like carpets with roses imitated in full relief (Fig. 3) Ruskin said that he saw no more to object to in them than in the relief in a picture, and that the old and respected firm of April and May made very

beautiful carpets of that sort, and farther that we spread the ground with real flowers on festive occasions.[1] I think we will agree that Wallis was right in his opinion and Ruskin wrong. Ruskin did not wholly disagree with Wallis, for he heartily endorsed his statement that *material* and *use* should govern the design of any object, a principle generally accepted nowadays.

Wallis resigned the Head Mastership in consequence of ill health in 1857. He was followed by David W. Rainback, who retained the post until 1876.

Although there were two Societies they used the same building in New Street until 1858, when, in order that "the Birmingham Society of Artists" might hold their exhibitions in the rooms, the "Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design" moved to the Midland Institute. At that date (1858) there were 820 students on the books, and the School had entered on the course that it has honourably held ever since. Its habitation varied, for as well as the Midland Institute rooms it had others at Queen's

[1] *The Works of John Ruskin*—Library Edition—Vol. xvi, page 427.

College. Afterwards it had to be lodged in the Council House to make room for the expansion of the Midland Institute. A special school building was evidently required, and an appeal was made to the public for funds, but it met with little response. About this time the "Birmingham Society of Artists" bought the right of the School of Design to the use of the rooms in New Street for the sum of £500, excepting the right to the use of the rooms during the month of February in each year, and it is that right which now enables the School of Art Committee to hold the Annual Exhibition of Students' Works there in that month.

The Louisa Anne Ryland Donation and the Building of the Present School.

"It's a long lane has no turning," and even the School's turning point arrived at last, for in 1877 came a windfall of £10,000, a handsome gift from an anonymous donor offered through Mr. Arthur Ryland. It is now known to have been the gift of Miss Louisa Anne Ryland. This £10,000 was offered conditionally. A Head Master whose attainments and experience were considered adequate was to be appointed,

the salary paid by the Committee was to be increased to £600 a year, and what remained of the gift was to be used for free admissions and scholarships for either sex.[1]

On the strength of this donation Mr. E. R. Taylor was appointed Head Master in May 1877, and under his guidance changes were made which soon brought the School into a position of first rate importance. In 1879 William Morris gave an address to the students of the School, from which I have taken the following words as they bear upon what I have said.

"Let us look backward in history for a short while, and then steadily forward till my words are done: I began by saying that part of the common and necessary advice given to Art students was to study antiquity; and no doubt many of you, like me, have done so; have wandered, for instance, through the galleries of the admirable museum of South Kensington, and, like me, have been filled with wonder and gratitude at the beauty which has been born from the brain of man. Now, consider, I pray you, what these wonderful works are, and how they were made; and indeed, it is neither in extravagance nor without due meaning that I use the word 'wonderful' in speaking of them. Well, these things are just the common household goods of those past days, and that is one reason why they are so few and so carefully treasured. They were common things in their own day, used without

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[1] The origin of the Louisa Anne Ryland Scholarships.

fear of breaking or spoiling—no rarities then—and yet we have called them 'wonderful.'

"And how were they made? Did a great artist draw the designs for them—a man of cultivation, highly paid, daintily fed, carefully housed, wrapped up in cotton wool, in short, when he was not at work? By no means. Wonderful as those works are, they were made by 'common fellows,' as the phrase goes, in the common course of their daily labour. Such were the men we honour in honouring those works. And their labour—do you think it was irksome to them? Those of you who are artists know very well that it was not; that it could not be. Many a grin of pleasure I'll be bound—and you will not contradict me—went to the carrying through of those mazes of mysterious beauty, to the invention of those strange beasts and birds and flowers that we ourselves have chuckled over at South Kensington. While they were at work, at least, those men were not unhappy, and I suppose they worked most days, and most part of the day, as we do."

In 1880 Morris again addressed the students as President of the School of Design. In that address he laid down as a golden rule: "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

In 1881, the School Committee applied to the Town Council for assistance. Overcrowding of the school was said to be affecting the health of the students. As a result of the Committee's memorial, the Mayor announced that an anonymous donor (Miss Ryland again)

was prepared to give £10,000 towards a special building, that Messrs. Richard and George Tangye would give another £10,000 on condition that the School should become the property of the Town Council. That condition having been accepted the building of the school in Margaret Street and Edmund Street followed. When finished it soon became overcrowded, so great was the influx of students, and an extension became necessary. That was undertaken and the school extended into Cornwall Street.[1]

The School was formally opened in 1894, on which occasion Mr. William Morris again distributed the prizes and gave an address which he ended with these encouraging remarks :—

"Well, if I were to go on saying all I really have to say,

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[1] The entire cost of the school buildings as they now stand, with the names of the donors, is as follows :—

Miss Ryland	£10,000
Messrs. R. & G. Tangye . . .	10,937
The Department of Science and Art .	1,038
Mr. Cregoe Colmore	14,000 *
,, ,, ,, donation . .	1,000
The Corporation of Birmingham .	19,869
Making a grand total of . .	£56,844

* The estimated value of land on which the School stands.

there would be no end to it. So I will end with the saying that I, an old man now, have been much encouraged with what I have seen of the enthusiasm, and aspirations toward the right road, of the Birmingham School of Art during the last few years, and I beg you to go on encouraging as the last generation, so that the next after you may need no encouragement save what they will get from their own work—the pleasure of creating beautiful things, which is the greatest pleasure in the world."

The first practical classes in metal work were established about this time. The School flourished under the guidance of Mr. Taylor until his retirement in 1903, under the provision of the Corporation's Superannuation Scheme, at the age of sixty-five, after twenty-six year's service. In the School during Mr. Taylor's headmastership a vast host of men and women were trained in hand and eye and in artistic judgment, who have been absorbed by the workshops of this city and other places, and in the profession of teachers of art. Many of them hold positions as teachers in the great public schools of the country and in art schools at home and abroad.

Together with these must be mentioned a group of students who have since been designated "The Birmingham School." They were animated by a love of the mediaeval schools

of North Italy, a feeling which enabled its members to concentrate their energies and to keep free of the more nebulous modern spirit. Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Morris were very much interested in and hopeful of the doings of these young artists. To name only a few—Joseph Southall, a painter in tempera; Edmund H. New, an illustrator of books; Arthur Gaskin, jeweller, silversmith and painter; Henry Payne, a stained glass painter; Charles M. Gere; Miss Mary Newill, embroiderer and stained glass painter; Miss Kate Bunce, a decorative painter.

Mr. Walter Langley, a well-known painter of the modern school, received his early training under Mr. Taylor; he has the distinction of having one of his pictures mentioned in Tolstoy's book, *What is Art?*

The Vittoria Street School.

Now I come to the time of my own appointment as Head Master of the Vittoria Street School, which took place in 1901. That School was founded as a Branch School in the jewellers' quarter of the city in 1890, but it did not answer the expectations of the Jewellers' and

Silversmiths' Association, so it was decided to make it an independent School, with a Head Master having control of the technical as well as the drawing departments. Those departments had been under separate heads hitherto, but a Joint Consultative Committee of Management, responsible to the School of Art Committee, was formed of members of the Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association and members of the School of Art Committee.

It was agreed by the Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association to contribute a considerable sum annually towards the cost of the School, in order to pay a salary sufficiently tempting to a Head Master with the qualifications considered necessary for the post. I had the honour to be appointed. The results, I am proud to say, proved highly satisfactory to the Committee and to the teachers working under me. I was there for two years. Then came Mr. E. R. Taylor's retirement, and although I left with regret the result of my two years' work, I felt highly honoured when the Chairman of the School of Art Committee informed me that I had been unanimously appointed Head Master of the Central School.

Mr. A. J. Gaskin was appointed to the post I left at Vittoria Street. He has discharged his duties there with conspicuous success, making that School honoured all over the country and beyond it. In some respects Vittoria Street is a new type of school—certainly so in this city, for as well as contributing a considerable sum annually to the School, the Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association pay half the fees of students in those trades, the other half being paid by their employers. The members of the Association also permit, and encourage, their employees to attend the afternoon classes without decreasing their pay. Quite recently, too, an arrangement has been made with the Education Department of the City Council to regard the School as a manual instruction centre, so that boys attending Council Schools can take classes in drawing and metal work there. About fifty of these boys attend the afternoon classes and it is hoped that they will increase. The number of students attending last year (1909) was about 650.

The Government Grant has increased very rapidly from £233 in 1901 to £615 in 1908,

showing the importance the School has attained in the eyes of the Board of Education in a comparatively short time.

Work of the Central School.

I shall now give you some idea of the other work in which the Central School is engaged in this city, as I know it from personal experience. Commencing with the Elementary School system of the Education Department: The School has six teachers or inspectors visiting the elementary schools of the city all the year round, giving advice, and if need be, instruction, each school receiving a visit on an average once in three weeks. The instruction given in drawing at these schools is founded on the idea that the children should be taught to observe and record accurately, rather than they should be instructed in Art in the commonly accepted sense of that word, and in this the School is working in agreement with the Board of Education. The teaching may be said to be entirely different from the form of instruction existing before my appointment, flat copies being then almost wholly in use. These have now been superseded by objects and plants. At the Central School, moreover,

are special classes for the instruction of elementary school teachers and those in training as elementary teachers.

In higher education the School is the Local Art Authority recognized by the Governors of the King Edward Foundation Schools. The School holds an annual examination of the drawing done in those schools and recommends for appointment the chief drawing teachers employed in them.

The Central School has five evening Branch Schools spread over the city, four of these are held in Council Schools, and one in a specially built school in Moseley Road which was erected in 1898 at a cost of about £10,000. At this school as well as drawing most of the crafts taught at the Central School are carried on and there are afternoon classes.

Scholarships.

I must not burden you with too elaborate a catalogue of the School's activities, but I think I should point out the system of free admissions and scholarships which are granted by it. To begin with, there are 100 free admissions offered to ex-pupils of the City Council Elementary

Schools. These free admissions are tenable for two years. At the end of the first year the most brilliant boys become William Kenrick scholars and receive 5*s*. a week for forty-six weeks in the year. There are twelve of these scholarships. They are due to the generosity of the Chairman, Alderman the Right Hon. William Kenrick, who made them permanent by placing the handsome sum of £3,000 to the credit of the Committee. At the end of the first year they pass on to a scholarship which gives them 6*s*. a week, and from that in the following year to 7*s*. a week. By that time they are ready to compete for higher scholarships against all the students of the School. These higher scholarships are as follow: eight of £15, five of £20, and two of £30 given each year. These £20 and £30 awards are called "Louisa Anne Ryland" Scholarships, after the donor. Finally they can compete for a £60 scholarship, given every two years, due to the generosity of Sir Richard and Mr. George Tangye, who left it as a memorial of John Skirrow Wright.

These scholarships have been the means of discovering many students of talent, who have been thereby given the opportunity of develop-

ing their gifts to a very high degree. With a few exceptions they are at present held by boys who came from the elementary schools.

Besides these scholarships, a sum of about £100 is given by the Committee in small prizes. Some of them are offered by private individuals. As well as these scholarships and prizes there are about sixty free studentships.

Students and Crafts.

I need not give you a list of the numerous crafts taught in the School, but I may mention that there are three special classes :—

1. Brasswork in connexion with the Technical School, Suffolk Street.

2. House Decoration.

3. A newly formed day class for architects. There has been an evening architectural class for a long time past, but it was considered by the Birmingham Architectural Association as inadequate to the needs of a complete education in architecture.

The number of students on the books last year was nearly 4,000. The number of teachers is about 100. I may also say in passing that the craft teachers have almost all been trained

in trade shops, a fact which should remove the charge occasionally made that they "do not know how to use a hammer." The awards received at the National Competition held at South Kensington by the Board of Education annually considerably out-distance any school in the United Kingdom.

The School of Art Committee.

The School system is entrusted by the City Council to a Committee called the Museum and School of Art Committee (the Chairman of which is Alderman the Right Hon. William Kenrick, who has held that position since 1884). It has four Sub-Committees :—1. School of Art Management. 2. Joint Consultative, for Vittoria Street. 3. Finance. 4. Museum and Art Gallery.

The Chairman is elected annually.

The members are :—

Seven City Councillors, life members (the remnant of the Committee before the School became the property of the Corporation), co-opted members, amongst whom are at present the University Professor of Education—Professor Hughes, and Mr. J. R. Holliday, who is

also Chairman of the Museum Art Gallery Sub-Committee.

The meetings take place about once a month. Members are appointed to visit the School and its branches about once a month and to make reports to the Committee.

There is a triennial examination of the School made by the Board of Education upon which the Government Grant is assessed, last year's grant being about £4,000.

Relation of School to Workshops.

In conclusion I must say a word or two about the difficulties the School Committee has had to meet the needs of the workshops of the city, for on that subject there has been, all along, a continual flow of criticism. The School has been charged with not training students in such a way that they can enter a manufactory and take up the work there; that the School methods are slow and not antiquated; and that the students are not taught the various styles, both ancient and modern, likely to be used in commerce.

To begin with, the School has to take the

student in the most elementary stage and to teach him to draw and model as well as the elements of metal-work and invention. To get any knowledge of those subjects worth considering it will take at least three years' constant work, and that should be all day work. But if the student only attends night classes for three nights a week—which is above the average—it would of course take a very much longer time. The consequence is that the great mass of students only get a smattering of the knowledge they require to make them expert in any one of the crafts taught at the School. If the School had a large number of all day students who would undertake to attend a systematic course for five years, then there would be a good chance of turning out efficient craftsmen in proportion to the needs of the city. But the casual manner of attendance without any guarantee of a long period decreases the value of the School as an aid to commerce. The scholarship system of the School helps in some degree, no doubt, to modify this weakness, but there is no guarantee that even the scholarship students will attend long enough.

Yet it is certain that those who have attended regularly have turned out excellent craftsmen and draughtsmen—though not perhaps exactly what the manufacturer would wish them to be.

However high the standard of artistic excellence the School may wish to maintain—and I do not think that it can be too high—no doubt the *immediate needs* of the staple trades of the city should have a prominent place in the considerations of the Committee. This aspect of the matter is now being very carefully considered with a view to adequately meeting the city's requirements.

But while the School tries to meet trade needs, it must not allow itself to make mere commercial tools of the students. It should endeavour to develop their thinking, feeling, and creative powers, whatever the factory system and the poor artistic taste of the general public may make of them afterwards. I think, on the whole, if the Committee has failed to meet the requirements of industrial art it has certainly not failed to advance the interest of art, in the highest sense, and

it is a question whether commerce has really suffered.

I shall end with the hopeful last words of Morris's address to the students in 1879 :—

"If these hours be dark, as, indeed, in many ways they are, at least do not let us sit heedless, like fools and fine gentlemen, thinking the common toil not good enough for us, and beaten by the muddle ; but rather let us work like good fellows trying by some dim candlelight to set our workshop ready against to-morrow's daylight—that to-morrow, when the civilised world, no longer greedy, strifeful, and destructive, shall have a new art, a glorious art, made by the people and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user."



"The Man Born to be King."

Tempera Painting by Joseph Southall.



The Market Place,
Cathedral,
and Conduit: Wells



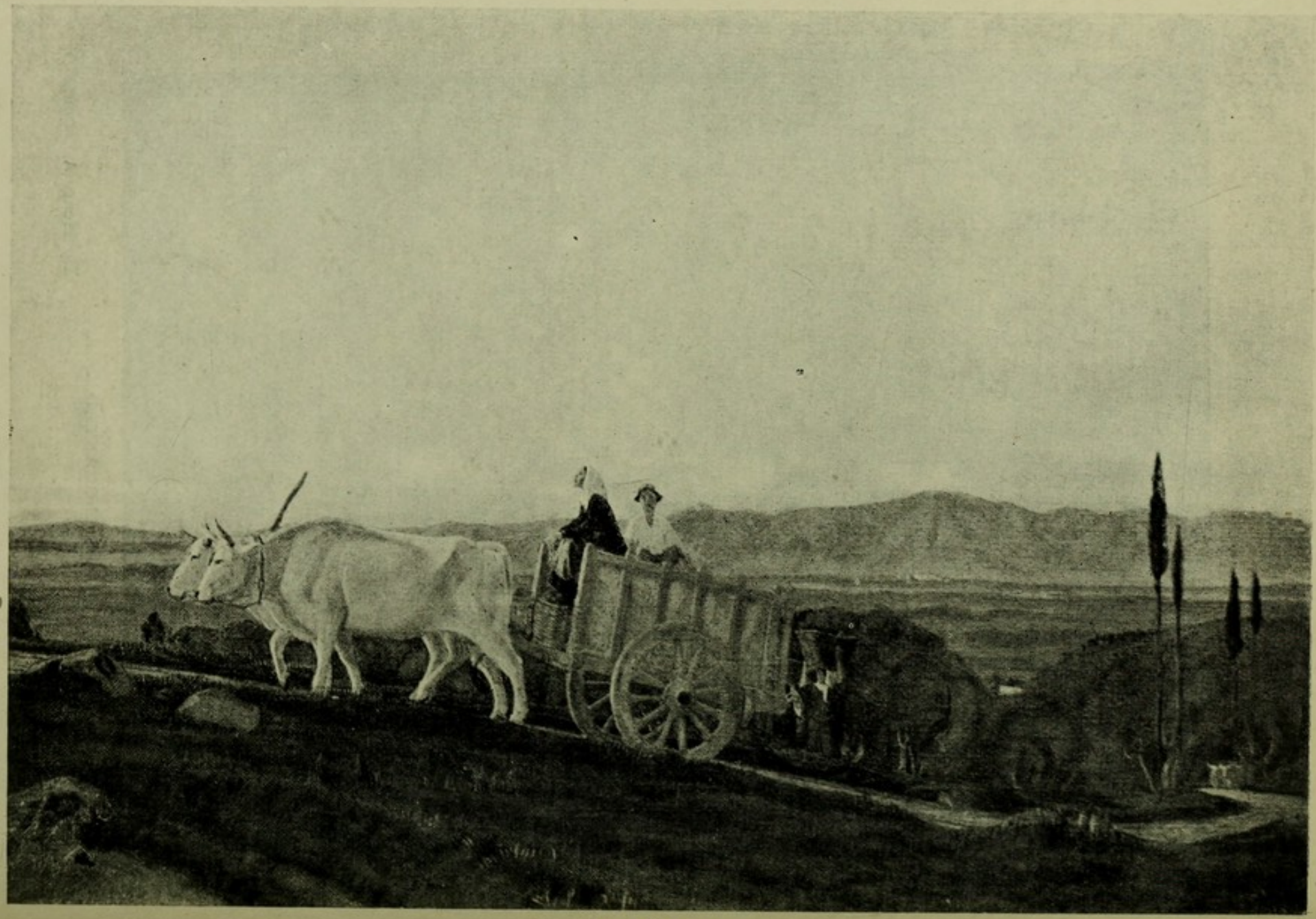
"The Marsh King's Daughter."

Book Illustration by Arthur J. Gaskin.



THE ENCHANTED SEA.

By Henry A. Payne.



THE OXCART.

By Charles M. Gere.



ALTAR CLOTH.

Designed and Embroidered in Silk by Miss Mary Newill.



THE CHANCE MEETING.

By Miss K. Bunce.

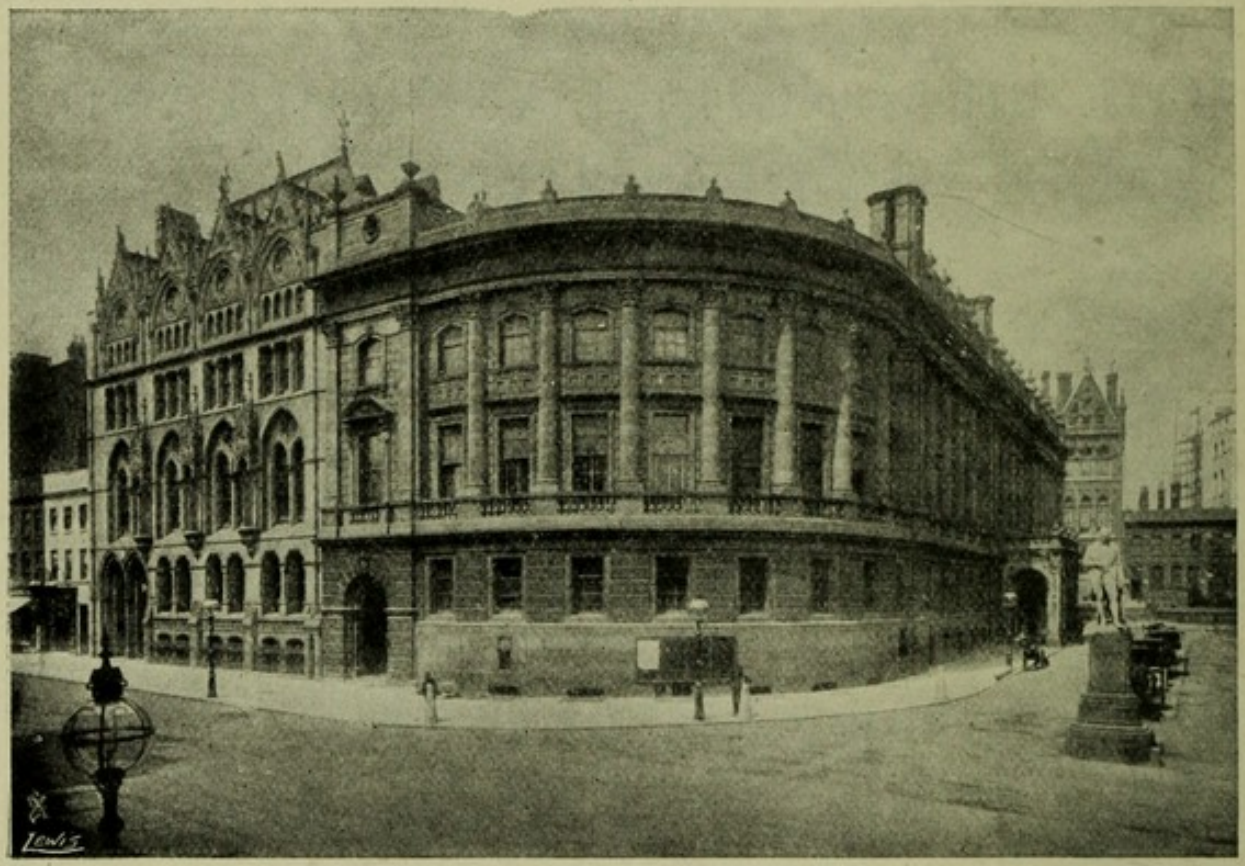


CORNISH FISHER FOLK.

By Walter Langley, R.I.

THE BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND INSTITUTE

By Arthur Godlee



THE BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND INSTITUTE.

THE BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND INSTITUTE

By Arthur Godlee.

Co-ordination of Educational Institutions.

You have heard something of the educational establishments of Birmingham, and you will yet hear more before this series of lectures is over, and I think when you have heard all, you will be struck by the way in which each establishment has its own work to perform, from the Elementary Council Schools where the youngest infant is taught its alphabet to our University, which is the crown of our Educational System.

Every effort is made to prevent overlapping, and you will find that on almost all the main governing bodies there are representatives of other governing bodies, so that where there is any question between one and another such questions are easily solved, and indeed are often

prevented from arising at all by the prompt assistance of those concerned.

I shall be telling you soon, for instance, that on the Midland Institute Council, apart from those who are elected by the members of the Institute, we have ex-officio members representing the City Council (one of whom is the Lord Mayor for the time being), the University, and King Edward's Grammar School. We on our part appoint a representative on the City's Higher Education Committee, and on the Midland Council of your Workers' Educational Association.

The question I have therefore to present for your consideration this evening is, What is the position of the Midland Institute in this educational scheme?

Just let me say at once that the primary idea of the Midland Institute is that it provides a means of education for those who are engaged in their ordinary avocations. It is not a school in the ordinary sense to which students go who are devoting their whole time to study, but rather a means of improving the education of those who have already been obliged to enter into business, so that its chief

activities are in the evening when the ordinary labours of the day are done.

Early Institutions.

The early institutions of this character were called "Mechanics' Institutes" which you will see convey the idea I have mentioned above. The Birmingham Mechanics' Institute was established so long ago as 1825, and it was stated in its printed rules that the object proposed by it was to provide for the cheap instruction of the members in the principles of the arts they practised, and in various branches of science. In those early days the means included:—

Elementary classes for teaching arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, etc., with their various applications.

Lectures on natural and experimental philosophy, practical mechanics, etc.

A Library of Reference, a Circulating Library, Reading Room, Laboratory, etc.

The means were to be derived from the voluntary association of mechanics and others, and the payment of a small annual or quarterly sum by each.

In 1830 it was stated that the Institute had

been continued with acknowledged utility and success and with every prospect of permanent support. It was added that at this date a writing class had also been formed for the instruction principally of the junior members.

The Mechanics' Institute ran a most useful career for some eighteen years, but then I find that "mismanagement produced its usual result," and this important Institute for the education of the artizans of the town had to succumb to debt.

Another Society called "The Athenæum" had evidently a very short life and met the same fate.

On the ashes of these two Institutions the "Polytechnic Institute" rose up. The resolution passed at a public meeting on March 1, 1843, was as follows :—

> "That in consequence of the Mechanics' Institute and the Athenæum having ceased to exist and there being no literary institution in Birmingham for the intellectual recreation of the operative classes, it is the opinion of this meeting that a Society should be formed upon the principle of the Mechanics' Institute with as little delay as possible."

That Society was in due course formed with classes and lectures, a reading room and the usual

arrangements of such a Society, and it carried on its activities for several years, but towards the end its existence was of a struggling character and the foundation of the Midland Institute proved its death blow.

There was one more institution which flourished in times before the Midland Institute, and that was the Philosophic Institution. It was founded in 1800, and continued its existence until 1849. It was not intended to do the same work as the Mechanics' Institute (otherwise the Mechanics' Institute which as I said was founded in 1825 need not have been founded). The Institution had a permanent home in its later years in Cannon Street. Lectures were delivered, and it was in its day a great educational influence.

Foundation of the Midland Institute.

It took some years before the greater scheme of the formation of the Midland Institute was fully completed. So far back as 1849 a meeting was held to consider the propriety of founding an institution on a wide and comprehensive basis suited to the requirements of the town.

This meeting resulted in adopting a memorial

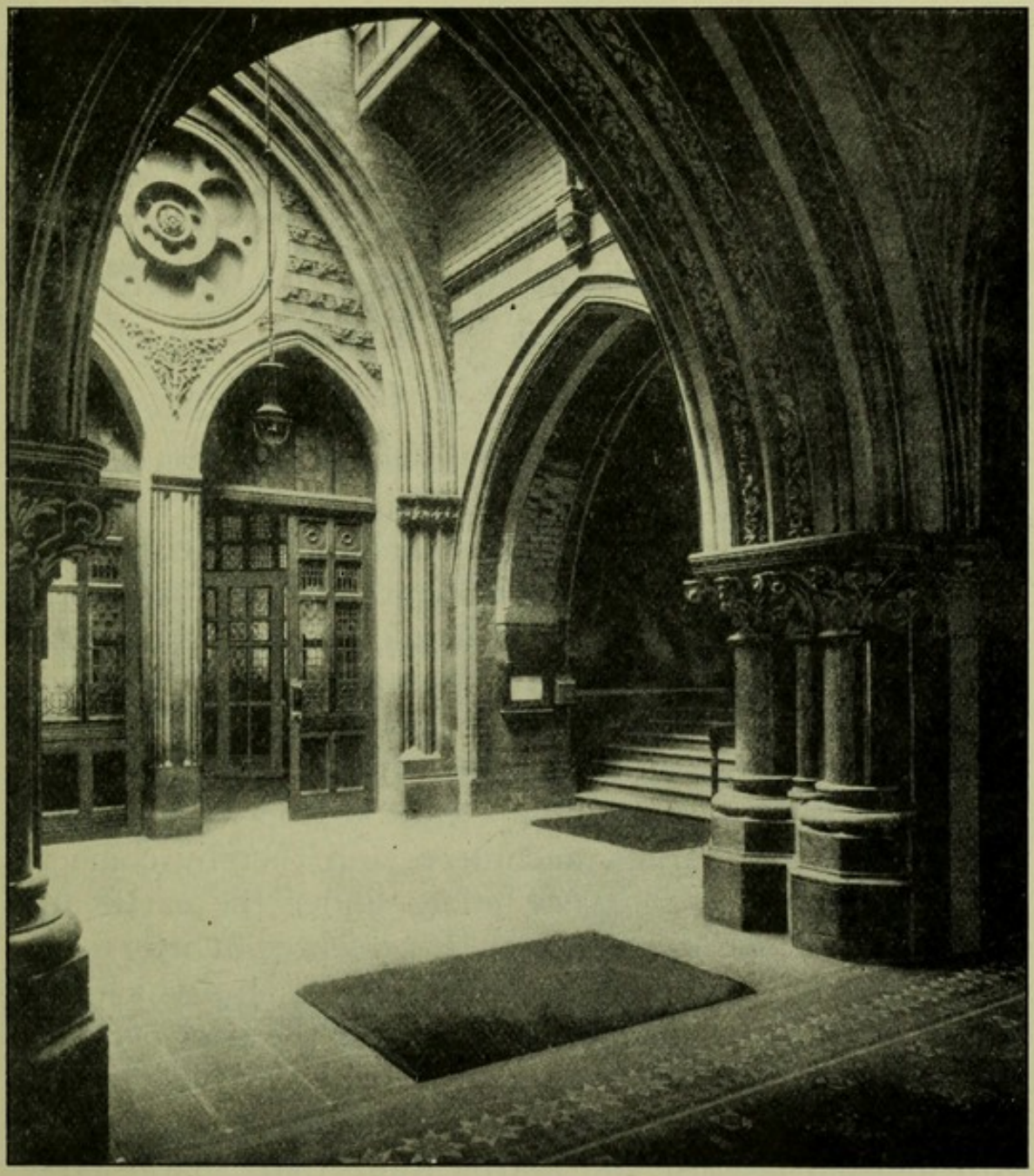
to the then Premier, Lord John Russell, asking that his Lordship might be pleased on behalf of Her Majesty's Government to sanction the introduction of a Bill into the House of Commons to extend the power of certain existing Acts so as to enable Town Councils to erect and provide and maintain Institutes containing museums of art and science, library, and reading rooms with the necessary accommodation for classes, lectures and laboratories.

The application was based on the statement that it was highly important to the welfare and character of all large towns that every opportunity should be afforded to the inhabitants for the *occupation of their leisure hours in intellectual and elevating pursuits,* and that for this purpose as well as for promoting improvements in the arts and manufactures, ample and permanent provision should be made for facilitating the instruction of all classes in science, literature and the Arts.

This effort to secure Government help shared the fate of many similar applications. It bore no fruit, and three years passed before any very practical step was taken.

At this stage of the proceedings the necessary

impetus was given to the work by the appear-



ENTRANCE HALLS.

ance upon the scene of the great novelist, Charles Dickens.

Dickens came to Birmingham in 1852 in

connexion with a presentation of a ring and some article of local art manufacture by the working men of Birmingham, and at a banquet given in his honour he made the following reference to the work of the gentlemen of that day who were doing their best to establish the great Institution which they had in their minds. He said :—

"Lastly, he was rejoiced to find that there was on foot a new Literary and Scientific Institution, which would be worthy of this place, even if there were nothing else of the kind in it. It was to be an institution where the words 'exclusion' and 'exclusivism' should be quite unknown, where all classes and creeds might assemble in common faith, trust and confidence. It was designed to graft on it a great gallery of painting and sculpture, and a museum of models, where industry might exhibit the various processes of manufacturing machinery, and thereby come to new results. Nay, the very mines under the earth and sea would not be forgotten, but be presented in little to the inquiring eye. It would be an Institution by which the obstacles which now stood in the way of the poor inventor would be smoothed away, and if he had anything in him he should find encouragement and help. He observed, with unusual interest and gratification, that a large body of gentlemen had agreed for a time to lay aside their individual opinions, and on an early date to meet to advance this great object, and he would particularly call upon the company to drink success to their endeavours, and to make a pledge to promote the welfare of the Institution."

Before he left Birmingham he expressed his willingness to read in public his Christmas Carol in aid of the scheme.

Things now began to go, and Birmingham then as now found that it must rely upon its own efforts to secure its own ends, and it also then as now found that its prominent citizens were prepared to come forward to serve their city.

Of the local gentlemen of that day we cannot expect to know the individuals, but the public spirit of Birmingham seems to run in families. The names will sound to you as if they were of those who are to-day active in the public life of the city when I tell you that I find that the members of the families of Osler, Chance, Beale, Ryland, Dixon, Jaffray, Wiggin, Feeney, Kenrick, Tyndall, Lloyd, Wright, Peyton, Martineau, Muntz, Southall, Marshall, Russell, Mathews, Wallis, Timmins and many others are among the stalwarts who nearly sixty years ago laid the foundations of the Institute. Of these the most active and prominent was Mr. Arthur Ryland, who was most devoted and persistent in his work for the establishment of the Institute.

Charles Dickens's reading of the Christmas

Carol in the Town Hall produced some £300 for the funds and was an immense success. It was at the time said that "It was the finest thing without exception ever seen in that house."

On one of the evenings on which he spoke he prefaced his remarks with the words which are often quoted :—

"Erect in Birmingham a great educational institution to which all orders of men contribute, in which all orders of men may meet, wherein all orders of Birmingham men are faithfully represented, and you will erect a Temple of Concord which will be a noble example to the whole of England."

In January 1853 a large public meeting was held at which the scheme was laid before the public, and was enthusiastically adopted. The Mayor was in the chair, and in due course the necessary committee was formed to raise the required money, on the understanding that they were not to start unless they got £4,000.

The scheme was much the same in principle as it now is. There was to be what we now call the General Department, of which more hereafter, and an Industrial Department, or in other words "a school of science applied to the arts for artizans."

Then followed public meetings, canvassing for money, application to Government for grants, and a very great deal of local interest.

A Mr. T. L. Preston, a veteran who died last year at the age of eighty-four, was present at one of the many meetings that were held, and as a working man he was asked to support one of the resolutions. From a recent obituary notice of this gentleman which appeared in the Institute Magazine, I gather the following facts which I think will be of interest to this audience, and will show something of the spirit which was abroad at the time.

At the public meeting held November 17, 1853, at which the objects of the proposed Institution were brought prominently before the inhabitants of Birmingham and the district, the Ven. Archdeacon Sandford moved :—

"That the artizans of this town and district being specially interested in the success of the undertaking be invited to co-operate with the Committee in the establishment of the Institute."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. George Wallis, Head Master of the Birmingham School of Design, and supported by Mr. T. L. Preston, who said :

"That as a working man he felt great pleasure in supporting the resolution, believing that the proposed institution would confer a great and lasting benefit on this great and important town. . . . At present the working man had no means of employing his leisure hours in such a manner as would most conduce to his instruction and advantage, and if an institution like the one now sought to be established were once in existence it would be found to be better not only for the working man but for Society at large. . . . Out of more than 200 trades he was unable to call to mind one in which it would not be an advantage if the working man possessed some scientific knowledge."

After referring to the absurd notions working men had as to the introduction of anything new in their trade he continued :

"A singular instance of this species of blindness had happened in connexion with improvements in the production of designs in paper hangings, where the men actually gave notice of a strike *because it was proposed to resort to the French method.* Now a little scientific education would have shown these men that it was they who were behindhand, and that there was nothing dangerous to their interests in the improvements suggested ; in fact, experience was all very well, but men of experience would find it much better if they had science to direct them. . . . He believed that the institution, once fairly afloat, it would not be very long before Birmingham would be as celebrated for its scientific workmen as it now is for its practical ones."

Subsequent to this meeting an Artizans' Committee was formed on which Preston served.

He was one of two gentlemen who were elected the first Industrial Governors in 1854.

I cannot occupy your time by going through the details of the various negotiations which led up to the application to Parliament for an Act to enable the Institute to be founded on its present site, and for the land to be given by the Town Council which was done.

Act of Parliament obtained.

The Act was obtained in 1854, and still regulates the Institution.

Opposition was of course made to the proposal, but I do not find that the two councillors who opposed it have left any descendants who are now at work in the city. Anyway, the grant of the present site was made, and at that time it included also the site of the present Free Library.

If you will look at the building you will see that the older part of the Midland Institute, i.e. the part facing the Town Hall and the Free Library is built as a complete whole.

Visit of Prince Consort.

The Prince Consort, who as you know took a great interest in educational matters and a

special interest in Mechanic Institutes all over the country gave his hearty support to this Institute, and on November 22, 1855, he came to Birmingham and laid the foundation stone of the new buildings amidst much popular enthusiasm. The chair in which he sat on this occasion is still preserved as an interesting relic of the past.

I have referred to the newspaper published for the week comprising the Prince Consort's visit, which contains a very enthusiastic account of the proceedings.

The account begins with the evergreen subject of the weather. It proceeds to describe the nature of the fog, the coldness of the rain and to state that the streets were speedily "*covered with liquid mud.*" The mud was evidently a good deal on the writer's mind as he speaks later on about "innumerable street boys who disported themselves in the mud as in their natural element," so that apparently the Public Works Committee of that day were not so competent to deal with a royal visit as our own authorities were on the occasion of the recent visit of His late Majesty the King to open the new University buildings last summer.

Notwithstanding the weather, however, the public enthusiasm seems to have been great, the town was decorated and crowds of people thronged the streets and the houses. At the luncheon which took place in the Town Hall it is curious to note that after our own Royal toasts the toast of "Our ally the Emperor of the French" was given. You will remember that 1855 was the time of the Crimean War, and an allusion having been made to this in an address by the Midland Institute the Prince in his reply said :—

"I must heartily join with you in congratulating the country that not even such a war as that in which we are now engaged, calculated as it is to enlist our more immediate interest, can divert Englishmen from the noble work of fostering the arts of peace and endeavouring to give a wider scope to the blessings of freedom and civilization."

The Buildings.

The buildings, which correspond to the Free Library, were now begun from designs of Mr. E. M. Barry, an eminent architect of the day. There seems to have been a little delay, for a local paper early in 1856 heard with pleasure that the buildings of the Midland Institute were soon to be commenced, adding: "We are so

ashamed of the packing case in which the foundation stone has passed the winter standing solitary as if Pickford's wagon had dropped it there by mistake and forgotten it."

The question seems to have been "Shall the building have a stone front or a cemented one?" and my journalist friend pours out his editorial wrath on cement with the words: "*We* detest stucco and all its works. It is a sham, and like most other shams it wants constant new coating to hide its *original lie*." Anyway stone was decided on.

As the work grew the building was several times enlarged, until in 1881 the new building of a completely different design, which provided the new Lecture Theatre seating 1,000 people, with classrooms and a suite of rooms for both gentlemen and ladies, was erected. This work was carried out by Mr. John Henry Chamberlain from his own designs.

The total cost of the buildings has been about £80,000.

One word more as to the bricks and mortar. The educative work of the Institute was actually begun in 1854 in the old rooms of the deceased Philosophical Society in Cannon

Street. The building still stands and is used as a solicitor's office. The new building was opened in 1857.

Constitution of the Institute.

Now I think we may look inside. The objects of the Institute are defined by their Act of Parliament to be "The diffusion and advancement of science, literature and art." There are two departments, (*a*) *General,* to provide (1) reading and news rooms; (2) libraries, museums, gallery of fine arts, collection of mining records, and other collections for scientific purposes; (3) lectures and meetings for discussion in the higher branches of knowledge. (*b*) *Industrial,* to provide (1) classes for elementary and progressive instruction in mathematics and practical science, and such other subjects as may seem fit to the Council of the Institute; (2) laboratories, models, philosophical apparatus, and all other things necessary for the objects of the Institute. The Institute is governed by a Council of twenty-five consisting of (1) Official Governors: a President, two Vice-Presidents, and a Treasurer, the Head Master of King Edward's Gram-

mar School, the Warden of Queen's College, formerly the Chairman of the Committee of the Birmingham Society of Arts and of the Government School of Ornamental Art, now a representative of the Birmingham University; (2) Borough Governors: the Mayor and four members of the Town Council, elected annually by that body; and (3) thirteen Elected Governors viz., eleven members of the Institute, and two students of the Industrial Department. The President, the Vice-Presidents and the thirteen are chosen by the members of the Institute at the annual general meeting. Casual vacancies are to be filled up by the Council, which has to meet at least once a month. Not less than three of the thirteen are to be regarded as ineligible for re-election each year.

Early Work of the Institute.

Penny Scientific Lectures were started and in deference to an expression of opinion on the part of the artizans themselves that they had not sufficient education to profit by the education given, penny lectures on elementary mathematics and science were also given.

Mr. George Dawson and Mr. Sam Timmins

volunteered to conduct an English literature class, which was continued for three years, and classes, also taught voluntarily, were established in arithmetic, Latin, French, English history, logic, languages and thought, so that when a start was made in the new buildings a good foundation had been laid. The voluntary system could not however be expected to go on very long and in 1860 paid teachers were substituted.

At this time, 1860, it is stated that of the students attending the classes in the Industrial Department 33 per cent. were artizans, 33 per cent. shop assistants, and 16 per cent. women of the same ranks.

In 1868 the numbers were, artizans 45 per cent., shop assistants 29 per cent., women 21 per cent.

The number of students grew so quickly that additional room had to be taken, and ultimately branch classes established so as to spread the teaching over a wider area. These have since been given up.

Many citizens gave sums of money to provide prizes and these are worked for and won to-day by the students.

The students are kept up to the work by examinations, some conducted by eminent persons on behalf of the Council, known as Council Examinations, others conducted by the Board of Education, Whitehall, and the Royal Society of Arts, and very substantial Government grants in aid (some £500 a year) are now received.

To tell you of the innumerable alterations that have taken place in the curriculum would occupy much too much of your time. The great principle has been "adaptation." As Mr. John Henry Chamberlain, an Honorary Secretary for eighteen years, once said, "We have never made up our minds to teach any particular subject unless we were convinced that there existed outside our walls a readiness to study it. But once convinced of such a desire, we have done whatever we could to meet it."

The attendance at the classes has always been the measure of the extent to which they are required, and according to this principle, when one subject has dropped out we have generally found some other subject to take its place as I will now show.

The Institute the Mother of Educational Activities.

We have been the mother of more than one child who has left us to start for itself. The School of Art found its home under our roof until 1885, when it launched out for itself into its present home in Margaret Street. Then we founded the Technical School, which stepped into the room left vacant by the removal of the School of Art.

On the initiative of the late Lord Mayor, Sir George Kenrick, ably assisted by Mr. George S. Albright and others, the metallurgical classes received a great impetus and experienced a most remarkable growth. It was determined to extend our Institution to the actual practical work in which our students were engaged in their daily lives. Sir George Kenrick guaranteed £2,000, an engineering workshop was formed and the laboratory greatly increased.

In 1886 a writer on this subject goes so far as to say that "the Institute now possesses—and it is perhaps its most interesting feature—the most extensive Metallurgical School in Great Britain, one well-nigh worthy of the

position of Birmingham in the manufacturing world."

How little the writer could foresee the rapid growth that was about to take place in this all-important question of technical education!

It was a good little school and grew so fast that we applied to the City Council to make us a grant of £1,000 a year to help us to carry it on, but what happened? The matter was looked into, the grant was refused. Why? Because the city Council seeing the magnitude of the work that was opening up conceived that it was the duty of the city to take it over altogether, and away flew our child to form the nucleus of the magnificent Technical School founded in 1891 with its present average class attendance of some 5,800 students and a total expenditure, including interest and sinking fund, of £23,000 a year.

The School of Music.

Well, what happened then? The little school of music which was started in 1885 was our next child, and it has steadily grown and grown till it is now one of the most flourishing branches of our work.

I remember the time when we had penny classes in the violin. Large numbers attended and the backs of the students were used as music stands for those sitting behind them. It was a crude state of things and a good part of the time was occupied in getting the instruments tuned.

All this has long since been changed. As you know we have as Principal the celebrated musician Mr. Granville Bantock, who takes the greatest possible interest in the work.

It has been a great satisfaction to the Council of the Institute that when, owing to ill health, Sir Edward Elgar was obliged to give up the Richard Peyton Chair of Music at the University Mr. Bantock was chosen to fill the post, thus uniting under his leadership the two institutions. We trust that many of our students will qualify themselves to take the University degree, and I am glad to know that many are already preparing themselves to do so.

We have teachers and learners for all the instruments of the orchestra, the best local professional performers are on the teaching staff and the number of entries of students is over 1,700.

The Amateur Opera Society, though not a part of the School of Music, is closely associated with it and gives performances of the highest excellence in connexion with the annual conversaziones in the winter. Their chorus singing is very excellent.

In 1891 the Birmingham Amateur Orchestra Society was affiliated to the Institute, and during the next decade and a half was the means of introducing many new and unfamiliar works to us, but times change; in 1907 it was felt that the Society's day was passed, and it was disbanded after a successful existence of some forty-five years. The truth is we set that child flying and took the work on ourselves. The Students' Orchestra had made such rapid strides under the Principal's direction as to be competent to continue the work without break. The defunct Society's considerable collection of music formed an admirable foundation on which to build the Institute's extensive and steadily growing Music Library.

Apart from the work of the Amateur Opera Society, mention must be made of the efforts of the Institute, through the School of Music, in the direction of grand opera. In the last

few years admirable performances have been given of "Orpheus" "Iphigenia in Aulis" (the first performance in England) and "Iphigenia in Tauris." These performances, conducted by the Principal and stage managed by Mr. G. A Breeden, and to a great extent staged by the students themselves, are an invaluable training for young singers, but the very inadequate support given by the public renders it difficult to continue them.

Our teachers also superintend the singing classes in the Council and Voluntary Schools, for which an annual payment is made by the city.

General Classes.

Besides the School of Music, which entails the employment of thirty-two teachers and has 40 collective classes and some 200 individual students, in the course of every week we have 73 classes, presided over by some 20 teachers in the following subjects:—Modern languages and literature, history and classics (19 classes); Arithmetic and mathematics (6 classes); Science (23 classes); Commerce (23 classes); Civil Service (1 class); Voice production (1 class) for the speaking voice as distinguished from singing.

These classes had last year a class entry of 2,445, making with the 1,729 entries in the School of Music no less than 4,174 during the year.

As a result of the growth of elementary education and other causes it will be seen that the scope of the work of the Institute has very materially altered. One marked feature in our work to-day is the fact that we have to deal with a very large number of the elementary teachers in the city's schools. This amongst many other reasons gives us, we think, the right to ask for grants in aid from the City Council towards the annual deficiency which I am sorry to say exists, but I suppose that if we press the point too much another of our children will take flight and the city will itself establish some system of night teaching for this class of students at the Institute. As Treasurer I should like to have the grant, but I do not want to lose the students.

Vitality of the Institute.

These particulars will give you some idea of the vitality of the Institute as a place of instruction, and if you should ever find yourselves

within its walls of an evening it would remind you of a beehive in which the teeming students are gathering together not, it is true, to bring honey to the hive but to gather instruction, to improve their intellects, to vastly increase their capacity for work and to brighten their lives by the acquisition of knowledge.

May I here take a modern instance, a very modern instance, because the details were published in the Institute Magazine a few weeks ago. Giving a short account of the life of our present Lord Mayor, Alderman Bowater, the writer records that in his early years Alderman Bowater entered himself as a student of the Institute and devoted his evenings to the completion of his education within its portals. He studied physiology, botany, practical chemistry, mathematics and languages and attended classes in various scientific subjects such as Electricity, Sound, Light, and Heat, while he was one of the first students to enter the Laws of Health classes which have always formed an important feature in the Institute curriculum. The writer of the Magazine article states that in recalling the years of his studentship he speaks with a deep sense of gratitude to the Institute for the

opportunities which it afforded him, opportunities which in those days were not to be obtained elsewhere in Birmingham, and he has watched the growth of its influence in the city and the ever widening sphere of its usefulness with constant admiration and sympathy.

I mention this as a modern instance, but it is only typical of the experience of many of our citizens who have cause to thank the Institute for invaluable help in their early years.

It is also typical in that it displays the loyalty and kindly feeling towards the Institute which we constantly find on the part of those who, like the Lord Mayor, have found that their early training there has helped them to make their way in the world and take up their positions as honourable citizens.

Prizes.

I mentioned prizes a little while ago, and I think it may interest you to hear what a few of them are, for instance—

A Teacher's Exhibition in Hygiene of £20 a year for two years is competed for. The winner must be a teacher and has to teach Laws of

Health in his or her school while holding the Exhibition.

The Siemens Medal and Prize—A silver medal and £10 in money awarded in the advanced stage of Astronomy and Stage III of Physiography.

Founder's Prize in the Laws of Health Classes—£5 awarded in Stage III of Hygiene.

The Albites Prizes—£6 and £4 awarded in the advanced stage of French.

Alderman T. S. Fallows' Memorial Prize of £5 5*s.*; John Arthur Fallows' Prize of £5 5*s.* Both in English History.

The Central Literary Association Prizes.—Two of £5 5*s.* each awarded in English History and English Literature.

The Newton Prize of £2 2*s.* awarded for the neatest work during the session in the Book-keeping class.

The Messenger Prizes.—Two of £10 each awarded for mechanical work. Last year given (1) for a mount for a lady's hand bag and (2) for a brush back and comb mount and one of £5 for the best drawing of the human figure from the life.

The Middleton Exhibition of £50 a year

for three years awarded to students who qualify by means of certain prescribed matriculation examinations to proceed to one of the Universities to take the B.A. degree.

I am glad to say these degrees are now usually taken at our own University.

There are numerous other Prizes in Harmony, English History, Physiology, Algebra, Geometry, Commercial French and German, Elocution, German, Spanish, English Literature, etc.

In the School of Music the system of reward is largely confined to providing fees for the students in classes which they desire to attend so as to reward them for work done but at the same time to secure the continuance of their studies.

General Department.

Now I must ask you to allow me to address myself to what is called the General Department as distinguished from the Industrial Department of which we have been speaking. The students who attend the classes pay fees, but these are not sufficient to bear all the costs of the Institution. They are supplemented by

Government grants and endowments derived from money given to the Institute which bring in a substantial revenue, as well as by the subscriptions of the members of the General Department. In 1909 these subscribers, including holders of lecture tickets, contributed £2,478 to the Institute and after they had received very substantial return for their money and had paid half the establishment charges there was a surplus of £274 to hand over to the Industrial Department.

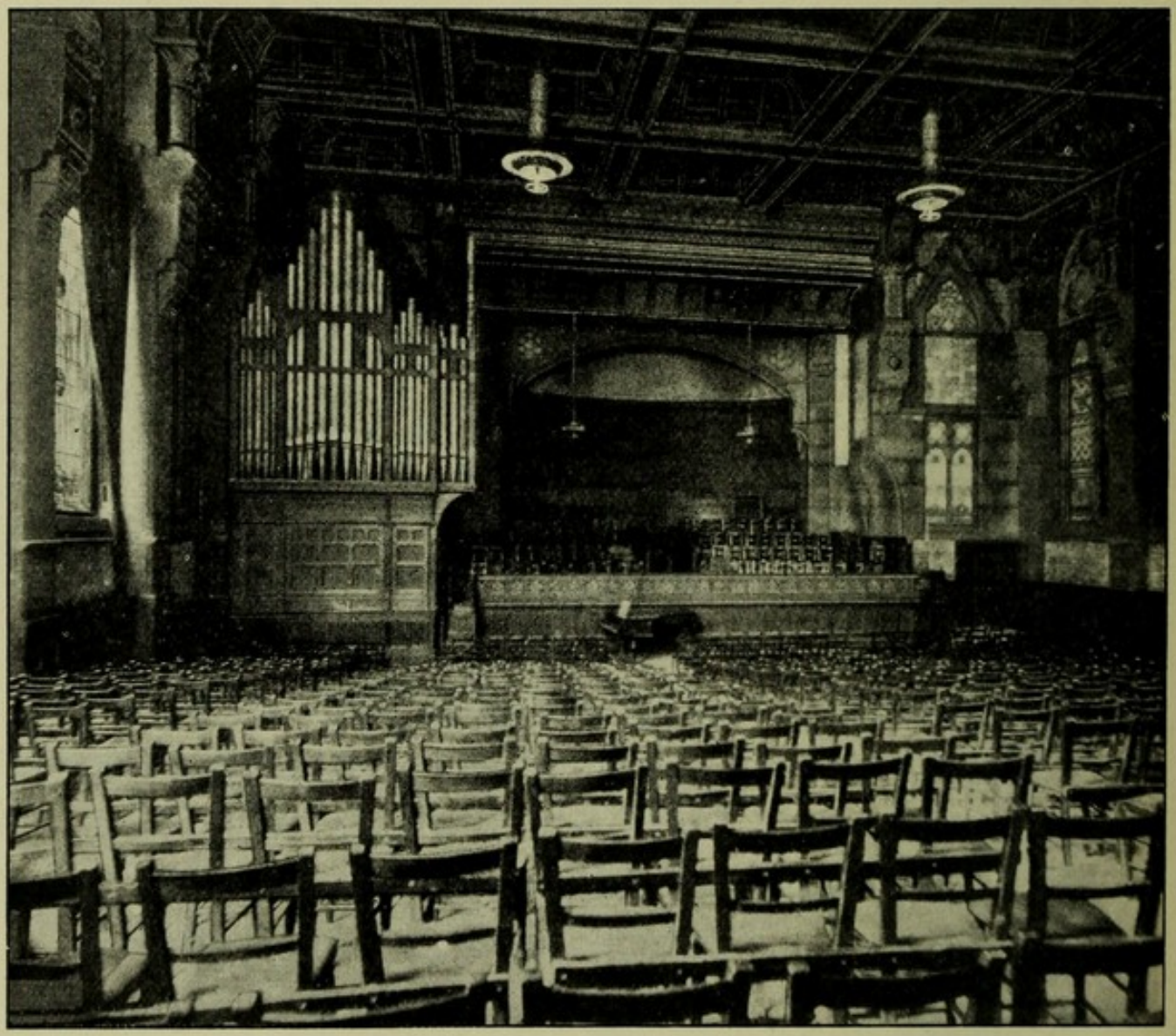
You ask me what the return is.

They have a reading room—it might be called a club room—a very good room amply supplied with papers and magazines, a smoking and writing room, and a ladies' room.

Then they have every Monday during the lecture season a most admirable set of lectures of the highest order which ever since the foundation of the Institute have been a very strong feature in its programme. Indeed, sometimes they are too great an attraction and the big Lecture Theatre is inconveniently crowded.

To mention a very few names only of those who have delivered these lectures, I will name, in earlier days, George Dawson, Professor Owen,

J. A. Froude, Sir Samuel Baker, Professor Huxley, Professor Freeman, Anthony Trollope; in later days the Bishop of Ripon, Augustine



LARGE THEATRE.

Birrell, Du Maurier, Dr. Nansen, Sir William Richmond, Harry Furniss, Pett Ridge, Owen Seaman, and Ian Maclaren (Dr. Watson).

Besides the Club Room and the Lectures the members of the General Department may attend and take a lady or gentleman, as the case may be, to the great Annual Conversazione held in the Town Hall and the Institute, which for the occasion are united by a covered passage. There is dancing in the Town Hall, scientific exhibits in the Institute buildings, and all sorts of interests, and when I tell you that it lasts for four days, one of which is given up to the students, and has an attendance all told of some 5,800 people one way and another, and costs some £500, you will gather that members get a good deal for their money and that the Committee which has the matter in charge has to exercise a good deal of economy to keep the expenses in hand.

In addition to this they have the privilege of attending the Annual Presidential Address in the autumn when the Town Hall is crowded to hear some of the most eminent men in the country.

Presidents.

I do not want to trouble you with schedules of names, but the names of some of those who

have held the office of President are a sort of inspiration in themselves to those of us who have the interest of the Institution at heart.

To name only a few, Lord Lyttelton, the first President, Charles Dickens (of whom I have already spoken), Professor Huxley, Sir John Lubbock (now Lord Avebury), Professor Fawcett, Professor Tyndall, Dean Stanley, Sir Wm. Siemens, J. Anthony Froude, Lord Kelvin, Russell Lowell, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Lord Rosebery, Lord Alverstone (the Chief Justice of England,) Viscount Curzon, who last year held the Town Hall in rapt attention to an address of extraordinary eloquence, and this year the Right Honourable Alfred Lyttelton, whose father was, as I said, the first President.

Honorary Secretaries.

I should like to say a few words on the subject of the Honorary Secretaries of the Institute, and I will not go further back than Mr. John Henry Chamberlain.

He was Honorary Secretary of the Institution for eighteen years from 1865 to 1883, and devoted his energies to the work which was very near his heart. I do not know whether

any of you remember the circumstances of his death. He was at the time Honorary Secretary and he had been delivering one of the Monday evening lectures. His subject was, "Exotic Art," and (little mindful of his own rapidly approaching end) he concluded by quoting Tennyson's words—

> And I must work thro' months of toil
> And years of cultivation,
> Upon my proper patch of soil
> To grow my own plantation.
> I'll take the showers as they fall,
> I will not vex my bosom;
> *Enough, if at the end of all*
> *A little garden blossom.*

He left the lecture room and when he reached Mr. Lawson Tait's house in the Crescent he fainted away and died, actually in harness in the service of the Institute he served so well. Of him it has been well said in the Report of 1883:—

"Under his guidance the Institute has undergone development which is truly marvellous; he had genius to see the needs of the time and the direction in which the Institute could be developed to meet them. The wisdom of his counsel, the extent and variety of his knowledge, the grace of his eloquence and the wonderful charm of his personal presence made him a colleague whom it is impossible to replace."

The office of Honorary Secretary was then undertaken by Mr. Alderman R. F. Martineau, whose death we have had so recently to deplore. No words of mine can express the devotion which Mr. Martineau brought to this work for a period of twenty-one years, i.e. until 1904, when he retired owing to failing health.

In the midst of many engagements, philanthropic and civic, the Institute was, I think, his first love. He was in daily attendance and, not content with taking part in the larger issues he went into every detail, attending the classes and joining in the interests of the many associated societies so far as he could, making himself acquainted with all that was going on and making personal friendships with teachers and students alike. He was a true friend to the Institute, and we have strong evidence of this in the recent announcement that he has made the Institute his residuary legatee.

He was succeeded by Mr. Whitworth Wallis, who is so well known to you and so much with us to-day that I need not expatiate on his merits, as you will know that he could not undertake this or any other work without throwing him-

self heart and soul into it and bringing his powers of organization and his ability to bear to the great advantage of the Institute.

Other Officers.

In parting from the Honorary Secretaries I must just add here that we have for many years now been admirably served by our Secretary, Mr. Alfred Hayes, M.A., who brings to his work a highly-cultured mind and an enthusiasm for hard work which is of the greatest service to the Institute, and you must not think me too much of an optimist if I say that it always seems to me that the warm interest which inspires those who take up the work, as members of the Council and in other capacities, inspires also the clerks in the office, and loyal and hearty work, far in excess of the mere equivalent for wages and salaries paid, is given by those who are so engaged.

There is one other name which must be mentioned in any account of the Midland Institute, and that is Mr. C. J. Woodward. The Institute owes much to him for his untiring efforts on its behalf. He was one of our very earliest students, one of our most valued teachers,

and he is still, I am glad to say, one of our most constant friends.

Finance.

Just a word on the financial position of the Institute. Our expenditure is £10,000 a year, more or less, and our income, I am sorry to say, is considerably less.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
In 1909 the *Expenditure* was				10,016	7	11
made up of	£	s.	d.			
General Department . .	2,246	10	10			
Industrial Department . .	7,516	19	11			
Repairs, alterations, and Bank charges	252	17	2			
	10,016	7	11			
and the *Receipts* were				9,432	11	4
made up of						
General Department . .	2,521	7	2			
Industrial Department . .	5,682	3	4			
Income from Investments, Rent of rooms, etc. . .	1,229	0	10			
	9,432	11	4			

The difference between these two figures shows a deficiency for the year of £583 16*s.* 7*d.*, which is naturally not satisfactory, especially as added to an accumulated deficiency, brought forward,

it makes a total deficiency appearing in the accounts of £2,915 16*s.* 9*d.* It is clear that if this state of things continues it will be necessary to appropriate some of our legacies towards meeting the deficiency, a course which the Council would be very unwilling to adopt, and an appeal has been made to members to make further contributions.

As showing the kind of difficulty that has to be contended with, I would mention that for many years we found the rooms for the Education Authority's Day Training School, which paid us the handsome rent of £400 a year. All of a sudden two years ago away it flew to other premises, just as with that assistance I was looking for a balance of the receipts and expenditure.

Education work of this character cannot be carried on without a permanent income ; and I look forward with confidence to other citizens making donations or leaving legacies to provide a sufficient endowment.

The expenditure is very carefully watched and an institution which does so much good to so large a number of our citizens ought not to be hampered for want of means. We hold investments for endowment and special prizes

worth some £40,000 and another £20,000 added to this would be very acceptable.

I should also like to see crowds of people joining the General Department not because they expect to be able to enjoy all the privileges of membership so far as it gives personal benefit to themselves, but because by doing so they will help to keep going a great educational establishment for the benefits of those perhaps less favoured than themselves in matters of education.

Subordinate Societies.

This address would not be at all complete without some account of the various subordinate societies which have been established within the walls of the Institute in connexion with the other departments which I have already described.

Men and women brought together for purposes of education naturally desire to cultivate the social side of their nature, and to unite themselves in smaller bodies calculated to cultivate their particular tastes. The Institute has been very fruitful in the growth of such associations. For instance, for those who are interested in

archæology there is the Birmingham Archæological Society, founded in 1870. This body has periodical meetings when papers of the greatest interest on Archæological subjects are read and discussed. During the summer months excursions are arranged to places of interest in the neighbourhood, not haphazard but with careful preparation. Local people are arranged with to describe the places visited and sometimes short papers are read on the spot, so that these are not mere afternoons out, but the members come away with fresh interest in the locality and with their minds stored with chapters in history made real by the inspection of the actual places where important events took place. Once a year a very excellent Report is issued adorned with illustrations which now make a volume of the greatest interest.

For those whose tastes take a different turn, there is the Chess Club with its President and officers. They meet in the Institute buildings and you may see them night after night in a smoke-laden room poring over the chess boards engaged in the difficult and exacting occupation which is called a "game."

What a game it is I see from last year's

report that Mr. J. H. Blackburne, the very celebrated player, paid them a visit during the year and played 22 members simultaneously, of which games he won 14, lost 3 and drew 5. One of the members has tied for first place for the British Championship and another has secured for the second year in succession the Championship of Scotland.

If you prefer excursions not connected with archæology, but with the interests of living things, you can join the Cycling Club or the Ramblers, and should you belong to the latter you can have an annual dance in the winter season when out-of-doors excursions are not so convenient.

Should your turn be literary you can join your lot with the Literary and Debating Society, or the Shakespeare and Dramatic Society, where you can discuss literary subjects and engage in debates on all sorts of subjects which are arranged from time to time.

Talking of literary matters I must not forget the *Institute Magazine*, started in 1882 and ably edited by Mr. Howard S. Pearson, once a student and now an honoured teacher of literature and history amongst us. It deals with all the

interests of the Institute and contains some very excellent contributions from students. It is quite a feature in the arrangements of the place.

I am afraid I shall weary you, but I am here to tell you about the Birmingham and Midland Institute, and so I must go on a little longer, for I have not yet mentioned the Scientific Society, one of the most important of the subsidiary societies. It was founded in 1859 and now contains 135 members. It has also the inevitable meetings and discussions (I see last year they had fifteen papers read and discussed during the session, so that you will see they are an active body). They help to keep alive amongst those most interested in scientific subjects a spirit of research and inquiry which is of the utmost value.

It also arranges excursions, and in the winter has a soiree.

In addition to this it undertakes, with a hearty good-will which is beyond praise, the arrangement of the scientific exhibits for the Institute Conversazione, and always manages to provide some scientific novelties for the delectation of the 5,000 visitors who I have told you are entertained on these occasions.

Then, speaking of the Conversazione, we must not forget the Amateur Opera Society, which has for many years taken a very prominent part by producing year after year a play which is given in the great Lecture Theatre. The performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas has earned the highest praise. Indeed, on one occasion I remember there was a little difficulty caused by the proprietor of one of the operas about giving permission for it to be performed because the chorus singing was so good that it compared rather too favourably with the theatre performances of the same opera.

Last, but not least, there is the Union of Teachers and Students, a body which takes an active part in watching over and promoting the interests of the students and teachers. Every November it holds a celebration which includes speeches, some acting and a good social time in order to keep alive the fact that the foundation stone of the Institution buildings was laid on the 22nd day of that month by the Prince Consort in the year 1855. One of its duties is to select and nominate the two Industrial Governors to sit on the Institute Council.

This Union fills a very useful place in the work-

ing of the Institute and is of assistance to the Council in carrying out their duties.

Conclusion.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I expect you are about tired of me, as I cannot expect that the matter which interests me so much, after over twenty-eight years' acquaintance with the inner working of the Institute, can be equally interesting to you, to many of whom the Midland Institute is but a name. But that is just the reason why I came to address you to-night. I hoped that I might be able to convey to you something of the spirit of the place and make you feel proud that such an institution exists in your midst. If any one in this audience should think that there is anything in our school which appeals to him, I can assure him of a hearty welcome and that he will reap a sure reward. Surely some among you will be inspired by a fresh thirst for knowledge and a new desire to cultivate the talents entrusted to you.

Who can estimate the incalculable benefit that must have accrued to the City from the passage through this institution during the sixty years of its existence of the many thousands,

shall I guess at 100,000 students, who have from time to time come under its influence in one way or another ? and cannot you now better understand why I said before that there are very many of our fellow citizens to-day who look back with something like affection to the days spent under its roof ?

Ladies and gentlemen, I have done. I thank you for your very courteous attention to what I have had to say to you. I am conscious of many omissions and many imperfections, but I trust that you will go away from this room to-night with a fuller knowledge of and a deeper sense of respect for the Birmingham and Midland Institute.

THE COUNCIL SCHOOLS

By A. H. Coley



A School Interior.

THE COUNCIL SCHOOLS

By A. H. Coley.

My subject to-night does not involve any inquiry into ancient history. The story of the origin and development of the Council Schools is comprised within a period of forty years, and the incidents of the story are within the memory of hundreds of living citizens.

The Education Act of 1870.

Prior to the year 1870 such provision as existed for elementary education was provided by voluntary bodies chiefly connected with the Churches. The only assistance given by the Government was in the way of aiding the existing schools by grants of money. I am not sure that full justice has been done to those devoted men and women who, in the voluntary schools, worked so hard for the education of the people. Let us pay a passing tribute of gratitude to

their memory. In spite of their efforts, it has been said by a modern historian that in the matter of elementary education England was behind every other great country in the world, and that she was behind most countries that in nowise professed to be great. In the year 1870 more than two-thirds of the children of the country were without instruction, and as a nation we were slow to move in the direction of making provision to remedy the deficiency. On February 17, 1870, there was introduced into the House of Commons a Bill to make provision for Public Elementary Education in England and Wales. The scheme of the Bill did not involve the extinction of existing schools. In the language of Mr. Forster—that man of vigorous and independent mind, who introduced the Bill—the object was to complete the voluntary system, and to fill up gaps. The Bill became an Act, and it was provided that whenever the voluntary supply was insufficient, School Boards should be created with power to levy rates for the establishment and maintenance of schools ; and at the same time to exercise, by means of local bye-laws, the power to compel the attendance at school

of children from five to thirteen years of age. It was calculated that accommodation would be required for one-sixth of the population. The expenditure was to be provided by local rates, grants from the Treasury, and school fees. The voluntary schools were to continue to receive Government aid if they complied with certain conditions as to efficiency and a conscience clause—that is to say, parents were to have the right to withdraw their children from any religious instruction or observance of which they disapproved. By the Act women were made eligible to sit upon the School Boards.

The First School Board.

It is easy to understand that no time was lost in setting up a School Board in Birmingham, and, indeed, it must be acknowledged that, at that time, it was not well with us in the matter of elementary education. The first Board was elected on November 28, 1870, and met for the first time on December 15 in that year. It consisted of fifteen members. The story of their election is full of incident and interest. The controversial fires which then burned so fiercely have long since died down, and I will

make no attempt to rekindle them. Of the fifteen members first elected, three were clergymen of the Church of England, one was a Roman Catholic priest, and three were Nonconformist ministers, whose names were known throughout England. They were Robert William Dale, George Dawson, and Charles Vince. Of the eight laymen, two were Joseph Chamberlain and George Dixon. The first Chairman of the Board was William Lucas Sargant and the Vice-Chairman Mr. Sampson Samuel Lloyd. It was three years before the ratepayers had the wisdom to elect a woman member in the person of Miss Eliza M. Sturge. From that time the Board was never without a woman member, and this example has been continued and extended by the Education Commiteee. A change of parties took place at the election in November 1873, and of the second Board then elected, Mr. Chamberlain was appointed Chairman, and Mr. Jesse Collings became a member. The Rev. E. F. M. MacCarthy, whose great services are fresh in the minds of all of us, became a member of the Board in 1875, and remained a member until the dissolution of the Board in 1903.

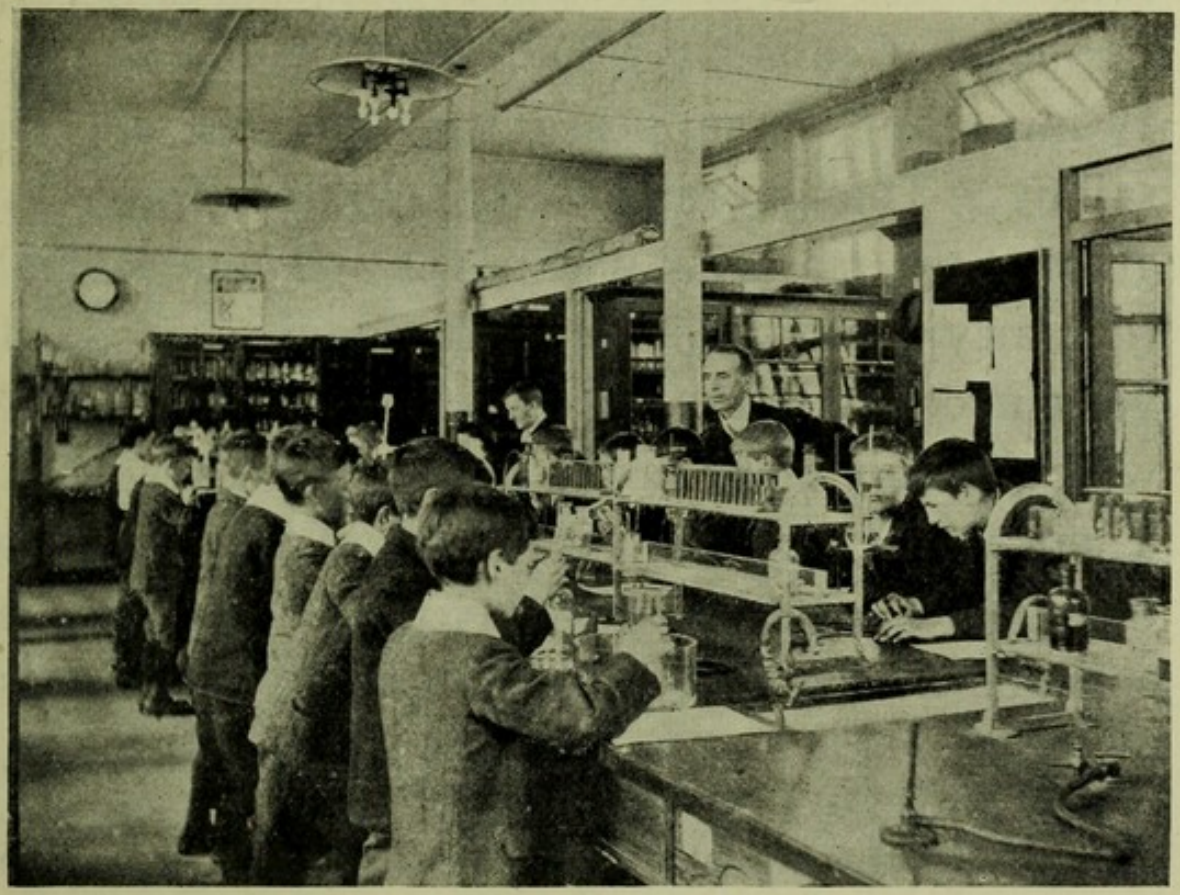
The First Board School.

The duty of the Board first elected obviously was to survey the position and take note of existing facts. As a result of careful inquiries it was estimated that the number of children for whom accommodation in elementary schools was required was 59,710. There was existing accommodation, including private schools, for 37,442 only. Provision had, therefore, to be made for 22,268 children. An actual census of children was taken in 1874, and there was no material difference in the numbers. The Board applied itself to its task with industry and vigour. A site of rather less than an acre was acquired at Bloomsbury, and school buildings were erected upon it. The total cost of site and buildings was £10,683. The school was built to accommodate 1,059 children, and it was opened on March 24, 1873. I have referred to the file of the local newspapers for an account of the opening ceremony. In a day when the fame of the orators of Birmingham was high, I expected to find recorded some examples of their powers, but I was disappointed. The record comprises precisely twenty-eight lines,

It tells us of children waiting with their parents before the doors were opened ; of the presence during the day of several members of the Board ; of the non-arrival of books, and other details ; but formal opening there was none. Owing to the unfinished state of the school only the class-rooms in the girls' school were used, and the total number of children attending was 39. But surely the day was an eventful one in the history of our city. Then, for the first time, in a populous part of the town there stood a school, built by the community at its own cost, managed by its duly elected representatives, and bringing the blessed light of knowledge to the children of the district. The day, perhaps, was bleak and cold, but all right-thinking citizens must have rejoiced as they reflected upon the work then so well begun.

The fees charged at first in the Board schools were 3*d.* per week for children over seven years of age, and 2*d.* per week (afterwards reduced to 1*d.*), in the infant schools. In some of the poorer districts an uniform fee of 1*d.* was charged. A somewhat ambitious curriculum was adopted. In those days, and scarcely less so to-day, it was necessary to comply with an omnipotent

Code in order to earn Government grants. These were paid for reading, writing and arithmetic, and a small grant was also paid for any two or three specific subjects which included grammar, history, and geography for children



A Practical Science Lesson.

in Standards IV to VI. Beyond the sacred three R's, object lessons of a simple character, and some exercises of the Kindergarten system were taught to the infants, and instruction in sewing was given to the elder girls. Besides the essential subjects, plain needle-work and

cutting out were taught in the girls' schools, and where it was thought "the children were sufficiently advanced" various other subjects including English, Physical Science, Geography, Drawing, History, and Domestic Economy were taught, with the discretionary subjects of Social Economy, Geometry, Algebra and Mensuration. It must not be supposed that all was smooth sailing. The ignorance of the children was very great; the majority had never attended school regularly before. Their attendance was yet very irregular, and organization and discipline were difficult tasks in the hands of the teachers. There were, too, many half-timers belonging to the poorer classes, and the presence of these children in the schools added to the difficulties of the teachers.[1] The three R's had, of course,

[1] At this time a half-timer was required to make 150 attendances in the year to satisfy the conditions of examination. Most of the half-timers attended school in the afternoon after having been at work during the morning, and they were not then physically in a condition to profit by the instruction given. The teachers found it impossible to construct a time-table capable of being carried out in a satisfactory manner in a class composed of full and half-timers. Moreover, the half-timers were continually moving to other schools owing to changes in their places of employment.

the first place—a place due to the pronounced ignorance of the early scholars, and to the value of these subjects for grant-earning purposes.

In July 1871 the Board had made bye-laws compelling attendance at school, fixing the period of compulsion at the maximum allowed by the Act, namely, from five to thirteen years of age, but providing that Standard IV. should be the Standard for total exemption from attendance, and Standard III. for half-time exemption. The first school attendance officer was appointed in 1872. Later, there was a development of the law with regard to the obligation of the parent to send his child to school. By the Elementary Education Act 1876, it was enacted that it should be the duty of the parent of every child to cause such child to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and if such parent failed to perform such duty, he was made liable to such orders and penalties as are provided by the Act. In 1880 it ceased to be optional to School Boards to make bye-laws to compel attendance, and it became obligatory upon them to do so.

Development of the System.

At the end of the first ten years of the Board's existence there were twenty-eight Board schools providing accommodation for 28,787 children. Of these, 25,720 were in average attendance during the year. About the same number were in attendance in the other elementary schools of the town. At that time the Board were employing thirty visiting officers whose work had a beneficial effect upon the attendance in the voluntary schools as well as in the schools of the Board. In the tenth year of their life the Board asked from the ratepayers the modest sum of £39,000, equal to a rate of $6\frac{3}{10}d.$ in the pound.

The work of organization and development went rapidly on. Great improvements were effected in the building of the schools. The central hall, with class rooms, came to be adopted. Evening schools were opened in 1874. Cookery, needlework, drawing and singing, were adopted as subjects of instruction. Scholarships were established with the view of bringing the elementary schools into relation with the educational institutions of the town. The standards for exemption from school attendance were

raised, and the system of peripatetic science teaching was introduced. Later years saw provision made for the instruction of pupil teachers, the organization of the Kindergarten system in infant schools, a development of object lessons,



A Needlework Lesson.

and the organization of physical exercises. Thrift was encouraged by the opening of a Savings Bank. In September 1891 all school fees were abolished. Manual Instruction Centres came into being. Arrangements were made for the maintenance and education of

blind children in boarding institutions, and classes were opened for the instruction of the deaf. These classes were soon followed by the establishment of special classes for defective and feeble-minded children. Higher grade schools were opened in Bridge Street and Waverley Road, and afterwards the Oozells Street School was converted into the George Dixon Higher Grade School to take the place of the school in Bridge Street. At a later date laundry work was adopted as a subject of instruction for elder girls.

In earlier years, before the duty of the State received the recognition it meets with to-day, many voluntary efforts were made for the amelioration of the lot of the poorer children. Free meals were provided for them; their bodily ailments were cared for; and their lives were brightened by entertainments after school hours, and in other ways. The members of the Board were themselves alert to observe and adopt many improvements. A science laboratory was built in connexion with the Icknield Street school. Hand and Eye work was introduced in Standards I to IV as a preparatory course to manual work in the upper standards.

The staffing of the schools received careful attention. More adult teachers were employed, and the number of pupil teachers taking an active part in teaching grew less. The size of the classes was reduced. It became the practice to place all the departments on the ground floor in buildings of one story. Four denominational schools were transferred to the Board ; but these have long since been closed as new Board schools were erected. In 1891, on the extension of the city boundaries, eight schools, formerly in the districts of King's Norton, Smethwick and Aston respectively, became subject to the control of Birmingham. The attendance in the schools was improved by the power to inflict larger penalties for absence ; and the attainment of a higher standard of proficiency was required before exemption from attendance was allowed. During this time Codes have come and gone ; different methods of assessing the Government grants have been adopted ; the condition of individual examination has been abolished ; and discretionary visits of His Majesty's Inspector substituted ; and the patience and skill of everybody engaged in the work of elementary education have been tried in a thousand ways.

The Act of 1902.

I have shortly sketched the origin and development of the schools. Let us now look at the conditions existing to-day. By virtue of the Education Act, 1902, the School Board was dissolved, and an Education Committee for the city was constituted. This Committee consists of thirty-two members, of whom eighteen are members of the City Council, seven are nominated by the City Council as persons experienced in the work of education, and the remainder are nominated by the following bodies —namely the University of Birmingham, King Edward's High School, the Birmingham and Midland Institute, the Birmingham Trades Council, the Church Schools Association, the Birmingham Diocesan Catholic School Association, and the Birmingham and District Association of the National Union of Teachers—as their representatives upon the Committee. The Committee has six sub-Committees, and three sets of School Managers representing the North, Central and South divisions of the city. Of these Managers a number are co-opted—they are not themselves members of the Education

Committee. To-day the Education Committee has entire control of the secular instruction given in all the elementary schools of the city, Council and voluntary schools alike, with the single exception of St. Jude's School—an exception due to the conscientious convictions of the managers of that school. The voluntary schools have, indeed, still their own managers appointed under their trust deeds ; but in every case the Education Committee has representatives upon the bodies of foundation managers. The voluntary schools, which number forty-eight, cannot, of course, strictly be called "Council schools," but there is perfect equality of treatment between both sets of schools so far as the Education Committee is concerned.

There are to-day sixty-three Council schools. They have been built and furnished at a total cost of £1,100,000. Of this vast sum £320,000 has already been repaid out of the revenues of the city, and the balance must be provided in like manner. If we add to these figures the cost of the Municipal Technical School, and the Shustoke Industrial School, we find there has been a further expenditure of £120,000 of which £66,000 has been repaid. It is a matter for

just pride that the people's schools have been built with the people's money, and that no contribution has been received from any outside source. The schools are not only places wherein the children of the city receive instruction. They form meeting places for the citizens on countless occasions, and they have been the scenes of instruction and entertainment of many kinds. The playgrounds are open out of school hours for the benefit of the children living in the neighbourhood. In the Council schools there are 68,205 children with an average attendance of 61,303. The figures for the voluntary schools are 28,968 and 25,550 respectively. There are, therefore, in average attendance in all the elementary schools of the city 86,853 children. The general percentage of attendance to the number on the registers is 89·4. The children are instructed by 2,188 adult teachers, between whom and the Education Committee the most friendly relations prevail. There is an adult teacher for every forty-four children, or, if we take certificated teachers only, then there is one for every fifty-two children.

As a result of the Education Acts and the

bye-laws, children must remain in school until they have reached their fourteenth year, but a child between twelve and fourteen cannot be required to attend school if such child has received a certificate from one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Schools that it has reached the seventh standard prescribed by the code. It is possible, under the Education Act, 1902, for a child to remain in a public elementary school until the close of the school year in which the child has attained the age of sixteen. There are three Inspectors of the upper departments, and an Inspectress of the infant schools. The Committee has a staff of forty-five visiting officers working under a superintendent. The total expenditure of the Education Committee upon all branches of education for the year ending March 31, 1909, was £438,872. Of this amount £214,646 was received from Government grants and minor sources, and the remainder came out of the pockets of the ratepayers. With a trifling exception in the case of one school, no fees are charged in any of the elementary schools. The present education rate is $18\frac{4}{10}d$.

The Work in the Schools: Religious Instruction.

Let us turn from the dry bones of statistics and consider what goes on in the schools. Take first the subject about which the battle has been of the fiercest. Religious teaching is now given in all the Council schools and occupies about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours every week. A written course of lessons is prepared by the staff, a hymn is sung, and the Lord's Prayer is repeated by the scholars. Then the children, (except those in the infant departments), are formed into classes, and they read and learn by heart portions of Scripture. The teachers also give lessons of a simple character on Scriptural subjects in accordance with the prepared course. In the infants departments, after the children have said the Lord's Prayer, the time is devoted to Bible reading, or the repetition of texts or hymns, the narration of Bible stories, or moral lessons. Full protection is given to the conscientious convictions of the parents and teachers. The Committee have no control over the religious instruction in voluntary schools, where it is given in accordance with the trust deeds. In addition moral lessons on such

subjects as honesty, truthfulness, industry, temperance, frugality, and courtesy are given in all the schools.

Care of the Body.

If we provide thus for the higher nature of the child we do not neglect the body. Every child admitted into the schools is examined by a competent medical man or woman. The parents of the children are invited to attend when the examination takes place, and a large number of them do so. In this way bodily defects are ascertained, and made known to the parents. When the system of medical inspection is in full operation, a child will be examined three times in the course of its school life. Doubtless in the future provision will be made for dealing with some, at any rate, of the defects found on the medical examination, but you are aware that the system of medical inspection is yet in its infancy. One step, at any rate, has been taken by the Education Committee. It has been ascertained at what prices reliable firms will provide spectacles for children whose sight has been found to be defective, and the parents concerned are furnished with the in-

formation so that they may obtain the articles at the cheapest possible rate.

Again, necessitous children are supplied with free breakfasts. This is no longer the result of private bounty. The rates of the city are drawn



WITH THE DOCTOR.

upon for the necessary expense. Careful inquiry is made into the cases and every effort made to prevent abuse. There is power to compel a parent to pay for the meals supplied to his child if he is in a position to do so. The last returns show that tickets were supplied

to 3,563 children, and that 42,024 breakfasts were supplied during a period of three weeks. The meal supplied consists of half a pint of cocoa made with skim milk, one round of bread and margarine, and one round of bread and jam. It is easy to understand how great is the benefit thus conferred upon the children, and none, I think, will grudge the sum of £2,442 which this beneficent work cost the community during the last financial year.

Physical exercises occupy about an hour and a half in every school week, and the work is supervised by the superintendent appointed by the Committee who reports annually to them. Swimming is practised by the children, who may attend on certain mornings at the baths at a charge of ½*d.* each. Organised games, which may count as part of the school time, are carried on in connexion with two of the elementary schools.

Secular Instruction.

We pass to what we have grown accustomed to call the "secular" instruction. In the infants departments the object aimed at is the development of the faculties of the mind and

body of the children, rather than the giving of formal instruction. Where there are children under five, instruction is given by means of various Kindergarten occupations and instructive games. Included in the occupations are drawing, paper folding, and clay modelling. Considerable time is devoted to singing, recitations, story-telling, and nature lessons. The good work done in infant schools could be made even better if the city could afford to build quite new schools in substitution for some of the older ones ; but that is a counsel of perfection upon which I must not dwell. It may be truly said that, assisted by the elasticity of recent codes, the school life of the younger children is made happy and bright in every way. In most of the infant departments there is a Standard I. In this standard, and in the two upper classes, about half the time devoted to secular instruction is given to reading, writing, and number. Needlework and knitting are also taught.

In the upper departments, that is to say, generally speaking, in the case of children above seven years of age, there is, of course, a wider curriculum The Government requirements are

specified in the code issued annually by the Education Department.

The arrangement of the classes depends primarily upon the accommodation and circumstances of each individual school. In a modern school containing fourteen class rooms, it is possible to allow a class room to each standard, namely, seven on the boys' and girls' sides respectively. But this accommodation is only found in a small number of the schools.

Amongst the subjects of instruction prominence is rightly given to the English language. Books of excellent quality are used in the schools, and in reading them the children become acquainted with some of the masterpieces of our literature. Silent reading, as well as reading aloud, is practised. In the upper standards the scholars are required, after they have read a passage, to reproduce it, orally or on paper, as an exercise in composition. The children are also taught to use works of reference. They have opportunities of using the school libraries, and they are encouraged to use the free libraries in the neighbourhood. Composition is taught not only in the way I have just indicated, but in formal lessons. Thomas Carlyle was, at

the mature age of seven, reported by an Inspector to be "complete in English." We attempt no such heroic deed; but we may at least claim that the children in our primary schools are well taught the elements of their mother tongue. Handwriting is taught in the lowest standards by the teacher writing sentences on the blackboard, and the copying of the sentences by the children. The teacher, when he goes round the class, corrects faults made by individual children, and in case of common faults he shows and corrects them on the blackboard. Above Standard III, headline copybooks are used. The simpler rules of arithmetic are taught in the lower standards, and later, the children are taught to deal with compound and vulgar fractions, decimals, mensuration, percentage and interest. Mental arithmetic is practised. In teaching the subject generally, the object is to lay more stress upon the learning of the reason of the process than upon what may be called mechanical skill. Drawing is taught under the supervision of visiting teachers who are members of the staff of the School of Art, and this connexion of the elementary schools with the School of Art is

admittedly of very great value. Geography and history are taught in the lower standards in connexion with object lessons. Sometimes geography and history are taken together.

I have shown that the courses of instruction are not merely of a "book" or "literary" character. I must mention some other subjects.

The practice of thrift is cultivated in the schools. A Savings Bank is established in 226 departments. In the year 1908 a sum of £17,000 was paid in by 38,520 depositors, and at the end of that year there was a balance due to depositors of £2,834. It would be easy to enlarge upon this topic, but the figures themselves are of sufficient significance.

I have already referred to the teaching of science by means of the peripatetic system. The subject is taught to boys and girls in Standards V, VI and VII. There are laboratories in connexion with two of the Council Schools, namely, Icknield Street, and Oldknow Road. At these centres preparations are made for the experiments which are given to illustrate the lessons in the class. There is a staff of eleven peripatetic teachers, of whom two are women. In the boys' schools weekly lessons

are given by one of the peripatetic teachers, and between his visits a lesson is given to the class by the class teacher who was present when the lesson was given by the demonstrator. A number of scholars attend at the Oldknow Road and Icknield Street laboratories and do practical work there. In some of the schools the science teaching is given by qualified members of the ordinary staff. A delightful feature of the science teaching is the practice of taking some of the children out for rambles in the country under the guidance of a teacher. It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence upon the children of such opportunities for observing the beauties of Nature and learning her secrets—that Nature "who never did betray the heart that loved her." In the girls' schools special attention is paid to the teaching of domestic economy, and to hygiene and the laws of health. A leaflet containing very useful hints on health for elder girls has lately been issued. The course of instruction for music is graduated according to the standards. The children are taught to sing songs of a national and patriotic character. The relation between the tonic-sol-fa and the old notation is taught to the

scholars in the upper standards. The supervision of singing is undertaken by teachers on the staff of the School of Music associated with the Midland Institute.

Needlework forms part of the instruction in the girls' departments. Sewing and knitting are taught, and cutting out in paper, and mending, are practised. Stress is laid upon the mending of garments, and in many schools a large number of children bring clothes which they are taught to repair. A syllabus of instruction has been prepared by the Committee's Inspectress who, with the aid of an assistant, supervises the work.

There are twenty-two centres for the teaching of cookery, and at four of them instruction is also given in laundry work. Twenty-two teachers are engaged in teaching these subjects, under the direction of a Lady Superintendent. In cookery, a demonstration lesson is first given to a class of eighteen girls, and it is followed by a practical class. Leaflets containing information as to cheap and wholesome summer dishes, and cheap and nourishing dishes for winter, have been prepared by the Superintendent of Cookery and largely circulated. The girls are

also taught how to feed and take care of infants. The Education Committee, recognizing the value of these domestic subjects, is engaged in reorganizing the system so as to secure that no girl shall leave school without having received a thorough training in cookery and laundry work.

Again, with the boys careful attention is given to the teaching of handicraft. There are sixteen centres for manual instruction. Of these thirteen are for the teaching of wood-work and three for metal-work. Instruction is given by sixteen Manual Instructors, and twenty Assistant Manual Instructors, acting under the direction of a Superintendent. The lesson covers the entire morning or afternoon session as the case may be. Most of the time is given to practical work at the bench. Instruction is given in the use of tools, and in the properties and natures of different kinds of materials. Drawings done to scale are required, and original designs by the boys are encouraged. The object is not to teach the boy a trade,but to train him to use his powers of thought and observation, and to think and reason for himself. With these aims in view, general support will, I think,

be given to an intended extension of the system of manual instruction whereby every boy will receive instruction in this subject.

Criticism of Curriculum.

Criticism is sometimes expended upon the curriculum of the schools. I have no desire to enter into controversial matter upon this occasion, but when I hear the subject discussed I am tempted to ask two questions, and, unlike jesting Pilate, to stay for an answer. The first question is "What subjects is it proposed to omit from the curriculum?" and the second is, "What would be the effect upon teachers and scholars if nearly the whole of the school time were given to the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic?" I do not say that we have reached the ideal. We are far, indeed, from realizing Edward Thring's axiom, namely, "the necessity, in a true school, that every boy, be he clever or stupid, should have proper individual attention paid to him. If he has not," says Thring, "the boy, so far as he is neglected, is not at school." It is easy to understand that much work remains to be done, and

many reforms await adoption, before this end is attained.

Physically defective children.

Hitherto I have spoken of the care of the community for the children of normal health and strength. But the children of affliction are not forgotten. There are two day schools for the deaf, and two for crippled children ; and the omnibus in which some of these children are conveyed to school must often have excited our sympathetic attention as we have seen it pass through the streets. Several nurses and attendants assist in the care of these physically-defective children. There are, in addition, seven schools for mentally defective children. Upwards of one thousand children are found in these special schools, and fifty-nine teachers are engaged in the work carried on there. The duty of selecting the children for admission is performed with great delicacy and care. It is impossible to visit one of these schools without being profoundly moved, and one rejoices to know that the conscience of the community has been awakened to the duty of caring for these unfortunate children. No part

of the work of the Education Committee is carried on with greater sympathy and devotion. Nor are the children to whom God hath "light denied" without a helper; for thirty-eight of those who never see the glory of this present world are tended and instructed in the Blind Institution at the public cost.

I have assumed that, in speaking of the Council Schools, it was my chief duty to describe the elementary schools. I must not, however, omit to refer to the three Council Secondary Schools in which excellent work is being done. They provide instruction for 1,330 scholars, and their curricula are carefully framed to meet the needs of the scholars in after life. There is also the great Technical School in Suffolk Street, with its extension in John Bright Street, and three branch schools. There, in the laboratory, at the lathe and the bench, and in the classes, is an army of 3,500 students, gathering, with eager minds and hearts, valuable knowledge of the industries in which they earn their daily bread. Thither, too, women may come and learn in scientific fashion to prepare the domestic meal, and make the homely but artistic gar-

ment. Again, there are the twenty-four evening schools with more than 5,000 seekers after knowledge; and there is the industrial school at Shustoke. Moreover, you may see at the centre in Oozells Street, upwards of 200 pupils, who, partly by means of their studies there, and partly by actual work in the schools, are being trained for the honourable profession of teacher. All these institutions are of the utmost value, and I hope that this short reference to them will not be taken as the measure of my appreciation of their work and importance.

Scholarships.

I can only refer in a sentence to the scholarships at the disposal of the Committee—some of them founded in memory of great citizens of the past—whereby scholars are assisted to continue their education at the University and elsewhere.[1]

It is time I brought my story, incomplete as it is, to an end. We have in part surveyed the past; and we have contemplated the present.

[1] On this see "The Education Ladder," by the Editor of *Educational Handbook and Calendar* (Birmingham Printers, 1908).

It is no vain boast to say that here, in this city, great ideals have been cherished, and that Birmingham has inspired and promoted some of the great legislative measures relating to the education of the people. Nowhere, for example, did the movement for free schools meet with more ardent support than in this place. Nor have we been backward in matters of administration. Not once nor twice only have alterations and improvements that had long previously been adopted here found their way into Acts of Parliament and Codes. There has been no turning back in this onward march. There have been moments here, as elsewhere, when the voice of complaint at the cost of education has been heard, but in the clear light of knowledge and experience our citizens have recognized the value of the work that has been done, and have not weighed too nicely in the balances the expense. When effect had to be given to the changes wrought by the Act of 1902, the Education Committee, composed of men and women of different religious faiths and political opinions, showed how the new system could be carried out in a spirit of justice and equity to all parties.

To-day new demands are made upon us in every direction. Without doubt this generation will witness what we have already begun to see—great and striking developments in our national system of education, from its lowest to its highest forms. It is our happiness to know that a child living in the meanest court of the city may enter into the schools of the people, and demand there to be taught, without money and without price, the elements of knowledge. We must resolve that this birthright shall be preserved to him—nay, that it shall even be enlarged. So may we take the first steps in the training of the citizens of the future, who, going from strength to strength in all wisdom and virtue, may in their turn serve their day and generation, and, by the example of their lives, adorn that city in which the ample page of knowledge was first unrolled to their eyes.

THE BIRMINGHAM FREE LIBRARIES

By A. Capel Shaw



THE REFERENCE LIBRARY, BIRMINGHAM, LOOKING WEST.

THE BIRMINGHAM FREE LIBRARIES

By A. Capel Shaw

The Libraries To-day.

No course of lectures on the Institutions of Birmingham would be complete which did not include one on the Birmingham Free Libraries. It is for this reason, I suppose, that I have been asked to say something on this subject, and I have been specially requested to treat the subject from the historical rather than from the practical point of view.

The Birmingham Free Libraries occupy a position second to none among the rate-supported libraries of the United Kingdom, and their importance is recognized not only in this country, but practically all over the civilized world.

The Library System now consists of a Reference Library, containing about 212,000 volumes, and the Lending Libraries, situated in different

parts of the city, containing in all about 122,000 volumes, so that altogether there are about 334,000 volumes the property of the city and available for the use of all the citizens. Indeed the great bulk of these books, viz., those in the Reference Library, are accessible to all the world, and as a matter of fact readers do come from many parts of the country to consult them.

From an intellectual standpoint, therefore, these Libraries are one of the most valuable assets that the city possesses, and although they earn nothing which can be directly applied to the reduction of the rates, may we not assume that by raising the intellectual standard of the people, they do indirectly contribute to the same result?

Perhaps I may be pardoned if I refer again for a moment to the number of volumes in the Libraries. It is so easy to say the city possesses 334,000 volumes, but it is not quite so easy to realize what an immense number this is. Some little idea, however, may be gained from the fact that they would require a shelf nearly eight miles long to enable them to stand side by side on it. The shelf room actually

provided in the Libraries must be considerably more than that, as allowance has to be made for continual growth.

The total issue from all the Libraries last year exceeded one million and a half, and of this large number more than one million were borrowed from the Lending Libraries and taken into the homes of the people. Who can estimate the amount of mental culture thus provided, or assess the value of the wholesome recreation which the Libraries afford? Both are, I believe, incalculable, and personally I am not disposed to think it is a matter for regret that our Libraries are such an important factor in providing innocent recreation for our citizens. We are glad that they assist in the culture and education of the people; we are glad also that by the provision of wholesome fiction and great poetry they open to all the lofty realms of imagination, and enable the sorrowful and weary to escape for a time from the sordid cares and trials of life. This is no small thing to accomplish, and we rejoice that, in addition to their educational influence, they are thus also capable of ameliorating the lives of the people.

Such and so great are the Birmingham Free Libraries as they exist to-day, and it is now my pleasing duty to endeavour to trace their growth and to show you how, from the small seed originally planted, they have developed into such a noble tree.

Public Libraries Act.

So long ago as the year 1852 the first attempt was made to establish a Free Library in Birmingham, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Libraries Act of 1850. This Act was a very inadequate one, as under it the rate to be levied was limited to one halfpenny in the pound, and the proceeds were to be devoted to the erection or adaptation of buildings, and to current charges of management and maintenance, but not to the provision of books or specimens for the Museums. These it was thought would be provided by the generosity of the citizens themselves.

Imperfect as it was, it was yet an advance on the Museums Act of 1845, and was really the first step towards the provision of public libraries.

On February 6, 1852, Councillor Boyce

brought the subject before the notice of the Town Council, and obtained the passing of a resolution that the Council at its next meeting should take into consideration the subject of the Free Libraries Act of 1850 with a view to decide upon the desirability of the Council requesting the Mayor to take the necessary steps to ascertain whether the provisions of the Act should be adopted in the borough.

In accordance with this resolution, the subject was considered at the next meeting on March 19, 1852, and after considerable discussion the following resolution was passed :—

"That this Council request the Mayor to take the necessary measures in accordance with the provisions of the Public Libraries Act of 1850 in order to ascertain if it is the wish of the burgesses that the provisions of the said Act shall be carried into effect in this Borough."

In pursuance of this resolution the Mayor, Mr. Henry Smith, called a meeting of the burgesses and took a poll for and against the adoption of the Act.

This poll was taken on April 7, and the result was disastrous to the hopes of those who wished to establish free libraries.

By the provisions of the Act, a majority of

two-thirds of those voting was necessary for the adoption of the Act, and notwithstanding the vigorous efforts of the friends of the movement who canvassed the town for the purpose, the majority in favour of adopting the Act fell short of two-thirds by twenty-five votes, and the Act was therefore rejected. The actual figures were 534 for, and 363 against the adoption of the Act.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this result is the extreme apathy shown by the burgesses in reference to a question that so directly affected themselves. The burgesses at that time numbered about 7,000 and of these only 897 took the trouble to vote. The action of this small number, however, settled the question for the time. By the provisions of the Act two years must pass before any further appeal could be made to the burgesses, and as a matter of fact rather more than seven years passed before the question was re-opened.

Although Councillor Boyce failed to carry his proposition, this did not detract from his title to our gratitude. By his proposal he has built for himself an enduring monument, and

his name is deserving of all honour from those interested in the establishment of public libraries. The seed that he cast into the earth did not perish, but ultimately sprang up and brought forth the noble libraries which adorn our city to-day.

The Adoption of the Act.

On August 16, 1859, Councillor E. C. Osborne again brought the subject before the Council, when it was decided to appoint a Committee to consider the subject and report to the Council.

The Committee on January 3, 1860, reported in favour of adopting the Act, and they were able to strengthen their case by pointing out that the Act had already been adopted in Liverpool and Manchester, in both which places it was working satisfactorily.

Since the last appeal to the burgesses in 1852, the Act had been amended and the limit of the rate raised to one penny in the pound, the proceeds of which could be applied to the provision of a building and also to the purchase of books.

The report of the Committee showed that

the penny rate in Birmingham would produce £3,436, which at that time seemed a sufficient sum for the purpose.

The Council approved the report and directed the Mayor to call a meeting of Burgesses to consider the question of adopting the Act. This meeting was held on February 21, 1860. The motion for adopting the Act was moved by Councillor E. C. Osborne, seconded by Dr. Miller, Rector of St. Martin's, and supported by Mr. George Dawson. The resolution was carried by a very large majority, and Birmingham thus fell into line with Liverpool, Manchester and other towns which had already adopted the Act.

The approval of the burgesses having thus been obtained, the Council proceeded to carry their decision into effect. A Committee consisting of eight members of the Council and eight non-councillors was elected to carry out the provisions of the Act. In going outside the Council for members of this Committee, the Council was actuated by a desire to obtain the services of persons who possessed special literary qualifications which would render them of great assistance to the Committee in the

selection of books and in other departments of this new and untried work.

It is interesting to note that among the gentlemen thus selected were Mr. Samuel Timmins, whose connexion with the Libraries remained unbroken, except for a short interval, from that time until the failure of his health in 1898 compelled him to withdraw from public work, and Mr. J. Thackray Bunce, late Editor of the *Post*, from whose work on the Corporation of Birmingham I have derived the greatest assistance in the preparation of this paper.

The Committee thus formed took the matter into consideration and prepared a comprehensive scheme which they submitted to the Council in May 1860.

The Scheme.

They recommended that the scheme as a whole should comprise a Central Reference Library with Reading and News Rooms, a Museum and Gallery of Art, and four District Lending Libraries with News Rooms attached.

They proposed that the District Lending Libraries should be situated as nearly as possible as follows :—

Northern District, near St. George's Church.
Southern District, near Bradford Street.
Eastern District, near Gosta Green.
Central and Western, near Town Hall.

They estimated that the first cost of establishing these four Lending Libraries in buildings rented for the purpose, together with the expense of maintenance for one year, would average £813 each or £3,252 altogether, and that the annual cost afterwards would average £370 each or £1,480 in all. The report was approved by the Council and the Committee authorized and instructed to carry its provisions into effect, which they immediately proceeded to do.

First District Library.

So energetically did they carry on the work that the first District Library was opened in some premises in Constitution Hill, rented from Mr. Cartland on April 3, 1861.

The Library was formally opened by the Mayor, Mr. Arthur Ryland. So important was this matter considered that the Mayor entertained the Council, Magistrates, Public Officials, Clergy, and Ministers at breakfast at *Dee's Hotel*, from which place they walked in

procession to the newly established library. There speeches were delivered by the Mayor, Mr. George Dawson, Canon Miller, and others, after which the building was declared open amidst the cheers of the assembly, taken up and repeated by a vast crowd which had gathered outside.

Books were first issued on April 22, and so great was the excitement that for several weeks applicants had to wait upwards of an hour before their turn came to be served, as many as two hundred persons applying at one time.

The interest shown by the people was very encouraging to the Committee, but notwithstanding this, they were unable to proceed immediately with the completion of the scheme. In their report for 1862 the Committee express their regret that they had been unable to open either of the other three branch libraries, the delay arising from the difficulty of obtaining suitable sites.

Even after suitable sites had been found, some considerable time had to elapse before they could come into possession of the Free Libraries Committee.

Meanwhile, however, the number of libraries

was increased in an unexpected way by the acceptance of an offer of the Right Hon. C. B. Adderley, M.P., to grant to the Committee a lease of Adderley Park at Saltley with the Library and Museum thereon for a term of 999 years at an annual rental of 5*s*. This library was opened to the public on January 11, 1864.

The Central Libraries.

The next work undertaken by the Committee was the erection of the Reference Library with which the Lending Library and News Room for the Central and Western Districts was to be united.

A site was found on a piece of land which had been conveyed to the Midland Institute by the Corporation in 1854. The Institute was intended originally to include an Art Gallery, but as this part of their scheme had been deferred, the Institute Council offered to return the unused land for the purposes of a Library and Art Gallery.

The site was in many respects a suitable one, being very central and of considerable size, and the Committee gladly accepted the offer and also the condition that the new buildings

should be entrusted to Mr. E. M. Barry, the architect of the Institute, in order that they might harmonise with his original plans.

The Committee, however, found it impossible to carry out this condition within the limits of the cost which they were prepared to recommend and therefore recommended that another architect should be employed. The matter was thrown open to competition and finally the designs of Mr. William Martin were approved.

New tenders were obtained and in October 1862 the tender of Messrs. Branson and Murray for £8,600 was accepted.

The work was delayed by a strike among the stonemasons, but at last on September 6, 1865, the Central Lending Library and Art Gallery were opened on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association in Birmingham. The Reference Library was not yet finished, but meanwhile the selection of books went on steadily, the work being entrusted chiefly to Mr. Jacob Phillips, the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Samuel Timmins and Mr. J. D. Mullins who had been appointed Chief Librarian in May 1865. Rather more than twelve months after, on October 26, 1866, the Reference Library

was opened, and on the same day the branch library at Deritend was opened and the foundation stone of the library at Gosta Green was laid, the triple event making the day for ever memorable in the history of the Birmingham Free Libraries.

The ceremony in the Reference Library took place at half-past one, the Chair being taken by the Mayor, Mr. E. Yates. The inaugural address was delivered by Mr. George Dawson. This address was admirably suited for the occasion and ranks amongst his loftiest oratorical efforts. It is naturally too long for quotation but is well worth perusal. I may, however, allow myself the liberty of quoting one or two sentences.

Towards the end of his address he says:—

"A great town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped, all the highest, loftiest, and truest ends of man's intellectual and moral Nature."

and his final sentence reads—

"I am glad the Corporation has given itself an officer who represents intellect, that it looks upwards deliberately and says, 'we are the Corporation who have undertaken the highest duty that is possible to us: We have made pro-

vision for our people—for all our people—and we have made a provision of God's greatest and best gifts unto man.'" [1]

In passing I may say that the Gosta Green Library was finished in 1868 and with the opening of that Library the entire original scheme of the Free Libraries Committee was completed.

With the completion of their scheme the first stage in the history of the Birmingham Free Libraries is ended. The Committee had accomplished their task: the Birmingham Free Libraries were an accomplished fact.

Development from 1868 to 1891.

It will now be my duty to show the development of these Libraries on the lines already established from 1868 to 1891, when the scheme was revised and extended. Do not, however, be alarmed at the length of the period covered by this intermediate stage. The description of this period will not necessarily take long and but for one lamentable event which took place in 1879 it might be dismissed in a few lines.

[1] The address is contained in *Shakespeare and other Lectures*, by George Dawson (1888), pp. 154–169. It was also issued as a separate pamphlet.

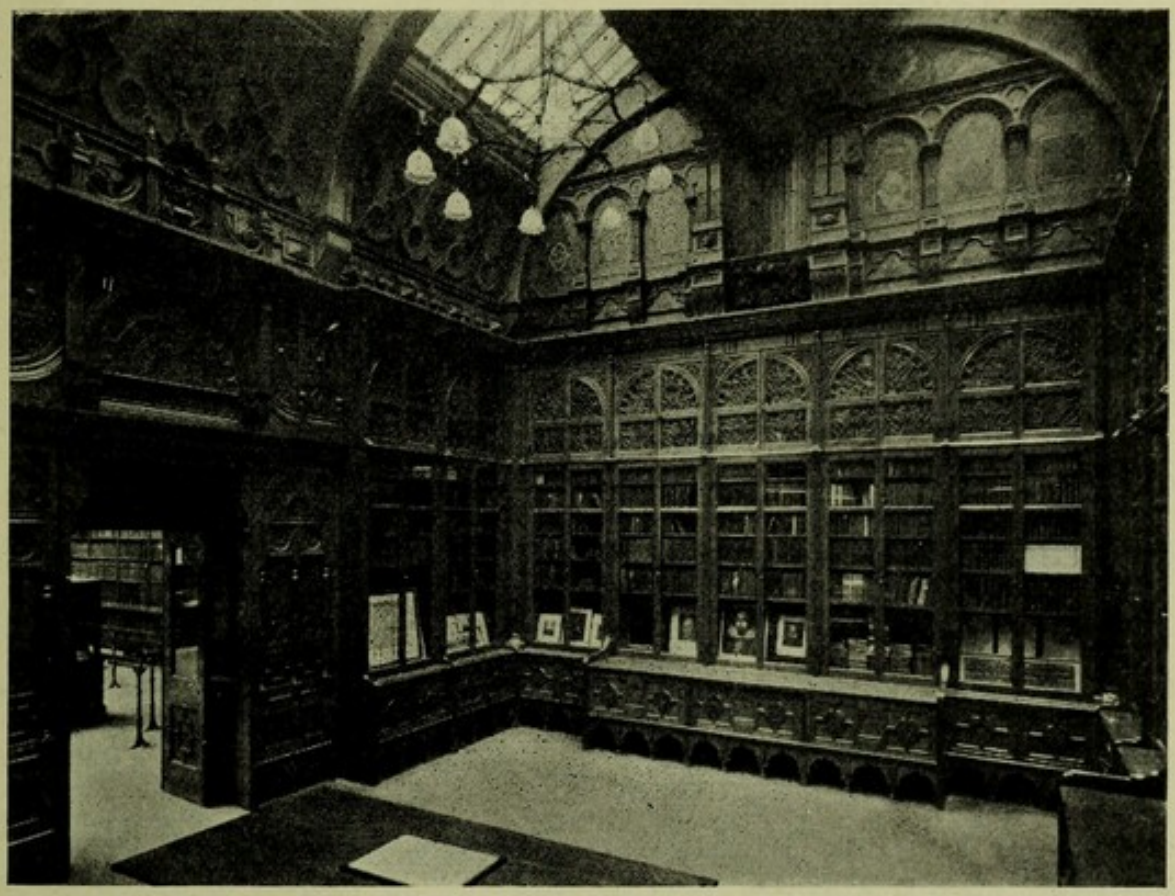
The Shakespeare Library.

Two years after the opening of the Reference Library in 1866 an addition of special interest was made to it, viz., the Shakespeare Memorial Library. This was no new thought, for as far back as 1858 the question of establishing a Shakespeare Library in Birmingham had been raised by Mr. S. Timmins, and again in 1861 by Mr. George Dawson. In 1863 a Committee was formed for the purpose of establishing such a Library, and at their request a room was obtained in the Central Library building.

The Committee pushed on with their work and such progress was made that on April 23, 1864, the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, the Mayor, Mr. W. Holliday, entertained the Committee and a number of other gentlemen at breakfast, and on this occasion a large collection of Editions of Shakespeare's works and of literature relating to them was accepted by the Mayor, and subsequently by the Corporation on behalf of the town, together with about £450 in money to be spent by the Memorial Committee in the purchase of books.

The conditions on which the presentation was made were as follows :—

I. That a special room to be called the Shakespeare Memorial Library, and to be



The Shakespeare Memorial Library, Birmingham.

exclusively used for that purpose, should be appropriated to the Collection.

II. That the Library should be placed on the same regulations as the Free Reference Library.

III. That the Library be maintained and augmented by the Free Libraries Com-

mittee, and all works of the same class purchased by them or by the Shakespeare Memorial Committee be placed and arranged in the Shakespeare Memorial Library.

The room set aside in the Central Library building was completely fitted and stored with books early in 1868 and the Shakespeare Memorial Library was opened on April 23 of that year by the Mayor, Mr. Thomas Avery.

At the date of opening the Memorial Library contained 1,239 volumes. The principles on which the Library was founded were well expressed in a letter sent by Mr. George Dawson to *Aris's Gazette* when proposing the scheme. He wrote as follows :—

"I want to see founded in Birmingham a Shakespeare Library which should contain (as far as practicable) every edition and every translation of Shakespeare, all the commentators, good, bad, and indifferent : in short, every book connected with the life or works of our great Poet. I would add portraits of Shakespeare, and all the pictures, etc., illustrative of his works."

So wide and comprehensive was the scope of the Library as it existed in the minds of its founders. On these principles they acted in the selection of their first purchases, and on

these lines year by year additional purchases were made and gifts received until the collection had reached a total of 7,000 volumes, when it was almost entirely destroyed in the disastrous fire of January 11, 1879.

The history of the Free Libraries from 1868 to 1879 was one of continual progress, checked at times by

"That eternal lack of pence which troubles public men."

The insufficiency of the funds provided by the 1*d.* rate which was all that the Corporation was at that time empowered to levy, was at times so marked that the Committee were unable to buy books to such an extent as was necessary to keep pace with the growing demands of the public.

In their report for the year 1870 the Committee called public attention to the limitation of their work owing to the lack of means.

The 1*d.* rate at that time produced rather less than £4,500 and of this amount nearly £2,000 was required for interest on and repayment of loans, leaving only £2,500 for the maintenance of six libraries and the Art Gallery. The

amount was so utterly inadequate that the Committee were able to spend only £125 on new books for the five lending libraries, with the natural result that there was a considerable decrease in the issues, compared with the previous year.

In spite of the gradually increasing value of the city bringing a growing increase in the amount derived from the penny rate, it was not until 1883 that any substantial addition to the income was obtained, when by a clause in the Birmingham Corporation Consolidation Act of 1883, the limit of the library rate to 1*d.* in the pound was removed.

From that time forward the Committee were able to provide for the growing needs of the libraries in a suitable manner without any fear that they would exceed the amount of the rate allotted to them. No doubt some people at the time thought it a risky thing to fix no limit at all to the rate for the libraries. They may have feared that Birmingham was embarking on a career of reckless expenditure. This, however, has not proved to be the case, for up till the present time the expenditure on all the libraries has never been much above 1½*d.*

in the pound. It is indeed generally slightly below that amount.

In touching on this subject, however, I have slightly anticipated the course of events, and will therefore now return to record the few events of general interest which occurred before the fire.

Sunday Opening.

In 1872 an important change was made in the administration of the libraries, with a view to render them more generally accessible to the public. The Free Libraries Committee approached the Council and asked for power to open the Reference Library and Art Gallery on Sundays. This proposal was met with violent opposition from the religious bodies in the town, and a deputation from the Lord's Day Defence Association asked permission to attend the Meeting of the Council on January 2, 1872, in order that they might speak against the proposal of the Free Libraries Committee. This was a very unusual course and very undesirable as it might form a bad precedent, but the feeling of the public was so strongly excited that it was thought better to grant the request.

The deputation accordingly attended the Council Meeting, and presented memorials against Sunday opening from the congregations of twenty-two chapels and from seven other bodies engaged in religious work.

The question was postponed till March when the Chairman of the Free Libraries Committee (Councillor Jesse Collings) presented a number of memorials in favour of Sunday opening, and finally at the Council Meeting on April 2, 1872, the Chairman moved and Alderman Osborne seconded the approval of the Committee's report. An amendment to reject the report was moved and seconded, and after a lengthy debate the amendment was defeated by twenty-five votes to seventeen, and the motion for opening the Reference Library and Art Gallery on Sunday was carried without a division.

In accordance with this decision the Reference Library and Art Gallery were opened on Sunday, April 28, 1872 from 3 o'clock till 9 p.m. From that time till the present day no attempt has been made to reverse this decision, and Sunday opening in Birmingham has taken its place among those things concerning which no question is ever raised.

The Staunton Collection.

In 1875 the Reference Library was enriched by the addition of the unique and very interesting Staunton collection of books, manuscripts, etc., illustrating the history and antiquities of Warwickshire. The price of this remarkable collection was £2,285 and of this sum about £1,700 was raised by a special committee, the balance being defrayed by the Free Libraries Committee. This collection would no doubt have been of the greatest use to historians, but unfortunately it was almost entirely destroyed in the great fire of 1879. The loss was the more to be deplored as the collection was practically irreplaceable. Very few items were saved : among these, however, was the beautifully written and richly illuminated Knowle Register 1412-35. This choice MS. volume was kept locked up in an iron safe, and in this way it passed safely through the fire, and in due course became No. 1 of the new Reference Library.

The Fire of January 11, 1879.

Year by year the Central Libraries continued to grow in extent and usefulness, but even growth

has its drawbacks, as careful parents are apt to discover when their offspring grow too rapidly out of the garments which perhaps it has caused them no little difficulty to provide. As far back as 1872 it had become apparent that the building opened in 1866 was not large enough to allow for continual growth, and negotiations to obtain additional space had been entered into with the Council of the Midland Institute. Plans for carrying out the alterations necessary at a cost of £11,000 were prepared, and the sanction of the Town Council obtained.

Nothing, however, was done at that time, progress being stopped by a scheme for reconstructing the Midland Institute, which would necessarily affect the Library, and it was not until 1878 that any steps were taken in the matter. Revised plans and estimates were submitted to the Council early in 1878 and approved and the work was begun in the autumn of that same year.

All went on smoothly for some few months and good progress was made, when the work was suddenly stopped by a terrible catastrophe.

The end wall of the building towards the

Midland Institute had been pulled down and replaced with a temporary wooden screen reaching from the ground to the top of the building. On Saturday, January 11, 1879, the officials and readers in the Reference Library were alarmed by a loud cry of fire. The cry came from the outside of the wooden screen to which I have referred, and in a very few minutes smoke and flame pouring into the Library showed that the fire had got firm hold. Immediately a chain of men was formed and buckets of water filled from a large butt at the entrance of the Library were passed from hand to hand and poured on the place where the fire seemed breaking through, and in this way all visible fire was put out. Directly afterwards, however, the flames re-appeared at the top of the upper book cases and began to spread rapidly. By this time the firemen had come with the hose and begun to play on the fire, but without effect. The steam fire-engine was a little delayed, but about ten minutes past two this also began to play on the back of the screen and continued playing till late at night. Everything that could be done was done, but the wooden screen afforded such fuel to the

flames, and the draught in consequence was so great that nothing could save the Library. In fact, all hope of saving it had passed away before two o'clock owing to the intense heat, and the density of the smoke. Help of all kinds was at hand, and foremost among the helpers was the Mayor, Alderman Jesse Collings, who hurried from the Council House to help in saving the treasures of the Library. Little, however, could be done.

I have heard from eye witnesses, that in a quarter of an hour from the first outbreak it was absolutely impossible to enter the Reference Library in consequence of the heat and the smoke. During that quarter of an hour, however, the few hundred books which escaped the fire were saved.

The Lending Library being on the ground floor, and not so early attacked by the flames, was more accessible, and a large portion of its contents was rescued before the spread of the fire rendered access to that room also impossible.

At that time I was the recently appointed Librarian of the Central Lending Library, and in accordance with the usual arrangements had

gone off duty at 12 o'clock. When I returned at half-past two it was already impossible to get into the building, and we could only go on with the transfer of the books that had been hastily brought out to the gateway of the Mason College which was then in course of construction. When this was done we could do no more, but fascinated, stood watching the progress of the flames, as they leapt from shelf to shelf, or shot high into the sky when some greater mass of books than usual fell from the walls into the centre of the flames. By and by the floor between the Reference and Central Lending Library fell in with a loud crash, and now the whole interior of the building was a mighty well of flame, from which smoke and sparks and burning débris were constantly vomited forth.

When night fell, a black and smoking heap was all that remained of the Reference Library which had been gathered together with so much care and judgment. About 1,000 volumes out of the 50,000 it contained were saved: all the rest were destroyed.

Of the Lending Library about 15,000 out of 17,000 were saved.

Restoration of the Central Libraries.

This great calamity was met in the true spirit of Englishmen. The Free Libraries Committee did not simply sit down and bewail their loss, they braced up their energies to repair it. As the fire took place on Saturday nothing could be done till Monday, but on Monday the Committee met and passed a resolution that it was a public duty immediately to repair the loss, and urging the establishment of a fund for this purpose. At the same meeting they appointed a Sub-Committee to confer with the architects as to the plans for a new building. They also requested the Mayor, Mr. Alderman Collings, to call a public meeting of persons willing to contribute to a restoration fund. This meeting was held on Friday, January 17, 1879, and was very largely attended. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., moved, and the Rev. A. R. Vardy, Head Master of King Edward's School seconded a resolution, declaring that "under the heavy calamity which has befallen Birmingham by the loss of the Reference Library, our first duty is to take immediate measures for the restoration of the library, on a scale of completeness worthy

of the town, and for this purpose it is necessary in aid of the amount for which the Library was insured to raise by public subscription a sum of not less than £10,000 for the purchase of books."

A Committee for this purpose was at once appointed with the Mayor as Chairman, and a large amount was subscribed in the room. So generous was the response of the public to this appeal that at the close of the year the fund amounted to £14,000 and was ultimately raised to £15,197.

In addition to this fund a sum of £25,000 was received from the insurance companies, so that the Committee were not hampered in their work by lack of means.

They were also greatly encouraged by the sympathy shown throughout the country and in literary circles abroad—sympathy which it is only fair to say did not end in words, but was accompanied by many valuable gifts of books to assist in the restoration of the library.

It would be impossible here to mention all the donors, but they included Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the chief libraries, institutions, societies, publishers and booksellers, and many private persons throughout the country.

The work of restoration was immediately begun and carried on with great energy, and meanwhile a suite of rooms in the Council House was placed at the disposal of the Committee for present use. In May 1879 the plans for the new building were approved by the Council, and the work was completed in 1882.

Opening of Restored Central Libraries.

The new Reference and Lending Libraries were opened on Thursday, June 1, 1882.

This was a great day in the history of the Birmingham Free Libraries. From all parts of the country a large and representative gathering assembled to do honour to the occasion.

The opening address was delivered by the Right Hon. John Bright, M.P., and at a banquet in the evening given by the Mayor, Alderman Thomas Avery, speeches were delivered by the Mayor, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., Alderman Collings, Lord Norton, Sir Henry Parkes, Prime Minister of New South Wales (formerly a Birmingham man) and several other gentlemen.

Under these favourable auspices the new

Central Libraries started on a new career of prosperity which has known no interruption.

New Branch Libraries.

In 1883 a new building was opened for the Constitution Hill Library in place of the premises which had hitherto been used for the purpose, and the lease of which it was found impossible to renew.

Another change also took place about the same time, namely, the separation of the Museum and Art Gallery from the Free Libraries, with which they had up till then been connected, and the placing of them under a separate Committee.

In 1889 the Free Libraries Committee obtained a share of the revenue accruing from the operation of the Local Government Act, 1888, and received authority from the Council to erect new branch libraries at Bloomsbury, Small Heath and Spring Hill.

The work had hardly been begun when the scheme had to be enlarged in accordance with the pledges made to the districts added to the city in 1891. Balsall Heath and Harborne made it a condition of joining the city that free

libraries should be provided in these districts, and Saltley stipulated that the branch at Adderley Park, already in existence, should be enlarged and re-organized.

The new scheme thus included the provision of five new branch libraries, and the re-organization of one of the existing branches.

The work of extension was pushed on rapidly and the new libraries opened on the following dates :—Bloomsbury, June, 1892; Harborne, August, 1892; Spring Hill, January, 1893; Adderley Park enlarged, October, 1893; Small Heath, December, 1893; Balsall Heath, April, 1896.

In 1896 also the Gosta Green Library was enlarged by the inclusion of a passage and sub-room in the News Room, and in 1898 the Library at Deritend was almost doubled, by extending the building on a piece of adjoining land which belonged to the Committee.

Thus by the end of 1898 all the six libraries included in the original scheme had been much enlarged and in some cases entirely rebuilt, and five additional libraries had been provided. This may be said to complete the historical portion of my sketch, in which I have traced

the story of the libraries from their inception down to the present day.

Recent Developments.

From 1898 until now the story is one of progress and development only, such changes as have been made being in the direction of granting greater facilities to the public so as to induce them to make greater use of the libraries which are their own property.

It may perhaps be interesting and useful to call attention to one or two of these developments.

When the libraries were first started and for many years afterwards, borrowers were restricted to one library. If they took out a ticket at the Central or at one branch, they were not allowed to have tickets at any of the others. A few years ago this limitation was removed entirely, so that a borrower can now obtain tickets on properly filled up vouchers, at any or all the Lending Libraries at the same time, entitling him to borrow from them all. This was a great extension of privilege, for a borrower could now obtain ten tickets in place of the one to which he had previously been

restricted. Of course it would not happen, as a rule, that a borrower would take out ten tickets, but he could do so if he chose.

Another extension was the granting of a transfer ticket from any of the branches to the Central Lending to enable a borrower to obtain books which his branch did not contain. These transfer tickets, however, were not available for prose fiction or juvenile literature.

It will be quite evident to all who think on the subject that there are many important and somewhat expensive books which ought to be accessible to the public, but which it would be a waste of public money to place in all the branch libraries. Such books as these are placed freely in the Central Lending and can now be obtained by any branch borrower who does not wish to take out a ticket at the Central as well as at his branch, by means of a transfer ticket.

Still more recently an additional privilege has been conferred on the borrowers, by allowing every borrower to have two tickets at any or all of the libraries, one available for any book in the library, the other available for any books other than prose fiction or juvenile literature.

This is a very great advantage, for in this

way a reader can have at the same time a work on history, biography, science or political economy to occupy him in his strenuous moments and a work of fiction to recreate him when weary of his exhaustive labours.

You see, therefore, that by this means a borrower can now have twenty tickets if he chooses from the Birmingham Free Libraries and can use them all at once if he likes. No one, I think, can now say that the Free Libraries Committee have placed any obstacles in the way of people desiring to read.

They have made a large provision of books, about 122,000 volumes in all, available for home reading, and they give every reader the opportunity of taking out twenty of these books at once if he chooses to go to the necessary trouble.

A further improvement in the borrower's favour is the extension of time allowed for reading. Formerly the time for reading was seven days for all books alike. Now the time has been extended to fourteen days for all books except prose fiction or juvenile literature, and all books can be renewed for a further period of seven days by being brought to the Library for that purpose.

It was formerly a ground of complaint that a borrower was allowed only the same time to read Green's *History of the English People* or Darwin's *Origin of Species* as the lightest novels.

This complaint no longer exists. In all these directions the Committee have sought to increase the usefulness of the libraries by granting greater facilities to the borrowers. The result of the extension of the system of libraries and of these various changes is that the issue from all the libraries is over one million and a half annually, of which more than a million are taken out for home reading. This may be regarded as a satisfactory result, but the libraries are capable of doing a great deal more than this and would be glad to do it.

The Borrowers.

The total number of qualified borrowers from the Lending Libraries last year was about 38,000 and of these more than 14,000 were under fourteen years of age and a further 8,000 between the ages of fourteen and twenty, so that the adult borrowers do not number much more than 15,000. When we remember that the adult population of Birmingham must be well over

100,000 this cannot be regarded as wholly satisfactory.

While we gladly welcome the children and young people, we want more adult borrowers, we want the people whose rates pay for the Libraries to make more use of the treasures they contain. Here are books on almost every subject that can be mentioned: Theology, History, Biography, Voyages and Travels, Political Economy, Art, Science, Natural History, Mechanics, Poetry and Fiction all waiting to be read and we want the people to read them. Our issue is nearly 5,000 a day: we should be glad to have it doubled or trebled, and we have books enough to satisfy the demand.

Free Lectures.

As I have pointed out many additional privileges have been granted during the last few years. In addition to these privileges the Committee have also inaugurated a system of Free Lectures in connexion with the various Lending Libraries, with the view of making people better acquainted with the contents of the Libraries and inducing them to make greater use of them.

Many subjects of interest have been dealt with in these lectures and there is no doubt they have had some influence in increasing the issue of books, and it is confidently hoped that this influence will be greater as time goes on and that the people will more and more turn to the great Free Libraries for that mental culture and recreation which is so abundantly provided for them.

The News Room.

Books however are not the only kind of reading that the libraries provide. Every library has a News Room attached and here is an abundant supply of the chief newspapers and periodicals of the country.

At the Central News Room in addition to representative papers from London and all the larger towns and districts, a certain number of foreign and colonial papers are provided, so that readers of all tastes can find something to suit them, and can make themselves acquainted with all that is passing in the world around them, both at home and abroad.

That this provision is appreciated is shown by the number of people who frequent the News

Rooms. For example, the great Central News Room is visited by 7,000 people every day, and the total number of visitors to the Reference Library, Reading Room and News Rooms combined is over 29,000 daily. An easy sum in arithmetic shows that the number of visitors to these various rooms reaches the enormous total of 9,000,000 a year.

You will sometimes, no doubt, see complaints of the unfair use that is made of these rooms, but the complaints are really much exaggerated. No doubt a few people do come there for rest and to pass away the time, and no doubt a few of these may occasionally be seen, who have been lulled by the warmth and comfort of the rooms into a state of slumber, but what are these among so many?

One of the most striking features about the News Rooms is the number of people who come there to look for work in the advertisement columns of the daily papers. To assist these very deserving cases, a few years ago the plan was adopted of cutting out the "situations vacant" advertisements and posting them on notice boards in the rooms, so that people could consult them more readily.

More recently still this practice has been further extended at the Central News Room and now these notices are posted in the vestibule at 7.30 in the morning so that those seeking places are able to get very early information of vacancies to suit them.

The Children's Room.

Another interesting extension of Library privileges was the opening of a Children's Room on Sundays in the year 1901. This was rendered necessary by the extraordinary increase in the attendance on Sunday in the Reference Library during 1900. The increase consisted largely of boys who came to look at picture papers such as *The Graphic, Illustrated London News*, etc., and was so great as to interfere considerably with the ordinary readers. As it did not seem desirable to exclude them altogether, the Committee willingly agreed to a proposal to open the wing of the Central News Room for the use of children and as a corollary, to exclude them from the Reference Library except in special cases.

The experiment was immediately successful; the children thronged the room in large numbers.

It is not contended that they do much reading, they are chiefly interested in pictures, but it is felt that this may induce them to become readers, and in any case it is quite as well for them as racing about the streets.

I have now, I think, described, perhaps even at too great length, the working of the Free Libraries as they exist to-day, and the various arrangements that are made to render them of service to the people.

Room for growth of Reference Library.

I cannot however close my summary of the present state of the Libraries without a brief reference to a very important extension which has been made, and which is only just finished.

One of the great difficulties of Libraries, especially of a Reference Library, is to find room for the ever-increasing accumulations of books. This is not felt so much in the Lending Libraries, as although we are constantly adding new books, numbers of old books get worn out or become obsolete, so that the net gain can be kept within reasonable compass. It is quite otherwise in a Reference Library. There the books are intended for permanent preservation, and very

few indeed are at any time removed. Consequently the growth is continuous, and however large your building is to start with, in time it gets overcrowded. This has long been the case with the Birmingham Reference Library: all the space originally provided has long been filled up, and various extensions in sub-rooms, etc. have also been absorbed.

Still the growth went on till in a large portion of the Library the books were what is technically known as "doubled," that is, placed one behind another on the shelves.

Even this resource at last became exhausted and something had to be done. At first we expected to get a portion of the land in Edmund Street, and erect a new building, but it was finally suggested that a basement should be excavated under the floor of the News Room, and a new book store be constructed there. Plans were prepared and estimates obtained by the Architects, Messrs. Martin & Martin, approved by the Committee and finally by the Council, and the work begun early in 1909.

It is now completed and the result is that we have a magnificent store house for books under the floor of the News Room accessible by a lift

from the Reference Library, and capable of holding from 100,000 to 150,000 volumes.

This extension will provide room for growth for from twenty to twenty-five years, and it has been accomplished at far less cost to the city than the erection of a new building in Edmund Street, with the additional advantage that it keeps the library in one building.

Such is the story of the Free Libraries down to date.

From the small seed cast into the earth so long ago, there has sprung up this great and noble system. The Birmingham Free Libraries are among the most valuable possessions of the city : they are the provision of the Council for the intellectual needs of the people, and are in every respect well equipped for the work they are called upon to do.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE POOR

By C. A. Carter

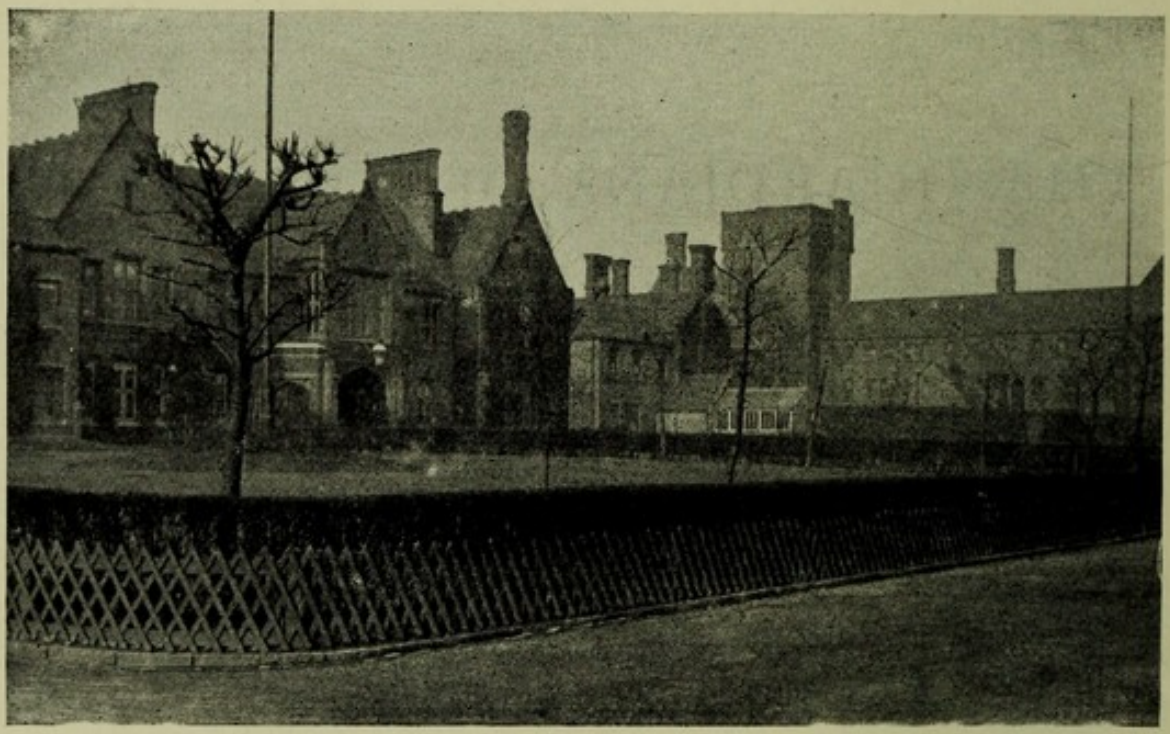


Photo by] [*Nightingale, Smethwick.*

BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE (FRONT ENTRANCE).

THE GUARDIANS OF THE POOR.

By C. A. Carter

First I desire to thank the officers of your Society for inviting me to deliver this lecture and the Guardians and their clerks who have given me much information and assistance.

My difficulty has been how best to deal with such a mass of material. I shall avoid pictures and descriptions of buildings and inmates, and shall treat your association as a serious body in search of information.

I shall not to any extent make comparisons between the authorities, but shall treat the subject as a whole.

The History of the Poor Law.

I propose to deal briefly with the history of the Poor Law, to give in general terms particulars and statistics of the work of the Guardians, and to point out some disabilities under which they carry on their work, chiefly as affecting employment and out-relief as two of the chief subjects materially affecting working

men. A very brief sketch of the history of our present Poor Law appears necessary in order that we may have a better grasp of the present position. In our earliest records it is noted that it was ordained by kings before the Conquest (1066) that "the poor should be sustained by parsons, rectors and parishioners, so that no one should die for lack of sustenance." It is a fact that about the year 1500 there existed in England for the relief of sick and poor persons, besides the regular monasteries and convents, no less than 750 hospitals and other establishments under the care of various religious orders of the National Church. On the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII (about 1538) many of these establishments ceased to exist and the poor relieved by them were thrown on their own resources. Already before this the end of the civil wars between the contending parties of Lancaster and York (1480) had left in its train the usual result of a large number of able-bodied men unable to find work—thus early do we meet with the curse of unemployment. Sturdy beggars roamed through the country taking alms where they would, and the earliest laws in the reigns of

Henry VII and VIII and Edward VI (1471–1553) deal with these by directing that in the church of every parish collections be made for the cost of restraining these persons and setting them to work.[1] This enactment for placing on the inhabitants of each parish the duty of relieving their own poor though possibly desirable at the time has led to some of our present difficulties. Collections in churches (established about 1500), in spite of the powers of the parson and bishop, soon became insufficient, the evil of begging did not diminish, and the first step was taken in the reign of Elizabeth (1560) towards the present system of the assessment of the houses and lands of the inhabitants and the collection of a poor rate with which we are now all so familiar. In (1601) the same reign was also passed an Act which is the basis of our present Poor Law. Let me remind you that on the basis of this Act has arisen a system which established workhouses and poor rates and on which many times more money

[1] I may here draw attention to a curious provision that if a parishioner was not liberal he could be admonished first by the parson, then by the bishop, and if still unrepentant the bishop could send him to Quarter Sessions.

has been collected and spent and more litigation has occurred than on all the other Acts of Parliament put together.

In connection with this it is worth while to notice that the work to which it was intended to put the unemployed was not on the land but *rather in working on hemp, wool and iron.*[1] It need hardly be said that the class to be employed were not found proficient in such skilled work, nor was any trouble taken to teach them. Unheedful of the generations to come the simplest methods were taken and the rates collected from the rapidly impoverished ratepayers were used either in the grant of money to the destitute or to pay wages for labour of little value on the land and parish roads, with the result that wages were lowered and pauperism increased. An attempt was made in the reign of George III (1782, Gilbert's Act) for the provision of *workhouses* in which the sick and infirm should be maintained *and the able-bodied be set to work.* This does

[1] Compare this with the present cry of "back to the land"; *then* manufacture was to be encouraged, *now* our eyes are being turned to the neglected science of agriculture as an opening for unemployed.

not appear to have been a success, and in 1796 the grant of out-relief to the able-bodied was again permitted. In 1832 the Commission was appointed to enquire into the law relating to the relief of the poor, and the report shows conclusively that chiefly owing to the maladministration of out-relief every class of persons in the country was suffering, the principal sufferer being the honest workman who found his rate of wages reduced by the out-relief granted to the able-bodied man who had failed to support himself. The result of this Commission of Enquiry was the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, under which our present system is carried on. This Act did not, as might have been expected, repeal any of the earlier Acts which had led to such disaster but provided for the union of parishes for setting up workhouses, for the stricter classification of paupers, and the more stringent regulation of out-relief, especially to the able-bodied who *were to be relieved only in workhouses*, when they were *to be set to work*, and the whole administration throughout the kingdom was for the first time put under the control of salaried commissioners. In the place of these

commissioners in 1847 was established the Poor Law Board, and in 1871 the present Local Government Board took over the control. If to all this we add some subsequent amending Acts, hundreds of orders, circulars and letters, often conflicting, sometimes suggesting new methods of relief to be presently abandoned, we can form some conclusions as to the state of affairs at the present time.

In 1832 mixed workhouses were condemned, but are still in existence where sick and able-bodied, aged and young, sane and weakminded, the unfortunate and vicious are all housed under one roof, and unconditional and insufficient doles of money or food are still granted by way of out-relief; the principles of full enquiry, supervision, sufficiency, and purpose, being too often unrecognized. The altered conditions of society arising from the increased means of communication, increased wealth, the diffusion of information by the press, the introduction of machinery, the formation of friendly societies, trade unions and other social and national agencies, have united to create a new situation while only the old ineffective machinery exists to deal with it.

It must not be forgotten that during the past forty years in addition to the money spent on relief of the poor, large and increasing sums have been spent in the country on education, on the improvement of public health, on lunatic asylums, and again, in voluntary efforts represented by hospitals, homes, orphanages and other institutions and by charitable societies of all kinds further large and increasing sums have been and are being expended. Knowing all these things I think you will agree with me that we might fairly have hoped for a marked diminution of pauperism, but although there has been under some aspects of the situation a decrease, yet at the present time the totals of pauperism both in numbers and cost throughout the country are increasing.

Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens and many others have in vain raised their voices against the system, and though improvements have been here and there made, the state of affairs disclosed by the recent Report is serious.

A return of the Local Government Board in 1907, prepared at the instigation of the recent Poor Law Commission, shows that in that year no less than 1,719,000, or 47·7 per 1,000

persons (excluding casual paupers and lunatics), were relieved under the Poor Law in England and Wales. The total cost to the nation amounts to 14½ millions every year and is increasing. Let us now see how our Guardians of the Poor are dealing with their share of this morass of poverty.

Birmingham Administration.

Birmingham is administered, as you know, by the Guardians of the Poor elected for that purpose by the ratepayers and householders. You know also that at the present time three separate Boards of Guardians have jurisdiction over three separate areas in the city as follows:

Birmingham Parish.	The Birmingham Board of Guardians.
Edgbaston, Harborne, Balsall Heath, Quinton	The King's Norton Board of Guardians.
and that part of Aston Parish in the City including Saltley and Little Bromwich.	The Aston Board of Guardians.

I am not going to dwell on the inconvenience

of this present arrangement because all parties are now agreed that it is undesirable, and whatever may be the result of the present proposal for a Greater Birmingham we may all hope that very soon the Poor Law in this great city will be administered by one authority. The recent Commission on the Poor Law has thrown a flood of light on the difficulties in the administration of the present Poor Laws, difficulties arising partly from mistakes made in the past, and partly from the fact that the poor law has not got behind it that full assent of the public will without which no law can be fully enforced. The facts disclosed by this important Commission and the proposals made affect the whole nation, and can be dealt with from a national point of view only, but in my remarks on our local institutions I shall have occasionally to refer to it.

Before going into particulars let me say generally that at the present time the administration of the local Poor Law is no worse and in many respects very much better than in other parts of England and Wales. I believe that the present authorities are conscientiously doing their best to carry out the law in the

best interests of the poor committed to their charge and of the ratepayers who have to find the money. You will not be surprised that the Guardians of the Poor generally resent many of the conclusions of the Poor Law Commission and feel that if only they had some additional powers, for which they have been asking for a long time, they could and would not only relieve but take some steps towards preventing and in some cases curing that destitution which is eating at the very heart of the nation. Knowing many of them as we do we will not to-night disagree with their ambition, and will express our conviction that in the reforms to be, I trust soon, proposed we shall find them among our best advisers and helpers.

I invite you in imagination to stand with me for a few minutes on the top of the Clock Tower of the Art Gallery, the highest point in the centre of the city. Away to the west you will see the parish and union of Aston. That part of Aston union which is in the City covers 5,109 acres and contains 227,905 inhabitants. Except our own gas and water works and the railways you will not find many large

buildings or houses, the average rateable value is low and the houses are chiefly occupied by working men. Immediately at your feet and for some distance around you will see the Parish of Birmingham, with an area of 2,996 acres, and a population of 247,482. The queen bee as it were round which the other parishes lovingly nestle, all anxious, so we are told, to merge their existence in hers. Turning our eyes to the south and west, we can see the shady groves of Edgbaston, the heights of Harborne and the crowded district of Balsall Heath. All the poor in these three parishes are dealt with by the King's Norton Guardians, whose further rural area extends beyond. I am not mentioning these particulars without purpose. I want you to see that they materially affect the question of poverty and the manner of dealing with it. You will find in Birmingham, which has had a longer experience in dealing with an urban population, a more matured plan of dealing with poverty, but further than this I find no difference worth mentioning except that the cost of administration seems somewhat larger per head than in Aston or King's Norton. Aston has no special features calling for notice,

except that perhaps a tendency to economy often found in rural districts is more noticeable. In King's Norton you will find a very much lower percentage of pauperism due to its semi-rural character, the rapid increase of its population and the larger number of residents of the better class. In the newer work it has had to undertake it has had the experience of others in the past to be guided by, and its newness, almost to be described as spick and span compared with Birmingham, is very marked. Do not misunderstand me; there is no slovenliness but only a pleasing maturity about the Birmingham institutions. I do not propose to weary you with a lot of statistics because they really will not help us in the general view I invite you to take with me to-night, but in order that you may see the magnitude of the work I must give you the following figures :—

NUMBER OF PAUPERS.

	In-door.	Out-door.	Luna-tics.	Totals.
Birmingham	3,937	2,299	951	7,187
Aston in Birmingham .	1,658	1,697	520	3,875
King's Norton . .				
Balsall Heath . . .				
Edgbaston. . . .	414	777	204	1,395
Harborne				
Quinton				
Making a total for the whole city of . . .	6,009	4,773	1,675	=12,457

This means that in Birmingham, roughly speaking, out of rather more than 44 persons 1 is a pauper, or in other words 2·5 per cent. or 23 out of every 1,000 persons. This however is calculated on a day count, and if all the persons who have come under the Poor Law in one year were calculated the number would be much greater.

The total cost of the maintenance and relief of pauperism in Birmingham amounts to £189,083 each year, the average rate on property for Poor Law purposes being 1*s.* 5*d.* in the pound. This sum is divided among the three Boards of Guardians as follows :—

Birmingham	£116,239
Aston	47,161
King's Norton	25,683
	£189,083

Annual Expenditure not including interest on loans [1]

	Work-house.	Cost per Head.	Out Relief.	Cottage Homes.	Cost per Head	Mony-hull.	Lunatics.
Birmingham	£29,115 Infirmary £34,865	6/3¾ 14/4¾	£11,797	£9,271 Board-ing Out.	3/1¼	£4,852	£16,173
Aston . .	£22,851 Workhouse	—	£10,398	£2,821	—	£1,670	£21,767
King's Norton	£6,033 Infirmary. £4,739	4/3¼ 6/1½	£10,043	£2,265	3/8¾	—	£12,707

These figures have been somewhat difficult to extract but I believe them to be substantially correct. If any error should be disclosed I do not think it will be very important.

[1] The outstanding loans amount to:—

	£
Birmingham	101,064
Aston	140,515
King's Norton	155,353
	£396,932

Number of Guardians elected for the City :—

Birmingham	37
Aston	15
King's Norton	12
Total	64 for the City.

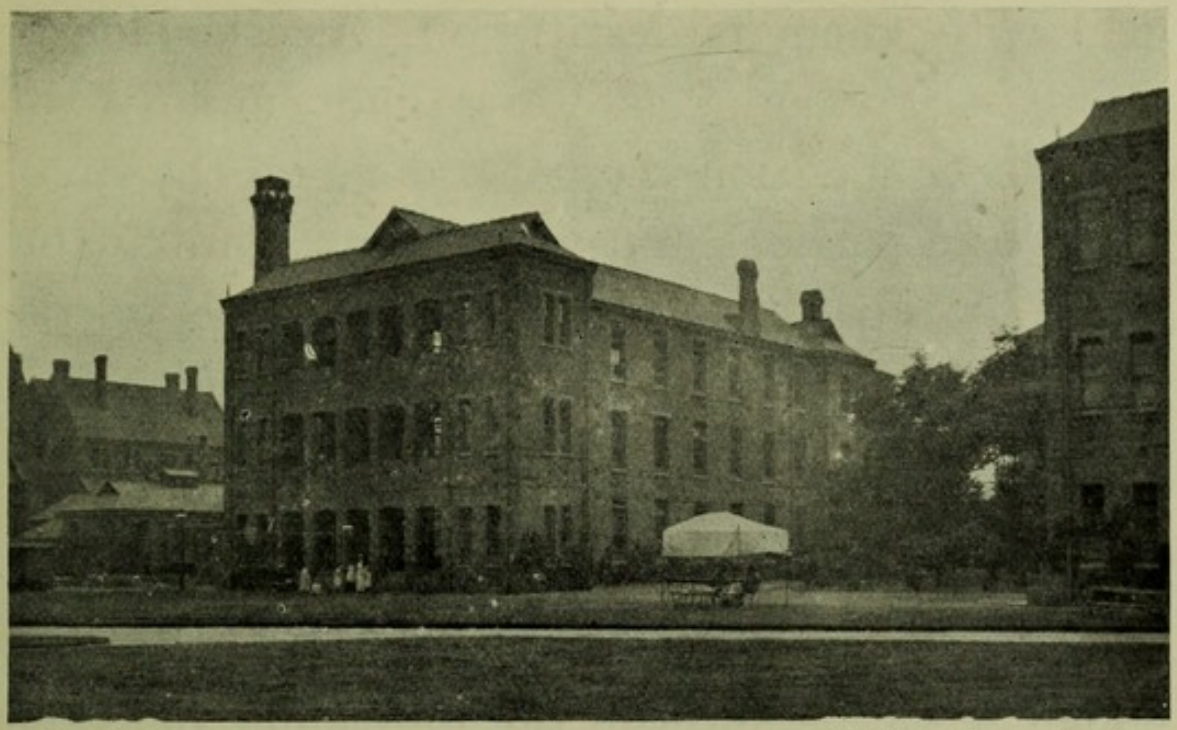


Photo by] [*Nightingale, Smethwick.*

BIRMINGHAM INFIRMARY, BLOCKS NOS. 4 AND 6.

The Workhouses.

The institutions in which the indoor paupers are maintained are the three workhouses : of Birmingham at Spring Hill ; of King's Norton at Selly Oak ; of Aston at Erdington.

At each of these workhouses you will find the best efforts made that are possible in a mixed

workhouse to deal separately with the men and women, children and infants, sick and able-bodied, aged and young, sane and imbecile, well behaved and disorderly or vicious. The only quality that all these various classes must have in common before the Guardians can deal with them is destitution. As showing a desire to prevent waste and find employment I ought to mention the work done on the small farms and gardens and in breeding poultry and pigs. A separate account of all these operations is shown in the accounts. Besides this much of the clothing for the inmates is made in the workhouses. I do not think I need dwell on this, but will pass on to the institutions separated as far as possible from the workhouse which have arisen from the desire not only the better to relieve, but if possible to cure the causes of the pauperism of the inmates.

Although the latest I will mention first, because I believe it to be one of the best, The Birmingham, Aston and King's Norton Joint Poor Law Colony at Monyhull for epileptics and feeble-minded; 160 inmates were there in March last—there is room for 50 more, 210 in all. I mention this first because it is a big

movement not only for the relief but the improvement of a number of people who are at the very bottom of the morass of destitution, and I view it as an admission that this element of improvement is one that must be extended.

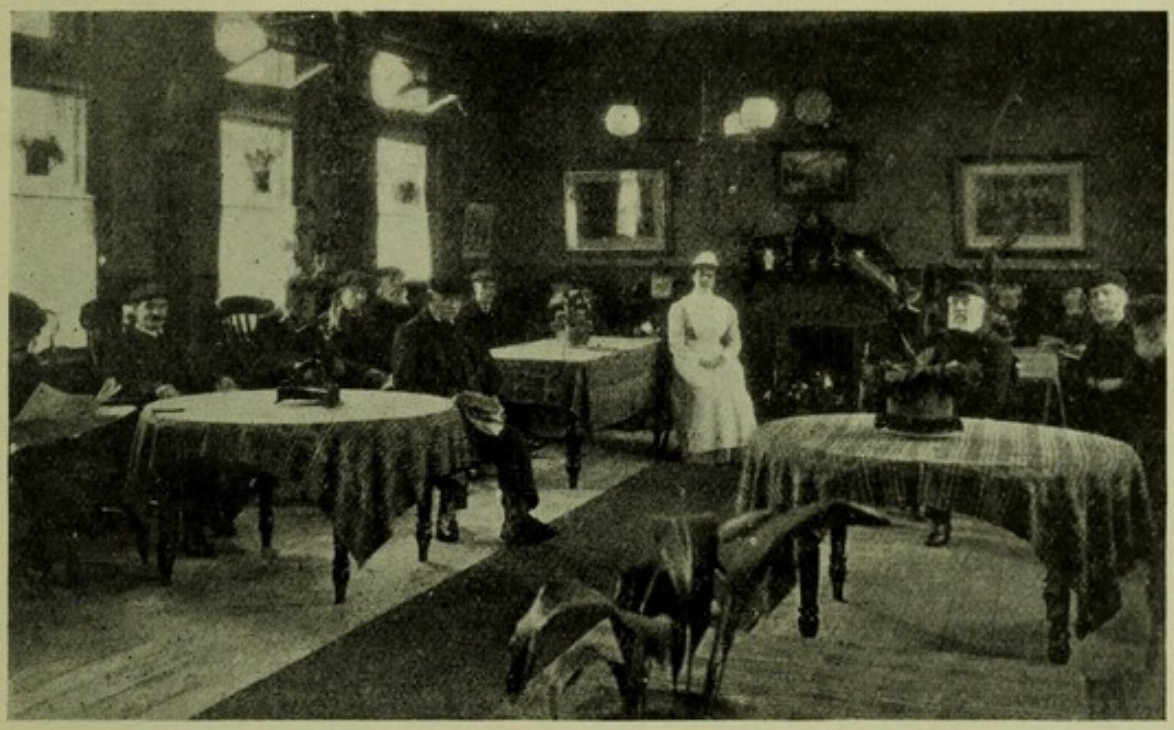


Photo by] [*Nightingale, Smethwick.*

MALE MERIT WARD, BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE.

The Infirmaries and Cottage Homes.

We notice next the infirmaries of Birmingham and King's Norton. The plans for a separate infirmary at Aston are standing over pending the inquiry into the proposals for amalgamation.

In these infirmaries a great step has been taken not only in the relief of poverty but towards the restoration of the inmates to their place in the nation as self-supporting citizens.

Then the cottage homes for children at Marston Green, Shenley Fields and Erdington



Photo by] [*Nightingale, Smethwick.*

MARSTON GREEN COTTAGE HOMES.

represent a well sustained and carefully thought out plan for the benefit of the young citizens of the future who are without means of sustenance. Year by year increased efforts are made to deal with the children away from the workhouse either in the cottage homes or by boarding out, so that they may escape the

taint of pauperism.[1] A return by the Birming-

[1] Children under control of the Birmingham Guardians of the Poor on January 1, 1910, were distributed as follows :—

	Boys.	Girls.	Infants (under 3).	Total.
In Workhouse (Nursery)	0	0	60	60
,, Summer Hill Homes	40	30	—	70
,, Infirmary . . .	50	27	27	104
,, Cottage Homes . .	244	212	0	456
,, Certified Schools .	44	87	0	131
Boarded Out . . .	2	3	0	5
Totals . . .	380	359	87	826

Children under control of the Aston Guardians of the Poor on January 1, 1910 :—

	Boys.	Girls.	Infants.	Total.
In Workhouse . . .	21	19	81	121
,, Cottage Homes . .	171	144	0	315
Boarded Out . . .	40	40	0	80
In Certified Schools .	36	27	0	63
	268	230	81	579

Children under control of the King's Norton Guardians of the Poor on January 1, 1910 :—

	Boys.	Girls.	Infants.	Total.
In Workhouse . . .	—	—	—	31
,, Infirmary . . .	—	—	—	40
,, Cottage Homes . .	136	124	0	260
Boarded Out . . .	—	—	—	5
In Certified Schools .	—	—	—	25
In Institution for Blind, Epileptics, etc. . .	—	—	—	9
Totals . . .				370

ham Guardians shows the following results of boys and girls sent out to situations during the five years ending Lady Day 1909 :—

	Boys.	Girls.
Very good	46	30
Fairly good	39	37
Unsatisfactory	8	6
Bad	3	0
Doing well till relatives interfered	4	7
Lost sight of	15	3
Returned from situation	4	0
Dead	0	0
Feeble-minded	9	2
Inefficient	0	3
Not yet time for report	2	3
	130	91

A return of the King's Norton Guardians for six years ending 1906 shows that of 106 boys and girls sent out to situations 85 are reported as doing well or fairly well.

The Aston Guardians also say that the reports of children in situations are very encouraging and very few of the children are returned. It is my firm conviction that in the care and love which our Guardians bestow on the children they seek some solace and respite from the sterner duties they have to fulfil in other

departments, and in this work I am sure we shall give them our sympathy and not grudge the expense. I must not omit to mention the steps taken to secure for the well behaved aged poor by separation from the other inmates and by increased liberty to reduce the hardship



Photo by] [*Nightingale, Smethwick.*

SUMMER HILL HOMES.

of their lot. But the work of dealing with the sick, aged and infirm in body or mind and the bringing up of children all in institutions or under careful supervision is the brighter, or rather the less depressing, side of the work of the Guardians.

Ins-and-Outs.

We shall serve no purpose by dwelling on it now; but before passing from it I must mention one or two disabilities under which even this work is carried on. At the present time there is no power to deal with persons who, unable to maintain themselves or to administer to their daily necessities, are a danger to themselves and to the public welfare, and who refuse to come into any institution provided for them. These cases are fortunately few—but a more serious trouble is that arising from the conduct of those known as "ins-and-outs." A man can and too frequently does go into the workhouse with his wife and family and after some weeks or less, in which the children are drafted to the cottage homes and their education begins, he can on giving proper notice take them all out again to return perhaps in a few days in a worse state of privation and dirt than before. An alteration in the law in these matters is among the recommendations of the Report of the Poor Law Commission. We shall all I think agree that this is very necessary, but the graver side of the work of the Guardians lies in dealing with

the able-bodied and the grant of out-relief. There are certainly other difficulties, among them medical relief, the treatment of maternity cases, especially with respect to unmarried women, and the proper treatment of casual or vagrant paupers. There is not time to discuss

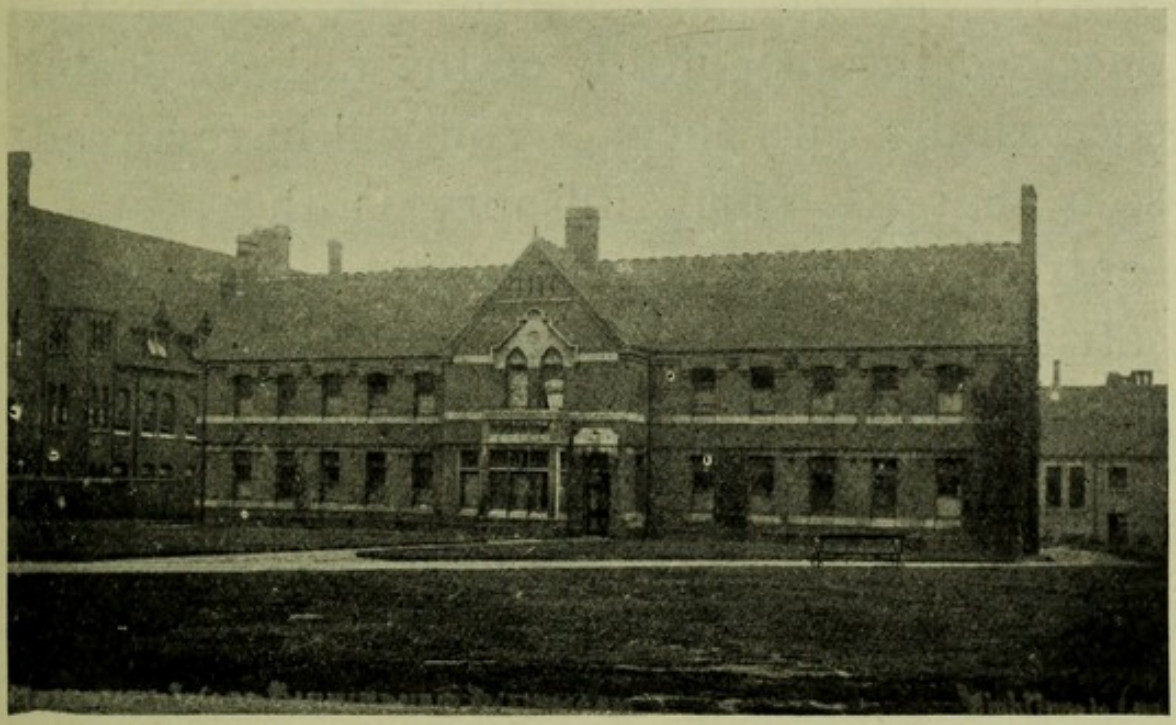


Photo by] [*Nightingale, Smethwick.*

MATERNITY WARD, BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE.

all these in a single lecture, but the relief of the able-bodied and the grant of out-relief call for some comment.

The Able-Bodied and Out-Relief.

Let us consider first the able-bodied men and women—some requiring relief as the result

of their own wilful improvidence or worse, and some only unfortunate, some decent and deserving, others ill-behaved or vicious and some answering to *Punch's* description "I eat well, I sleep well, I drink well, but when I see a bit of work I go all of a trimble." I have only to classify them in this way and you at once see the magnitude of the task of dealing successfully with them. You will have already seen that the chief difficulty in the past has centred round the able-bodied. Because no satisfactory plan of dealing with them has yet been found charity has stepped in to supplement the Poor Law and has only added to the confusion. We have seen that the attempts to relieve the able-bodied in the past by the grant of out-relief have led only to the impoverishment and ruin of the industrious self-supporting man, and strenuous laws have consequently been made prohibiting such relief. Attempts have been made, notably in 1886 when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was President of the Local Government Board, and since by the Unemployed Workmen Act 1905, to provide for the relief of the deserving man out of work, but these attempts have failed because of the difficulty

of finding suitable work, and further because the selection of the deserving has been found too difficult and exacting a duty for the bodies elected for the purpose to thoroughly carry out. The stern necessity for making the condition of the able-bodied seeking relief less desirable than that of the self-supporting man has from false sentiment been insufficiently recognized with the result that the relief offered has been scorned by the better men and naturally has in general failed to do more than temporarily relieve the less desirable. The workhouses in which the able-bodied were to be set to work have been utilized and are still used for all sorts and conditions of men and women, with the result that it has not been possible either to find suitable work or to maintain the proper discipline. The enforcing of the law that able-bodied are to be set to work in our workhouses may be illustrated by what has happened in the parish of Birmingham, as disclosed in the Report of the minority of the Poor Law Commission.

What I want to emphasize is this, that by driving the able-bodied out of the test workhouse you may relieve the rates but you do not

relieve the distress, and it may be confidently asserted that the class so driven out prey upon society to the detriment of themselves and the public at large. It is not my task to-night to deal with the suggestions to be found in the Report for dealing with this evil, suffice it to say that I hope we are all agreed that a better organization of labour, a place for the employment of men of good character temporarily unemployed, and a power to detain and if necessary punish those who will not work is urgently required.

The time for dealing with out-relief is short. The evils of different methods of administration of out-relief in the different unions of the country are so obvious as to render comment unnecessary. It is creditable to our authorities that they have stayed this evil here, and that out-relief is now granted on substantially the same rules throughout the city. The cost of supervision over those receiving out-relief, especially in the case of those having children under their control, has prevented as much being done in this direction as seems necessary, but this and the other vexed question of adequacy of relief are I know receiving the very careful attention of our Guardians as will be seen by a reference to any report of their proceedings. It is to be

hoped that in no distant future such efficient organized voluntary aid will be offered to the Guardians to assist them in this important duty as they will be able to accept. This and a more complete co-operation of all forms of charity must in my opinion be looked to as a solution of many of the difficulties in the present system of out-relief.[1]

It is unnecessary for me to say much about the law of settlement. You know that if you or I become applicants for relief the cost must be defrayed by the parish in which we have a settlement, and we may be removed to that parish. The costs incurred in the past to determine a person's settlement have often far exceeded the cost of his maintenance. The evils of this system have been much mitigated by the present law that a year's residence makes a man 'irremovable,' but it is to the credit of our Guardians that they have arranged not to raise these questions among themselves.

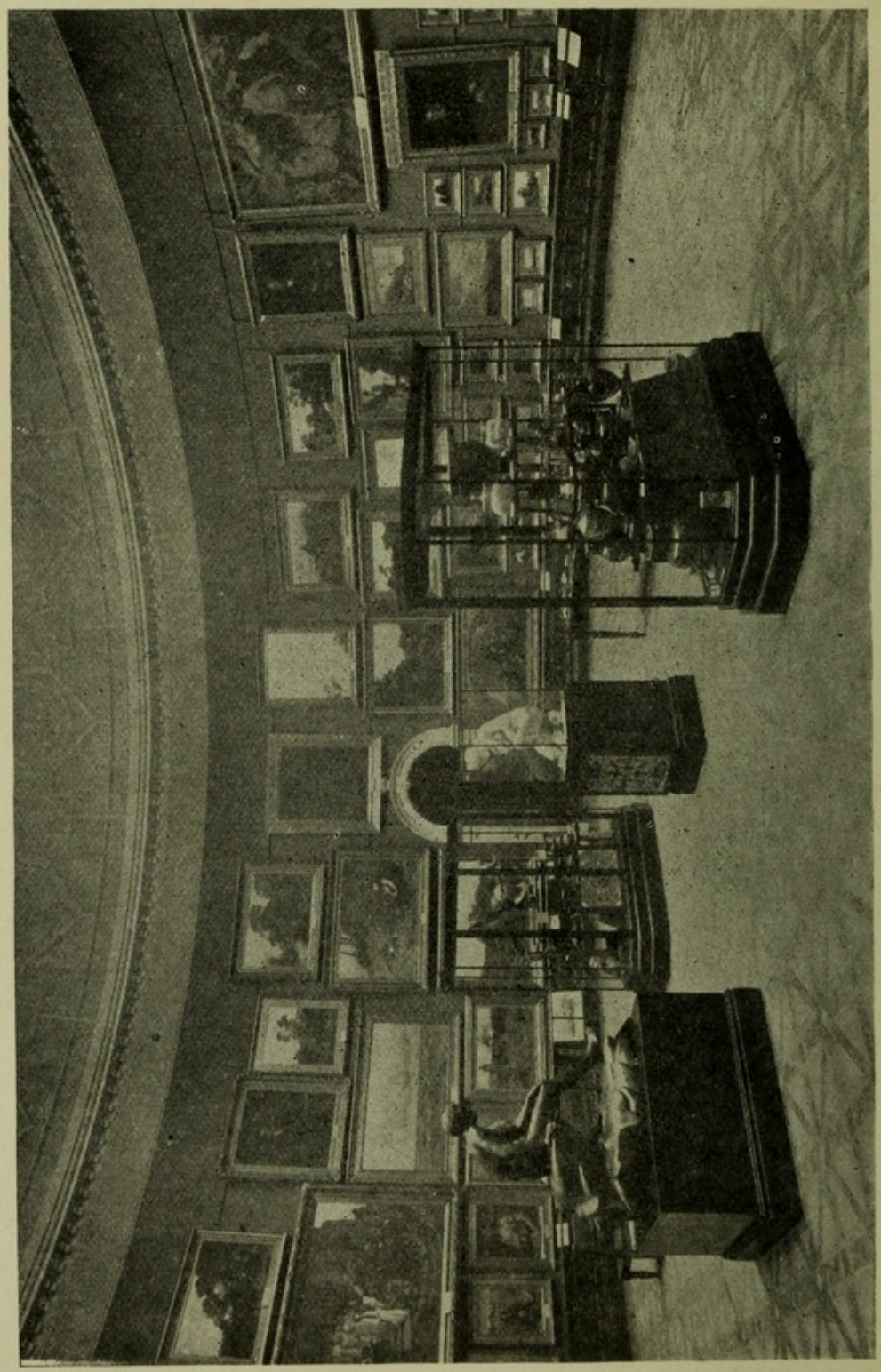
And now in conclusion let me remind you that the whole of the Poor Law will probably soon be in the melting pot and the pattern of

[1] On what is being attempted here see lecture on the "Birmingham City Aid Society above."

the new law will depend on the country at large, represented by ourselves, the electors, directed as we all hope to be by wise and large-hearted advisers, among them as I have already said our own Guardians. Remember that no law has its full force unless it has also to the fullest extent the support of public sympathy behind it. One of the reasons of the failure of the present Poor Law to stem the tide of pauperism has been that though we have all been ready to find fault we have not thought enough or helped enough. Much may be learnt by a fuller acquaintance with the work of our local authorities than I have been able to give to-night, and I would also draw your attention to a very able summary of the recent Report which you can buy at any bookstall, or at the *Daily News* office in John Bright Street for one penny. It is because of these impending alterations that I have taken up so much of your time with some local difficulties and proposals to remove them rather than with a mass of detail of local work, but I do hope that I have said enough to impress on you the importance and extent of the work done in the relief of our poorest citizens and the onerous duties devolving on our Guardians.

THE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

By Whitworth Wallis, F.S.A.



ROUND GALLERY.

THE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

By Whitworth Wallis, F.S.A.

When the original plan of the Birmingham Free Library, which stands in Ratcliff Place, was submitted, it was intended, if possible, to incorporate within the building an Art Gallery. This idea had to be abandoned. It is, however, of some interest to note that the first attempt to form an Art Gallery was under the fostering care of the Free Library, and, all things considered, a provincial museum can hardly be started under better auspices. The intimate connection of Free Libraries and Museums in their aims, and the functions they perform in the education and culture of the people, must be apparent to all who take the trouble to consider these institutions from the standpoint of a general principle in relation to the elevation of the masses. In one case, that of the Free Library, the mind in its wider aspects is

appealed to ; in the other, that of the Museum, the eye is the organ through which the perception of beauty and proportion is conveyed to the mind.

In 1864 a solitary picture of "Dead Game," by Edward Coleman, a well-known Birmingham artist, was presented by a body of gentlemen to the Town Council, and this was the first modest step towards the formation of our present collections. This donation was followed the next year by the School of Design depositing a number of pictures, and in 1867, a room in the Free Library being then available, a small loan collection was arranged and the Art Gallery was opened to the public.

It was a small and unpretentious beginning, yet it was visited by 34,560 persons in five months.

In 1872 a larger exhibition was formed, and in that year the Gallery was opened on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. This admirable change, together with the new collections, brought the number of visitors up to 145,000, an extraordinary number when we consider that the Gallery was only one large room, seventy feet long by thirty feet wide—not much larger

than the Italian Gallery in the present building. It is also to be noted with satisfaction that despite the evening and Sunday opening, to which many of the townsmen were bitterly opposed, predicting I believe, all sorts of ruinous disasters, the Committee reported that with all the crowding there had been no complaint as to the conduct of the visitors, nor the slightest injury to any of the works of art.

In 1875 our distinguished citizen, the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, then Mayor of Birmingham, presented the sum of £1,000 for the acquisition of examples of industrial art, and the following year an important addition was made by the presentation of the Museum of Arms, formed by Count Callandra, by the Guardians of the Proof House. This is a collection unequalled except at the Tower and Wallace Collections. The total number of visitors that year reached 400,000.

In 1878 the eminent engineers, Messrs. Tangye, keenly alive to the disadvantages under which the artisans of Birmingham laboured in comparison with those of many continental towns, where art collections were extensive and easy of approach, wrote to Mr. John Thackray Bunce,

the Editor of the *Daily Post*, generously offering to contribute £5,000 towards the acquisition of works of art, if the Corporation would undertake the erection of a permanent Art Gallery, within a specified time; and they offered an additional £5,000 if the gift was met by adequate donations of equal amount. Both conditions were fulfilled. The Council instructed a Committee to consider the provision of an Art Gallery, and a Committee was formed which raised considerably more than the sum necessary to secure Messrs. Tangyes' conditional offer of £5,000.

The building difficulty was got over in the following way. The Corporation owned a piece of land in the rear of the Municipal Buildings (the present Council House), intended originally for the erection of the Assize Courts. The Gas Department needed more offices, and this plot of land was exactly suitable for the purpose. The land was consequently allotted by the Council to the Free Libraries Committee, under the provisions of the Free Libraries Act of 1855, which enabled land belonging to the Corporation to be allocated to such a purpose. The Free Libraries Committee then transferred the land to the Gas Committee, on the condition that



ITALIAN GALLERY.

above the offices to be erected by them, they, at their own expense, should construct a Public Museum and Art Gallery. Messrs. Tangyes' stipulation having been complied with, the Corporation undertook the erection of the permanent Art Gallery at a cost of nearly £50,000. This is how Birmingham obtained an Art Gallery, a step which, I venture to think, has never been regretted.

The foundation stone was laid on July 19, 1881, by Alderman Richard Chamberlain; and, at the luncheon which followed, Mr. Richard Tangye signalized the occasion by presenting, in the name of his brother and himself, their large and valuable collection of Wedgwood, which had been formed at great labour and cost. This same year Mr. Joseph Chamberlain again evinced his interest in this new department of the Corporation by presenting William Müller's great picture "Prayer in the Desert."

The difficulty of providing a building having been disposed of, it was necessary to look round for the objects which should be exhibited there. The Birmingham Art Gallery was not to be merely a picture show, but a Museum of decorative and industrial art; and the Committee,

being in possession of a building, decided not to rely upon loans from wealthy collectors, but to acquire as soon as possible such objects and pictures as should form the basis of a permanent collection.

With the set purpose of obtaining permanent collections, an appeal was issued to raise the additional £5,000, offered by Messrs. Tangye. The response was prompt and liberal, for within a few weeks the sum of £17,000 was subscribed. This became the Art Gallery Purchase Fund, administered by a special Committee, now disbanded because all the money has been spent.

As the erection of the building was being proceeded with, other gentlemen in Birmingham, following the example of Messrs. Tangye, presented pictures and objects of great value, notably Mr. Joseph H. Nettlefold, who bequeathed no less than twenty-six oil paintings by David Cox. Messrs. Richard and George Tangye also presented Albert Moore's famous picture "The Dreamers," in memory of John Henry Chamberlain, one of the architects of the Free Library and of the School of Art, and one who had done so much for the advancement of art in Birmingham.

At the opening of the Art Gallery a great gift was made by Mr. John Feeney, who had devoted some years to the formation of a large oriental collection, which he then presented to the town. The collection filled no less than twenty-eight cases, and in itself formed the nucleus of a Museum of decorative art.

Mr. Timothy Kenrick presented the exceptionally fine example of the art of W. Collins, R.A., " The Reluctant Departure," whilst other gifts were of considerable value and importance.

" By the Gains of Industry we Promote Art." This is the motto that salutes the visitor upon the memorial-stone in the entrance hall, and it is a perpetual reminder of the circumstances under which the Art Gallery was erected and equipped. The profits on the gas undertaking furnished the building, and prosperous captains of industry contributed its contents, the only direct charge upon the public rates being the charges connected with its maintenance and the insurance of its collections.

The present building was opened by His late Majesty King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, on November 28, 1885. The present record of admissions, now amounting to fifteen



INDUSTRIAL HALL.

millions, is calculated from Monday, November 30, 1885, when the Museum and Art Gallery was thrown open to the public.

It has ever been the object of the Committee to place before our visitors, notably in our decorative and industrial sections, all such objects having as far as possible a direct bearing upon the industries of the town, cultivating thereby the powers of observation, and assisting also the education of the eye in its perception of form and style.

Having secured the collections, let us make them interesting to the spectator. Three-fourths, or very nearly so, of the visitors to our National Museums possess, as a rule, but very scanty, if any, antiquarian and art knowledge. They wander through the superb Egyptian and Assyrian collections, the Greek treasures, the Mediæval department, and elsewhere at the British Museum. At South Kensington they meander through the priceless collections of the industrial and decorative arts, and they leave each building with a crude notion that everything is very old, that people long ago used these things, that they possessed gold and silver in abundance, that their statues were

very funny, and that the principal Assyrians cultivated very long beards and were adorned with wings.

This is certainly not as it should be. The governing authority should make the objects more interesting to these visitors. Each case or section should contain descriptive labels of the contents, not merely the short labels that are already used ; these are excellent in their way, but fuller descriptive labels should be provided, giving the development, the history, and the salient points of the objects generally, the method of production, and many little facts likely to awaken the interest of the reader.

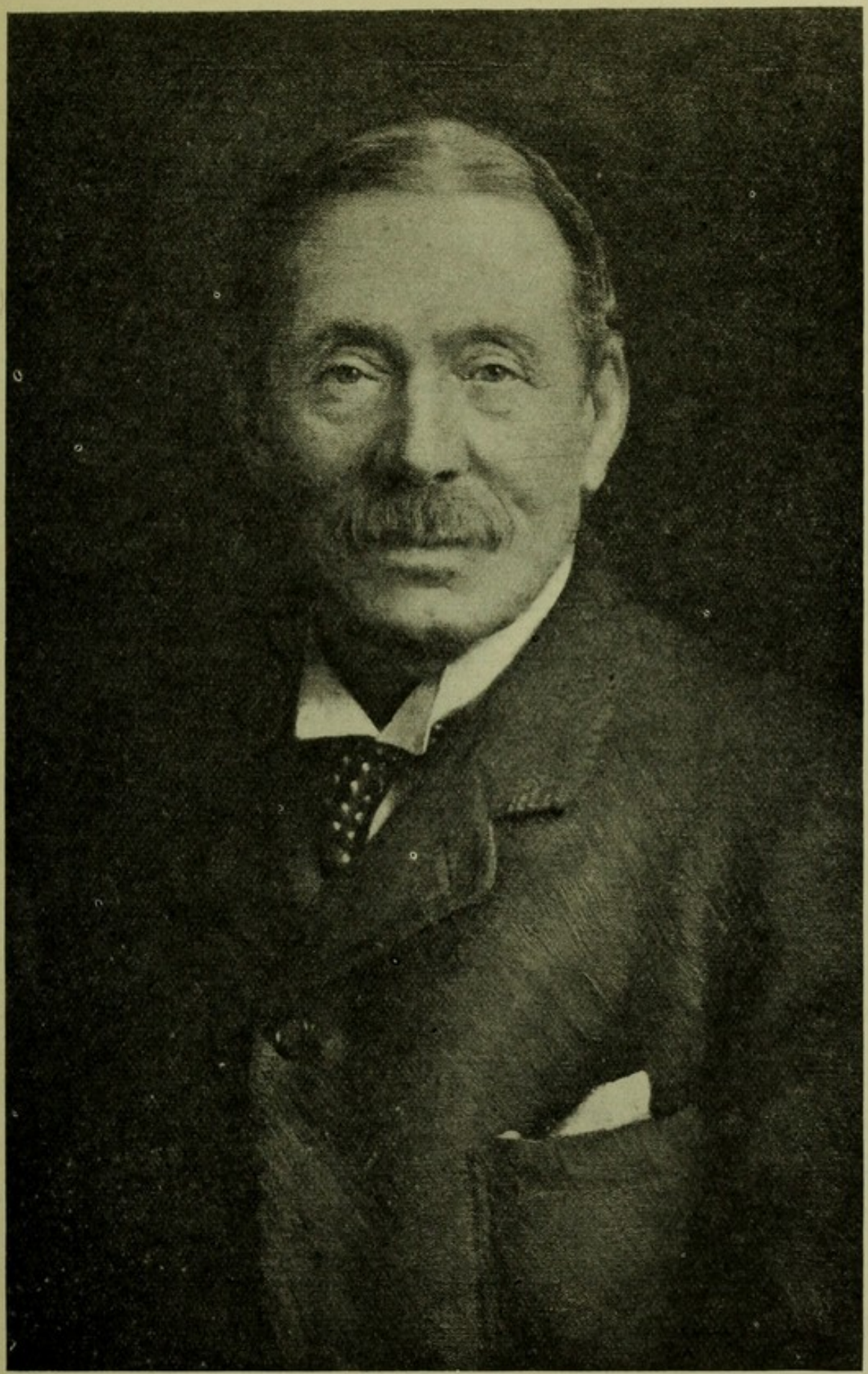
Rameses the first or second is a most uninteresting person in red granite or black marble to the ordinary visitor, who would, however, be much more interested if he knew that Rameses II was the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel. Then again, "Vestment of a Coptic Ecclesiastic"—I take it that ninety-nine persons out of a hundred could not tell you what "Coptic" means. Would it not be more advantageous to say that the Copts were the Christian descendants of the Ancient Egyptians ? What earthly use is there in using such terms as Cloissonné, Renaissance,

Majolica, etc., without explaining them to the man in the street.

These institutions are not kept up entirely for the benefit of antiquarians, artists, and scientists, but to foster a love of knowledge, and to promote the education of the uninformed in these matters, an object which cannot be achieved if we start with the idea that only well informed individuals should be considered.

Of course, in spite of these descriptive labels and cheap catalogues, it will never be found possible to teach people to think for themselves, simply by seeing the objects arranged for their instruction. But these labels do tend to arouse their perceptions and prevent uncultured folk from wandering listlessly through the building and wondering what on earth all these things mean.

The stone and iron implements known as celts, the flint arrow-heads, a bone with a rudely drawn animal, give us not only the first beginnings of civilization but the actual dawn of art. It was Whistler who said that the first artist was the man who, too tired for the chase, remained at home and scratched some crude drawings on an earthen jar. In Birmingham the



JOHN FEENEY.
Born 1839; died 1905.
From a portrait by LANCE CALKIN.

little Greek figures in the Italian Gallery, and the gold work in the Round Gallery, can take us back to the times of Athens and of Pericles. The little figure of Isis tells us of the civilization of Ancient Egypt and the story of old Father Nile; the Pompeian bronzes tell us of Rome when "Mistress of the World"; the Venetian well heads and balconies speak to us of the famous City of the Lagoons, whose argosies brought wealth and beauty from the almost unknown East. The Italian Gallery brings us to the time of Florence and the days of Lorenzo de Medici, and so on through many centuries until we reach the English potter and artist, Josiah Wedgwood, and his world-famous ware. Here is a ring which once adorned a cardinal's finger, a curious piece of gold and of cunning workmanship, set with an antique gem of Ancient Greece. Thus jewellery and gem-cutting are combined, and the arts of two nations linked together. Here is a small snuff-box adorned with a pattern of *niello*, black and silver; from *niello* sprang the art of engraving, and to that art we owe those beautiful works known as English mezzo-tints.

By these means can extinct civilization be

reconstructed, and thus one is enabled to investigate forgotten and neglected branches of art.

Ruskin says that the word museum means "belonging to the muses," and that all museums ought to be places of noble instruction, where, free from the distractions of the outside world, one can devote a portion of secluded and reverent life to the attainment of divine wisdom, which the Greeks supposed to be the gift of Apollo or of the sun, but which the Christian knows to be the gift of Christ.

Since 1885 the record of the Gallery has been a distinguished one as far as gifts and loan collections are concerned, and I do not think that another provincial Gallery can show anything like such progress in a corresponding period of time.

The total value of the permanent collections at the present time is more than £165,000: the paintings, drawings, and sculpture accounting for £115,000 of this total, the balance of £50,000 being the estimated value of the objects of decorative and industrial art. This figure takes no account of a large number of exhibits which are on permanent loan, such as the splendid collection of Limoges Enamels, worth some thousands of

pounds, lent by the Midland Institute. The pictures include some of the most famous examples of our greatest modern artists.

In examples of what is known as the English Pre-Raphaelite School of painting the Gallery is unsurpassed, and that gives it an importance readily acknowledged by all European critics. The series of drawings by Rossetti and Burne-Jones, Millais, Ford Madox Brown, and Sandys —about 800 in number—a very large portion of which we have not yet been able to exhibit, render the Birmingham Museum unique in this direction. No other Gallery, moreover, can boast such a collection of works in oil by David Cox, or such a number of his sketches.

The development of the industrial art collections has also proceeded upon successful lines. No provincial Gallery possesses such an array of objects illustrative of the Italian Renaissance. The objects, or groups of objects, catalogued have increased from 11,124 in 1885, to 20,900 at the present time—an addition of nearly 10,000. They include examples of jewellery, gold and silver work, Limoges enamels, ivory carvings, glass, decorative iron work, steel, carvings in wood and marble, textiles, lace,

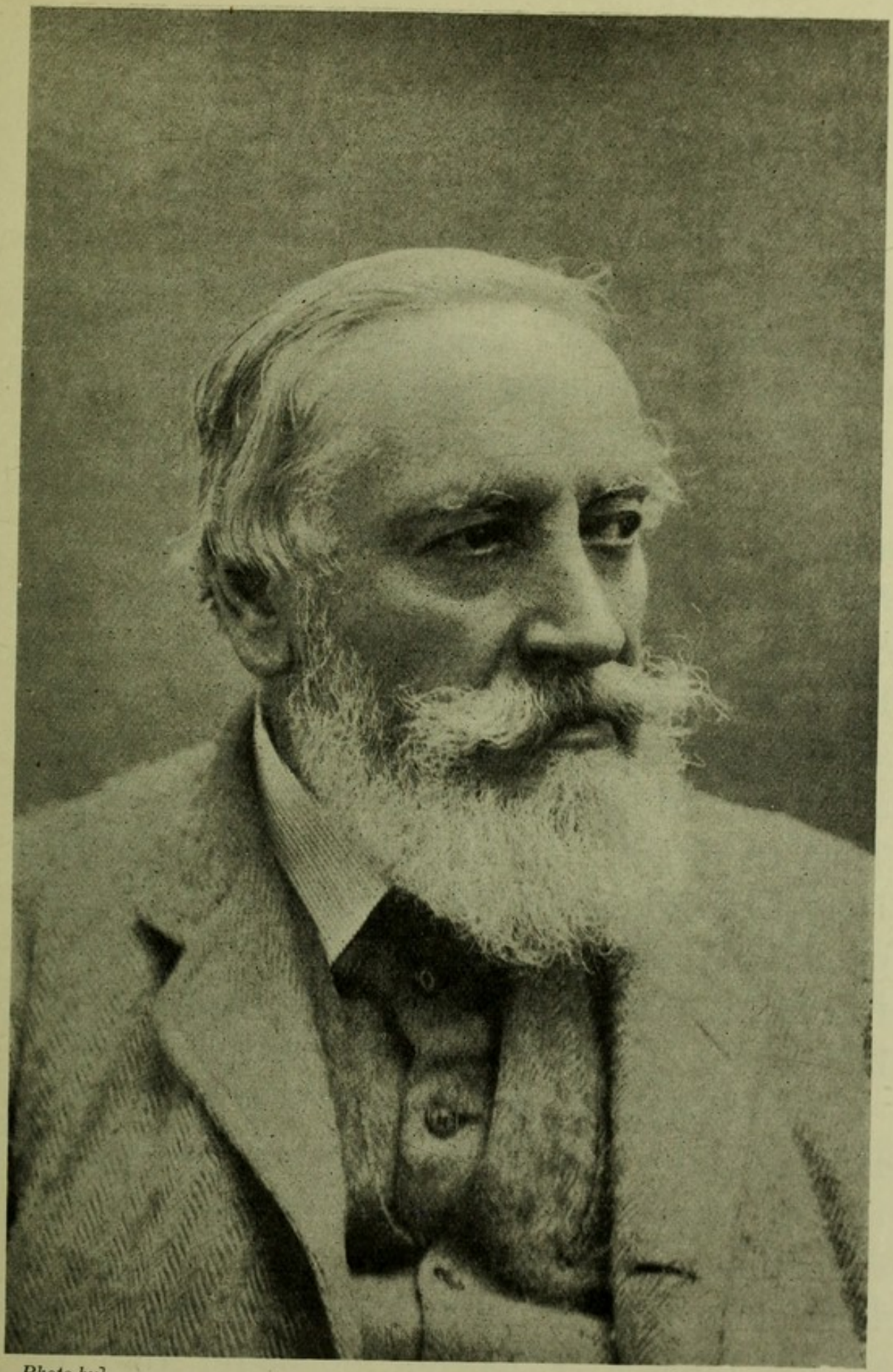


Photo by] [*Whitworth Wallis.*

JOHN THACKRAY BUNCE.
Born 1828: died 1899.

majolica, porcelain, and earthenware. Many of these were acquired in Egypt, Sicily, Italy, Germany, France, and other foreign countries, and also from the sale-rooms of Paris and London, at the dispersal of famous collections—such as the Spitzer, Bardini, Magniac, etc. Others are gifts, and include a considerable collection of Japanese and Oriental work, also Turkish and Norwegian silver presented by the late Mr. John Feeney, cases of English china bequeathed by Mrs. Nettlefold, a collection of English silver plate bequeathed by Mr. Machin, and objects in ivory and early illuminated books and manuscripts presented by Mr. Samuel Jevons. Then there are the wonderful tapestries of the Holy Grail, designed by Burne-Jones and executed by William Morris, which were presented to the Art Gallery by a body of Birmingham ladies.

Our collections of industrial art are an unfailing source of interest to visitors of all classes, while to those engaged in the design or execution of artistic objects they are a rich fountain of suggestion and inspiration. It is, in my opinion, a matter for regret that we have not been able to extend our purchases

still further in this direction. Unfortunately we have no funds at our disposal. Again, the rise in prices has been so enormous, that a considerable sum would be required to secure the many desirable and rare objects which come into the market. We must be content with what we have, and congratulate ourselves that twenty odd years ago we acquired the objects we now possess at prices which now represent a tenth and a twentieth of their present value. Personally, it has always been my constant desire to make the Birmingham Art Gallery something more than a picture exhibition. Thanks to the valuable co-operation of Mr. Alderman Kenrick and the late Mr. Thackray Bunce, that result has in some degree been achieved. It may not have been popular with some people. A well-known, well-educated, and prominent citizen once asked me why money was wasted on the acquisition of "earthenware platters," meaning the beautiful majolica plates in the Italian Gallery.

The task has not been an easy one. A good many estimable people look upon the industrial art collections, or a portion of them, as waste of money. On the other hand there are others

to whom this particular section of the Art Gallery is of outstanding interest, and many of our objects are regarded with envious eyes by the directors of many continental museums.

It is to be regretted, I think, that our art students and young workpeople do not make more use of our industrial collections, in the way that students do of the similar collections in London, Berlin and Paris. Why they do not do so I cannot understand. It is, however, gratifying to note the admirable memory-drawings from objects in the Museum which Mr. Catterson Smith encourages the School of Art students to make. It is an exercise as interesting as it must be valuable to the student.

Here is a storehouse of more or less unworked or undeveloped artistic, historical and educational material.

Our manufacturers might also take greater advantage of these collections. That they are backward in doing so is illustrated by the following story. In 1890, when the collection of ironwork, which I had gathered together during a lengthy journey through Italy and Sicily, was exhibited, or rather when it was being arranged, a young German



THE BLIND GIRL.

By SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS, P.R.A., 1829–1896.

Presented by the Right Hon. WILLIAM KENRICK, P.C., Chairman of the Art Gallery Committee.

draughtsman asked permission to make certain drawings of the gates, balconies, grilles, etc. This was refused until the collection was opened to the public. Later on he came all the way from Munich, and for three or four days was at work in the Galleries, taking back with him a perfect storehouse of suggestive designs. It was months before any Birmingham draughtsman or student of the School of Art came to draw a single object.

We get applications from all parts of the world for photographs of the pictures and objects of decorative art. Those at a distance appear to appreciate and utilize our collections more than those under whose very noses the collections are located.

It may be asked of what use are Italian sculptures, marble saints and madonnas, terra-cotta busts, carved pilasters and friezes, chimney-pieces and cassoni likely to be to Birmingham and its industries. Such questions have been and no doubt will be asked again. As a matter of fact, in the Italian sculptures of the period of the revival of art are to be found the most exquisite and beautiful developments of relief ornamentation that the world has ever seen, full of

instruction to art workers, modellers, carvers, die sinkers, art metal workers, and craftsmen in every branch.

In Vienna, in Brussels, in Zurich, in Darmstadt, in Paris, in Berlin, in Munich, in Basle, in Nuremberg, to mention but a few cities, you would find the students of the School of Art, and youths engaged in many industries, continually studying and copying the objects in such collections.

It is earnestly hoped that some inspired manufacturers ere long will give us a sum of money to be entirely devoted to the acquisition of further specimens. You have no idea, my Committee has no idea, the City Council has no idea, of the extraordinary strides being made in this direction by Continental museums.

Believe me, it is not the American collector alone who is sweeping the market clean of objects of industrial and decorative art, but Continental and American museums. Their great cities are alive to the educational importance of permanent collections of such objects, and one American benefactor has recently left half a million of pounds, not dollars, to the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the greater

portion of which is to be spent in the purchase in Europe of objects similar to those in our Italian Gallery.

Since the opening of the present Gallery over twenty Loan Collections have been held, to which more than 7,000 pictures and 5,000 objects of art have been lent, including works belonging to His late Majesty the King, Queen Victoria, and many noblemen and gentlemen in various parts of the Kingdom.

These exhibitions brought visitors to the Gallery from far and wide, including the Continent, and were the means of bringing into notice many works by Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney, Raeburn, Hoppner, and others, with which the public had previously been wholly unacquainted, and which had never previously been publicly exhibited. These collections have been insured for over two millions, and have given the Birmingham Gallery a distinct position in the world of art.

Unfortunately, for six years no loan exhibition has been held, owing to the absolute impossibility of finding storage room for the permanent collections, which, of course, have to be disturbed to admit of the proper display of the pictures



THE LAST OF ENGLAND.

By FORD MADOX BROWN, 1821–1891.

on loan. In the new buildings this will be remedied, and a special gallery is being erected which will be utilized for loan exhibitions only.

Birmingham has been the pioneer of the Sunday opening of Museums, and I cannot but believe that it has proved a boon to many overworked inhabitants. Our Art Gallery also led the way with cheap catalogues; over 300,000 penny catalogues have been sold, and the sixpenny catalogues, with instructive biographical notes and illustrations, have been imitated by more than one well-known Gallery.

In the early years of the Gallery I and my most excellent assistant, Mr. A. Bensley Chamberlain, lectured frequently in the Town Hall and the Board Schools on the principal contents of this Corporation treasure-house. I think something like 100,000 people must have been talked to—poor souls. The lectures were illustrated by limelight views and drawings on the black board, and they have led to a search for more solid information, and moreover, kindled an interest in the Museum collections, which has been evinced by the many offers of objects as gifts to the Gallery from those not over-

burdened with the good things of this world. I need not say that they were of a most miscellaneous character, ranging from the handcuffs worn by Palmer the murderer, and the bridle of a celebrated race horse, to pictures of a positively appalling character, prize pigs in soap, and a dead octopus; but many objects of real artistic merit were most acceptable, notably some old English enamels, embroidery, needlework, glass, arms, ironwork, etc.

In November, 1898, Mr. John T. Middlemore, the generous donor of Holman Hunt's "The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple," made his munificent offer to the Corporation of the following pictures :—

"Aspiration," by G. F. Watts.

"The Triumph of the Innocents," by Holman Hunt.

"The Merciful Knight," by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

"The Garden of the Hesperides," by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

The Pygmalion Series (four pictures), by Sir Edward Burne-Jones;

and he was permitted to say that if his offer was accepted, Lady Burne-Jones would present the

superb portrait of her husband, by G. F. Watts. To this splendid offer, which created something like a sensation in the art world, Mr. Middlemore attached certain conditions, viz. that the Corporation should build, within a reasonable time, a proper gallery for the display of its works of art, as he had long been struck with the unsatisfactory and inadequate accommodation which then existed.

Birmingham has never been deficient in civic pride, and it was felt that Mr. Middlemore's offer and its conditions would be accepted, and the city would become possessed of some of the greatest art treasures which this generation has produced.

Unfortunately, financial and economical considerations prevented the Corporation at the time from carrying out Mr. Middlemore's desire, and two and a half years later—in May, 1901—he withdrew his splendid offer. The Council's refusal to build did not, I am glad to say, alienate Mr. Middlemore's interest in the Gallery, for he presented the Pygmalion Series, which had been originally included in his offer. Whether the other magnificent works, notably the famous "Merciful Knight" and "The



SIR GALAHAD AT THE RUINED CHAPEL.
By DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, 1829–1882.

Triumph of the Innocents," have been lost to us, no one can say; but it is hoped that the well-springs of his generosity may be revived when the new buildings are ready for inauguration.

In 1905 Mr. John Feeney passed away, and he placed the city under a debt of gratitude by bequeathing the sum of £50,000 for the erection of an Art Gallery; the surplus, if any, to be devoted to the purchase of paintings by the old masters.

The Corporation had by this time undertaken the erection of the Council House extension, with part of the upper floor thereof as Art Galleries, and matters had proceeded so far that it was impossible, so it was said, to make any alterations in the suggested scheme. The present buildings rapidly rising in Edmund Street, Congreve Street, and Great Charles Street, are the outcome of the architectural competitions, and Mr. Feeney's magnificent bequest will be more or less appropriated to providing the Feeney Galleries on the top floors of the extension. Personally, I am quite positive that Mr. Feeney never contemplated any such arrangement, for he frequently attacked the present

building for being above the Gas Department. Mr. Feeney intended his gift to be used for a building to be devoted to the arts alone and erected on an independent site. Extraneous circumstances compelled the abandonment of such provision, the legal authorities decided that the top of the Municipal offices " was a site " for an Art Gallery, and so—well, like my Lord Tomnoddy, " nought could be done and nought could be said."

I want you, however, to understand that these galleries are not being erected at the expense of the ratepayers, but by the generosity of the late proprietor of the *Daily Post*.

Judging from the admirable plan of the architects, the new galleries will be worthy of the purpose for which they are designed, and will commemorate in a dignified manner the bequest of the city's benefactor.

Two important new features will, we hope, be embodied in the new galleries—a Natural History Department, for which the city has long waited, and a Collection of Casts of the finest examples of Greek and Roman Sculpture. The latter should be the forerunner of a Department of Classical Art, which should prove of service

to the students of the University and of the School of Art.

The present chaotic and overcrowded state of the galleries is deplorable, but I venture to hope that the disadvantages under which we have laboured so long, and the anxieties we have experienced, will be removed by our transfer to the other side of the road.

The Burne-Jones and Rossetti drawings in the Industrial Gallery at present cover up and hide from view valuable textiles, metal work, porcelain, and some beautiful Persian pottery. In the store-rooms are the contents of several cases of enamels, metal work, lacquer, and armour. The framed drawings, mezzotints, etchings, and engravings, which it is impossible to exhibit for want of space, now amount to nearly 600, whilst there are nearly 3,000 of a similar character unframed. The remarkable coloured reproductions of early Italian, Flemish and German masters, which form a small Gallery of old masters in themselves, are still unframed and languishing in the store-cupboard; the unique collection of drawings and studies—300 in number—by John Everett Millais, Fred Sandys, and Ford Madox Brown, so generously



THE FINDING OF THE SAVIOUR IN THE TEMPLE.

By WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT, O.M., 1827–1910.

[Presented by Mr. JOHN T. MIDDLEMORE, M.P.

presented five years ago (1905), have not yet been shown, and cannot be until galleries worthy of their exhibition are provided.

Surely this state of affairs should appeal even to those who are indifferent to the purposes and aims of the Art Gallery.

The Art Gallery is under the control of a Committee of the Corporation, consisting of eight members of the City Council and eight co-opted members.

The average cost of this institution to the city, during a period of over twenty-four years, has been about £3,700 per annum, an exceedingly moderate amount. In fact, there is no other Gallery in the United Kingdom of its size, with so large a number of visitors, with such valuable contents, and only closed to the public on two days in the year, which is worked more economically than that of the City of Birmingham.

Twenty-four years have now rolled away since the Gallery was first opened to the public; during that time fifteen millions of visitors have passed through the turnstiles. There is no local institution of a more democratic character. It is one of its distinguishing features, in con-

trast to many other provincial galleries, that there is no pay day. It is only closed on two days in the year—Good Friday and Christmas Day. Despite the great number of visitors, and the crowded state of the building, not a single object has ever been damaged. This is eminently gratifying; yet it is only what happens, I believe, under all similar circumstances, when the people know that the place is their own, and that they have a right to use it, and that they themselves are consequently responsible for the preservation of order and for the safety of the valuable contents of the building.

Surely this enormous attendance, consisting for the most part of the artisan class, justifies the action of the Corporation. Many, no doubt, come from sheer curiosity; but I am certain that a large number have carried away a little knowledge about things of which they were previously ignorant, and thereby have been induced to visit the collections again.

The refining influence of art is of course admitted by all, but the question may be asked, do the citizens of Birmingham care for the means of instruction and recreation afforded by the Museum and Art Gallery?

There are many individuals who are apt to regard the Art Gallery as a fad, just as there are many well-to-do and well-informed people in this city who never enter the Art Gallery except at a Mayoral Reception. These people are ignorant of the great amount of good work being done by this institution in cultivating the powers of observation amongst all classes.

The beautiful and valuable contents of the present building have not cost the ratepayers one penny—a fact which cannot be too often repeated. Everything has come from private subscription, no ratepayer has ever been called upon for any contributions towards its contents, but merely for the necessary grant for the up-keep of the institution. The estimated money-value of the gifts extending over the last twenty-five years is, roughly, £80,000. I often wonder if the citizens of Birmingham realize the generosity which has been displayed. The position of the Art Gallery is due, more or less, to the same generous donors year after year—the devotion of the few rather than the support of the many.

Twenty-four years constitute a long span, whether in the life of an individual or a branch



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

By G. F. WATTS, O.M., R.A., 1817–1904.

[Presented by Mr. JOHN T. MIDDLEMORE, M.P.

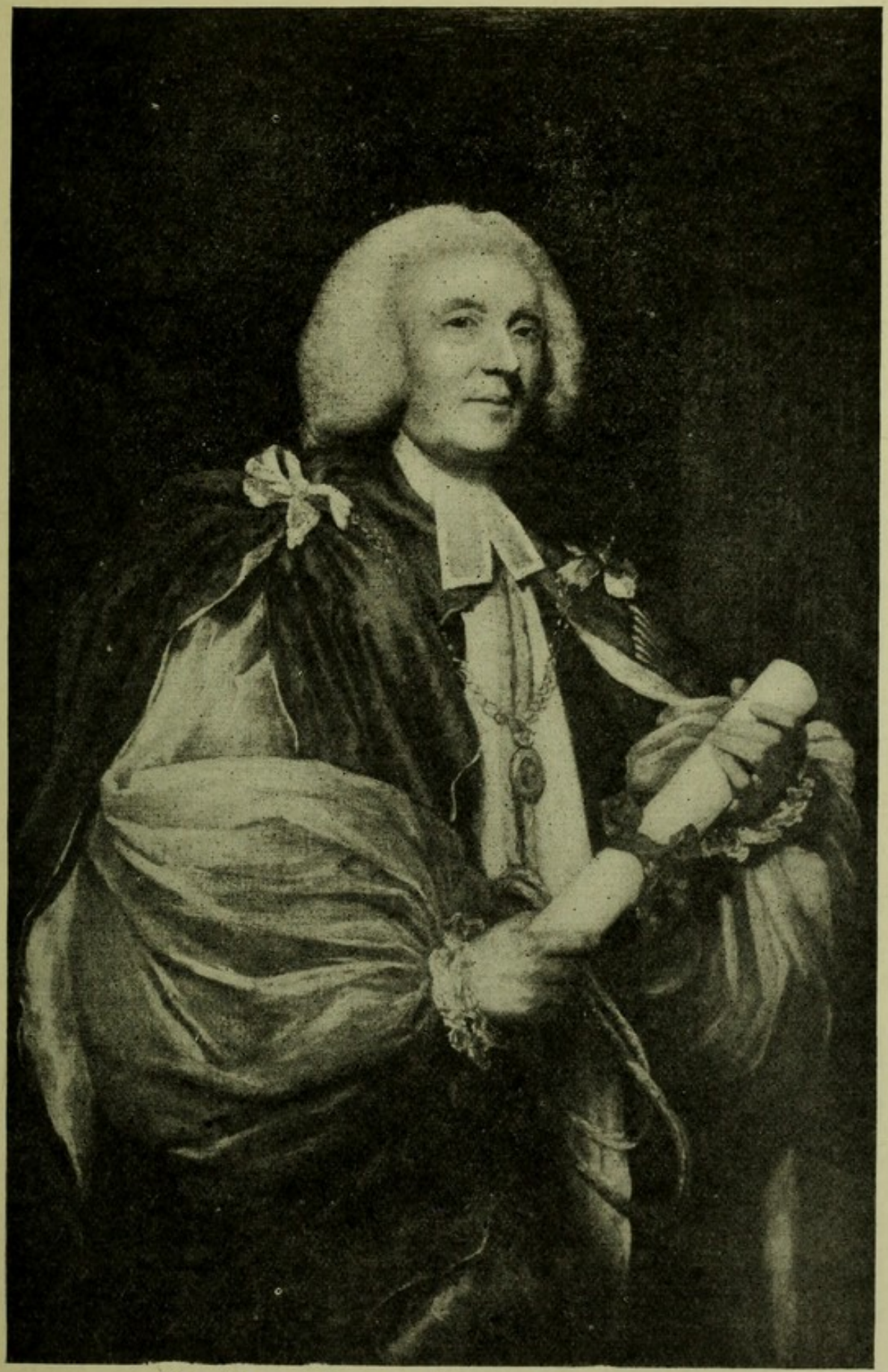
of municipal enterprise, and it is possible in that time to judge by their works the usefulness of both. In any such estimate, however, the frailty of the individual presents a sharp contrast to the permanency of the institution. There is, in a sense, more durability in bricks and mortal than in human life, but it is a pleasure, nevertheless, to reflect that the memory of a personality, or the influence of his good works, does not pass away quite so rapidly as individual life itself. While the Art Gallery has as yet scarcely seen the zenith of its day—indeed, it has only now reached a period of maturity—many of those who struggled valiantly to shape its scope and character have long since been gathered to their fathers. In this category might be mentioned several members of the Committee, earnest for the public good. One or two quiet workers call for special notice. The first is John Thackray Bunce, who was for many years Chairman of the Management Sub-Committee, who from the earliest days took an active part in the building up of our collections, and whose advice and powerful pen were ever at the service of the Committee. His loss in many ways has been irreparable. Another

is John Feeney, the donor of many valuable objects and considerable sums of money, to whose noble benefactions the whole city is indebted for the Art Gallery extension in Edmund Street. These men have gone, but their names and the work they have accomplished can never be forgotten.

To these two names must be added that of the distinguished gentleman who presides over this lecture—Alderman the Rt. Hon. William Kenrick. He is, fortunately, still with us, and as Chairman for twenty-six years he has presided over all the deliberations of the Committee. His artistic knowledge and his experience have been always at the disposal of the city and its Art Committee. To his generosity we are indebted for our beautiful and pathetic "Blind Girl" by Sir John Millais, "Sweet Water Meadows of the West" by North, "Evening, Tangier" by Lavery, and, undoubtedly the most popular picture in the Gallery, "A Martyr of the Sixteenth Century" by Geets, whilst he has also shared in the acquisition of our Rossetti and Burne-Jones drawings, and many other important works. His recent gift of £5,000 to the Public Picture Gallery Fund must be in the recollection of all.

That he may long be spared to us and the city is the wish of all those who have had the privilege of close association with him during twenty-five years of progressive work.

Of Messrs. Tangye and Mr. Middlemore I have already spoken ; and though he may not like it, public testimony must be borne to the earnest and enthusiastic work during the last twelve years of Mr. J. R. Holliday, who has been for three years Chairman of the Management Sub-Committee, and who has contributed so generously to the acquisition of many important collections. With Mr. Holliday's gifts must be coupled those of Mr. Palmer Phillips, to whom we are grateful for most of our finest water-colour drawings. He has never been appealed to in vain, and some of us are almost ashamed to look him in the face, so seldom do we approach him without making some call upon his generosity. Yet another name I trust I may be permitted to add to the foregoing—it is that of my excellent assistant, Mr. Arthur Bensley Chamberlain, the worthy son of a gentleman —John Henry Chamberlain—to whom this city owes much and whose memory is dear to many. Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, who amid multifarious



DR. JOHN THOMAS, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

Born, 1723; died, 1792.

By SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, P.R.A.

duties is mainly responsible for our catalogues, has worked well and faithfully for the Corporation for twenty-one years, but only those intimately acquainted with his work are in a position to appreciate, at its true value, his unostentatious devotion to the public service.

The munificence of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Sir John Holder, Mr. Richard Peyton, and other citizens too numerous to mention, together with the Trustees of the Public Picture Fund, formed by Mr. Clarkson Osler, set an example which might well be followed by others whose names are not yet honoured by a gilt label attached to a picture or some work of art. In America no wealthy citizen is deemed to have done his duty to his city unless he has been identified with a noble gift to its Municipal Museum.

It has been said, that the Englishman's appreciation of art, as art, is superficial and spasmodic; that we have as a nation no adequate perception of the place of art as an element of national greatness; that we have no national pride in its achievements, nor do we appreciate its vital importance in branches of national prosperity; and that whilst we admire and honour certain achievements which we look upon as admirable

and excellent, we do not detest what is undoubtedly ignoble and hideous. These are briefly some of the shortcomings recited by a former distinguished President of the Royal Academy of Arts. The charge, though exaggerated, I believe is in the main true ; for undoubtedly we do not, as a nation, possess that aesthetic consciousness which leads towards the beautiful and repels from the ugly and unsightly. Till the love of beauty is more alive in us or amongst us, there can be little hope for art ; for everything we use and everything we wear is an expression of it or an absence of it. With the view of inculcating and fostering this love of art, a museum should contain those objects which reflect clearly or dimly the magnificence to which life has attained in former years. It should aim at improving, establishing and maintaining the art-taste of the community in which it is placed. It is not the object of an art-museum to produce artists, painters, connoisseurs, or amateur experts, but to inspire the people with a love for what is chaste and beautiful, and to excite a real discontent with the ugliness amidst which most of us unfortunately have to live.

The radical defect of art-education in this

country—and the great stumbling-block in the way of the proper appreciation of the aesthetic value of ornamental art—has been the apparent determination not to regard anything as a work of art except pictures and statues. Such an idea appears ingrained in an Englishman's notions of art. The first things always asked for on loan from the South Kensington Museum were pictures only, the fact being ignored that the Museum was founded and maintained for the promotion of ornamental and decorative art. Thanks, however, to such schools as our own admirably equipped and directed School of Art, and such societies as the Arts and Crafts, this notion is gradually disappearing and a far more intelligent perception is being created as to the value of art as applied to industry.

The visitors to an art gallery should learn from their own pleasure in the fine works exhibited, that such delight should be elevating and inspiring, and not merely a passing idle fancy. The stirring of the emotions by the contemplation of a beautiful object, may it is true be only possible to those who understand the conditions under which the object was produced and the purpose for which it was designed.

The visitor who knows Greece and Greek history will be more greatly moved by a fragment of the frieze of the Parthenon than one who is unacquainted with its purpose and its history. To revive such understanding is one of the objects of a museum. The beautiful objects in our glass cases were not produced, and are not preserved, to be merely gaped at by a holiday crowd. They are there to remind us that those objects were fashioned and made for use ; and they should inspire us to produce modern substitutes of equal beauty. The accomplishment and the production of a living art is the universal purpose of a Museum and Art Gallery.

THE SCHOOLS OF KING EDWARD VI

By R. Cary Gilson, M.A.



King Edward's School, Birmingham (from New Street).

THE SCHOOLS OF KING EDWARD VI.

By R. Cary Gilson, M.A.

In responding to the invitation to address you on the subject of the notable Birmingham institution of which I have the honour to be a servant, I ought I think to plead certain disqualifications for the task. A human institution—unlike, say, a mineral or a steam engine—cannot be properly analysed or tested without reference to its history. Disastrous mistakes have been made, both before and since the French Revolution, through neglect of this general truth, and its particular application to King Edward's School bears the inference that the present lecture must contain a good deal of historical matter, which, being neither by learning nor by taste much of an antiquarian, I am not well fitted to supply. Moreover, there is truth in the proverb that it is the

onlooker who sees most of the game, and, being constantly engaged in the actual administration of the School, I cannot claim the smallest share of that detachment which is perhaps desirable for present purposes. Under these circumstances I must hope that you will overlook my shortcomings in an indulgent spirit and find what compensation you can in the fact that—in common probably with most of yourselves—I am even more interested in the present and future of King Edward's School, than in its past.

Five hundred and twenty-seven years ago—that is to say, nearer by two centuries to the Norman Conquest than to the present day—four burgesses of Birmingham obtained licence from King Richard II to found what was called a chantry in St. Martin's Church. The endowment consisted of lands, houses and rents in Birmingham and Edgbaston valued at 20 marks a year, to be paid to two chaplains for the celebration of divine service in the church. The names of the four founders were Thomas Sheldon, John Coleshulle, John Goldsmyth, and William atte Stowe, of which the first two are still familiar to us as place-names in the

neighbourhood, and the third not improbably shows that the working of the precious metals had a place even at that early period among the industries of Birmingham. The actual licence, in an excellent state of preservation and bearing a large fragment of the seal of King Richard, is still to be seen in a glass case on the wall of the Governors' Board Room in the New Street School. For some reasons, however, now undiscoverable, this original chantry never came into existence, and nine years later, in 1392, the fifteenth year of Richard II, on the petition of the townsmen, who had evidently not forgotten the matter, a Gild, called the Gild of the Holy Cross, was founded in substitution for it. This Gild or Brotherhood was of a remarkable character. It was neither a Trade Gild, of which there were so many in the Middle Ages, whereof the great City Companies of London—Goldsmiths, Mercers, Skinners, Spectacle-makers and the rest are the survival—nor a Gild Merchant, like the Merchant Adventurers of Bristol, and in later days the magnificent East India Company, nor yet one of the town gilds managing municipal affairs, the forerunners of present-day City

and Urban District Councils. Nor, although a chantry in St. Martin's still formed an important part of the Trust, was it in any exclusive sense a religious foundation. Besides brethren it admitted susteren, i.e. sisters—an excellent precedent of unimpeachable antiquity for the recent inclusion of women in the Governing Body of King Edward's School. In addition to the two chaplains, a Master and Wardens, an organist, a bell-man, and a midwife were supported by the Gild funds, which also maintained Gild almshouses and afforded occasional gifts to the poor, the remainder of the income being expended in keeping roads and bridges in repair. There is no evidence of the existence of a school of any sort in Birmingham at this date, though where two priests were attached to a chantry it was not unusual for one of them to act as schoolmaster. If the negative presumption be admitted, then of the forty-four schools of King Edward VI up and down England Birmingham is the only one which can claim to have been actually founded by that monarch—in the sense that it was a new educational foundation and not a re-institution of a previously existing school. The Gild of

the Holy Cross held its meetings in the Gild or Town Hall, a half-timbered building in New Street. Of this edifice, which afterwards served as the School for no less than 150 years, no plan, drawing or print has ever been found, though it is perhaps not too late to hope that it may turn up. If any one here present should light on such a thing I hope he, or she, will not fail to report so interesting a discovery.

Kings were not much in the habit in those days of doing anything for nothing, and King Richard received £50—estimated to be the equivalent of £1,000 of our money—for his royal licence. This handsome sum, together with the wide scope and liberal arrangements of the Gild, may be taken to indicate that Birmingham was already a place of some wealth and population, though to judge by the number of men at arms which it sent to the wars it was only equal to Stratford-on-Avon, and only one-tenth of the importance of Coventry, a proportion now just about reversed.

"So, for about a century and a half,"—I quote from Mr. Bunce's admirable lecture delivered in 1895, to which I am greatly indebted—"the Gild of the Holy Cross pursued

its way, and then the 'for ever' of the Royal Licence of Richard II came to a sudden close, for in the thirty-seventh year of Henry VIII, the Birmingham Gild was treated, though most unjustly, as a religious foundation, and was involved in the common confiscation of monasteries and chantries, its constitution being dissolved, its charter abrogated, and its lands and rents being seized by the King."

After so great a cataclysm we might perhaps expect to read "the rest was silence." That this was far from being the case is fortunate for Birmingham and fortunate for the reputation of the Tudor sovereigns. To do those masterful princes justice, they were great at construction as well as at destruction, and Henry VIII himself, the most masterful of them all, was a splendid patron of education, as is evidenced not only by the grandeur of my own beloved Alma Mater, Trinity College, Cambridge, but by a host of Grammar Schools of King Henry VIII of various degrees of celebrity and usefulness in various parts of England. I do not defend his methods of confiscation any more than his views on marriage, but neither do I doubt that if he had lived to 1552 our turn would

have come as surely as it did under his milder son and successor Edward VI, and part at any rate of the appropriated Gild property would have been restored to the town in the form of a School endowment. I say this not in any spirit of ingratitude to the pathetic figure of our pious Founder, but in justice to the burly tyrant, who, with all his faults, cannot fairly be charged with lack of public spirit.

In the year just mentioned, 1552, the King's advisers, acting on a report by Commissioners of Enquiry made in 1547, the first year of his reign, drafted a Charter which in due time received the royal signature, and is still to be seen, much discoloured by damp, on the walls of the Governors' Room. The Commissioners had found that the rent roll of the Gild amounted to £31 per annum and that good work had been done with the money, not only in relief of the poor, but in the "reparacion of two great bridges and divers foule and dangerous highwayes, the charge wherof the town of ytselfe ys not liable to mainteign, so that the lack thereof will be a greate noysaunce to the King's Majesty's subjects passing to and ffrom the Marches of Wales, and utter Ruine to the

same toune, being one of the fayrest and most profittable tounes to the King's Highness in all the Shire. The said Toune of Brymycham ys a very mete place, and it is verey mete and necessarye that theare be a ffree Schoole erect theare to bring vppe the youthe, being boathe in the same toune and nigh thereaboute."

Accordingly the Charter directs that "there be and shall be one grammar school in Brymyncham aforesaid, which shall be called the Free Grammar School of King Edward the Sixth, for the education, institution and instruction of boys and youths in grammar, perpetually, for all future times to continue."

There are two terms here which perhaps deserve a word of explanation. The word "free" has no reference to the payment or non-payment of fees, but means nearly what we mean by "public," that is to say, open to the boys of the district without distinction of class or creed, not controlled by any particular religious order or similar body, nor conducted for the profit of any individual or group of proprietors. Thus when in later days fees came to be charged and the money employed to extend the benefits of the education to a much larger number

than could otherwise have enjoyed them, while still retaining a large proportion of non-fee-paying scholars, there was no interference with the "freedom" of the School. On the other hand, there certainly was such interference when, as happened for a number of years, admission to the School could only be obtained through the nomination of a Governor, and no one could be a Governor who was not a member of the Established Church. Similarly, the term "Grammar" had a different and wider significance than that which is now attached to it: Grammar meant the study of language, especially no doubt the Latin language, at that time an indispensable preliminary to the acquisition of knowledge and learning, but was by no means confined to the analysis of the parts of speech and the structure of sentences. There is a good deal to indicate that the study of the classics was far more intelligently pursued in the century from 1550 to 1650, than in the century, or even perhaps the two centuries, succeeding the latter date.

As is the case, however, with other great Public Schools our information for a very long

period after the Charter is extraordinarily scanty and incomplete. The granting of the Charter is symbolically depicted by the imagination of a modern artist in one of the panels in the Town Hall. The School was held, as has been already said, in the old Gild Hall, but of the number or names of the scholars or their success or failure in their studies we have no record. The first Head Master whose name has been preserved was Nathaniel Brooksby, appointed in the days of the Commonwealth, 1654. He enjoyed a stipend of £40 "and the use of the auncient howse and gardens formerly belonging to the head schoolmaster, for his habitacion." The amount of the salary, though not princely, shows that the revenue of the Trust was already increasing. For only about two thirds of the Gild endowment of £31 was restored by the Charter of Edward VI, and out of the £20 estimated to be the annual yield of the estates in 1552 one master or pedagogue and one sub-pedagogue or usher were to be maintained. There were twenty Governors, who were to be "of the more discreet and more trusty inhabitants of the town and parish of Brymyncham aforesaid,

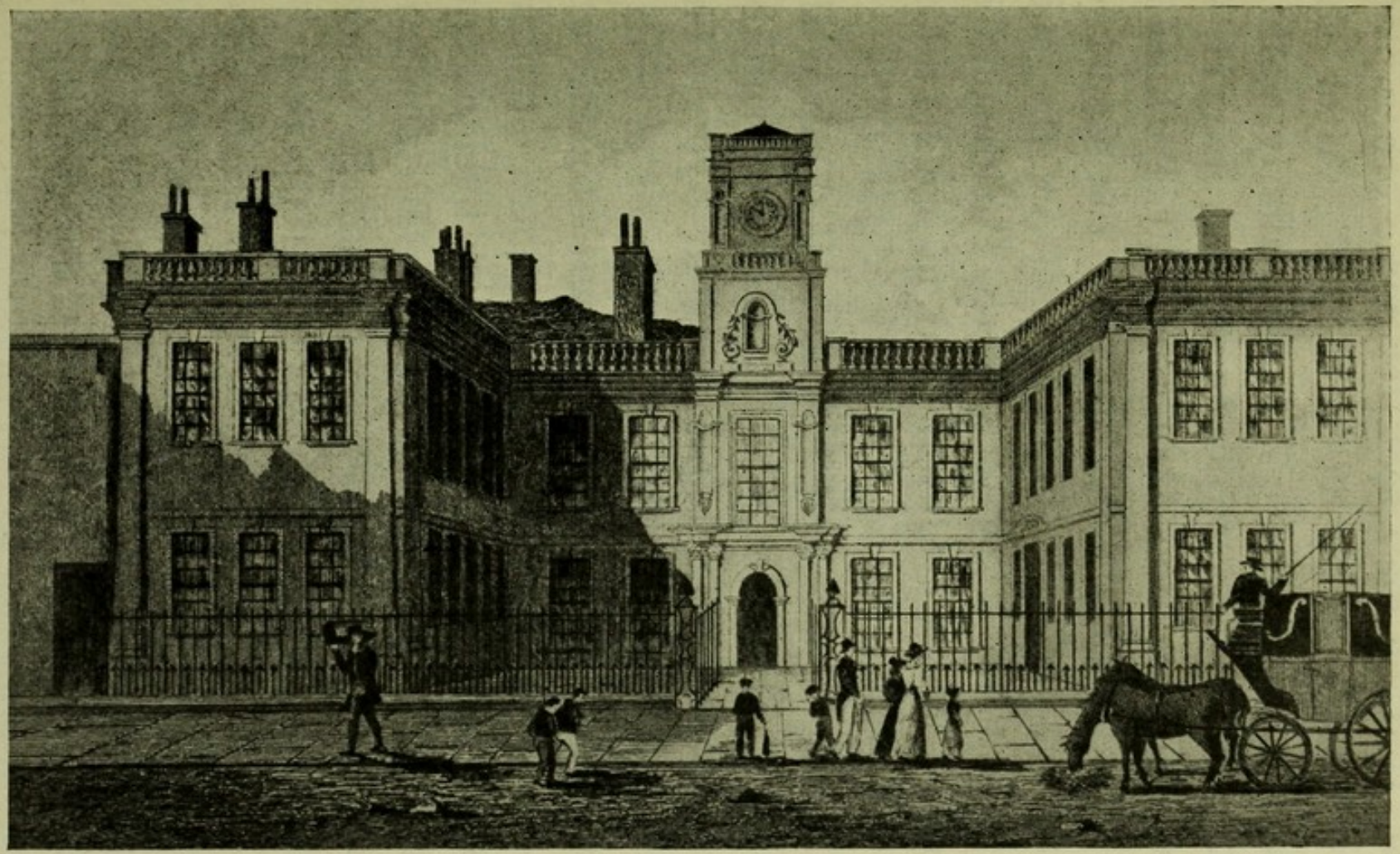
or of the manor of Brymyncham to the same town adjoining," and they were empowered to appoint the two masters already mentioned, and with the consent of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Birmingham being then in that diocese, to make fit and wholesome statutes for the government of the School, of its pedagogue and sub-pedagogue, and its properties. Rather strangely no statutes were actually framed till 1676, 120 years after the foundation of the School, when we learn that the Chief Master received £68 15*s.* a year with a close of land and a house. He also had the services of an assistant at £20 a year. The Second Master was paid £34 6*s.* 8*d.* £20 went to an English master or assistant to the usher "to teach, in a School distinct from the Grammar School 50 boys," and a further sum of £20 to a scrivener "for the teaching of 20 boys continually at once, to write and cast accounts, gratis, if so many do desire the same." These last two provisions are interesting as the first attempt to provide more than one type or grade of education out of the funds of the Trust. For some inexplicable reason the scrivener was the only member of the

staff permitted to marry, and he only by the special permission of the Governors. His miserable colleagues and so-called superiors were condemned to perpetual bachelorhood on pain of forfeiting their office. Seventy pounds a year "if it can be lawfully raised" was to be appropriated to scholarships tenable at Catherine Hall, Cambridge, and two fellowships of £30 a year might be created, the scholarships to be tenable for seven and the fellowships for twelve years.

In spite of these in many ways reasonable statutes evil days were now in store for the School. They were evil days for England generally, although, as has happened so often in our chequered national history, good came out of them in the end. As the outcome of an intrigue of some kind, the details of which cannot now be traced, the Charter was surrendered to Charles II in the last year of his reign and a new one issued by James II in February 1685 to the Governors, who addressed the King in terms of fulsome flattery which would be sickening if they were less ludicrous. After thanking him for his princely favours and acknowledging with humble gratitude his "great

act of clemency" they prayed God "who had so quietly placed him on the Throne of his Ancestors to fix in his Right Hand length of days, and in his Left riches and honour. This prays, Great Sir, your Majesty's most humble, dutifull and obedient subjects." The "great act of clemency" cost the Foundation £91 in fees and expenses, and no sooner had its royal and sacred author absconded than a suit was begun in Chancery for the annulment of the new Charter, which was finally—at a cost of £250 more—pronounced illegal, and the Charter of Edward VI restored, certain ejected Governors being at the same time replaced in office. These disorders in high places were not likely to be conducive to good government lower down. Indeed in the latter part of the seventeenth and early years of the eighteenth century the Head Masters and the boys seem to have been rivals in successful, or at any rate unpunished, acts of rowdyism. On November 26, 1667, a barring out of the master by the boys occurred on a scale of such violence that it seems to have amounted to a dangerous town riot. The School building was carried by storm, the scholars being assisted

in their assault by "the more unruly persons of the town, in vizards and with pistols and other arms. The assailants did not only threaten to kill their master, being got into the School, but by the space of two hours cast in stones and bricks breaking the wall and wainscot of the School" and endangering the pedagogue's life. No retribution seems to have ensued, for the Governors, while threatening to prosecute the townsmen who "came running into such dangerous riot" yet "for some reasons" thought fit their master should pardon this present transgression in the offending scholars. From which we infer that they considered it a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other. Again, ten years later, in 1677, we find the significant entry of a payment to Widow Spooner "for cleansing ye Schoole att Pennynge out." On June 24, 1709, James Parkinson, who became Head Master in 1694, was dismissed from his office by formal resolution of the Governors for mismanagement, unquietness, and unfitness to be Chief Master, the Governors directing that "out of civility to him, though we don't apprehend he much deserves it, notice be sent to him of this our



KING EDWARD'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL, NEW STREET, END OF 18TH CENTURY.

order, that he may seek for some other place where he may be more useful." After this civility it must have been peculiarly galling to the Governors two years later, in 1711, to have to order payment of £50 to Mr. Parkinson, the Head Master, by order of the Court of Chancery, towards his expenses in the suit, and again in 1713, "£50 to Parkinson, as before." Mr. Parkinson died in 1722 still in full enjoyment of his office.

The Governors had indeed pulled down the old Gild Hall and erected a more suitable building for School purposes in 1707. This was a red brick edifice consisting of a central block surmounted by a square tower, and two projecting wings. It remained standing till 1836, and is a prominent feature in eighteenth century prints of the town of Birmingham. They also opened two small branch schools and an evening school in different parts of the town, but in other respects mismanaged the property and neglected their duties. In 1723 Commissioners appointed by the Court of Chancery reported various breaches of the Trust, among them the fact that no Scholarship had been given for twenty years. The

election of scholars was probably resumed, but in 1734 we find the Governors faced with the surprising difficulty that the Chief Master *having no scholars under his care,* Statutes 14 and 15 could not be complied with, and one of the usher's pupils had to be elected, and sent up to Oxford with the School Exhibition. Things were not always as bad as this. Scholars were sent up from time to time to the Universities, though not in the numbers or with the regularity prescribed by the Statutes, and some effort at any rate was made to fill up the grievous gaps in the educational equipment of the town. In 1751, after a report of the large numbers of Birmingham children who by the poverty or negligence of their parents were unable to read the English language, the Governors authorized the appointment of four masters or mistresses for the teaching and instructing of such, and so many, boys and girls in the English tongue as the Governors for the time being should nominate and appoint, no master or mistress to be obliged to teach more than forty scholars at one time, and each teacher having the full complement of pupils to receive £15 a year. Except as regards the method of

selecting the pupils, and the figure of the teacher's salary, this reads as quite up to date, if not a little beyond the standard of efficiency at present reached in elementary schools. On July 7, 1773, it was ordered that a French master be enquired for for teaching and instructing *five* scholars of the School in the French language at a salary of £20, which seems an extravagant rate of remuneration compared with that of his English colleagues. In a Guide to Birmingham, published in 1808, the Author, speaking of the curriculum of the School, says: "Drawing has been recently introduced; and the English language, and productions in it are now generally cultivated, an improvement which certainly gives the School greater consistency with the character of the Town for whose use it is chiefly intended," sentiments which the English Association would be likely to approve. But what would the Modern Language Association say of the remainder of the passage, which runs as follows? "The French language was formerly taught gratis, but this is no longer the case. This we think a very proper regulation. Nothing prepares a country so completely for subju-

gation as teaching the inhabitants the language of the would-be conqueror. We trust that our subjugation is not at hand, but there is no reason why we should incautiously promote the object of our enemy."

On the whole, the educational history of the Foundation, and consequently of the town, during the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century cannot be regarded with much complacence. It is true we know but little about it, but what we do know is of an unsatisfactory character. The School doubtless did some useful work, but it might have done a great deal more, and certainly it possessed no shadow of the national reputation which it has since acquired. The extremely handsome marble fireplace and beautiful bust of the Founder erected in 1748, and recently restored to their pristine purity of colour, are the most permanent memorials now surviving of this period. A portrait in oils of King Edward, acquired by the Governors in 1682 at a cost of £2, the frame costing £3 9*s*. 6*d*., is a less meritorious work of art. It hangs in the Head Master's house, and so far as I can judge, the disproportion between the value of the frame

and of its contents is only apparent, and the purchasers made no great bargain with either.

There is still an Old Edwardian living who was admitted by the Rev. Dr. Cooke, Head Master from 1797 to 1831. It is his opinion, and I should be the last to dispute it, that no other Head Master of the School is fit to hold a candle to Dr. Jeune, appointed at the date last mentioned. For whereas each of his successors has found an excellent School on first assuming office, Dr. Jeune, found it "the worst school in England, and left it one of the best." The modern era in fact begins with 1830, when—I quote again from Mr. Bunce:—

"A Bill was introduced into Parliament to reform the School. Power was taken to build a new Grammar School, to extend the curriculum, so as to include all branches of an English education including modern languages; to found four branch schools of an elementary character, to provide for the publication of accounts, which had never yet been done, and to institute other reforms. But, extensive as were these concessions to public opinion, there was one clause in the Bill which justly destroyed it. This was a provision that no person shall be elected a Governor who is not a member of the Established Church of England. It was a monstrous proposal, considering that Nonconformists were actually preponderant in the town, as regarded both numbers and influence. Such an opposition was offered that the Bill was rejected, but in 1831, stripped

of the obnoxious clause and somewhat altered in other respects, it was passed. One result of this Act was the building of the present Grammar School in New Street, from the designs of Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Barry, the architect of the Houses of Parliament. A second Act was obtained in 1837 to amend, and in several important matters to enlarge, the Act of 1831, and by 1838 the new system of Schools, advanced and elementary, was in full operation under the direction of James Prince Lee, who for ten years thence forward showed himself a great Head Master."

These were notable reforms, and supported by the augmentation in the revenue of the Endowment, the usefulness and the celebrity of the School grew together. The 125 acres of open field with a few agricultural and other buildings which in 1552 were reckoned to be worth £20 a year were becoming the heart of a great industrial town. The rental in 1810 was £2,400, in 1830 £3,200, in 1850 £8,500, in 1870 £13,400, in 1890 £30,000, and, to bring the statement down to the present time, in 1909 the entire income from all sources, including fees, was about £53,000.

It is well known that three of the most eminent scholars, theologians, and Churchmen of the nineteenth century, Archbishop Benson, Bishop Lightfoot, and Bishop Westcott were

all pupils of Prince Lee, while Sir Edward Burne-Jones, almost the most famous of its artists, was under Lee's successor, Dr. Gifford, and has gratefully acknowledged the inspiration he received at the great Birmingham School of the forties. But they were far from standing alone. It is no part of my present purpose to compile a Roll of Honour, and the task would soon become invidious, especially when we come to the names of men now living; but it is necessary to take account of the causes which gave to the School's fame a wider expansion than even the industry of Birmingham was giving to its financial resources. Within ten years this almost unknown provincial Grammar School—not to count any other distinctions—sent to Cambridge six Senior Classics, an achievement in that field of learning unrivalled, and indeed hardly approached, by any Public School before or since. It lifted King Edward's at once into the front rank, not of Birmingham or of Midland, but of English schools, and I mention without a blush that its boys have been doing their best to keep it there by insisting on two places in the first bracket of the Classical Tripos and

two Senior Wranglerships within the last four years—a performance, of its kind, also unsurpassed, and indeed, as it happens, now unsurpassable.

But we have still eighty years of history to cover, and must return to the Acts of 1831 and 1837. These measures, although they sufficed to launch the School on a new and splendid career, were still far from satisfying public opinion or all the claims of justice and sound statesmanship. Whence came the enormous accession of wealth which for three-quarters of a century continued to double the already large revenue of the Foundation every twenty years? Clearly from the industry and enterprise of the people of Birmingham. As Mr. Bunce expresses it, it was "what in the case of private owners would be called unearned increment, but in this case a well-earned increment, due to the progress of Birmingham and devoted wholly to the benefit of the town which made it." Yet the town had singularly little voice in the matter. The Governors were what is somewhat illogically called "self elected": that is to say, on the occurrence of a vacancy the remaining members of the

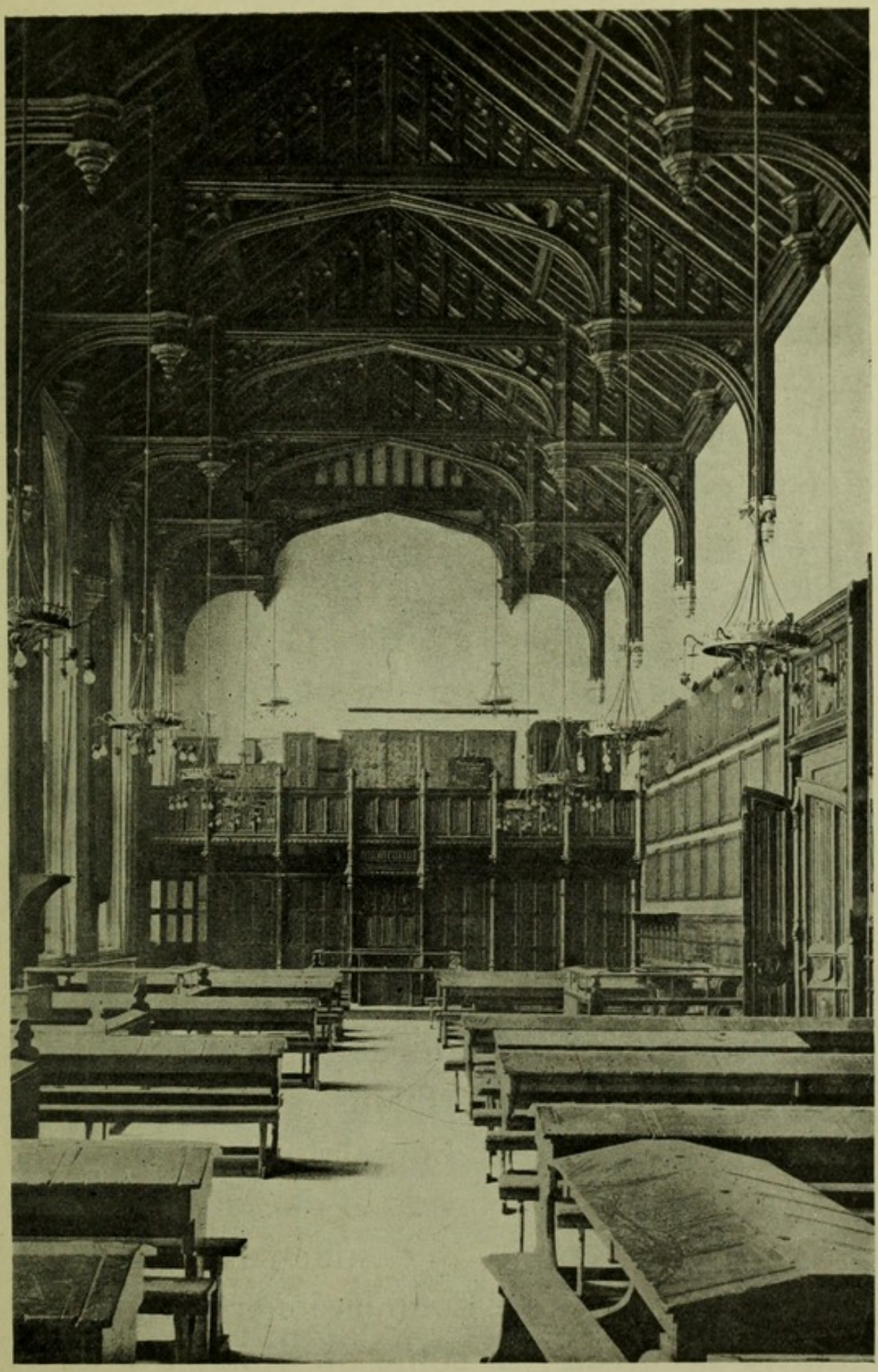
Board merely co-opted a new colleague. This might not have mattered very much, and there is no reason to doubt that the Governing Body has been ever since the reform of 1830 a singularly upright, diligent and far-seeing body of men. But it was a serious defect that pupils could be admitted only by individual nomination, and a more popular and representative constitution was the obvious remedy for this and similar faults. Agitation went on intermittently for twenty years to support the claims of the Town Council to a share in the administration of the School. In 1865 a series of extraordinarily able and vigorous letters appeared in the *Daily Post*, signed "Historicus," and proceeding from the pen of my lamented friend the late Mr. C. E. Mathews. A Grammar School Association was formed, to induce the Governors to surrender the co-optative principle and to effect other reforms. The justice of the claim was established by the report of the Endowed Schools Commission of 1868, from which the following words are a quotation. "No Dissenter, within the memory of man, has been a Governor. No Mayor of the town has till the present year been a Governor;

no Member for the borough, except one, a Conservative ; not one Town Councillor." Such exclusiveness was indeed an insult to a town of so much public spirit as Birmingham then displayed. The inevitable reform took some years to complete and was effected in several stages. There were new schemes in 1875, 1878, and 1883, the details of which it would be tedious to recount. In the dust of controversy main lines of policy are obscured, while minor issues sometimes loom larger than they should, and it is surprising now to read that the measure of 1878 was opposed, though unsuccessfully, in the House of Commons by three such indisputable Birmingham patriots as Mr. Bright, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Muntz.

At this time there were three divisions in the central school, called a Classical, an English and a Lower department, comprising 584 boys in all, and eight branch schools educating 607 boys and 554 girls. These branch schools were elementary, and their work was being rapidly taken up by the schools of the Birmingham School Board established by the Act of 1870. Consequently the scheme of 1883 converted them into Secondary Schools under

the name of Grammar Schools, the original Grammar School in New Street being entitled the High School. The High School included girls as well as boys, the girls being taught in the side of the building hitherto occupied by the English Department, the pupils of which were transferred to the new Grammar Schools, especially that established at Five Ways under Mr. MacCarthy, the Head Master of the old English Department at New Street. The building formerly belonging to the Edgbaston Proprietary School was acquired and enlarged for the reception of these boys. Several years later the splendidly designed and equipped Girls' High School, whose glories are—for financial reasons rather than from any feminine shyness—withdrawn from the gaze of the passer-by in New Street, took away the girls from Barry's stately edifice, which once more echoes to none but masculine voices.

The scheme of 1883 provided that there should be twenty-one Governors, eight nominated by the Town Council, one each by the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London, eight by co-optation, and one—an interesting and perhaps unique feature—elected by the



KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM. "BIG SCHOOL."

Teachers of the Foundation, who at the present moment number nearly 140. Admission to all the schools was to be by examination, and one-third of all the pupils were to hold Foundation Scholarships exempting them from the tuition fee. The constitution and the admirable system of scholarships and exhibitions were due in no small measure to the sagacity of Mr. T. H. Green, of Oxford, one of the Endowed Schools Commissioners of 1868, and afterwards himself a member of the Governing Body representing the University of Oxford.

Mr. Bunce remarks that this scheme of 1883 was possibly not final—for in educational plans there is no finality—and this prophecy has been fulfilled. The parental, not to say grandmotherly, control of the Charity Commissioners in London, more suitable for the superintendence and safeguarding of small local charities, proved superfluous and obstructive in the case of a great Foundation administered by some of the best heads of one of the busiest cities of the empire. Conflicts between the Governors and the Commissioners were constantly occurring, in some of which the latter were told their business with a freedom to

which they can hardly have been accustomed. Finally in 1900 the Governors promoted a bill in Parliament which with the powerful support of Mr. Chamberlain duly passed into an Act, and deprived the Charity Commission of all further power to waste our time and money in needless red tape and interminable correspondence with London. At the same time an additional seat was provided on the Board for a representative of the New University of Birmingham. This seat, I need scarcely tell you, has ever since been occupied by the Principal of the University, our Chairman of this evening, Sir Oliver Lodge.

By this Act, the Birmingham (King Edward VI) Schools Act of 1900, we are still governed, but with the consent of our new masters, the Board of Education, certain modifications, both in the constitution and in the Scholarship system, were introduced last year. By a slight further reduction in the number of co-optative Governors places have been found for representatives of the neighbouring County Councils of Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire, and by an altogether admirable improvement, in a body which controls so many girls'

schools, women, for the first time since the sixteenth century, take a share in the administration of the Trust. Mrs. Muirhead and Miss Fry are our first Lady Governors.

While the aggregate number of free places in the schools will not be greatly altered, the mode of election to them, so far as concerns the Grammar Schools, is somewhat changed. Twenty-five per cent. of the vacancies in all these schools are now offered at the June Admission Examination to boys and girls from Public Elementary Schools as free places. Some further free places, or Foundation Scholarships, will still be awarded to pupils already in the schools, on the results of the ordinary half-yearly school examinations, without restriction as to previous place of education, but the number will necessarily be smaller than hitherto.

It is too early to gauge the whole educational effect of this change, which seems likely to be of a mixed kind. Inasmuch as 25 per cent. of the Foundation Scholarships were already held by children coming from Public Elementary Schools, and in point of fact the eyes of the Board of Education seem to have been fixed on the shining example of King Edward's

School, Birmingham, in framing their regulations, it is a little surprising that when their copy of us comes to be applied to that of which it is a copy, any readjustment, on our part at any rate, should be required to secure a perfect fit ; and a little doubtful whether the readjustment will be found to be an improvement, especially to those in whose interest it is ostensibly made. However that may be, the King Edward's Grammar Schools are now in line with the Board's regulations and able to earn Exchequer Grants in competition with their friendly rivals the Council Secondary Schools, and this advantage has been gained—I should like to emphasize the fact—without in any degree altering the general scope and character of the education given in them. The Schools will give the same sort of training as before, but will be better equipped to give it, for the additional resources placed at the Governors' disposal are enabling them to effect very important improvements in the buildings and staffing of the schools. Within the next few months new laboratories and similar equipment of the most up-to-date description will be provided at Five Ways, Camp Hill and Aston ;

and the walls are already rising of a great girls' school at Handsworth accommodating 475 pupils to which educational pilgrims desirous of learning the last word in school building will be likely to come from all parts of England and from beyond the sea.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have endeavoured to take you over a long period—from 1383 to September 1911 when it is hoped that the new Handsworth Girls' Grammar School will be opened. What are the main characteristics of the Institution whose development we have been tracing through well-nigh five centuries and a half, and what lesson, if any, may be drawn from the narrative? The main point is that it is surely a fine example of public spirit, a virtue less easy to define than to admire, the presence of which is as sure a sign of a vigorous, sound, and progressive community as its absence is the token of decay and impending disaster. Thomas Sheldon, John Coleshull, John Goldsmyth and William atte Stowe were, according to their lights, good Birmingham citizens and public benefactors when they offered of their substance to endow a chantry in St. Martin's Church in the year 1383. The

constitution of the Gild which their benefaction ultimately founded exhibits not only a truly Christian charity but in some respects a degree of foresight and width of view rather in advance of the age. When after the lapse of some six generations the great blaze of light which we call the Reformation and the Revival of Learning burst somewhat stormily upon the mediæval world, it was found that the Gild was still doing work of such undeniable utility that public opinion drove even the haughty Tudors to make early restitution of what, taking advantage of the general commotion, they had for the moment seized. It is no mere formality when in all the schools of the Foundation we daily give thanks for our pious Founder, King Edward the Sixth, and pray that we may answer to his good intent and become profitable members of the Church and Commonwealth. For we sincerely believe that no form of restoration could have been devised more truly and permanently beneficent than the educational form which his gentle and studious disposition, supported by the wisdom of his advisers, has set forth in the great Charter of 1552. For more than 350 years since that

date the communal benefit has been preserved and maintained by successive bodies of Governors, not indeed without grievous lapses and doubtless some loss, but with sufficient fidelity to enable it not merely to survive but to expand and develop marvellously in accordance with the growing needs of modern times. What are these needs ? There is a principle underlying democracy which we need above all things to remember, for if it be lost sight of, democracy itself will prove, as has happened before this in the history of nations, a delusion and a disaster. It is the principle defined by a French statesman as the career open to the talents, and which we may ourselves describe in homely language as getting the right man into the right place. No community, and no generation, can afford not to give free play to the natural inherited powers of its members. Mute inglorious Miltons do not write immortal poetry, and if Cromwell made some mistakes it is a true saying that the man who makes no mistakes never makes anything, and to keep our potential Cromwells in crass ignorance and seclusion is to choke their powers for good even more effectively than their possibilities

of mischief. Of all the means of bringing ability to the front, none can compare with cheap and efficient education. The ideal should be, so to order our educational system that the inborn qualities may have full play in whatever rank of life they may appear.

Secondary Schools, from their very nature, must be select schools, but the selection should be by natural powers not by accidental or artificial circumstances, nor by the wealth or poverty of the parent. The poorest boy or girl should be able to rise to the full height of position and responsibility in the state for which his or her natural endowments are adapted. The King Edward's Schools by their liberal provision of free scholarships from the elementary schools, by a provision (which I could wish were larger) of Maintenance Scholarships between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, and leaving exhibitions to the Universities, and not less by their wisely graded distinction of High and Grammar Schools, whereby those whose period of education is shorter get something tolerably complete in itself, and not a mere fragment, useless by itself, of something greater—are working with this ideal in view.

I am far from saying that they cover the whole field. In all probability they can do this far less completely with their modern £50,000 a year than they could formerly with one-twentieth part of that sum, because the field has grown faster than their means. When I praised "cheap" education, I meant cheap to the parent, not education which is cheap to the provider—than which nothing can be really dearer, for it is worthless, or even worse. To give the fullest educational opportunities to nearly 3,000 children, 1,000 of whom pay nothing at all, and the remainder in no case as much as half the cost of what they receive, is to bale out sovereigns with both hands daily, and the Foundation, so far from being rich, has, ever since I have known it, been lamentably poor, if by poverty be meant, as it should be, lack of means to do one's own proper work in quite the best way. Still, the schools have filled, are filling, and I trust will continue to fill, an enormous gap, which in less fortunate cities remains an aching void, and Birmingham fathers and mothers, as well as Birmingham children, may very properly join us in our daily formula of thanksgiving and of prayer.

BIRMINGHAM AS IT MIGHT BE

By W. H. Bidlake, M.A.

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I must confess to a sense of temerity in attempting to deliver a lecture on this subject, not only because its title involves an implication that Birmingham might be improved, but because it embraces problems of the greatest complexity whose solution is still engaging the earnest thought and devoted enthusiasm of some of the best minds in the country.

The Slum and the Suburb.

A year ago I was visiting a friend at Middleton, near Manchester. We reached the dreary little smoke-begrimed town after one of the most depressing tram-rides of ten miles that I can remember. Imagining that we had surely reached the boundary of bricks and mortar, I asked my friend how much farther we should have to go to be quite out in the open fields. "Ah," he replied, "our *shortest* way would be to go back through Manchester." We are not,

in Birmingham, quite so unhappily situated as that, but we must not forget that we, too, have our "Black Country."

Think of it, what chance have the children of poverty at Middleton ever to know the pleasures of the countryside or even to see a green tree? Many of them must live and die in their dreary surroundings. Yet it was not always so. At one time, towns were clearly defined and the open country extended right up to their boundaries. In mediaeval times, indeed, the houses were entirely enclosed within the wall of defence and no suburbs lay beyond; only gardens, vineyards and fields.

Our modern civilization has brought us many benefits, but it has also brought us the modern slum and the modern suburb. Can a still higher civilization bring us back the country?

The inordinate growth of the town and the corresponding depopulation of the rural country is a modern phenomenon. The introduction of machinery has required the centralization of those manufactures and crafts which were at one time carried on in the workers' homes. And as the worker must be housed near his work he must, perforce, leave the village

for the town. The better education of village children, which makes them less content with the monotony of country life, assists the same tendency, and it is doubtful whether even the prospect of a small holding will attract the erstwhile ploughboy from the excitements of town life and the pleasures of the music-hall.

But land in a town is valuable and so, in order that it may bring in an adequate return, it must needs be covered with small back-to-back houses arranged in narrow closed courts, into which neither sunlight nor fresh air can find their way. The degradation and degeneration of the worker is the inevitable result. I need not dwell on the too common picture of the man reeling from the public-house, or of the children, pale and prematurely old, playing in the street gutter, or of the squalid homes too often the nurseries of criminals; but I may point out the costliness of it to the nation, whose greatest asset is a vigorous and healthy race.

We are all agreed, then, *the slum must go*. But its abolition, or its improvement so that it be no longer a slum, is a very difficult problem. It is of no use to pull down the houses and drive their inmates to crowd into contiguous areas,

and it is just as futile to rebuild them at a rent which the dispossessed are unable to pay, or to make provision for the latter at a distance from their work.

I have heard a story of a single room being occupied by five families, one in each corner and one in the middle. All went well until the middle set began taking in lodgers and then the others objected. The story has its point, for if the rent is too high lodgers will be taken in to assist its payment, and overcrowding will once more result.

There are two ways in which slums may be dealt with by municipal authorities under the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890. Either the authorities may obtain power, which, by the way, is a long and costly process, to buy up the slum, and rebuild the houses either in blocks of artisans' flats or otherwise, or, on the other hand, they may, on the report of the Medical Officer, serve notice on the owners of dilapidated houses to put them in repair at their own expense, and in default a closing order is issued, which may, if nothing is done to remedy the defects, be followed by an order of demolition.

Mr. Nettlefold, in his book on *Practical Housing*, compares the working of the two methods and points out that while the cost per head of re-housing by the first method of municipal re-building averages £77 15*s.* for the whole country, the cost per head in Birmingham, which has adopted the second method of compulsory repair by the landlord, comes to £1 4*s.* 3*d.*

Charles Kingsley long ago pointed out the demoralization which follows in a closed court for lack of the restraining influence of public opinion, and the Birmingham Corporation has adopted the excellent expedient of demolishing, after due compensation to the landlord, those houses which fronted the courts along the street, thus converting the closed courts into open terraces.

Mr. Nettlefold, in a leaflet, states that during five years 634 houses were demolished in Birmingham as obstructive to others or as being incapable of being made fit, and that during the same period about twelve acres were thrown open to the air in congested neighbourhoods.

Two agents have now come to our assistance in solving the slum problem : *the bicycle and the*

cheap tram ; they are incalculable boons to the working man, for they enable him to live farther from his work. Thus the demolition of slum houses is not felt to the extent that might be expected, for the worker is, in increasing numbers, betaking himself to the healthier suburbs.

But what of these suburbs, at one time the residential districts of the wealthier citizens ? The flavour of the word does not commend itself. How is a suburb made ? Owing to the extension of the town outwards the old residential properties come into the market as building estates. The purchasers now set to work to develop them by first cutting down all the trees, and then by making roads, which are required by the bye-laws to be unnecessarily wide and unnecessarily expensive in construction. In order, therefore, to show a fair return on their investment the purchasers, be they jerry-builders or other speculators, must crowd on the estate as many houses as possible. These are allowed by the bye-laws to be fifty-six to the acre. We are all familiar with the result. Long unlovely streets of slated houses whose deadly monotony is only relieved by one dozen in the row having Bath stone window-heads

and the next dozen brick arches, and whose so-called gardens are little more than extended backyards.

Do the owners of such dwellings really deceive themselves as to their dignity or their surroundings by naming them Strathclyde or Bellevue ?

It is to suburbs such as these that the workman who has escaped from the slums must betake himself. Certainly, they are an improvement on the slum itself inasmuch as there is more air and light, but though farther from the congested town they are no nearer to the country. Their soullessness and monotony is deadly, crushing, overpowering. If we believe with the ancient Greeks that the contemplation of beauty ennobles the soul, what influence can we look for from surroundings such as these ?

Nor is it sufficient to go still further from the town, or even into the open country itself. Experience tells us that the same forces operate. The trees are all cut down, the land is cut up by streets, and as many houses as possible are crowded upon it, so that in an incredibly short time the anomaly of a slum-suburb surrounded by open fields presents itself.

In one respect it is an even greater evil than the slum itself, for it infects and contaminates the neighbourhood to a greater extent. Those who own adjoining land find its value depreciated for any other purpose than the development of further slum-suburbs. So down go the trees and up go the surveyors' notice boards "This eligible building land for sale," and the devastation spreads in an encircling ring round the town.

Town Planning.

Then is there no hope? Must the town dwellers resign themselves to the banishment for ever of the beauty and the delights of the country, the shade of trees, the colour of flowers and the sunlight on level grass? It is here that town planning comes in.

Hitherto estates have been developed solely with the idea of arranging as many houses on the land as possible, without regard to the general welfare of the neighbourhood, and often to the direct injury of adjoining owners. The bye-laws, so far from checking the evil, are at present actively stimulating it.

The object of town planning is to change

all this: to encourage co-operation between land owners and all those who are concerned in the development of building estates to work in harmony with a well-thought-out plan for the common good, which will also prove to their own advantage, to restrict the number of houses so as to provide for gardens and open spaces for recreation, and at the same time to enable the local authorities to meet the land-owners in the cost of estate development while reserving sufficient land for the construction of main thoroughfares.

Nor is it restricted in its scope to the suburbs and outlying districts; it aims also at ordering the development of the city itself, or of modifying its existing arrangements as opportunity may present, so that its streets may afford ready and direct means of traffic from point to point, so that its main thoroughfares may be spacious, its public squares and gardens well placed and designed, and its component parts, whether devoted to public buildings, warehouses, shops or factories, may be conveniently placed and correlated, all conducing to a harmonious whole.

What might not have been achieved had this course been adopted in times past before

our towns and cities had become rigid and while the value of the land still allowed a stately development of town planning! The question at once presents itself "Is it now too late?"

As regards the placing of public buildings and the lines of the principal thoroughfares, yes. But, on the other hand, our aim should not be to destroy the particular ensemble of a town which gives it its character and individuality, still less to obliterate its historic landmarks or demolish its ancient buildings. That would be too great a price to pay for modern improvement. But a judicious plan for the gradual improvement of the centre of a town and the development of its outskirts need not and must not prejudice its historical and archaeological interest.

On the other hand, as regards the outlying districts it is not yet too late. More might, of course, at one time have been done, but much may still be effected. But there is no time to lose. Every year, nay, every month, witnesses an extension of the suburb-slum of jerry-built houses.

It is of urgent and pressing importance that each town should appoint a town planning

committee without delay to assist the local authorities, and such committee should, I think, include not only solicitors and land agents but architects, painters and sculptors. These committees would collect information and cause maps, contour plans, and models to be made of the whole town and district, and then, and not before, they would evolve, without rush or hurry, a deliberately and carefully thought-out plan which should form the basis of all future town modifications and developments. And, in doing so, they would avail themselves to the fullest extent of the aids and facilities which the Town Planning Act of 1909 affords them.

In this matter of town planning the Germans are ahead of us, and the town plan of Cologne affords an excellent example of their method. Here, not only are wide circumferential boulevards or "rings" laid out uniting the various parts of the city, but the district round the business centre is mapped out in zones, in which are allowed buildings of varying character, height, and spacing, and parts are allotted to the poor as well as the rich in the same zone, so that all alike may have the advantage of country and garden surroundings.

But while acknowledging German precedence in a general application of town planning, we must not forget that it was the re-modelling of Paris that afforded the first example and gave the first stimulus.

Nor shall we be so ungrateful as to forget our own pioneers of garden suburbs and garden cities, our Cadburys, Levers and Ebenezer Howards who have demonstrated at Bournville, Port Sunlight, Letchworth and Hampstead the possibility of developing building estates on a sound financial basis, so that at the same time the dwellers may enjoy the delights of the garden and the country, and yet be called upon to pay only a reasonable rent.

Before considering the particular application of town planning to Birmingham and the districts round, some of the principles which govern the laying out of streets and places, and which have been formulated from a study of existing towns, might with advantage be examined.

The Two Systems.

There are two main systems on which a town may be laid out. There is firstly the *chessboard*

system, in which all the streets are set out at right angles to each other, and secondly the *spider's web system,* in which the streets are either radial or concentric.

The first or chessboard system has been practised at all times from the earliest ages. Egypt affords us an example in the ruins of Kahun, 5,000 years old ; Selinus is an example of Grecian " Doric " ; Turin has been developed from the rectangular lines of a Roman camp, while those towns founded by Edward I in Aquitaine and Guienne in the south-west of France, which at that time belonged to the English Crown, were invariably set out in rectangular lines. Winchilsea, under the same King, was replanned in the same manner after the destruction of the old town by the sea. It is, however, to America that we must look for the widest vogue and greatest development of the rectangular town. There no obstruction is allowed to interfere with a rigid setting out : the suggestions of the site, whether of hill or valley or water-course are all ignored, the net of streets is spread uniformly over all.

The system has one merit, the square blocks suit the natural shape of the buildings. So far

as I am aware, that is all that can be advanced in favour of it. It is mechanical and soulless in the extreme; moreover, it is very inconvenient and will remain so as long as two sides of a triangle are greater than the third side. The want of radial and diagonal lines is now beginning to be much felt in the cities of the States, and various schemes are being evolved to supply the deficiency. But the cost will be enormous, and it is doubtful whether the ambitious plan for the improvement of Chicago by the introduction of radial streets and circular boulevards can ever be carried out.

The second or spider's web system is more in harmony with the natural growth of a town. Moreover, it allows of a focus, which the former system does not. If all roads lead to Rome, it may also be said with equal truth that the main roads of any district lead to the centre of its principal town.

Birmingham itself has developed very much on these lines. But the setting out of a town on rigid radial and concentric lines, with the public buildings in the centre, is only a little less objectionable than the rectangular system. Both are alike artificial and want individual

expression. They are to the natural town-growth as the crystal is to the seed. Further the radial system if strictly carried out as some have advocated, gives awkward triangular sites ill-adapted to buildings, and while the straight radial streets gives monotonous and interminable perspective the perspective of the circular ones is for ever opening out and yet for ever closed. The ideal is to be found neither in the one system nor the other, but, as is so often the case, in the middle way.

For while the principal public buildings and their surrounding squares and places will certainly form the principal focus, the railway station, harbour, or river bridge will assuredly form other foci, and from each radial roads will lead.

If, therefore, the main thoroughfares will be mostly radial the filling in of secondary roads should be approximately rectangular to suit the buildings and, in addition to these, one or more main concentric roads should bind the whole together, while judiciously disposed diagonal roads should here and there unite points of special importance. But above and beyond all the lay-out should adapt itself to

the natural topographical conditions, its roads gently curving here round contour lines or river bend or there striking out straight across the plain. Only thus, by frankly accepting the hint of the site, will the town acquire a natural and individual character.

Almost all mediaeval towns have developed thus and it is to this fact that much of their charm is due.

The destruction of the city of London by the Great Fire presented Londoners with the unique opportunity of re-modelling their city on more convenient lines than the narrow tortuous streets to which they had been accustomed, and Sir Christopher Wren proved himself equal to the occasion. His proposed plan for rebuilding the city forestalls in a remarkable manner the conclusions of modern town planning, allowing, as it does, for wide radial streets leading out from the principal foci, or following the direction of the river, with a filling in of smaller streets on rectangular lines while concentric streets surround important centres.

We may note, too, in passing that Sir Christopher anticipated in another respect the ideas

of the present day. He suggested the pooling of all individual properties with redistribution, after the new street plan was provided for, of equivalent areas in as far as possible the same positions. I am not aware of this having been done in England, but in Germany it has in some cases even been made compulsory—and much to the benefit of the property owners as well as to the general community.

Coming now a little more to matters of detail, we shall observe that straight streets must not be too long without a break. A long, straight street appears to have no end, and its monotonous perspective converges to a point. Such streets are particularly disagreeable if they lie in the direction of prevailing winds. A straight street should either have the view closed or terminated by some building or object of importance to which it affords a fine vista. We may find many an application of this principle in Paris.

Streets of gentle curvature, on the other hand, are in themselves more interesting ; they hold the possibilities of a surprise and their concave sides display the buildings to better advantage. In a well planned town both straight and curved

streets will be found, and it is to the absence of the latter that some of the monotony of American cities is due. On hilly sites curved streets will necessarily be more frequent. Nor should the skyline of the buildings be neglected, nor the harmony of their general character. In special cases individual buildings should even be subordinated to a general design as, for instance, in the Quadrant of Regent Street. A further example may be found in the block of buildings which balances the Admiralty at the Place de la Concorde at Paris.

Birmingham has no conscientious scruples on this point. Corporation Street consists of what a seedsman would call "Selected varieties of sorts." The smoke, however, gives the broadening touch. It is doubtful whether this ameliorating effect of Birmingham smuts has ever been adequately recognized.

In thoroughfares which are not intended to be expressive of civic dignity an irregularity of width and of building frontage is sometimes pleasing: it breaks the perspective lines and enables one to recognize the third dimension of a building. Our own Town Hall jutting out beyond the Midland Institute gives an agreeable

break to Paradise Street. I have sometimes thought that all hat shops and those of costumiers should be recessed from the frontage line; it would be for the benefit of the ladies no less than that of the passer-by!

The height of buildings should be regulated by their position and by the width of the street. Such regulations are enforced at Cologne. To my thinking, the Workmen's Assurance building in Easy Row is offensively high. If the Americans with their skyscrapers are content to ruin the artistic beauty of their cities it is their concern, but do not let us, while we recognize their mistake, follow their example.

Most of the French towns were walled round during the Middle Ages, and where, in recent times, the fortifications have been destroyed their place has been filled with spacious boulevards planted with trees which encircle the town, and not only form a very agreeable promenade and means of communication round the town, but also afford a lung for fresh air in those towns which have outgrown their mediaeval boundaries. In a similar manner the splendid Ring-strasse of Vienna has been developed.

It is a matter for regret that English towns have not had the same opportunity of developing the ring boulevard which is of such inestimable advantage to those continental towns which possess it, but that affords no reason why we should not now set about its development as opportunity may offer. The Englishman's reluctance to beautify the streets and public squares of his cities by the planting of trees is a phenomenon which needs explaining. Can it be that there is no evident return in hard cash, and that it is considered a public waste to spend money in merely beautifying the city? Is that the Birmingham view? How can we otherwise explain the almost total absence of trees in the city? The French would have seized upon the Horsefair in Bristol Street long ago, and would have planted it with several rows of trees, and the twin steeples of the Council School and the church rising above them would have presented a charming picture on the approach from Bristol Road.

The "Place."

Having examined the lay-out of the streets and the arrangement of the buildings, we must

now give some attention to a third point: the public squares and their relation to the public buildings. As, however, the word *square* has become identified with a particular kind of open space, it would be better to substitute the word *place*, a word which is now being adopted in preference by writers on town planning.

The market place, or *agora*, was the centre of the public life in ancient Greek cities, and an analogous position and importance was occupied by the *forum* in the Roman world. In Rome itself the original forum, outgrown by the expanding city, was supplemented by the addition of a series of magnificent imperial fora, the splendour of which no modern city has ever emulated.

Every mediaeval town in like manner had its market place, adjoining which was the town hall. In cathedral cities there was also a second place adjoining the cathedral, and the churches generally, whether of the cities or towns, were generally built at one side of a small place so that at least two sides stood free, one or both of the remaining sides being often engaged with the surrounding buildings. These mediaeval places are often very irregular in shape and extremely picturesque.

With the advent of the Renaissance the places assumed a more formal aspect, as in the piazza in front of St. Peter's at Rome, and were set out on regular geometrical lines taking the form of squares, oblongs, octagons, circles or star shapes. A remarkable instance of the latter is the Place de l'Etoile, at Paris, where avenues radiate from the centre, which is occupied by the Arc de Triomph. The remodelling of Paris on formal lines set the fashion of the day in town planning, and Vienna, Berlin, and many a German city have been modified in this manner.

Recently, the publication of a work on town planning by Camillo Sitte, in 1889, has overthrown the Classic plan in Germany and revived the Mediaeval. Once again the path of wisdom is the middle way. The more formal lay-out in the neighbourhood of the great public buildings seems essential to the dignity of a modern city, while the more informal and picturesque lines of the Gothic plan are well suited to the town and the filling in of the city.

From a careful study of old mediaeval town places certain guiding principles have been laid down. Chief amongst these is the requirement

that the town place should be set in a frame of buildings, the streets stopping at the angles or sides of the place, preferably at the angles. This does not imply that the place should be entirely closed in, but that there should be a general sense of enclosure within the frame of buildings. Trafalgar Square loses much of its effect from its diffuseness ; the buildings framing it are too insignificant in proportion to the size of the square, and their arrangement does not lead the eye across the gaps of the streets so as to give a sense of unity and enclosure.

Many a quaint example of the closed place is to be found at Bruges and the cities of Italy, and many a delightful group of one or more places in conjunction with town hall and cathedral. Recall, for instance, the Piazza and Piazzetta at Venice, framed in by the basilica of St. Mark, the Library and the Doge's Palace, and dominated before the fatal catastrophe of a few years ago by the great civic Campanile, or that in front of the Palazzo Municipale at Florence, with the Loggia dei Lanzi and the arcades of the Uffizzi Gallery beyond, or the market place of Siena.

A remarkable instance of Renaissance town

planning of the time of Louis XV is to be found at Nancy, and it is interesting to observe the means there adopted to form enclosed places. The Place Stanislas is a spacious square in front of the Hotel de Ville, and is connected by great iron screens and gates at the open angles of the square with the buildings at the side, which would otherwise have appeared disconnected. This square is connected by a fine avenue laid out on the centre line with a second place in front of the Palais du Gouvernment, and the enclosure is here effected by two hemicycles with a triumphal arch opposite the Palais leading to the avenue.

Birmingham's One Square.

We may now ask how far these principles have been applied in our own town-place, Victoria Square.

We have the Town Hall well placed on the left, and inasmuch as it and the Council House bear a very intimate relation to each other, they should have been placed at right angles. When the architectural competition for the Council buildings was held, one of the competitors, Mr. Lynn, of Belfast, fully appreciated

this necessity, and ventured, I believe, in his design to correct the frontage line which was laid down in the conditions of the competition, and which has unhappily been adhered to in the present building. Moreover, he closed the angle of the square by connecting the Council House and Town Hall by a bridge, thus making the Town Hall available at civic receptions and immensely increasing the means of accommodation. Both the design and the plan were very fine in conception and the city is architecturally poorer for their not having been realized.

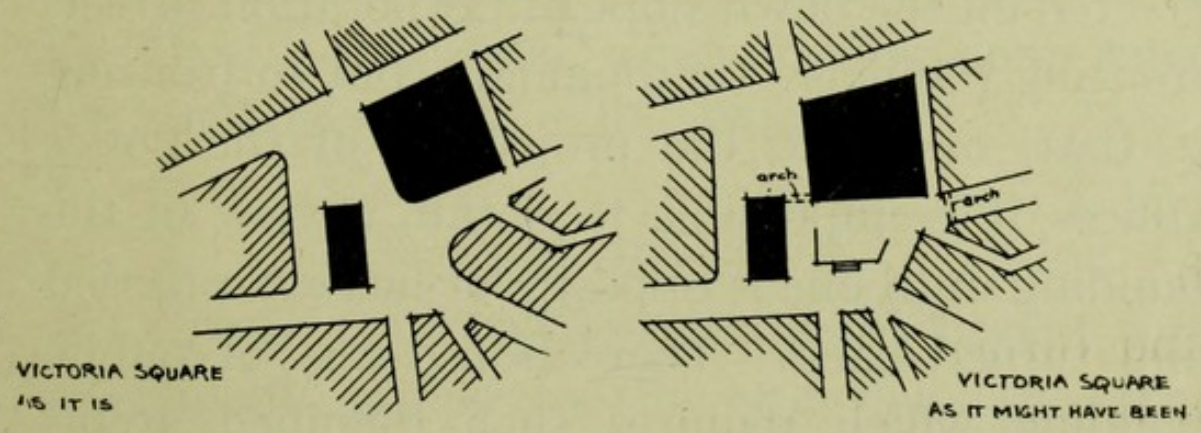
Unfortunately, the square is an inclined plane tilted up, as it were, on one angle. The present frontage of the Council House is therefore clearly wrong as it sets towards the diagonal of greatest inclination, the very thing which it should not have done. As a consequence, the building, when viewed from the Post Office or Inland Revenue Office, appears to be slipping down the incline. The Square has, moreover, been laid to a convex surface which is the least satisfactory because it tends to dwarf the height of the building beyond. It would not, however, have been easy to avoid this, and at the same

time make a convenient connexion between New Street and Colmore Row. But it is of little moment now, for the Square has been architecturally ruined by the frontage line of the new shops which stand on the site of Christ Church. I am not criticizing their design, but the manner in which they thrust themselves forward in front of the Council House, driving a blunt wedge into the middle of the Square. The purchase of the front part of the site would undoubtedly have been costly, but the city has only one Square, and it might have been thought worth while to make it as fine as circumstances would allow. The curved frontage of the buildings is a further evil, because it leads the eye away from the Square towards the openings of New Street and Colmore Row, whereas, as we have seen, the aim of town planners is exactly in the opposite direction.

I have embodied in the diagram some of these suggestions, and have placed an archway across the entrance to Colmore Row. I am afraid such an innovation would excite the ridicule of the Philistine, but those who remember the triumphal arch which was placed there on the occasion of the late royal visit

will agree that the architectural effect of an arch at that point would be very striking. It would be incongruous, I admit, but the incongruity would arise from the idea of the city spending money on purely architectural effect.

At one time, I pictured the land at the rear of the Council House planted out as a public garden, such as the French would have made



THE COUNCIL HOUSE AND VICTORIA SQUARE, AS THEY ARE AND AS THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

there, with the various public buildings grouped round, and I believed it might be realized because it was so evidently desirable. The erection of the new Art Gallery on this land appears to me to be the crowning mistake in the lay-out of the centre of the city. The new buildings will be surrounded by comparatively narrow and unimportant streets, and will be hidden away behind other public buildings very

much in the same way as at South Kensington, where a series of splendid buildings stand one in front of the other facing narrow cross streets —the Albert Hall, the Imperial Institute, the College of Science and the Natural History Museum.

There is one more important public building in the city—the Law Courts. This has been erected on the down slope of Corporation Street, fronting the noisy thoroughfare, but so fronting it, that, owing to the projection of the Police Offices, it is impossible to obtain a view of the building until one is opposite or has even passed and turned back. There is no class of public building which requires such dignified architectural treatment as a Court of Justice, which, by its restrained and imposing design, no less than by the dignity of its setting, should express the majesty of the law. The Old Square was ready at hand ; it had not then been built over. Had the Courts been set back from the Square with a back frontage to Steelhouse Lane and the Square itself planted as a garden with the Police Offices and other public buildings at the sides, a dignity would have been added to Corporation Street which the Courts in the

present position can never give. And so Victoria Square remains Birmingham's only square. But in the Birmingham of the future not only will the meeting of the principal roads be laid out as squares, but many a slum (now no longer overcrowded, for many of its former occupants will have moved out to the garden suburbs) will be cleared of its buildings, and a plot of open ground where the children may play, or a well laid out garden where the workers may rest, will have taken its place.

Open Spaces.

There is no more essential and urgent improvement needed in the city than the provision at very frequent intervals of these open spaces, which will admit light and air into the dwellings of the poor.

We have heard much of late of the taxation of unearned increment. If a tax is levied at all, is it unreasonable to claim that the whole of it should be received by the community whose activities had created the increment ? And in that case, might not the proceeds of the tax be exclusively devoted either to the acquisition of open spaces in congested districts or as interest

on loans raised for their acquisition ? I have already alluded to the open spaces where several roads meet. These spaces require careful planning. The star-shaped spaces formed by the intersection at a point of several radial roads and open at the centre are not satisfactory. The idea of expediting traffic by carrying the lines of road across such spaces is a delusion. It might be shown diagrammatically that at the intersection of six roads there are no less than 120 possible collision points. This means that the traffic will have to " slow down," and far from time being saved it will actually be lost. The collision points will be observed to lie towards the centre of the open space, and paradoxical as it may seem, the difficulty may be remedied by placing an obstruction at this very point. This, if large enough, will oblige the traffic to pass round it, and if all the traffic is compelled to pass round in the same direction the possibility of collision is reduced to a minimum. Exactly such an arrangement is the Grand Rond at Toulouse, where instead of taking the short turn to the left the trams passing in one direction go two-thirds round a circular garden which occupies the centre of intersection of five boulevards. Moreover, the

obstruction itself, be it garden, or fountain, or statue is an adornment to the neighbourhood.

Compare this with the open space at the bottom of Corporation Street, whose shape, far from having been designed, has merely been dictated by the intersection of no less than seven roads. On the main line of the principal street in the town what an opportunity has here been thrown away. So far from this great rendezvous of streets being dominated by some fine statue or fountain, what do we find ? Two small triangular " islands," the one occupied by a telephone box, which is not a thing of beauty, and the other by a public convenience! The open space in Navigation Street presents another instance of the risks of traffic lines intersecting at a point. A still further disadvantage of this arrangement is the wedge-shaped blocks of buildings left by the intersecting roads, a shape not only inconvenient in plan but difficult of architectural treatment, the blunting of the angle being the most common but the least satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

Once more we may learn a lesson from the mediaeval town which avoided triangular sites and intersecting radial roads.

Birmingham in the Past.

In any scheme for the improvement of an existing town I have referred to the necessity of studying not only its topography but its history. To obliterate some historic feature to save traffic a minute is not an improvement, it is a desecration.

Before, therefore, applying to our own city any of the conclusions at which we may have arrived from the study of other cities of other countries and other days, and of picturing in our imagination *Birmingham as it might be,* we might with advantage pass in rapid review some of the aspects of *Birmingham as it has been* with especial regard to town improvement in the past.

Like many another great commercial city, Birmingham is of humble origin—a number of smithies straggling along the main road in the marshy ground where the river Rea crosses Deritend. From this point the town extended in time through Digbeth, up the hill to High Street, then bending to the right through Dale End died out in the fields of the Coleshill Road, at the same time throwing off from this main thoroughfare three arms to the left, Small Brook Street, New Street and Bull Street.

The public life of the town practically begins with the granting by Richard II of a licence to found a chantry at St. Martin's Church. This chantry appears never to have come into existence, and in 1392 the Gild of Holy Cross was substituted. The fraternity met in the Guildhall in New Street on the site of King Edward's School, and its master and wardens had control amongst other matters of the roads and bridges. They were, in fact, the ancestors of our City Council. This Gild was unjustly represented as a religious foundation by the Commissioners of Henry VIII, and was suppressed. Shortly after, a Charity was founded by William Lench, now known as *Lenches Trust*, under which many of the public services of the defunct Gild were continued.

During the sixteenth century the town became very prosperous through its manufactures, and as it had been allowed to develop in a haphazard way many parts became congested and the streets were narrow, dirty and dark. Parliamentary powers to improve the town were at length sought, and a bill called " The Lamp Act " was passed in 1769.

The Commissioners appointed under the Lamp

Act held sway in Birmingham, and obtained powers to carry out many improvements in the fast developing town, until their powers were eventually transferred to the Corporation, the town having been incorporated in 1838.

The next great landmark in the development of the town was unquestionably the Improvement Scheme of 1876, initiated by Mr. Chamberlain, and which resulted in the construction of Corporation Street through what was at that time one of the worst districts of the town, although situated in its centre.

And now, in the fullness of time, comes the Town Planning Bill, and we may hope the Town Planning Committee, and as a result, the Town Planning Scheme, the final arrest of the growth of the jerry-built suburb and the reclamation of the slum.

The Hope of the Future.

A glance at the map of Birmingham will show that there is still a belt of considerable extent encircling the city which has not yet been invaded by the speculative builder, interrupted by park-like lands, either cemeteries, public parks or private properties.

May we not hope that some of the latter will some day be bequeathed to the city by public-spirited citizens to be maintained in perpetuity as public parks and recreation grounds? No gift could conceivably be of greater benefit to the community, none would be better appreciated, or put to better use. In a very real way it would be the means of increasing the happiness and the health of the people.

Imagine this hope realized, and further, imagine the spaces between the public parks filled with garden villages and garden suburbs, where each house, quiet and homely in appearance, and standing in its own garden-land, is grouped round the common green or borders the turf-edged and tree-planted road, the poor in association with the well-to-do, the employer and the worker, all inspired with a common aim, and that aim the maintenance of the beauty of their suburb. Can it be supposed that the dwellers in such happy surroundings of natural beauty would rest content until the city too had been transformed, until the great radial streets by which from their homes they reach their office or their workshop had been widened and planted with trees, carrying something of the country into

the heart of the city, or until the dark and unhealthy slums had been weeded out and open garden-places, tree-planted squares, or children's play-grounds had taken their place.

Actual street improvement within the city could only be planned as I have said after all the conditions involved have been ascertained and carefully weighed, but I may, perhaps, suggest modifications in two directions.

It will be generally admitted that the approach to Balsall Heath and Moseley from the centre of the city is extremely circuitous and inconvenient. There is, in short, great need in this direction of those radial roads with which other parts of the city are fairly well supplied.

I should suggest the linking up of Gooch Street with Suffolk Street, and the continuation of the latter to Tyndall Street and so into the Moseley Road.

The second suggestion has reference to the much discussed continuation of Paradise Street to Five Ways, so as to avoid the difficult corner at Easy Row. I would go further and have a boulevard at least 90 feet wide planted with trees, which should become the great promenade

of the city, and where, in time, some of the largest shops would be found.

I know no better illustration in Birmingham of the need of a comprehensive Town Planning Scheme than the erection of the Workman's Assurance building at Easy Row, at the very point where improvements were under discussion at the time. Its height is unjustifiable and would not have been tolerated if a scheme had been in existence analogous to that of Cologne. I am entirely at a loss to see how its ugly blank return wall can ever be made sightly. Could the new university building have been erected in the neighbourhood of Five Ways it would have served as a fitting climax to the boulevard.

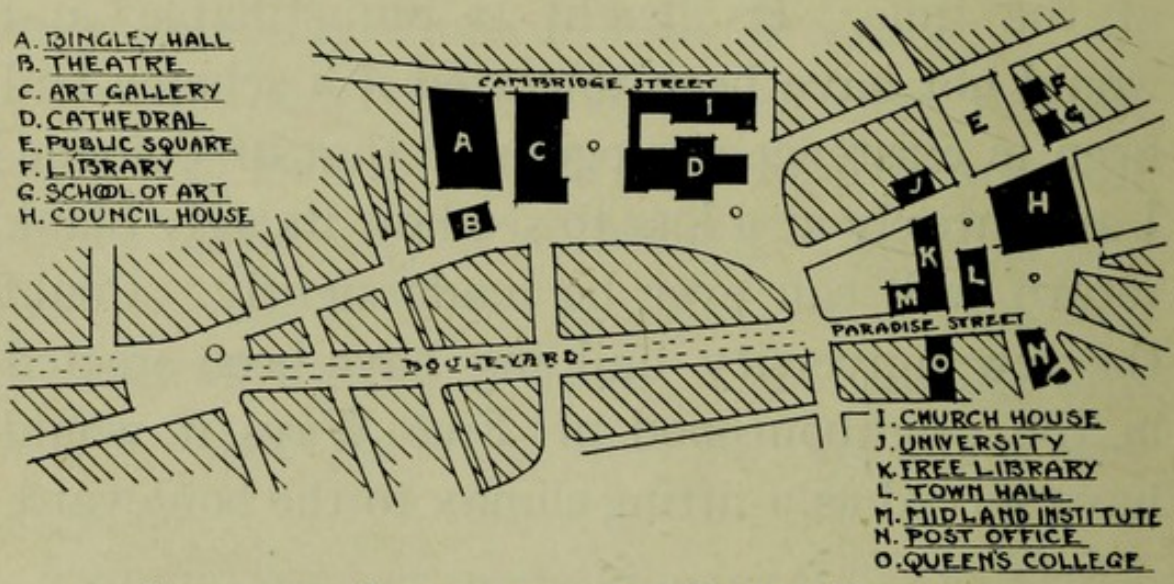
The Cathedral.

No picture of the Birmingham of the future would be complete which omitted the spires, or towers or domes of the Cathedral. It is the one great public building which has yet to be erected. Where shall it be placed ?

I would first of all lay down two propositions. Firstly, that St. Philip's with its fine classic steeple, its painted windows and its surrounding churchyard, the one and only green oasis of the

city, should remain intact, and secondly, that the new Cathedral must be placed on the high ground in the centre of the city, on the sandstone ridge, in fact, that extends from St. Philip's to Five Ways.

I do not think a better place could be found than at the corner of Easy Row between



SUGGESTED ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Broad Street and Cambridge Street, at present occupied by canal wharves. There is one objection and that did not exist a few years ago: the Workman's Assurance building, for its huge mass would tend to dwarf the Cathedral. The Cathedral square should extend at least as far as Baskerville Place, and then the space lying between it and Bingley Hall might have been occupied by the new Art Gallery. This would,

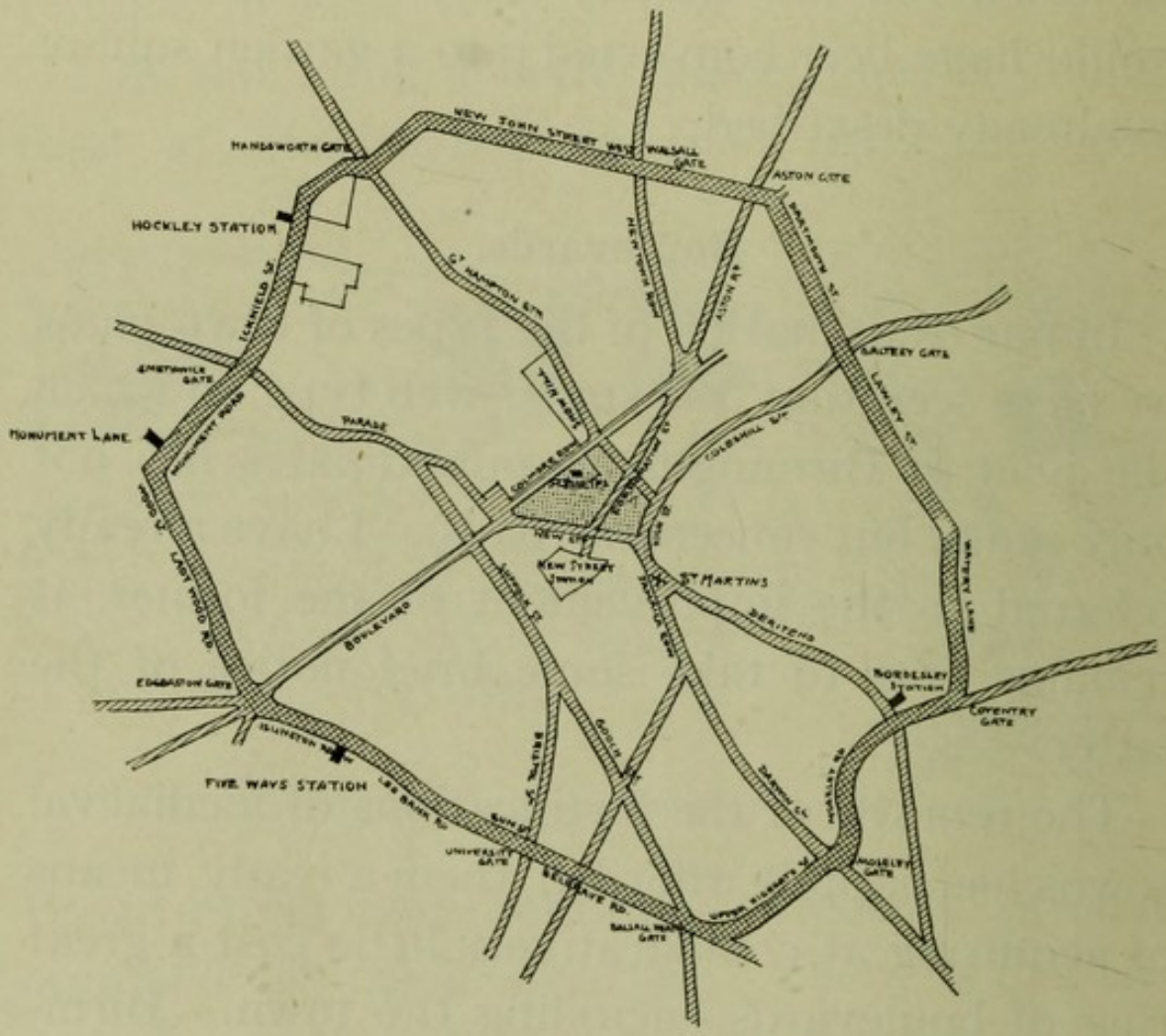
of course, have prevented the connexion with the existing Art Gallery now contemplated, but the latter might very well have been converted into a Natural History Museum, while the land on which the new gallery is now being erected would have been converted into a garden square as already described.

Boulevards.

In our examination of the types of town plans we have seen that the spider-web type to which the plan of Birmingham approximates has not only radial but concentric roads. I have already referred to the improvement of the former, it remains now to take some brief notice of the latter.

The removal of the fortifications of mediaeval towns has happily afforded them a ready means of acquiring at comparatively little cost a great ring of boulevards encircling the town. Birmingham is not so happily circumstanced. Yet if the financial problem could be solved, it would not be at all difficult to construct such a ring of boulevards by the widening of existing streets. They might, for instance, follow the lines of streets shown on the plan, that is to say, com-

mencing at the top and passing from right to left: New John Street, Great King Street, Key Hill, Ickneld Street, Monument Road, Wood Street, Ladywood Road, Five Ways, Islington



SUGGESTED RING BOULEVARD.

Row, Lee Bank Road, Belgrave Road, Upper Highgate Street, Moseley Road, Watery Lane, Lawley Street and Dartmouth Street.

This circular boulevard, at least 100 feet wide, and planted with trees, would be an immense

boon to the poorer districts, could it be realized ; and by a service of trams circulating round it, it might connect the great radial streets. Along its course might be placed the principal public-houses, no longer drinking houses only, but rather cafés of the continental type, modified to suit our English conditions, and at its intersection with the main thoroughfares, squares and gardens adorned with statues might be designed.

The Smoke Demon.

But this picture, however attractive it may be, and however much we may replan our streets and open out our public squares, is impossible of the fullest realization in our acid and smoke-laden atmosphere.

It is futile to open up the courts to the sunshine if the sun cannot penetrate the heavy atmosphere, futile to introduce the air, if the air is impure and poisonous, futile to plant trees if the tarry smuts by coating the soil and choking the leaves prevent them growing, and not the least, is it futile to erect fine buildings of beautiful coloured material if the acid smoke is to begrime them and eat away their substance.

Before Birmingham, or any large town, can

realize our dreams of the future the smoke problem must be solved. But it can be solved, already it *has* been solved. Chemical and engineering science has put into our hands the means by which the air over our great cities can be as pure from smoke as that of a mediaeval town, indeed, *purer*. Smoke from factory steam-boiler chimneys can be entirely prevented by mechanical stoking, that from furnaces almost entirely so. Domestic open fires might be replaced by gas and electric heaters, but that would not satisfy our traditional English love of the open fire. Very well, then a new substance comes to our aid. "Coalite" is a product of the distillation of coal at a temperature below that at which coke is produced. It is a substance which will burn in the open grate with a bright, cheery flame, but without any smoke. Moreover, the bye-products of its distillation can be converted into analine dyes and many substances, at present made in Germany and imported, but which are sufficiently valuable to pay for the distillation of the coal, so that "Coalite" can be sold for about the same price as the original coal.

There is an increasing tendency in our modern life to supply light, heat and power by gas and electricity from a distance. If power stations and gas works were stationed at the pit mouths a great deal of coal, at present unsaleable and cast aside as waste, would be utilized, the haulage of heavy and dirty coal all over the country would be saved, the sulphate of ammonia produced would be collected and sold as a soil fertilizer and, in a measure, converted into bread, the tar converted into dyes, and as a result great economies would be effected and the atmosphere would be purified.

Seeing then, that the production of smoke can be prevented, and considering the immense advantages to the health and welfare of the community in its prevention, I ask, has not the time come to demand its prevention and abolition, and to require after a due interval the passing of a drastic smoke prevention byelaw ?

Let Birmingham lead the way. The rest of the world will follow.

Let us, then, picture the Birmingham of the future as a city with fine radial tree-planted roads, with public squares, open gardens and recreation grounds, with its circular boulevard,

and its setting of park lands and garden suburbs, from which the jerry builder and the smoke have alike been banished, and where the air is pure and fresh like that of the country-side. It is no Utopian dream. It is an ideal capable of realization. But it demands the intelligent co-operation and self-sacrifice of Birmingham citizens.

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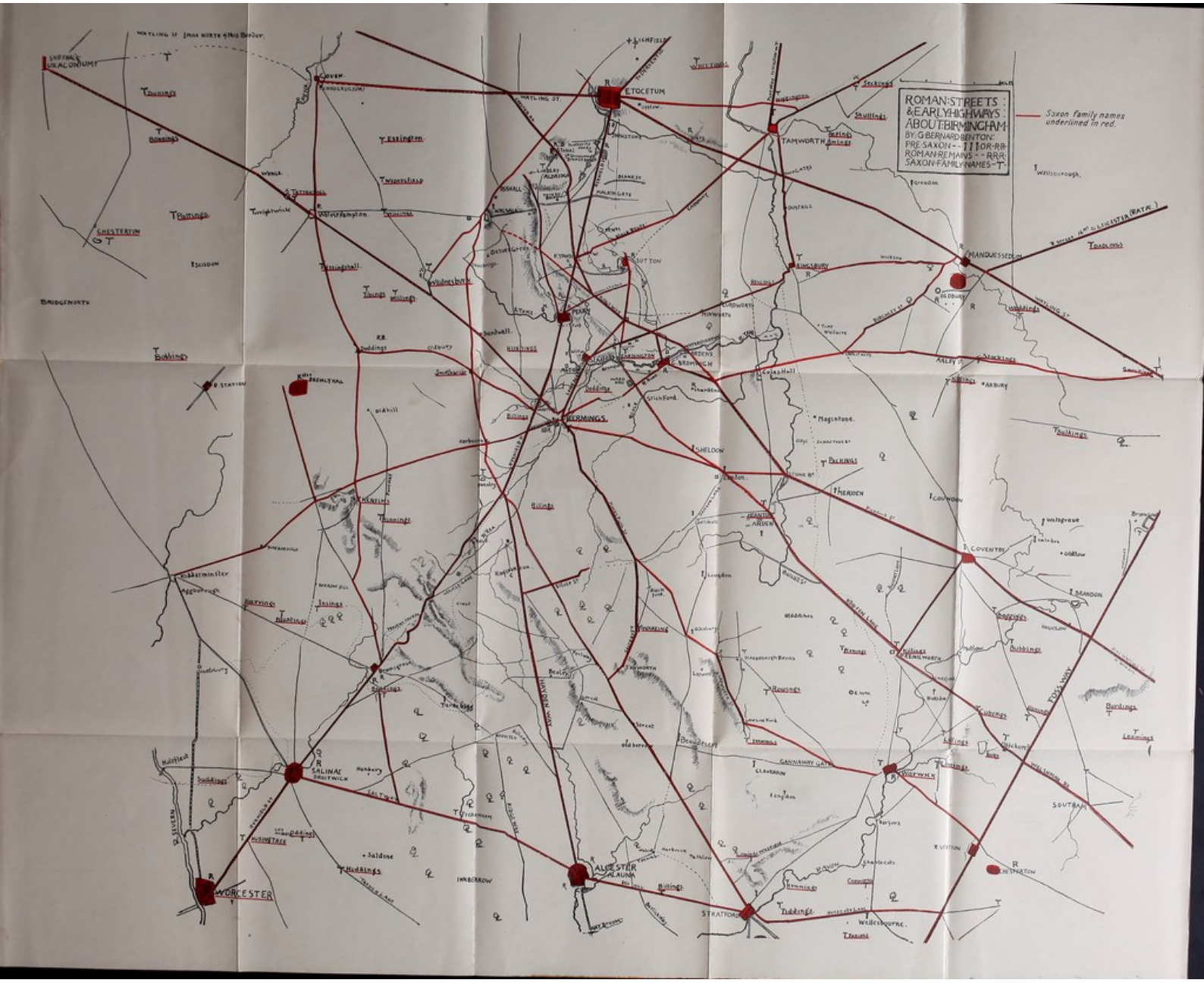
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