

A HISTORY OF BIDEFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL

BY

MORRIS MARPLES

M.A. (OXON.), F.R.G.S.

Headmaster of Bideford Grammar School, 1931-37

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PREFACE

THIS small volume is the outcome of five and a half years during which much of my thought and energy was devoted to the Bideford Grammar School of to-day. Inevitably I became curious about the Bideford Grammar School of yesterday; and yet it was very difficult to find out anything about the past. The standard histories of the town were content with a few vague and (as afterwards proved) not always accurate statements, and it was generally felt that beyond this there was nothing more to be known. Investigation, however, showed that much information could be had for the searching, in old leases and other documents, in minute books and records of all kinds, and in the pages of the newspapers. Towards the end of 1936 the idea of putting it on paper took shape in my mind, and at the Old Boys' Dinner in that year became a definitely expressed intention. Though since then my career has taken me away from Bideford, the intention has remained, and now finds fulfilment in these pages.

It has been a task of absorbing interest to trace out the story of the School through the last three centuries back into the mists of conjecture which precede 1617. My main hope is that readers will find it equally interesting. It is unfortunately a somewhat disjointed account: important details have not always been preserved, and anecdote and triviality have sometimes had to fill the gaps, especially during the earlier centuries; while for the present century the main difficulty has lain in an excessive profusion of material. I have no doubt that if I had remained in Bideford and been able to continue my researches, more could have been discovered and the inequalities of the narrative to some extent smoothed out. This, however, could only have been a question of detail, for the really essential facts, I believe, have all come to light. These I have tried to present in such a way as to bring out the individuality of the School, changing and yet the same.

A task like this could not have been completed without the collaboration of others, and I am glad to record my gratitude to those who have helped in various ways: to Mr. W. H. Rogers of Orleigh Court above all for his advice and guidance over the earliest period: to the Chairman of the Governors, Mr. A. W. Cock, for permission to consult the records of the School and for much personal help, and to the Clerk of the Governors, Mr. C. T. Braddick, for his courtesy in finding me what I required: to the Bridge Feoffees and their Clerk, for permission to examine documents in their possession: to Mr. T. A. Goaman, Mayor of Bideford and a former Head Boy of the School, Ald. A. R. Adams, Major W. Ascott, and Mr. W. D. K. Wickham, Governors

probably a merchant. The boundaries of the property are given as "Alhalwyn Street on the west, the ponyon end of the bakehouse on the east, the land of John Suzanne, gent. on the north, and the Broadway or street leading over the Long Bridge on the south." These are evidently the boundaries of the cellar (since the bakehouse itself constitutes one of the boundaries), and therefore of the School over the cellar, or part of it.

The position indicated is of course the well-known site in Allhalland Street, which was in more or less continuous use till 1869. It is thus clear that in 1617 a school already existed on this site. Moreover the casual nature of the reference shows that it was not a new school at the time, so that we may justifiably carry the foundation of Bideford Grammar School at any rate back to the Sixteenth Century.

On a *priori* grounds one would expect the School to have been founded in that century. It was a time when grammar schools (by definition, schools founded in the Sixteenth Century or earlier for the teaching of Latin) were coming into existence or rising anew from the ruins of the past all over England. One of the results of the Reformation had been to cripple the educational resources of the country. Many schools, as we have seen, had been dependent on monastic or ecclesiastical sources for their upkeep, and when this was withdrawn they had languished or died out altogether. Hence in the Sixteenth Century, at a time when the growing interest in learning was demanding satisfaction, there were at first not enough schools to give satisfaction. The subject even engaged the attention of Parliament: in 1562 the Speaker of the House of Commons drew the attention of the Queen to the fact that "at least a hundred (schools) were wanting, which before this time had been."

Before the end of the century, however, the most urgent needs were met, not by State action, as they would be to-day, but through the generosity and public spirit of individual men of means up and down England. It was not often that any town of considerable size failed to find some citizen willing to found a grammar school, if one were needed. Sometimes he caused his own name to be connected with the school, as in the case of Blundell's School, founded in 1599 by Peter Blundell, a clothier of Tiverton: some times the Queen lent her name, as with Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Crediton. At other times the school simply took its name from the town.

In this way a good many of the grammar schools of the country were founded, or perhaps re-founded, in the second half of the Sixteenth Century, including many which later became great Public Schools, such as Shrewsbury (1552), Westminster (1560), Rugby (1567) and Harrow (1571). There is a strong probability

that Bideford was among this number: but unfortunately, in the absence of definite evidence on the point, it can be nothing more than a probability.

The probability grows stronger, however, when we consider the local situation. Elizabeth granted a charter to Bideford in 1573, creating it a free borough corporate. The town was prospering, growing alike in wealth and in importance by reason of its trade with America, and especially with Maryland and Virginia in tobacco, and with Spain and the Mediterranean. It was the sort of time when some prominent and wealthy citizen might very well decide to add to the amenities of the town by founding a grammar school.

We know of no citizen who actually did so. But it is easy to point to a prominent Bideford citizen of this period who would have been more likely than anyone else to do so, namely Sir Richard Grenville. The town in any case owed much to him. By his part in the colonization of America he had brought it much of its prosperity: as Lord of the Manor he was closely connected with its civic life: and it is well known that he took a close interest in its institutions. One would like to think that he also founded its Grammar School.

If he did so, it must have been about 1588 or a little before, since he was absent from the West Country, mostly in Ireland, from that date until he met his death in the *Revenge* in 1591. On other grounds, as we have seen, this would be a likely date.

Mr. W. H. Rogers of Orleigh Court has further adduced some interesting topographical evidence in support of the hypothesis that a Grenville, if not specifically Sir Richard, was the founder. He points out that, as is shown by the lease of 1617, the School stood on Bridge land, but that all the land surrounding it belonged to the Grenvilles. Thus on the other side of Bridge Street, where the Town Hall now stands, was the old Grenville Manor House, No. 1 Churchyard: the house next to the School, formerly the Castle Inn, was also Grenville property: the Grenvilles owned the Quay, as Lords of the Manor: while the new Grenville Manor House, the residence of Sir Bevil Grenville, stood where the premises of the Gas Company are now situated. Mr. Rogers makes the suggestion that the Grenvilles may have given the site to the Bridge Feoffees so that a school might be founded there: and this indeed seems likely enough, and gives support to the general argument in favour of a Grenville foundation.

We are thus left with the probability that the School was founded in the second half of the Sixteenth Century, and a vague possibility that it was founded about 1588 by Sir Richard Grenville.

THE BUILDINGS

IT can only be conjectured what the original School was like.

The fact that it was near the parish church makes it probable that it was a building expressly intended as a school, since it was a common custom to build schools near to the church, as in the case of the old Barnstaple Grammar School (and especially of course those which had originated as Church Writing Schools). The usual type consisted of one large schoolroom, generally wainscotted in wood (on which the boys carved their names), with windows high above the floor. The master sat at one end of the room on a high chair, like the one still existing in the present School, which is of Sixteenth Century workmanship. If there was an usher, or assistant, he also had a high chair, generally at one side: while the boys occupied long benches down each side of the room, with their books in shelves on the walls behind them. If writing work was required, it seems that they had to use their knees for a desk, at any rate in the earliest period. There were, moreover, no slates (probably an Eighteenth Century invention), and Kingsley is guilty of an anachronism in making Amyas Leigh break his slate on the head of Vindex Brimblecombe, his fictitious Master of Bideford Grammar School. In most schools there was a large open fire, for which the boys often had to supply the fuel: any illumination that was required was also commonly provided by the boys in the shape of candles. As the later Bideford building at the time of its demolition about 1879 was one of this type, it is probable that its predecessor was somewhat similar (if indeed there was any complete rebuilding between the Sixteenth and the Nineteenth Centuries).

It seems to have been a fairly general practice to have under each school a "great cellar" for the storage of the firewood contributed by the boys, and for other purposes. We have abundant evidence of the existence of such a cellar at Bideford. Reference to it occurs in several Seventeenth Century leases, in addition to the 1617 lease already quoted; and indeed we only know of the School in the first instance because of its connection with the cellar. Apparently this cellar was little used for school purposes, and over a long period was let with the adjoining bakehouse, the tenant of which sub-let it generally to a merchant. We may suppose that it was used for the storage of merchandise landed from ships at the Quay near by. This might sometimes be inconvenient: an interesting clause in a lease of 1757 forbidding the storage of "Gunpowder, Turpentine, Brimstone and Pitch" suggests dangers to which modern schools are not usually exposed.

The dimensions of the first School building are not known. A lease dated 1745, however, gives the size of the cellar under the

School as 61 feet by 25 feet, and it is probable that this was roughly the size of the School itself at the time, and doubtless of its predecessor (if there had been any complete rebuilding), since the length of the site occupied, namely between Bridge Street and the Castle Inn, must have always been about the same.

We should probably then be justified in taking the size of the School to be about 60 feet by 25 feet. The actual dimensions of many other such schools at this time are known. Two of the largest were Blundell's, 100 feet by 24 feet, and Shrewsbury, 80 feet by 21 feet, but these were exceptional, and most are said to have been about 60 feet by 25 feet. It almost looks as if Bideford had been built according to a standard pattern. In any case in its earliest years it must have been comparable in general character with many other schools which have since outstripped it both in size and fame. As will shortly be seen, the endowment as well as the buildings was similar alike in character and in amount to the endowments of many other grammar schools.

REBUILDING, 1657 and 1686

IN 1657 the School needed rebuilding, which suggests, though it does not prove, that it had been in existence some considerable time. The event was commemorated by a rudely-cut inscription, "This schole house nue built 1657," placed apparently on the Allhalland Street front (Plate 2). It remained there despite subsequent alterations and rebuildings till 1840, when it was taken down by order of the Trustees and a new one substituted, which if we may judge from contemporary views of the School, bore only the date 1657, without any wording. (It is not certain, however, that this does not represent an altogether different tablet, though with the same date, which has completely perished.) This work was carried out by a Mr. John Martin for the sum of £1. The old stone remained on his premises till 1937, when it was presented to the School by his grandsons, and is now set up in the Assembly Hall. What happened to the new stone when the School was demolished to make room for the present Bridge building is unknown.

There is a lease, dated Nov. 1st, 1666, in the possession of the Bridge Feoffees which contains an apparent reference to the School in its new form. The bakehouse already mentioned was let at that date to John Lambert, blacksmith, together with a "chamber or new erected Roome" in the schoolhouse over the bakehouse. This seems to imply that when the School was rebuilt, or reconstructed, an extension over the bakehouse, and consequently over the intervening passage (see below, p. 12), was added: though

apparently only nine years later it was not required for School purposes. Such a room did exist in later years, as will be seen.

In 1686 the School was again rebuilt (or perhaps in reality only reconstructed) by order of the Mayor, John Darracott, and with the consent of the Aldermen and Capital Burgesses. This time the circumstance was fittingly recorded on a large and well-cut tablet (Plate 3), also preserved in the present School, with an inscription as follows :—

“SCHOLA GRAMMATICA BIDEFORDENSIS”

“Linguas, ingenium, atque religionem,
Haec reserat, docet, promovet, atque colit.

This school was rebuilt to ye
Glory of God, and incorragement
of good learning by ye order
of the Right worshipfull
JOHN DARRACOTT MAYOR
with ye consent of his bretheren ye
Aldermen and Capitall Burgesses
of this town Ano Dom 1686.”

An inscription¹ such as this must surely imply a flourishing School, and it certainly shows that the Corporation appreciated the value of education and took pride in the Grammar School and its achievements as hinted at in the Latin lines. It may even be that the rebuilding, only twenty-nine years after it had previously been rebuilt, was not due to decay, as has been generally supposed, but to the need for better and more dignified, though probably not larger, premises. But of that we have unfortunately no hint from other sources, and only a lucky chance has preserved the present inscription. It was taken down when the School was demolished about 1879 and lost sight of, till in 1922 it was discovered serving as support for a tar barrel and with one or two corners missing in the yard of Messrs. Cock, Builders, who kindly presented it to the School. It has now been restored by order of the Governors, and like the other tablet is permanently fixed in the Assembly Hall.

On the question of the various reconstructions of the School the local historians are thoroughly unreliable. Watkins, in his *History of Bideford* (1792), gives the date for the rebuilding during the mayoralty of John Darracott wrongly as 1690, instead of 1686,

¹ The meaning of the Latin is “Bideford Grammar School. This (school) loosens the tongue, instructs the intelligence, promotes and fosters religion.” It is possible that the lines are meant for an elegiac couplet : if so, the author’s knowledge of the metre and of Latin quantity was exceedingly defective. Was it the Headmaster who wrote them? The peculiar arrangement of the words, three nouns in the first line, with the verbs governing them placed in the same order in the second line, is a mannerism of late Latin poetry.

and this mistake has been copied by several subsequent writers. The Rev. Roger Granville in his *History of Bideford* (1883) gives it as 1680 : he also makes the mistake of attributing the dates 1657 and 1680 (meaning thereby 1686) to the Commercial School instead of to the Grammar School in one context (p. 102), while elsewhere (p. 76) he has referred them correctly to the Grammar School. The Commercial School, which will be dealt with later, was founded in 1761 : Granville, however, says it “was probably of more ancient origin than the Grammar School,” a statement which has no foundation in fact. Unfortunately a number of these errors, mostly it would seem derived from Granville, have been perpetuated on a brass tablet erected in the present Bridge Buildings to mark the site of the two schools which formerly existed there.

Details of the rebuilding in 1686 are lacking, but a number of isolated references may with difficulty be pieced together in an attempt to reconstruct the topography of the site at that time. A mention in a lease of 1695 of “three Sellers or Roomes under the Schoole house” seems to indicate that the great cellar was then sub-divided. The three cellars are again referred to in other leases up to 1757, but a plan dated 1745 (Fig. 1) in the possession of the Bridge Feoffees shows only one large cellar : this may be due to

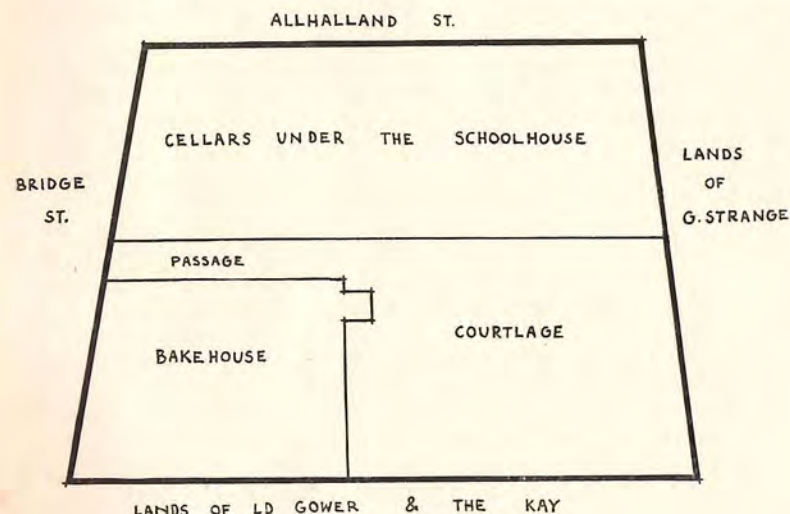


FIGURE I.

Plan of the site in 1745.

(From a plan in the possession of the Bridge Feoffees.)

the fact that the plan is merely a record of the areas and boundaries of Bridge property, and is not concerned with internal structures, and indeed the partitions may have been only temporary ones of wood, though this is unlikely.

In other respects the plan is interesting as showing the surroundings of the School. There was a passage leading to a courtyard between it and the bakehouse, and evidently the room over the bakehouse (not shown in the plan, which represents the ground floor only) bridged the passage also. Originally the School must have stood free of other buildings except at the north end, where it adjoined the Castle Inn. Although it is not shown in the plan, a lease of 1745 has a reference to a dwelling house in the possession of Elizabeth Trott, which formed part of the boundary of the property to the south. This must have stood on part of the ground marked Bridge Street in the plan, and commonly called the Broadway. A few years later, in 1758, when the first Bridge Hall proper was built, the same building was described as "a ruinous cottage called Trotthouse," 22 feet by 8 feet, which had lately stood on a waste spot of ground at the south end of the "old Bridge Hall."

This reference to the "old Bridge Hall" raises a problem. Originally there had been no Bridge Hall, and the Feoffees had met in various convenient inns, where refreshment might be obtained to assist their deliberations. In 1720, however, they acquired a room next to the Grammar School in which to keep their papers and hold their meetings, and this they seem to have dignified with the name of "Hall." Where was this room? I am inclined to think that it must have been the room over the bakehouse first mentioned in 1666, but there is no clear evidence as to its position, except that it must have adjoined Bridge Street. This is evident from later developments. In 1757 the Feoffees first put forward a plan for a new and superior Bridge Hall. The Long Bridge Day Book for that year speaks of the intention to fix pillars about five feet out, "making a compleat and commodious room for a Bridge Hall, together with a walk under the same," the purpose of the latter being to provide free passage for foot traffic. In order to do this it was necessary to encroach on Bridge Street and the waste spot of land already mentioned, which was the property of John Cleveland, then Lord of the Manor. He, however, raised no objection, and in 1758 an agreement was concluded by which the Feoffees secured the land they needed for a consideration of 5s. and an annual rent of 1s. The Bridge Hall in use till 1879 was then built, it being rather a new frontage attached to existing buildings than a complete new structure in itself. As will be seen from the accompanying engraving (Plate 1), it was a pleasing and impressive building, and no doubt a great improvement on what had gone before.

The Grammar School remained substantially unaltered, and may be seen to the left of the picture. It had windows on to Allhalland Street, and apparently a belfry, which must have contained the great bell now in the Municipal Museum, to which reference will be made later. The street front of the School (actually the side of the schoolroom) bore three tablets, one with the date 1657, and two others which cannot be identified from the engraving (which is dated 1860), but may have been the two recording the reconstructions of 1657 and 1686 respectively. Under the School were cellars, or more properly warehouses, approached by three barred doors in Allhalland Street, possibly one door to each of the three cellars already discussed. Strangely enough the School had no impressive main door, but was approached by a narrow staircase (of which the window is visible) from the covered walk under the Bridge Hall. This staircase is said to have been similar to one still in existence in the Masonic Hall, the last surviving example of the work of a Cornish staircase builder of the Seventeenth Century.

The internal arrangements are best described in the words of Mr. John Fulford of Bournemouth, who knew the School in 1873 when it was used as a Sunday School. It is likely that the main features then were not very different from what they had been 150 years earlier. A plan (Fig. 2), based on a sketch by Mr. Fulford, will make his description clearer.

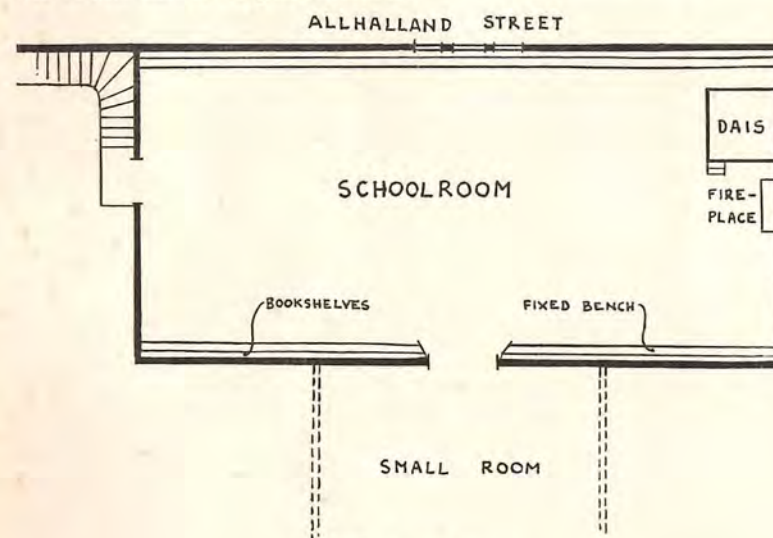


FIGURE 2.

The Allhalland Street School in 1873.
(Based on a sketch plan drawn from memory by Mr. John Fulford.)

"The entrance was through a narrow deep-set door in Allhalland Street, leading into a stone-paved lobby, to the right of which was an openwork iron gate leading to the covered walk facing the Town Hall. The schoolroom was reached by a flight of stairs on the left, turning to the right on a landing a few steps up. A window there gave light, and the wall was thick, as the recess, up which I have scrambled, would hold four or five of us. The School was long, lofty and well lighted. It must have reached to the Castle Inn. There were no pupils' desks. A master's desk, raised by a few steps, was at the far left end of the room, and next to the fireplace. The sides of the room were panelled a few feet up, and had cupboards with sliding doors. We used to keep the hymn books in these. A fixed form, just below these cupboards, went around the sides, and we also had movable backless wooden forms, very primitive, ranged round the teacher for us to sit on. In the right centre of the School, looking from the entrance, a smaller room, with a door, the upper panels of which were glazed, led off from the main room. I cannot give any details of this room, for I was never in it. The very small boys were taught there. My impression is that the schoolroom had skylights, but I am rather vague about this. There were high windows facing into Allhalland Street. On the right hand wall of the School, and I believe over the entrance to the smaller room, a phrase was painted in a kind of scroll, and I think it was 'Aut disce, aut discede.'"

The "scroll" refers of course to the plaque with the School motto, which is still preserved (Plate 4). In addition to this there was an elaborately carved and painted coat of arms of Bideford, made of wood, probably of Seventeenth Century date (Plate 5); this disappeared when the building was demolished, but in 1907 was found in a second-hand dealer's shop in Ilfracombe by Mr. A. G. Duncan, who bought it and presented it to the School.

CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

IT is an extremely difficult matter to ascertain what body was ultimately responsible for the control of the School during the early years of its history: and equally puzzling is the problem of the ownership of the buildings.

When first heard of, the buildings are clearly the property of the Bridge Trust, and were so scheduled in all surveys of Bridge property up till 1823, where the tenement is described as "Bridge hall, Latin school and writing school." The Bridge Feoffees constantly made themselves responsible for external repairs, as landlords, while the Master for the time being had to keep the interior in good order. They also, as we have seen, let portions of



PLATE I.

The Old Buildings in Allhalland Street.

(From a print published in 1860. The school may be seen to the left of the picture, its door indicated by a group of boys.)



PLATE 2.

Tablet recording rebuilding in 1637.

the building, such as the cellars and the room over the bakehouse, to other tenants, and appear as landlords in the leases recording these transactions. In spite of this, when in 1686 the School was rebuilt, it was by the order of the Mayor and Corporation, and there is no mention whatever of the Bridge Feoffees, who at the time must surely have been the legal owners. Unfortunately we do not know who paid for this reconstruction. But most mysterious of all is the final transaction of 1869. In that year the Bridge Feoffees paid the Trustees of the Grammar School £50 for the building of which they had apparently already been owners for nearly three centuries. Evidently at some time, though there is no record of it, they had tacitly or specifically waived their ownership in favour of the Trustees of the School. (It should be added that an attempt to sell the building to the Bridge Feoffees had been made in 1849, but on this occasion they had refused to buy it.)

It is equally difficult to discover who was responsible for the management of the School at different periods. The 1686 inscription seems to imply that control rested with the Corporation at that time. Likewise, when the first Master whose agreement survives was appointed in 1695, the document was endorsed "Mr. Richard Roberts schoolmaster his Articles of agreement with the Towne." But in that year the Feoffees or Trustees of the School were first constituted, and thereafter they were responsible for the appointment of the Master and for general management.

This control, however, was not absolute. It was one of the charitable functions of the Bridge Trust to help to support the Grammar School, which they did with occasional grants from time to time, and in later years with an annual grant, first of £80, now of £100. Naturally they claimed some say in its management. So too did the Town Council. Thus in the agreement with the Rev. William Walter in 1753 all three bodies are included as having the right to give the Master notice (which must have been a ticklish situation for him), while eighty years later, during the headmastership of Henry Alford, considerable ill-feeling arose between the Trustees and the Corporation owing to the insistence of the latter body on its right to interfere in the working of the School: and again in 1870, when there was some suspicion that the Trustees might be misappropriating their funds, it was the Bridge Feoffees who demanded an enquiry and the Town Council who conducted it (with, of course, the help of the Charity Commissioners' representative).

The arrangement indeed was one which, while difficult to establish clearly on paper, probably worked well enough in practice, except occasionally when the three bodies concerned (which of course consisted to some extent of the same set of men) could not agree.

The first scheme of 1873, which provided the School with Governors, put an end to the anomalous situation and prevented any disagreement in the future by providing for the representation of both Town Council and Bridge Feoffees, who appointed three members each. At the present day the Borough Council nominates six, while the representation of the Bridge Trust has been reduced to two. A new element, however, has now come in in the shape of the Devon County Council, which was first represented in 1873, and since 1929 has actually maintained the School under Articles of Government applicable to all secondary schools in the County, and owns the present premises. The Governors still have much important administrative work to do, but in almost all their actions they are now ultimately responsible to the County Council, which in its turn is responsible to the Board of Education. The School in fact has become part of a national system of education, instead of being a small self-governing unit.

Something remains to be said of the official now known as the Clerk to the Governors, who under different names has played a part of increasing importance in the history of the School. During the earliest years it is not likely that the Trustees kept any Minutes and there was probably little correspondence: doubtless they simply called in the services of an attorney, when some legal document had to be drawn up, such as the agreement with a new Master. Such a man was probably Narcissus Hatherley, who witnessed the deed recording the purchase of the School estate of Bushton in 1695. At other times, however, it seems that the Town Clerk acted on behalf of the Trustees of the School: as late as 1803, for example, applications for the Mastership were to be made to the Town Clerk. In that year the Trustees began to keep Minutes (at any rate no earlier Minute books are extant) and seem to have employed a regular clerk. His duties at first were probably not very exacting: the Minutes were short and letters few. But they have become more and more onerous as time has passed, and the Clerk to the Governors of the present day is responsible not only for the very voluminous Minutes of numerous Governors' and sub-committee meetings, but for a considerable correspondence, for the collection of fees and payment of accounts, and in general for the business side of the School administration.

BARTHOLOMEW UMBLES: c. 1660

ALTHOUGH the existence of the buildings can be traced back with certainty to 1617, the names of the earliest Masters are lost and there are no documentary records. Just one name has been recovered to fill this blank. Among the Willcock title deeds in the Bideford Municipal Library is a lease dated March 13th,

1661, of some houses and gardens East-the-Water to a certain Bartholomew Umbles, of Bideford, schoolmaster, whose name also occurs in the loyal address to Charles II at the Restoration (1660) as a Bideford resident. It is likely then that this Bartholomew Umbles was Master of Bideford Grammar school. If so, his is the earliest name on record.¹ It may be that other names of Bideford schoolmasters will come to light in time from similar sources: but little else is likely to be discovered about these early years.

RE-ENDOWMENT OF THE SCHOOL BY MRS. STUCLEY IN 1689

THE real documentary history of the School begins with the year 1689, when Mrs. Susannah Stucley, widow of the celebrated Lewis Stucley, in her will dated March 3rd left the sum of £200 to be laid out in lands for "the maintenance of a grammar school," provided that the Town could raise another £400 with the same object.²

It would appear that the original School had either closed or was languishing for want of financial backing, but nothing is known of the exact circumstances. The phrase "a grammar school" instead of "the Grammar School," however, seems to suggest that no school existed at the time, although it had been rebuilt in 1686.

Mrs. Stucley's appeal met with a much more generous response than other similar appeals did in later years. Not only £400 but £420 was raised, £100 of this bequeathed by John Thomas, a former Mayor of Bideford, the rest apparently furnished by various persons known as Contributors, whose names appeared on a board erected in the School in 1695, and whose children and descendants were till 1803 admitted at preferential rates. Four of these, together with the sums they contributed, are known from a scrap of paper which has been casually preserved. George Strange, Mayor in 1695, gave £85. 10s. 8d.; John Smyth, £85; Thomas Joce, £30; and John Buck, £3. 4s. 4d. All of these except Thomas Joce later became Trustees of the School. It is probable that the majority of the first Trustees were also Contributors.

In 1695 the Mayor, George Strange, together with the Recorder and fourteen others, Aldermen and Capital Burgesses, proceeded as Trustees to the purchase of an estate of 80 acres in the parish of West Buckland known as Bushton (or Bushtown³) from a certain

¹ I am indebted for this interesting discovery, as for much else, to Mr. W. H. Rogers of Orleigh Court.

² This gift is also recorded on a tablet in St. Mary's Church, probably erected in 1745, in memory of several members of the Stucley and Buck families.

³ It is worth observing that the name of the estate was Bushton, not Rushton. The latter spelling has obtained a certain amount of currency.

John Furse of Great Torrington for the term of 900 years. The purchase price was the exact sum raised, namely £620. It is interesting to find the conveyance witnessed by the hand of the Master of the Grammar School, the Rev. Richard Roberts, who had been appointed in March of that year, the other witness being an attorney who bore the attractive name of Narcissus Hatherley.

Thereafter for nearly two centuries the School depended for its main support on the rent and profits of Bushton. The Master's stipend, in addition to the whole or part of the pupils' fees, consisted of the rent of Bushton (to which was sometimes added a special grant made by the Bridge Feoffees): out of it he had to maintain the School and provide everything necessary, as well as support himself and his family. In 1698 the rent was £22 a year, a very usual amount for the maintenance of a grammar school at this period: a century later it remained much the same, £25. 10s. But in 1814 it increased to £57, and in 1843 to £63. By this time the Trustees began to think that it was more than the Master deserved, and his share of it was limited in 1850 to £60 and in 1854 to £50. The rent continued to increase till in 1874, just before the estate was sold, it had reached £80 a year: at this time it was being used to lease Edgehill House, where the School was being conducted under the name of Bideford College.

The estate also carried a considerable quantity of timber, the sale of which from time to time enabled the Trustees to improve and repair the School and meet other necessary expenses. In some cases also money derived from the sale of timber was invested in the interests of the School: in 1813, for example, £360. 18s. 9d. was laid out in the purchase of £550 stock in 3 per cent. Consols, which together with other accumulated investments was a few years later sold for the purchase of a headmaster's house in Bridgeland Street.

In this way the School was maintained (with the periodic assistance of the Bridge Trust) till Bushton was sold in 1875 to Lord Fortescue for £2,400 by order of the Charity Commissioners, in order to raise money for a new school building.

Many other schools founded about this time were maintained by means of estates in this way, and to begin with there was little variation in their incomes. As the years passed, however, the values of the estates changed very differently in different places. Bideford was unfortunate in depending on an estate in a remote country district, of which the rental showed no very great increase in the course of centuries. Other schools fared very differently, as for example King Edward's, Birmingham, where the estate, which had originally brought in the sum of £21 a year, in recent years has provided the school with an annual income of over £30,000.

REV. RICHARD ROBERTS: 1695—1716

HAVING arranged for the maintenance of the School, the new Trustees evidently lost no time in appointing a Master. On March 30th, 1695, that is before the actual purchase of Bushton, the Rev. Richard Roberts "of Bideford" became Master, the first of whose appointment there is documentary evidence.¹ The fact that he was described as "of Bideford" seems to show that he was already resident in Bideford before his appointment.

He agreed to open the School on April 1st, and after the first year to teach six poor children, who were to be elected by the Trustees, free of charge. This was the beginning of the Foundation scholarships, which continued to be awarded (with occasional lapses and periodic changes in the conditions) until they were superseded by the County Free Places within recent years. The School fee was fixed at £2 a year, with an entrance fee of 10s. The children of Contributors, however, were to be admitted for £1, with an entrance fee of 5s. This condition remained in the articles of agreement with subsequent headmasters till 1803, when it was removed as part of a scheme to increase the amount falling to the Master. A record of admissions had to be kept, which the Master was to leave behind him in the School on vacating his office.

The subjects laid down in the agreement were Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Such a curriculum was usual in grammar schools during the century after the Reformation, and it is worth remarking that it was usual because there was a demand for it. Latin especially was an essential qualification for many careers during the Sixteenth, and almost as many during the Seventeenth Century. Leech, in his *English Schools at the Reformation*, says: "The diplomatist, the lawyer, the civil servant, the physician, the naturalist, the philosopher, wrote, read, and to a large extent spoke and perhaps thought in Latin. Nor was Latin only the language of the higher professions. A merchant, or the bailiff of a manor, wanted it for his accounts: every town clerk or guild clerk wanted it for his minute book. Columbus had to study Latin for his voyages: the general had to study tactics in it. The architect, the musician, everyone who was neither a mere soldier, nor a mere handicraftsman wanted, not a mere smattering of grammar, but a living acquaintance with the tongue, as a spoken as well as a written language." Greek had less practical value, but was nevertheless in great demand among those who sought what in recent years has been called a liberal education. There was also of course a religious motive in learning both these languages: while in the case of Hebrew, which cannot have been so general, the motive

¹ The full text of the agreement with Roberts will be found in Appendix II.

was purely religious. It would be interesting to know how much Greek and Hebrew was taught in Bideford, and what subsequent careers were taken up by the "poor children" chosen by the Trustees for this exclusive training.

The salary attached to the post in the first instance was £20 a year, out of which the Master had to keep the School in good repair. He of course received the fees of the pupils in addition. It was agreed that as soon as an estate was purchased the rent should provide the Master's stipend. As we have seen, this was effected in the same year as Roberts' appointment, so that he actually received £22 a year almost from the beginning.

He was required to devote himself solely to the School, and was not allowed to "preach the Gosple, Marry, Bury, Baptize or Administer the sacraments dureing such time as he shall remain schoolemaster," without the consent of the Trustees. This clause incidentally is the only evidence we possess to show that Roberts was in holy orders.

Although he remained in office for twenty years there is no record of anything which took place during Roberts' mastership. The Trustees' Minute books for this early period, if indeed they had any, have perished, and in the records of the Bridge Trust there is no entry connected with the School till 1716, when Roberts resigned. He was then paid the sum of £5 by the Bridge Trust, but whether to mark their recognition of his services, or to speed his departure (as in the case of one of his successors) does not appear.

REV. ZACHARIAH MUDGE : 1717-32

ROBERTS' successor was perhaps the most distinguished Headmaster the School has ever had, and the only one to appear in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. This was Zachariah Mudge, called also Zachary or Zichory, who was nominated for the office in 1717 at the early age of 24 by Mrs. Sarah Stucley. His agreement with the Trustees has apparently disappeared, so that details of his appointment are lacking, but he and his family were the subject of a volume published in 1883, *Memoirs of the Mudge Family*, from which many of the following details are taken.

Before coming to Bideford he was Second Master of Mr. John Reynolds' school in Exeter (of which town he was a native), where he became friendly with Reynolds' son Samuel, later Master of Plympton Grammar School, and his grandson Joshua, destined to become the famous Sir Joshua Reynolds, who painted Mudge's portrait no less than three times in later years.

The records of the Bridge Trust show that Mudge received from them a stipend of £10 a year, in addition to his salary, with

an occasional extra grant of £10 "on account of the deficiency of scholars to the grammar school." It would appear that, though he is described as a very successful master, who took boarders and made the School flourish, there was difficulty in getting an adequate number of pupils. Some of those who did attend in his day, however, became well-known men in after life, notably the celebrated controversialist Dr. John Shebeare, and Mudge's two sons by his first wife, Thomas who became a distinguished horologist, and John Mudge, M.D., F.R.S. (His other two sons, who became a General and an Admiral respectively, were not born till after he left Bideford.)

When Mudge was appointed he was apparently a Nonconformist, but after a good deal of controversy with orthodox Churchmen he changed his views, and was eventually ordained himself in 1729. Shortly afterwards he became Vicar of Abbotsham, apparently holding this office in conjunction with his mastership. This divided interest may possibly have been one of the reasons for the "deficiency of scholars." At any rate it was in the Church that Mudge found his *métier* and attained fame. He left Bideford in 1732 on being appointed Vicar of St. Andrew's, Plymouth, at what must have seemed the princely salary of £2,000 a year, and in 1736 became Prebendary of Exeter.

In the years that followed he became particularly famous as a preacher, and has left several volumes of sermons. Boswell, who has occasion to mention him as a friend of Johnson (whom he met through Reynolds), says that he was "idolized in the west both for his excellence as a preacher and for the uniform perfect propriety of his private conduct." Johnson, however, who heard him preach in Plymouth, was rather more critical in his verdict : "Mudge's sermons are good, but not practical," he is reported as saying, "He grasps more sense than he can hold : he takes more than he can make into a meal : he opens a wide prospect, but it is so distant, it is indistinct."

In appearance he was at this time, as we may gather from his portrait, a man of calm and impressive features, who certainly looked the part which for many years to come he played in the West Country. He died in 1769 at the age of 76.

REV. RICHARD WHITE : 1732-50

MEANWHILE the Trustees had appointed another Master in the person of the Rev. Richard White. Nothing whatever is known of his antecedents, or indeed of his eighteen years' mastership : but it may be inferred that he was unequal to his task, at any rate during his later years, for under him the School dwindled and deteriorated till, as will be seen, eventually only one pupil was

left : apparently not even the Free Scholars continued to attend. Like his predecessor, he was (from 1735) Vicar of Abbotsham, and it seems likely that he may have taken more interest in his parish than in his School.

He received the same salary from the Bridge Trust as his predecessor, namely £10 a year, and was further relieved by the reduction of the number of Free Scholars to three instead of six. When in 1742 there was some trouble about the rent of Bushton, probably owing to a defaulting tenant, and White did not receive what was due to him, the Bridge Trustees generously made him a grant of £20 from Bridge stock "in consideration of the late losses he has sustained by the school estate." His receipt for this is extant.

What exactly were White's faults and why he was a failure will probably never be known : but things went from bad to worse, and at last in 1750 the Trustees, evidently after consulting with the Corporation and the Bridge Feoffees, decided to get rid of him by pensioning him off. This in itself suggests that he was not sufficiently at fault to be dismissed. The grim situation is summed up in the records of the Bridge Trust, who put up the money. "Finding the Free School of this town is shut up and that Mr. White the schoolmaster hath but one scholar remaining who he teaches in his own house which is a great Loss and Detriment to the Inhabitants who are forced to send their children abroad for education we have thought fit to offer to the said Mr. Richard White on his resigning the School and the School Estate at Christmas next Ten pounds in hand and ten pounds per annum during his life." An agreement to this effect, dated Dec. 22nd, 1750, is still in existence. In it the money is described as paid by order of the Corporation and Feoffees of the Long Bridge, and Richard White is required to surrender the School and all right of teaching therein to the four surviving Trustees, Dennis Stucley, Esq., Hartwell Buck, Esq., John Luxon, Merchant, and Coriolanus Copplestone. He accepted the generous offer of the Trustees, and retired to Abbotsham, where he continued to flourish for another sixteen years, dying on May 14th, 1766. The School remained without either master or pupils for nearly a year after his departure.

The first act of the Trustees was to increase their number once more to eighteen, and to establish a condition that whenever the numbers were reduced to six or less, they should again be raised to eighteen.

It was during this period of eclipse that the celebrated John Whitfield, the eccentric Rector of Bideford, is said to have fallen foul of his parishioners and forbidden them the use of the vestry : whereupon, so the story goes, they betook themselves to the Bridge Hall, and went to the trouble of having a special bell cast and hung

in the turret over the Grammar School to call them to meetings in place of the church bell. On it they placed two lines of doggerel:

"Our parson's pride formed me a bell :
By that I rose, by that Satan fell."

The bell, which continued to be used by the Grammar School from that time till the evacuation of the building, is now in the Municipal Museum.

REV. HUMPHRY MARSHALL : 1751-53

THE next Master, the Rev. Humphry Marshall, who had received his education in Glasgow, was appointed on October 26th of the following year, 1751. A piece of paper has been preserved showing the voting of the fifteen Feoffees of the Free School, as they are here described, who attended on October 7th, the day of his election. Mr. Marshall was appointed by a majority of one over a Mr. Griffiths, the other candidate, the eight who voted for him appending their signatures to the document.

His agreement shows several interesting points of difference from the first agreement of 1695, and in general suggests a greater caution and attention to legal niceties on the part of the Trustees. The Master was bound in the sum of £600 : he was required to live in the parish, to take no office more than six miles from Bideford, not to absent himself except on the usual Holy Days, and on vacating his office to give four months' notice, during which time he was to continue to teach in person or to supply a suitable deputy. The Trustees on the other hand could give the Master three months' notice. The descendants of Contributors were still admitted to the School at preferential rates, but only in the case of those who had contributed £5 or more. Hebrew no longer found a place in the curriculum.

Little more than a year after his appointment Marshall died : no indication is given of his age or the cause of his death.

REV. WILLIAM WALTER, M.A. : 1753-1803

HE was succeeded by the Rev. William Walter of Merton, who was appointed on May 4th, 1753, and remained in office for no less than fifty years. (Another Rev. William Walter was Rector of Bideford and Vicar of Abbotsham during part of this period, and is often confused with the Master of the Grammar School, by the Rev. Roger Granville in his *History of Bideford* among others : he was, however, a younger man, and did not die till 1844.)

The new agreement contained much the same terms as in the case of Marshall. The radius within which the Master might accept other offices was, however, extended to twelve miles, possibly to include Merton, where he may have held a curacy. One more condition was imposed upon the descendants of Contributors: only one scholar at a time was now to be privileged under the name of any one Contributor. Doubtless experience had shown that too many were apt to take advantage of these privileges.

The most interesting feature about Walter's agreement is that three separate bodies are described as possessing the right to give the Master notice. These were the Mayor, Aldermen and Capital Burgesses of the Borough, Town and Manor of Bideford, the Feoffees of the lands belonging to the Long Bridge of Bideford, and the Feoffees of the lands belonging to the School. Legally this would appear to be an awkward position for the Master, simplified in practice by the fact that the same individuals for the most part comprised the three bodies. Historically it is interesting as showing that at that time a threefold responsibility for the School was recognized. Later on, as has been shown in an earlier section, the Feoffees of the School repudiated the right of the Corporation to interfere: but the present constitution of the Governing Body quite rightly admits their claim to have some control over the School.

Walter's term of office covers a period during which education generally was at a very low ebb. The grammar schools of the country especially suffered severely, and in some cases were reduced to a mere handful of pupils, taught by a local clergyman, or even to none at all. Many famous schools were in this state. Oundle, for example, in 1779 had four boys, and in 1785 none: Repton over a period of twenty years had only fifteen boys in all. Bideford Grammar School, however, appears to have continued in existence, and there is no record that Walter suffered at any time from a shortage of pupils.

Not only did the Grammar School continue to exist, but there was even room for a fresh educational venture in Bideford. In 1761 the Bridge Feoffees started the Writing or Commercial School in a room in the Bridge Buildings adjoining the Grammar School, the purpose of which was to teach writing, elementary mathematics and navigation. This school, which flourished for more than a century, is often confused with the Grammar School: the Rev. Roger Granville, in his inaccurate *History of Bideford*, even states that it was an earlier foundation, and appropriates to its history several dates belonging to the Grammar School. It never had any connection with the Grammar School, however, though, like the Grammar School, it received free scholars chosen by the Mayor and Corporation: these, according to a deed of 1771,

might be of either sex, and numbered ten, six being drawn from the workhouse and four from the poorest inhabitants of the town. The stipend of the Master was only £10 per annum, and doubtless, like the Master of the Grammar School, he had to make what he could from his fee-paying pupils, some of whom boarded with him. The best known master of the Writing School was John Jewell, who presided over it for many years towards the end of the Eighteenth Century. He seems to have been a very enterprising man, to judge from the following advertisement taken from the *Exeter Flying Post* of January 7th, 1790, which deserves reproduction in full:—

“BIDEFORD SCHOOL, DEVON.

“J. Jewell takes this Method again of returning Thanks to his Patrons and Friends for their generous Support during Twenty-four Years Experience in the Principles of Science, and general Application to Practice, in the essential Duties of his Profession; and also to inform them and the Public, that he means to persevere in the same Line of Conduct, and unremitted Attention *Wholly* to the Business of Instruction; and that his School will be opened again after the Christmas Recess, Monday the 18th. of January, 1790, where Young Gentlemen, &c. are continued to be genteely boarded and rationally instructed in the Mathematics, and other Branches of useful Education, *viz.* Writing the usual Hands correctly, with instructive and ornamental Penmanship, and modern Short-hand; English Grammar: Drawing of Plans; Maps, Elevations, Sections, Models, Views, Designs, &c.; Geography, and the Use of the Globes; Arithmetic; Algebra; Architecture, civil and marine; Astronomy; Book-keeping; Chronology; Conic Gauging; Hydrography; Levelling; Mensuration; Mechanics; Navigation; Optics; Perspective Surveying of Lands; Spherics; Trigonometry; Plane, with the Construction and Use of Instruments in modern Practice.

“Nautical Pupils boarding with, and having received their previous instruction of MR. JEWELL, may be taught Spherics, Double Altitudes, Longitude by Astronomical Calculations, &c. &c. for the common Price of Two Guineas only; to others Two Guineas extra, or Four Guineas the Whole.

“Terms at large, and Specimens, (letters post-paid), may be had on Application.

“The Vacations are Christmas, and Midsummer, each a Month, are employed abroad, if required, for the Practice of his Sons, in general Measurements, Drawings &c.”

Reading between these rather breathless lines, one may perhaps detect an attempt to rival the Grammar School, and possibly to attract pupils from William Walter, now in his thirty-eighth year as Master, and doubtless beginning to lose his youthful vigour and

enthusiasm. Whatever the success of this may have been, the Grammar School continued on its placid way, taking pride in its title of "Latin School," which at this period and for some time later carried a sense of social superiority, much as "Public School" does to-day, and strongly differentiated it from the Writing School.

It was during the long reign of Walter that a certain Benjamin Donn flourished in Bideford, well known in his day as a "Teacher of the Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy on Newtonian Principles." He is thought to have taught mathematics at the Grammar School, and may well have done so at the Writing School too. In 1758 he published a rather formidable volume entitled *A New Introduction to the Mathematicks*, of which there is a copy in the Bideford Municipal Library¹: this must have been used as a text-book at the Grammar School. Donn apparently died in Bideford in 1775, and a sermon preached at his funeral is extant.

No other occurrences during Walter's mastership are known, except the provision of a new brick front for the School in 1780 at the expense of the Bridge. At last, in 1803, he died, while still in office, having completed fifty years' service. He can hardly have been less than 75 at the time of his death, and may have been considerably more: so that one may justifiably assume that during the last few years at any rate the School had ceased to be very efficient, and may even have ceased to exist except in name. Something of the kind is suggested by the wording of the advertisement which appeared in the West Country papers in connection with the vacancy, and runs as follows:—

"MASTER OF A GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

"Wanted a Master for the Grammar School in Bideford, Devon. Endowment and Freehold Estate, let for Thirty pounds a year clear of all outgoings, for which the Master must instruct three day scholars gratis.

"The candidate must be a clergyman of the Church of England, a Graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, have received his education at Eaton, Westminster or Winchester, or be acquainted with the modes of Instruction used in these schools: he should be a married man, and produce respectable Testimonials of his Character and Qualifications.

"The Election will be on Thursday the seventeenth April next, at the Bridgehall, in Bideford. Further particulars may be known by Letters (Post Paid) addressed to Mr. T. Smith Town Clerk Bideford.

¹ It contains the following inscription by a humorist, who was perhaps a Bideford Grammar School boy:—"John Smith his Book July 4th 1771 Steell not This Booke for feare of Shame For hear you may find the owners Name John Smith who wrought this with his one wright hand 1771."

"N.B.—A good school is much wanted in Bideford and many parents are now waiting for such an establishment."

In fact there was now either no school at all, or it had ceased to be a good one.

REV. THOMAS EBREY, M.A.: 1803-12

FROM whatever cause there was some difficulty in obtaining a suitable candidate, and an application was made to the Bridge Feoffees "to augment the income of the Master to induce some respectable person to offer himself in the room of the late Mr. William Walter deceased." To this they replied with the following resolution: "Being of opinion that it will be a material benefit to the town and neighbourhood to have a good Grammar School in Bideford, resolved that the sum of twenty pounds be allowed to the Master yearly for the term of three years certain."

This saved the situation, and the Trustees on May 13th, 1803, were able to proceed to the election of a new Master. Their choice fell on the Rev. Thomas Ebrey, M.A., of London, Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who was strongly recommended by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in whose diocese he doubtless held a curacy. Whether he was educated at Eton, Westminster or Winchester does not appear: but it is of interest to note that the School motto, "Aut disce aut discede,"¹ is also a Winchester motto, and must have been brought from there by some Headmaster: the style of the lettering on the oval plaque in the present School (Plate 6) suggests that it belongs to about this time.

Ebrey evidently made himself acceptable to his fellow townsmen and played some part in public life, for in September 1804 he became, like his predecessor, a Bridge Feoffee. This distinction has not often fallen to a Headmaster of Bideford Grammar School.

One of the reasons for the difficulty in securing good candidates was the absence of a house for the Master—one candidate had actually withdrawn on this ground—and this was a question which came to exercise the minds of the Trustees a good deal within the next few years. Meanwhile, in order to render the post more attractive and to increase the prestige of the School, they raised the fees to three guineas, with an entrance fee of one guinea, and abolished the privileges enjoyed up till that time by the descendants of the Contributors. Ebrey thus received a greater income than any of his predecessors, more than £100 a year, if we assume

¹ The full motto, as it appears at Winchester, is a hexameter line as follows: "Aut disce aut discede: manet sors tertia caedi."—"Either learn or depart: there remains a third possibility, to be beaten." The motto in the present school is known to have been in the Allhalland Street building, but efforts to trace its origin have failed.

twenty boys in the School, without taking boarding fees into consideration. That there were boarders is clear from the fact that the Trustees' Minute Book (of which the earliest existing specimen begins with the year 1803) contains a reference to boarding fees, though no amount was settled : probably it was left to the Master.

Ebrey drew up certain rules as to hours and terms, which are the first on record. School began at seven o'clock every morning (eight o'clock in winter) with Prayers, which were held in the Church on Saints' Days, followed by roll-call. There was a break of an hour for breakfast at nine, and of two hours for a midday meal at twelve. Afternoon school ended at five with prayers. Wednesday and Saturday were half holidays every week, "*si placeat magistro*," implying that he had the right to refuse a holiday if he thought it desirable to do so. The annual holidays consisted of one month at Christmas and one month at midsummer. The School was thus in session for something like six weeks more every year than it is at the present day ; in addition to which the boys worked for ten hours a week more than is usual now.

After an uneventful and apparently successful term of office Ebrey resigned on August 3rd, 1812, having doubtless secured a better post elsewhere.

REV. WILLIAM WOODCOCK, B.D. : 1813-15

THERE was again difficulty in finding a successor, but what exactly happened is not quite clear from the Minute Book. Apparently a Rev. John Bligh offered himself for the post, but did not prove acceptable to the Trustees. Some months later another candidate presented himself, the Rev. William Woodcock, B.D., of Hay, Brecon, and on January 13th, 1813, he was asked to open the School (which had presumably been closed for some months), being appointed for six months on probation at a salary of £31. 10s. for that period.

It was a most unfortunate choice, as later events proved, and the Trustees doubtless bitterly regretted the appointment. All went well for a time, however, and when after two months Woodcock tendered his resignation on grounds of ill-health the Trustees asked him to continue "having a high opinion of the talents of Mr. Woodcock for the tuition of children, and being satisfied for the documents he has produced with his character." He did so, and was confirmed in his position on March 18th : his salary was to consist of the clear rent of Bushton, together with interest on the money in hand, till a house should be purchased. There were few changes in the articles of agreement, the chief being the abolition of the Wednesday half holiday, and the introduction of a

condition forbidding the Master to take a curacy in Bideford, except for Sunday duty only.

Everything seemed to be going on satisfactorily till September, when the Bishop of Exeter, who evidently knew more about Woodcock than the Trustees, refused to grant him the licence to teach, which was obligatory at that time. Woodcock visited the Bishop accompanied by his solicitor, and obtained from him the promise of a licence if he could produce a testimonial signed by three clergymen of his former diocese and countersigned by the Bishop of St. David's. Unfortunately for him, the Bishop of St. David's refused to answer his letters : the Bishop of Exeter forbade him to officiate, and the Trustees closed the School. Woodcock was defiant, and declared his intention of opening the School as usual : but before matters could proceed further he was arrested on a charge of immorality, and committed to the County gaol in September 1815.

Glad to be rid of him, the Trustees immediately advertised for a successor. But Woodcock, evidently a man of obstinate character, insisted through his solicitor on the agreed six months' notice, and refused to surrender the key of the School until he received salary in lieu of notice. The Trustees had to give way, and in appointing a successor made it a condition that he should receive no stipend and not have possession of the School till Woodcock could be shaken off.

REV. FRANCIS HARRIMAN HUTTON, B.A. : 1815-26

THE chosen candidate was Francis Harriman Hutton, B.A., of Launceston and Wadham College, Oxford, appointed on November 15th, 1815, a young man of good position but probably without experience, who had not yet taken Orders. He agreed on his appointment to "use his utmost endeavour to obtain deacon's and priest's orders as soon as his age will qualify him for the same" : and evidently he did so, for he soon appears as the Rev. Francis Hutton, and a little later he was given leave to undertake a curacy at Bradworthy.

The new articles reveal a more lively interest in education, and especially perhaps in the social prestige of the School, which during the next fifty years became an important consideration. Hutton was required to teach "Latin, Greek according to the Eaton plan, also the elements of Geography, Astronomy and General History," and only to excuse the boys from work on such days as were "usually allowed for holidays in other Grammar schools of repute." The maximum fee was raised from three to six guineas : and £31. 10s. was spent on the purchase of a pew in the church in front

of the organ loft, where Hutton's boarders might sit and advertise the School while at the same time enjoying the benefits of attending service.

The question of a house for the Master had not yet been settled, but now at last something was done. No. 10 Bridgeland Street, one of the so-called New Buildings, was purchased from Capt. James Williams of Barnstaple for the sum of £420. This house, which possessed a garden afterwards used as a playground, and could accommodate thirty boarders, remained the residence of the headmaster till it was abandoned as unsuitable in 1869, when it was re-opened by a Company as Public Rooms. The site is now occupied by the Palace Theatre.

No sooner had Hutton become established here than he began to find it more convenient as a school than the actual School building in Allhalland Street, which seems to have been badly lighted and without sanitation. In 1819 he was given permission to transfer the work to Bridgeland Street, and the schoolroom there (doubtless intended for the use of the boarders only) was enlarged to accommodate the whole School. It was borne in upon the Trustees that a new school was required as well as a house, and they began to look round for a site where a school and house combined might be built. Nothing definite was done, probably from lack of funds: but a house in the High Street was inspected, and an alternative scheme for building several rooms at the back of the existing School was considered. (Where this could be done, is not clear: possibly there was still open ground or a one-storey building between the School and the Quay.)

About 1822 a change of relations between the Headmaster and the Trustees becomes noticeable. After seven years of pleasant and unexact work Hutton may have been getting dilatory: at any rate the Trustees seem to have decided to tighten things up. A scrap of paper dated August 8th, 1822, which has been accidentally preserved between the pages of a Minute Book, contains the rough notes of one of the Trustees or their clerk, evidently made during a discussion of the situation. The hours are to be strictly enforced: only the regular half holidays are to be allowed, and so forth: "on Mr. Hutton's strict compliance with these terms he will meet with the cordial support of the Trustees. But if not duly observed, the articles to be rigidly enforced." It is not revealed whether any of this was passed on to Hutton. But a year later he was told that it was contrary to the agreement to conduct the School in his own house (in spite of the permission previously granted), and he was forced reluctantly to return to the old School.

Probably relations continued strained till 1826, when he resigned. The immediate circumstances of his resignation are not referred to, but on leaving he apparently took with him some books and



PLATE 3.
Tablet recording rebuilding in 1686.



PLATE 4.
The School Motto.
(Formerly in the Allhalland Street School.)

globes purchased at the expense of the parents, and in 1827 he was asked to return them. So the Rev. Francis Harriman Hutton, still not more than about 30 years of age, severed his connection with Bideford.

REV. HENRY ALFORD, M.A. : 1826-49

THE next Master, the Rev. Henry Alford, M.A., of Morwenstowe, where he had perhaps been curate, was appointed on November 1st, 1826. He too was young, being 31 at the time of his election, but the Trustees this time were more fortunate, and retained his services for twenty-three years.

The terms of agreement were practically the same as before, and things seem to have gone on very peacefully for the first few years : so much so that the Trustees held no meetings from 1827 till 1834, when they had two, and then none again till 1836. Such a state of affairs is difficult to imagine in these days : but at that time there was none of the pressure of business that exists to-day, nor it may be added a Board of Education or local education authority to insist on attention to business, in cases where a stimulus was needed. About 1836, however, the Trustees were awakened from their apathy, and began to take an active interest in the School, which was clearly prospering under Alford. They decided to hold four meetings a year, and those who did not attend regularly were told that they must attend or else resign : one of these had been present at only two meetings since his election, and that at an interval of twenty-three years.

In 1837 new rules and regulations were drawn up. A Writing Master was engaged to attend from twelve to one to instruct the boys in writing when they had completed their ordinary morning's work. (This was a usual practice at the time.) Various stipulations as to the age of free scholars were introduced for the first time : like Special Place holders of the present day, they were not to be under 10 nor over 12. (The upper limit, however, was raised to 13 in 1838 and to 14 in 1846.) Their school life was limited to three years. Only the sons of parents resident in the town or parish were eligible, and candidates must be "qualified in an English education to enter on the Classics by having acquired a competent knowledge in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic." When a vacancy for one of these scholarships occurred, handbills were circulated round the town to attract entries. There were never very many candidates, sometimes none at all, and often some of the applicants were ineligible on various grounds. From 1838 the names of the Foundation scholars were put on record for the first time, with in some cases their place of residence and father's occupation. The evidence available does not suggest that they were by any means

poor children, as had been the original intention : the fathers of ten scholars elected between 1840 and 1850 followed the following occupations :—shipbuilder, surgeon, supervisor, National school-master, yeoman, solicitor, captain of mines, spirit merchant, gardener, druggist. They most of them belonged in fact to the commercial and professional classes of the town. In view of this it is interesting to find that the Trustees objected when Alford charged the free boys with the usual “extras,” and suggested that he should charge them for books only : he had of course to agree, whereupon they “expressed their approval of his liberal conduct.”

Perhaps one of the reasons for the increased activity of the Trustees was the fact that the Town Council at this time was taking an unusual, and indeed as it seemed to the Trustees, an unnecessary interest in the School. In 1836 they made a request that the number of free scholars should be increased to the original number of six, but Alford refused to deviate from his contract, with the time-honoured argument against innovations that it would be “attended with dangerous consequences.” (In spite of his objection, however, the number was very shortly raised again to six.) Next year and again in 1840 the Council applied for copies of the deeds concerning the endowment, but on both occasions were firmly told it had nothing to do with them. They next interested themselves in the work of the School, and suggested that an outside examiner should test it annually. To this the Trustees had no objection, provided that prizes for the best pupils were forthcoming, but Alford probably felt that it was a slur on his efficiency and objected strongly. For a time he had his way, but the subject was raised again and again in the next few years, and as will be seen shortly it was over this that he finally parted company with the Trustees ten years later.

Certain small improvements were made to the buildings under Alford. The interior walls, which had fallen into disrepair, were plastered at his expense. The tablets on the front of the School were repaired and newly lettered by the Trustees : it was on this occasion that Mr. John Martin for the sum of £1 set up a new tablet in place of the one bearing the inscription “This schoole house nue built 1657,” which his grandsons presented to the School in 1936.

Yet another house for the Master, this time in the Churchyard, was considered, but again things went no further than an inspection. The front pew in the church, purchased in 1816, was exchanged for three pews at the back, apparently at the wish of the Churchwardens who thought such good seats wasted on schoolboys : they promised, however, to find better seats for the School in due course, when the opportunity arose.

In 1849 the examination question finally came to a head. The Trustees in that year unanimously decided that the School should be examined, whereupon Alford, who may in any case have been feeling ready for retirement, handed in his resignation. There was no ill-feeling, and in accepting it the Trustees voted “That the unanimous thanks of the Trustees be given to Mr. Alford for his uniform attention and kindness to the boys during the 23 years he has been master of the school.” He moved to Abbotsham, where twelve years later, on February 13th, 1861, he died at the age of 66 : he is buried in Abbotsham churchyard.

REV. HUGH FOWLER, M.A. : 1849-54

THERE were at the time of Alford's retirement twenty-eight boys in the School, of whom eight were boarders, a very satisfactory total under the circumstances. The School was thus a more attractive proposition for a new Headmaster, and the Trustees this time had no difficulty in getting a good one. Advertisements were inserted in *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *Woolmer's Gazette*, and one Oxford and one Cambridge paper, one of which fortunately attracted the attention of the Rev. Hugh Fowler, M.A., Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and Headmaster of Helston School, Cornwall, since 1847, who was duly appointed on December 4th, 1849, and took up his duties in the following January.

Several points in his agreement point to the growing prestige of the School. The maximum inclusive fee for day boys was raised to eight guineas. The vacations were increased to six weeks at midsummer and five weeks at Christmas. The School now professed to teach “Latin and Greek and all other branches of a classical education, Writing, Arithmetic and Mathematics, according to the most approved system or mode” : except for Writing and Arithmetic, the six free scholars received the same education as the rest. Increasing numbers made it necessary to lay down that when the total reached thirty, the Headmaster should provide a competent assistant at his own expense, and so for every additional thirty. The School was to be publicly examined at the Trustees' expense as a regular practice.

One of Fowler's first acts was to try to get the buildings improved. He induced the Trustees to ask the Bridge Feoffees for £100 to repair the house in Bridgeland Street. When, as might have been expected, they refused this, it was suggested that they might buy the old school building in Allhalland Street (which one would have supposed belonged to them already). Again they refused, to Fowler's disappointment, and he had to content himself with minor improvements to his house and the installation for the first time of sanitary arrangements at the School. A committee

was formed to raise money by public subscription to improve the house, but like other such committees in later years achieved little.

Far from objecting to examinations, Fowler welcomed and made use of them both to encourage his pupils and to advertise the School. He was the first Headmaster to introduce prizes, which took the form of medals, and to hold something like a prize distribution. The medals were awarded, after examination, for Elocution, Classics and Mathematics : there was also an examination in Divinity, conducted by the Rector, but apparently no medal. In 1853 Charles Hole, Esq., of Ebberly House, near Roborough, offered another medal, to be known as the Ebberly Medal, which was to be awarded annually to the boy "who in the judgement of the Head Master had during the preceding year most readily conformed to the discipline of the school, whose moral conduct has been without reproach, and who has been most diligent and attentive to his duties." Several of these medals still exist : one in the present School was awarded to a member of the Bazeley family at a date not specified and presented by the late Mr. H. R. Bazeley in 1932. It is of solid silver, very massive and of considerable intrinsic value : on one side it bears the arms of Bideford, with the legend "Schola Grammatica Bidefordensis," on the other another coat of arms, probably that of Charles Hole.

Among other things Fowler was anxious to establish a connection with the Universities. At the fourth annual meeting of the Trustees and friends of Bideford Grammar School (a function which must be due to Fowler) he said in his speech that the wish nearest to his heart was for the establishment of exhibitions to Oxford and Cambridge. His words were read by a certain John Henry Furse, Esq., of Halsdon, who thereupon decided to make a donation of £50 towards the endowment of an exhibition, preferably to his old college, Exeter College, Oxford. A committee was formed to raise further funds, but unfortunately it failed to do so, and as the sum of £50 in itself was quite insufficient for the intended purpose the idea lapsed. Finally the money was merged in the general endowment of the School, and up to the present day Fowler's wish has not been realised : the School possesses no exhibition to any Oxford or Cambridge college.

Before he could accomplish much more Fowler obtained another post, and Bideford lost this most energetic and progressive headmaster. In April 1854 he was appointed Headmaster of the College School, Gloucester, where he remained for another eighteen years till his retirement, and was regarded as one of the great headmasters of that school. On leaving Bideford he took with him his housekeeper, "Minnie Maker," and a considerable number of boarders, in accordance with the practice of those days when boarders were often attached to a master rather than to a school : thirteen years

later he was still drawing boys from North Devon. The Trustees must have regretted his departure : it was the first time for fifty years that a Headmaster had left Bideford Grammar School without any kind of conflict with the Trustees.

A very full account of Fowler, together with a portrait, is to be found in a volume entitled *College School Memories*, published at Gloucester in 1890. "Who will forget," says the author, "his heavy rapid stride through the schoolroom with his gown flying behind him, or his determinate twanging of the bell on his desk until he got silence ? The firm-set mouth, the searching eyes, the dignified bearing, the sonorous voice—all had their effect upon the boys. No one ever dreamed of playing pranks with 'old Fowler' or of indulging in any familiarity with him, either in school or out of school." He was of portly figure, and wore glasses, as his portrait shows. It is recorded that he could wield the cane as effectively with his left hand as with his right. He had a strong sense of humour and a real sympathy with boys, who enjoyed his company : it is stated that he shared and enjoyed the numerous School excursions of those days, and that he took great pleasure in the production of scenes from Shakespeare, when "he would often roar with laughter at rehearsals." One of his strangest achievements was the invention of a complicated mnemonic system for remembering dates by means of letters,¹ and he was also the author of a book for beginners in Greek entitled *Auxilia Graeca*. He died, aged 61, on August 7th, 1877, and is buried at Barnwood, Gloucestershire, of which he had held the living since his retirement : he had four sons and two daughters.

REV. ABRAHAM KERR THOMPSON, M.A., D.D. : 1854-68

THE new headmaster was the Rev. Abraham Kerr Thompson, M.A. (Oxon.), who had been Headmaster of Dudley Grammar School, Worcester, since 1849. Apparently about the time of his appointment he became a Doctor of Divinity. He came with a good reputation, having in five years revolutionised the work of Dudley Grammar School, according to a history of that school, and increased the numbers from 40 to 100. Why he desired to come as headmaster of a very much smaller school is not quite clear.

He was elected on May 10th, 1854. Curiously enough the only extant copy of his agreement is dated December 30th, 1858, more than four years after his election. The terms were in essentials the

¹ The dates of the English kings were arranged in extraordinary hexameter lines, one of which is worth quoting as a curiosity :—"George prim./PAF : sec./PEP : ter./PAUZ : quart./KEZ : wi. KIZ :/vi.KIP."

same as in the case of Fowler, except that Thompson only received £50 from the rent of Bushton, whereas Fowler had received £60. In neither case was this the full amount paid by the tenant of Bushton, part of which was now appropriated by the Trustees for other purposes.

As usual at the appointment of a new Headmaster there was some agitation about premises. The Trustees in 1855 decided once more that it was desirable to get a house for the Master with a schoolroom attached. Thompson apparently tried to force them to action by buying out of his own pocket a house known as York Place (still in existence, and situated in the Northam Road next to the Stella Maris Convent), which the Trustees agreed to purchase from him for £1,000, if they could sell the house in Bridgeland Street or otherwise raise money. The usual committee was appointed, but that as far as existing records go was the end of it. York Place was not bought by the Trustees, and how Thompson got rid of it we do not know. Complaints from the parents about the drainage and ventilation of the School buildings now caused the work to be transferred once more to Bridgeland Street, this time with the acquiescence of the Trustees.

In spite of Thompson's success at Dudley, it does not appear that for the first four or five years at any rate he was very successful at Bideford. Though an external examiner in 1857 described him as an "able master" and the School as "highly proficient," the numbers were falling. In that year there were only seven day boys and three boarders, in addition to the six free scholars, a situation which must have caused some anxiety to the Headmaster, accustomed as he had been to the comparatively large numbers (and correspondingly large stipend) of Dudley. A year later the reason for this decrease was revealed. There had been rumours going about Bideford for some time past that Thompson was addicted to drink, and a public meeting had actually been held to investigate the charges. This Thompson had attended in the hope of confronting his accusers. But although, as might have been expected, none of them would come forward, there were still many who believed that the charges were true, chief among them the Rector, the Rev. F. L. Bazeley, who refused to have anything to do with Thompson and would not allow him to take part in any activities connected with the Church. It was not surprising that the Trustees were getting a little uneasy. They sent for Thompson, and asked him to explain the continued decrease in numbers. The whole trouble, according to him, was due to the hostility of the Rector, who had refused to shake hands with him, though his character had been vindicated, and persisted in prejudicing people against the School. Most of the Trustees, however, seemed disposed to blame Thompson. Some demanded his resignation: others

considered that he should exonerate himself from the charge of drunkenness to their satisfaction. The final decision was that he should have a month to think over the question of resignation: and there, as far as our records go, the matter ends. Apparently it all blew over, and from that time the School seems to have prospered under Thompson, who remained headmaster for another ten years.

Next year an anonymous Old Boy presented the Trustees with the sum of £150 to enable another free scholar, making seven in all, to attend the Grammar School. As Dr. Thompson in this case received the interest on the £150 by way of fee, this scholarship was on a very different footing from the other six. For teaching the original six Foundation scholars the Master of course received no extra payment, it being part of his duty as Master of what was at one time known as a "Free School."

Having safely weathered the storm of 1858, Thompson evidently now decided on a campaign of publicity for the School, and as far as we can judge he succeeded in raising its prestige once more. The years 1860 and 1861 were marked by many public functions and much advertising in the press. There were public recitations in the Bridge Hall, followed by distributions of medals, silver for Mathematics, Classics and Elocution, bronze for other subjects not specified and possibly for second prizes.¹ The Trustees attended and expressed their satisfaction with the work, while Thompson himself spoke of the rapid increase in numbers, the difficulties of maintaining discipline in a confined space, and the pressing need for new buildings. There were now twenty-eight boys in the School. In the evenings after these functions there were dinners at the New Inn, with wine for the boys and more eloquence on the part of the Headmaster. The only fly in the ointment was that there could be no School service in the church before the function owing to the continued hostility of the Rector. Public lectures were also given from time to time by Thompson.

A curious feature of this period of intense publicity was the publication of the examination results with marks in full in *The Bideford Gazette*. These examinations were conducted by various people, usually clergymen: but apparently in 1861 Thompson allowed his own Mathematical Master, Mr. Wood, also head of the National School, to do it, and incurred some public criticism in consequence. Mr. Wood, we learn, took six hours over the task, and was highly commended by Thompson for his efficiency. On this occasion a boy bearing the familiar Bideford name of Hooper

¹ A bronze medal awarded in 1859 to E. R. Berry Torr for elocution was presented to the School in 1937 by his daughter, Miss Berry Torr of Instow. It bears this inscription: "Awarded to E. R. Berry Torr for Elocution in the Town Hall Bideford June 1859 A Kerr Thompson D.D. Head Master."

came out top of the School by a margin of 2,000 marks, which seems perhaps excessive : a little later, however, Hooper again proved his worth by passing the Oxford Local Examination 1st in the West Country and 24th in all England. There appear to have been several candidates every year for this examination under Thompson. Sometimes he aimed higher still : in 1863, for example, a Bideford Grammar School boy named Cresswell passed 6th into Woolwich. No records of Oxford or Cambridge scholarships exist.

Having apparently rehabilitated himself and the School with the townspeople, if not with the Rector, Dr. Thompson in 1868 resigned his Headmastership in favour of a clerical appointment in Monmouthshire.

BIDEFORD COLLEGE : REV. J. L. KITCHEN, M.A. : 1868-73

JUST before Thompson's resignation the School had been visited by an inspector appointed by the Charity Commissioners, who reported that the buildings were inadequate and that the School should be moved to a site outside the town. The Trustees could hardly avoid taking action this time, and they did so without delay. The actual School was let for £2 a year to the Rector, who used it till its demolition as a lecture hall and Sunday School room, while the house in Bridgeland Street was abandoned as "insanitary and incommodious, besides which it is so out of repair that no master of any pretension will inhabit it." (It was immediately taken up by a Company and became the Public Rooms or Assembly Rooms.) In its place a "handsome and commodious" house known as Edgehill House, on the site now occupied by Edgehill College, was secured for a rent of £80 a year. There in August 1868 the Grammar School was re-opened under the new name of Bideford College.

The Headmaster, selected from twenty-eight candidates, was the Rev. J. L. Kitchen, M.A., late classical scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, and 15th Wrangler, who had previously been headmaster of Callington Grammar School in Cornwall. There was some slight controversy about his election, perhaps a hint of trouble to come. One of the unsuccessful candidates was the Rev. E. O. Vincent, proprietor of a private school at Northdown Lodge, who was not elected, according to *The Bideford Gazette*, "owing to the absence of his friends." This gave rise to some correspondence in the paper on the subject of favouritism, and a reply from the Chairman, Mr. T. B. Chanter, refuting the charge.

It is quite clear that Kitchen's intention from the beginning was to do what many other headmasters had done and were doing in England about that time, namely to convert an ancient Grammar School into a Public School. If he had had more money, or his

methods had been rather different, or the people of Bideford had been less antagonistic, perhaps he would have succeeded.

His first step was to change the name : "Bideford College" sounded much more imposing. It is quite likely that by so doing he aroused local feeling from the start, but in spite of that for a few years the School seems to have been very successful. Kitchen's aim was definitely to make a boarding school. He brought boarders with him from Callington, he advertised for boarders, and very soon it seems that most of his pupils were boarders, to the exclusion of the local boys. Within a year or two his advertisements spoke of a staff of University masters, with a native French teacher, and the School was described as "for the sons of gentlemen, but especially clergymen," and professed to prepare boys for the Army, Navy and Universities. Even allowing for Kitchen's undoubted talent for composing advertisements, this was a far cry from the ancient Free Grammar School.

The sporting activities of the School are given prominence for the first time under Kitchen. The boys competed in considerable numbers and successfully at the annual Westward Ho! sports. They also took part in swimming matches, and in 1870 Bideford College is described as competing with Cambridge University, Haileybury College, and Winchester in a swimming tournament, apparently won by Bideford. It can hardly be supposed that the other three competitors were at full strength ; the more so when we read a little later that, in a football match with Barnstaple Grammar School, Bideford College was beaten 2—1.

Kitchen was making a brave show, and everything seemed to be going well. But trouble began to brew two years after his appointment, in 1870, when there was some plain speaking at a meeting of the Bridge Feoffees. One of them pointed out that at that time there were no free scholars at the Grammar School (otherwise Bideford College), and demanded to know how the School Trustees were appropriating the endowment of £60. It was explained that the so-called "respectable" pupils at the School, in other words Mr. Kitchen's boarders, refused to associate with the Foundation scholars, who were regarded by the Headmaster as an obstacle to the development of the School. There was high indignation at this, and an investigation was called for, the Bridge Feoffees taking the view that the funds they provided should be used for the education of boys who could not otherwise afford a classical education.

An exchange of compliments in the local paper thereupon took place. The Headmaster himself used the correspondence columns to announce that "the endowment fund had not been used under his headmastership for the purpose of making education cheaper for the rich than it could otherwise be made." He did not give a satisfactory answer to the charge of refusing free scholars, and next

week "Victimised Tradesman" attacked him again on this ground. There were questions, he said, which would have to be answered.

As a matter of fact there had been no actual misappropriation of funds; the Trustees had merely spent the endowment on renting suitable premises, which they could obtain in no other way. It was perhaps just as well that an enquiry took place almost at once.

In 1869 had been passed the Endowed Schools Act, which established a commission to enquire into the administration of all such endowed schools as Bideford Grammar School. Bideford's turn came in 1871 and 1872. A sub-committee visited the School in the former year and described it in these terms:—"One 2nd grade (grammar): site, good: lately removed outside town: net income £80: no. of scholars 25: value of property £2000." This account of his School appearing in the public press can hardly have been gratifying to the Headmaster of Bideford College.

In 1872 Mr. J. G. Fitch, later distinguished as Sir Joshua Fitch, came to conduct a full enquiry into all the North Devon endowed schools. He first met the Trustees of the Grammar School, who were probably getting rather alarmed and were most anxious to have things cleared up. Next day he attended a meeting of the Town Council, and a very full discussion of the situation took place. The Trustees were bluntly accused of misappropriating the funds. Fitch, however, was able to assure the Council that nothing of the kind had taken place: they had merely spent the endowment temporarily in renting suitable premises, instead of on scholarships, and the principal had remained untouched.

The main object of the meeting was to decide how to reconstitute the Grammar School so that it would serve modern needs. Fitch had a difficult task with the councillors, who wanted to preserve the glories of the past: they were anxious to build "a school house extending from the present school to the Quay, equal to Blundell's, at Tiverton, which is held to be a model one," and very reluctant to abandon Greek. Fitch, however, pointed out that small country grammar schools could no longer compete with the great public schools in providing a classical education, and eventually persuaded them that it would be wise to aim only at a Second Grade school in Bideford, charging a fee of from six to ten guineas. He assured them that the constitution of the School would be re-modelled, and a new governing body appointed, on which they would be represented, so that they could forget the antagonisms of the past. Fitch's diplomatic methods were as successful in Bideford as in many other towns with ancient grammar schools, and the meeting ended happily with the cracking of some bottles of choice wine and an hour or two of pleasant conversation.

It is not quite clear how long Bideford College continued. It was still advertising in rather flamboyant terms in July, 1873, perhaps a last despairing flicker: but in November the new governing body of Bideford Grammar School was appointed, and if Kitchen continued after the end of that year it must have been in a private capacity. The School had definitely ceased to exist in February, 1875, when an article in *The Bideford Gazette* on the Grammar School referred scathingly to the recent period in its history, now at an end, when it had assumed the "more pompous name of Bideford College."

PERIOD OF ECLIPSE

THE outcome of the whole matter was that for a number of years the Grammar School ceased to exist as a School, while the new Governors were taking steps to carry out the requirements of the new scheme drawn up by the Endowed Schools Commission. There were no boys and no headmaster from probably 1874 to 1879.

Education, however, was still required in Bideford, and the gap was filled by a number of private ventures. Some of these had been in existence for some time, profiting by the exclusiveness of the Grammar School, but they certainly profited still more by its extinction, and it was difficult for it to re-establish itself when the time came. The most prosperous of these was the High Street school, which was attended by most of those boys who should normally have gone to the Grammar School. Other Bideford schools were the Bridge Commercial School, otherwise the old Writing School, and Mr. Huxtable's Commercial School, which professed to teach Latin and Greek. A rather more pretentious school existed at Northdown Lodge under the Rev. E. O. Vincent, who narrowly failed to become Headmaster of the Grammar School, and later the Rev. T. Russell. Neighbouring schools which must have offered some competition were the West Country School, Parkham (a very flourishing concern, if it lived up to its advertisements), and the Middle School, Torrington. This was certainly the best of them all, and under Mr. Doidge about 1870 had eighty boys, half of whom were boarders, and obtained many successes in the Cambridge Locals. Bideford Grammar School never had anything like that number till many years afterwards.

In the year that Bideford College presumably closed another boarding school was founded in the district, the well-known United Services College at Westward Ho! which very likely took some of the boarders from Bideford College. Curiously enough

about the same time the school now known as Kelly College came near to being started at Northam, instead of at Tavistock, where it was eventually located.

THE NEW SCHOOL IN NORTHDOWN ROAD

MEANWHILE the new Board of Governors had come into existence under the scheme of August 4th, 1873, and they were earnestly pursuing their task. At this time they numbered fifteen, and consisted of the Mayor, three governors appointed by the Town Council, three by the Devon County Council, three by the Bridge Feoffees, two by the magistrates in Petty Sessions, and three co-optative. It was thus for the first time a really representative body.

The scheme prescribed what the Governors must seek to achieve. They had first to purchase a site, and erect a new School with accommodation for 100 day boys and a house for the Headmaster, at a cost of not more than £2,000. The Headmaster, when the time came to appoint him, was to receive a salary of £100, with a capitation fee of not less than £2 for each boy: it was no longer necessary for him to be in Holy Orders. Boys could be admitted at 7 and must leave at 16: and the fees must not be less than £3 nor more than £8. The subjects laid down were similar to those taught at the present day, except that no mention was made of history or geography. The most important provision of all, one which perpetuated the ancient purpose of the School, was to the effect that six exhibitions must be awarded to boys from the elementary schools: it was thus that the Foundation Scholarships, by which the townspeople set such store, were re-established.

The chief difficulty in the way of carrying out the new scheme was a financial one. The income at the disposal of the Governors in 1874 was £177 a year, consisting of £80 from the rent of Bushton, £80 from the Bridge Trust, £2 from the rent of the old buildings, and the rest interest on investments. The Charity Commissioners therefore directed that Bushton must be sold, and this was accomplished in 1875, Lord Fortescue buying it for £2,400. The next thing to do was to find a site. An appeal was made in the hope that some public-spirited landowner would come forward and present one, but it met with no response, and eventually a piece of land known as Middleton's Tenement in Northdown Lane was bought from the Bridge Trust for £300. Plans for the new School were drawn by Mr. Hookway of Bideford, who was selected after some trouble from a number of competitors, a tender by Messrs. Cock & Lamerton to carry out the work for £1,400 was accepted, and at long last in 1877 work began on the Northdown Road buildings.



PLATE 5.

Arms of Bideford.

(A wooden carving, formerly in the Allhalland Street School.)



PLATE 6.

The Northdown Road Buildings (1877, enlarged 1908).

(The gothic window of the original schoolroom may be seen, and beyond it the Headmaster's house. To the left is the gymnasium (1911), and to the right the army hut (1920).)

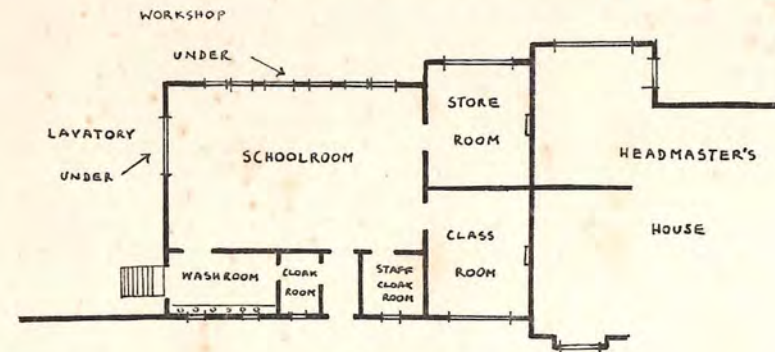


FIGURE 3.

The Northdown Road School before enlargement.
(From a sketch by Mr. C. J. Smith.)

The new premises (Plate 6 and Fig. 3) must have seemed very magnificent after what had gone before. They consisted of the headmaster's house, which formed by far the larger part of the structure, and is still (1937) occupied by the Headmaster; a large schoolroom, with high timbered roof and a big Gothic window at one end; two small rooms, one used as a store room, the other as a classroom, which eventually became the Sixth Form room and the Headmaster's study respectively; and the appropriate lavatory and cloakroom accommodation, the former under the schoolroom, the latter in the space later occupied by the main passage to the south of the schoolroom. A small belfry at the west end contained the School bell, which was rung by means of a rope depending into the schoolroom. The front door of the School opened on to an expanse of gravel: a side door gave access to some steps leading down to the lavatories, which steps were concealed from the front by a wall placed there for the purpose. The site was a pleasant one, high on a hill looking across towards Raleigh and Orchard Hill, and there was plenty of ground round the School (just over three acres in all), providing the Headmaster with good gardens and a paddock, but not at all suitable for use as a playing field owing to its steep slope. The need for organized games in connection with a school was not of course at that time envisaged.

REV. RICHARD FORD HEATH, M.A.: 1879

THE building was finished in the following year, and the Governors had to think of appointing a Headmaster. It seemed impossible to afford a salary of £100 as stipulated by the scheme, so the post was advertised at £40. As might have been expected,

it proved impossible to get a satisfactory applicant at this figure. A second advertisement was therefore issued offering a salary of £80, with an allowance of £25 for lighting and heating, a capitation fee of £4 for each pupil, and house free of rent and rates.

This proved much more attractive, and on February 8th, 1879, the Governors appointed their Headmaster, the Rev. Richard Ford Heath, M.A., of Hertford College, Oxford, who had previously been educated in Elstree. At the time of his appointment he was 46 years of age and a curate at St. Philip's, Oxford: he had also been acting as tutor, and was interested in art, on which subject he had written several books, including a life of Titian.

The task which confronted him at Bideford was difficult, and very different from anything he had encountered before. He had an excellent School building, but there was no money left to equip it, and no boys. The first step was to hire some desks to accommodate the boys when they turned up. Permission was obtained to use the arms of the Borough of Bideford for a cap badge,¹ as an indication that the Grammar School was the only school in the town connected with the municipality. When everything was ready, the rector and ministers of other denominations were asked to announce from the pulpit that the Grammar School was about to re-open, and that all interested in its welfare were invited to attend at 10 a.m. on March 3rd to be present at this historic occasion. No account of the proceedings appears to have been preserved, but the School was duly opened, and by August there were twenty boys in attendance. The position seemed so satisfactory that an assistant master, Mr. Charles Williams, was appointed at a salary of £20 a year. Unfortunately, however, in October the Headmaster suddenly resigned, possibly feeling that the position was too insecure. He had been offered a living at Bishopswood, Staffs, and evidently finding this work more congenial remained there for the rest of his life. Strangely enough, he died in Bideford (in 1888) while on a visit to relatives, and is buried in the old cemetery.

Before appointing his successor the Governors added to their slender resources by selling the old school in Allhalland Street to the Bridge Feoffees for £50. It was curious that they could do this, for the building had been regarded as Bridge property for centuries and was so scheduled in the periodic surveys of Bridge lands. Evidently at some time it had been decided to treat the Trustees of the School as the owners: but there is no record of

¹ The cap (as far as can be ascertained) was plain blue, the badge of silver thread. Thirty years later a metal badge was in use, and the seams of the cap were piped in red. Later a monogram took the place of the badge, and the cap was dark blue with a red top: the cricket cap was white. The present cap is black with a number of scarlet rings: the Prefects have a distinctive cap with only one ring, and there is also a cricket cap with equal bands of scarlet and black, and a red football fez with tassel.

this change, and we are thus confronted with the curious situation of the Bridge Trust apparently buying their own property.

Shortly afterwards the old school was pulled down, together with the old Bridge Hall, and the present new Bridge Building was erected on the site. The only relics are the various tablets preserved in the present School and the bell in the Municipal Museum. A brass tablet in the Bridge Building marks the site of the old Grammar School.

REV. WILLIAM MATHIAS, M.A.: 1879-85

THERE were fifty-two candidates for the headmastership this time, a number which had certainly never been approached before, so that evidently the post now had its attractions. On a strong recommendation from the Vicar of Newark, the Governors on December 10th, 1879, appointed the Rev. William Mathias, M.A. Nothing is now remembered or recorded of his previous history, but he was a vigorous and enterprising man, and under his unfortunately short-lived control the School prospered so far as it could under the circumstances.

There were thirty-two boys in attendance at the time of his appointment, and both Headmaster and Governors were anxiously concerned to increase the numbers. Owing to the presence in the town of the flourishing High Street school, the only hope seemed to lie in taking boarders, and an application was made to the Charity Commissioners for permission to do so. This was refused, however, on the grounds that the scheme prescribed only day boys, and that, as had happened before, the presence of boarders would raise social barriers against those for whom the School was intended. In spite of this, it appears that there were from time to time a few boarders living with the Headmaster.

The financial position remained most precarious. The Charity Commissioners would not allow the Governors to raise the fees to meet the situation, although Mathias was not being paid the £100 stipulated in the scheme. After a few years he accordingly became dissatisfied, and when in 1885 the position was made worse owing to the inability of the Bridge Feoffees to pay the Governors the £100, which the scheme of 1881 had laid down as their annual contribution, and on which Mathias' salary partly depended, he resigned. The Governors could do nothing but accept his resignation with great regret.

Mathias had made himself popular both with the boys and in the town during his short stay in Bideford. He was a quick-tempered but jovial man, and evidently took a keen interest in games, for he helped in the formation of an Association football club which used to play against the Grammar School. On Sunday

he shared duties in the parish church. It is known that he met his wife in Bideford and married during his time there (which may have been one of his reasons for becoming dissatisfied with a small stipend), but what happened to him afterwards seems to be unrecorded, though it is such a comparatively short time since he left. It seems likely that, as in the case of his predecessor, his career thenceforward lay in the Church.

ISAAC BROOKS: 1885-94

THE Governors were now confronted with a serious situation. There was no denying the fact that the Grammar School could not compete with the High Street school, now prospering exceedingly under a Mr. Isaac Brooks. What was to be done? There was one obvious solution: if Brooks himself were appointed to the Grammar School, at one stroke the numbers would be doubled and all opposition destroyed. Brooks became a candidate, whether on his own initiative or at someone else's suggestion. The Governors debated the question long and earnestly: Brooks was not a University man and had no degree: it would be contrary to precedent to appoint him. Some were strongly against it: others saw in it the only hope of saving the School. Eventually when they came to vote they were evenly divided, and it was the Chairman's casting vote which turned the scale in favour of Brooks.

An event then took place which lives in the memories of those who thus became pupils of the Grammar School through the lucky appointment of Brooks. The boys of the High Street school marched up with their Headmaster in a body and entered into possession of the Grammar School. It can be imagined that at first they were not welcomed by the Grammar School boys already in occupation. There had been rivalry and even hostility before between the two schools, which despised each other, and fights had been frequent. History does not record whether this enforced amalgamation produced a supreme upheaval: but there is no doubt that Brooks was successful in his efforts to get the two sets of boys to work together, and soon things were running smoothly.

During his headmastership of nine years Brooks re-established the School securely in spite of the Governors' financial difficulties. He personally was probably in a comfortable position. He received only the very small salary of £40 (which was one reason for appointing him), but in addition there was an allowance for light, heating, etc., £1 entrance fee for every boy, and the whole of the School fees less £1 a boy (later reduced to 10s.), which went to the Governors. As he had brought with him his former pupils, doubtless including some boarders, at the original fee whatever it may have been, he probably had little to complain about. Nevertheless

after a year or two he did complain, but the Governors were overdrawn at the Bank and receiving no income from the Bridge, so that little could be done.

The numbers began to rise slowly, reaching forty in 1890. An examination by the College of Preceptors was arranged at the personal expense of the Governors (who had no other means of paying for it), and a most satisfactory report followed. Two or three years later money was somehow found for the purchase of gymnastic apparatus, which was set up on a piece of ground behind the School later occupied by the gymnasium, and a grant of £25 from the County Council made it possible to start chemistry and to instal a workshop for eight boys in the basement of the School. This dark and depressing room cost £37. 14s. 6d., and actually continued in use, with some slight improvements, till 1935. A special instructor was engaged for woodwork, while an arrangement was made to have the use of both buildings and staff of the Technical School for certain subjects: this connection between the two schools also continued till 1935. Insignificant as these changes now seem compared with modern developments, they marked a great advance in the history of the School. It was definitely moving with the times.

In 1891, apparently for the first time, under the new scheme, the six places on the Foundation were filled. The Governors were overcome with misgivings at the possible effect of their action, and for a long time before had hesitated to move in the matter, though they often discussed it and even asked for the names of suitable candidates. In these days when the School caters for something like 100 scholarship holders in addition to fee-payers at a time, and finds among them many of its finest pupils, it is curious to note this reluctance. There can be no doubt now that the Governors were right to take the plunge. It will be of interest to record the names of the first six scholars: they were W. C. Pound (Richmond Terrace), W. C. Pearce (Allhalland Street), A. Y. Andrews (Milton Place), G. Young (Geneva Place), E. J. Mounce (Honestone Street) and M. F. Cole (Mill Street).

There are of course many Old Boys still living who were at the School under Brooks, and from their reminiscences it is possible to get an impression of School life at this period. Brooks himself, a large and genial man, bearded and of ruddy complexion, ruled the School with an easy hand, and probably took life easily himself. His methods were essentially democratic: he welcomed criticism, and if his arrangements were displeasing to the School, he had no objection to altering them. The School Magazine of the day (a hand-written production called *The Grammar School Budget*, edited for several years by T. A. Goaman, Head Boy of the School, and at the time of writing Mayor of Bideford) is loud in its praises

of his fairness and good sense, and the tribute is unquestionably sincere. Whenever opportunity offered—a particularly fine day, a cricket match to finish, the assistant master's birthday—there was a half holiday. Neither headmaster nor pupils in those days had to think seriously of examinations, and there was no higher authority to keep noses to the grindstone. The games too were essentially leisurely and democratic, as indeed was the custom of the day, and accounts of them make strange but pleasant reading to the twentieth century schoolboy, whose games if anything are over-organized. The captain of football or cricket was elected by the School: his duty was to select the team, which often included masters, and to issue challenges to other schools. Thus in 1887 Barnstaple Grammar School challenged Bideford Grammar School to a "rugger" match: as Bideford did not play "rugger," they retaliated by sending Barnstaple a challenge to a "soccer" match. Association football, cricket and marbles are described in *The Budget* as the leading games in 1887. The only playing field was apparently that adjoining the School, a rough and steeply sloping piece of land, very inconvenient for any game. It is not altogether surprising that *The Budget* has occasion to criticise the amount of mud-throwing which went on during football matches. There were of course Athletic Sports every year, enlivened, if we may believe *The Budget*, by frequent disputes, which involved the re-running of races and protracted the entertainment far beyond the intended time. The events included in the programme of 1887 show a pleasing variety, and some of them might well be revived. They were as follows:—200 yards walking match, high jump, race around the field, hoop chase, long jump, blindfold race, pick-a-back race, throwing a ball, wrestling, close-legged long jump, tug of war, hoop race, three-legged race, backward race, hopping race and steeplechase.

Despite the evident vitality of the School and the up-to-date innovations which had been introduced, the numbers began to decrease. In 1894 the Governors sent for the Headmaster and demanded to know why. Whatever reasons he may have given, Brooks was unable to satisfy the Governors, and shortly afterwards he was curtly told that either the numbers must increase or he must go. Anticipating the inevitable, he took steps to obtain another post, the headmastership of Swanley and Farningham Orphan Boys' School, and resigned on September 11th, 1894. The Old Boys at Bideford made him a presentation on his departure, which no doubt to some extent compensated for the fact that he was leaving in ill favour with the Governors.

REV. JOHN FAULKNER, M.A.: 1894-1904

HIS successor was the Rev. John Faulkner, M.A., a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, who was appointed on December 6th, 1894. There were only twenty-three boys in the School on his arrival, but as usual the change proved stimulating, and within the first year the numbers rose to thirty-eight. The appointment of an assistant master and a drill sergeant followed, the latter at a salary of £5 a year. But the inevitable financial difficulties still continued, and in 1898 the Governors even discussed finally closing the School. Fortunately they decided against doing so, and the immediate difficulty was tided over by the sale of stock and the reduction of the Headmaster's capitation grant at his own suggestion. It was not for long. By 1899 the overdraft at the Bank had risen to £300: the Governors were heavily in debt: the staff were underpaid: and it was impossible to repair the buildings. Governors' meetings at this period must have been very depressing, the more so as it was beginning to be apparent that Faulkner had not the vigour or the strength of character needed to develop the School.

For a time he seemed to be succeeding: the numbers reached forty-eight in 1899, but this was the climax, and thereafter they began to decline. The work of the School was adversely criticised both by the College of Preceptors and the Board of Education, who found fault with Faulkner for introducing shorthand and business methods in place of the more general education which such a School should have provided, and for admitting large but ignorant boys for two or three terms to "finish"—in fact for pursuing a policy designed to get boys at any price. One can hardly blame Faulkner for illiberal views under the circumstances.

The opinion was growing that the School was superfluous. Even some of its own Governors took this view, and would have liked to see secondary education in the district limited to Barnstaple. Amalgamation with the Technical School was often suggested, and as time went on it seemed the only solution. By 1902 the Charity Commissioners had reached the same way of thinking on financial grounds, and the Board of Education on general grounds. A definite scheme was put forward to utilise the existing buildings for dormitories, and to erect new classrooms at the Technical School, with the ultimate aim of accommodating as many as sixty boys.

Such is the history of what went on behind the scenes during Faulkner's headmastership. Quite another picture is given in the reminiscences of those who knew the School in his day and in the pages of *The Bidefordian*, which first appeared in print in 1900 and continued to be issued for the next few years. There we see a small but cheerful community, untroubled by the anxieties which

beset the Governors and the Headmaster, busy, but not too busy, with work and play—in fact a typical little grammar school of Boer War England.

There were two classes, one taken by the Headmaster in the large schoolroom, the other by the one assistant (from 1897 Mr. C. J. Smith, the present Senior Master, who at the time of writing has served on the staff for just forty years) in the small classroom. Science, a popular subject of the day and the speciality of both Head and Assistant, was taught at the Technical School, as also was Art. Shorthand was taken by a visiting master, while the sergeant of the local volunteers drilled the School on the playground, making no use of the gymnastic apparatus behind the School, which served only for amusement. There were sometimes pupil teachers, who helped by taking the junior boys.

In *The Bidefordian* we are given more intimate glimpses of School life. The senior boys were known as "Grecians," and are depicted eagerly competing for the honour of "Primus," or Head Boy. Scientific subjects and especially electricity, then something of a novelty, seem to have interested them most: "what sparks and the current can do" is the editor's naive way of putting it. Special occasions were still celebrated in special ways—the headmaster's birthday by an outing to Westward Ho!, November 5th with a hockey match against the Old Boys and a bonfire on the playground "which would terrify any Boer commando," Trafalgar Day by means of a little ceremony, in the course of which the flag was run up and the cannons (whatever they may have been) fired. The declaration of peace in 1902 was naturally made the occasion for something out of the ordinary: the boys subscribed to buy a new Union Jack, which after prayers had been said was run up, "with the exclamation by the Headmaster, 'May it never be lowered except by the hand of a true Briton!'"—an interesting side-light on the national mentality of 1902. Several Old Boys appear to have served in the Boer War, and some excitement was caused when any of them visited the School in khaki, with stories of the Boers they had "knocked over." The School games were hockey and cricket, both of which took place on the singularly unsuitable playground. On one occasion even ladies were seen playing hockey there. ("Now boys, look to your laurels," exclaims *The Bidefordian*.) Apparently there was no football, to judge from the editorial comment which followed the presentation of a football to the School by the Headmaster. During the war single stick was introduced as a mild form of military training, and there was some talk of learning to shoot.

So the life of the School went on, while the numbers dropped and the Governors mustered their determination. At last in 1903, when only seventeen boys were left, Faulkner was given notice.

He was eventually allowed to resign, instead of being dismissed, though it was of course virtual dismissal, and in 1904 he departed to a curacy at Chesterfield, leaving the School in a worse state than it had been for many years.

JAMES STUART FERGUSON, M.A.: 1905-31

FOR a time the fate of the School hung in the balance. To many people it seemed that this was the right moment to close it, or at any rate to amalgamate it with the Technical School. There were even those who thought that its small endowments should be transferred to Barnstaple. Fortunately the Governors decided to adopt none of these plans. They did not, however, immediately appoint a new Headmaster, which would have been very difficult under the circumstances. Instead they asked the Assistant Master, Mr. C. J. Smith, to take charge of the School temporarily. Mr. and Mrs. Smith moved into the School house, and at once set vigorously to work to rehabilitate the School. It had to be closed for a time while the muddle left by Faulkner was straightened out. When it reopened, the response was immediate: boys began to return, and it soon became quite clear that if the School were conducted properly there were enough pupils to support it. Nine months later therefore, on March 16th, 1905, when the numbers had risen to thirty-eight, the Governors undertook the appointment of a new Headmaster, their choice falling on James Stuart Fergusson, M.A., of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who was at the time an assistant master at Darlington Grammar School.

They could not have made a better selection. The new Headmaster was in quite a different class from any of his immediate predecessors: a layman, a man of strong personality, high ideals and true foresight, he was one of a new generation who had made teaching their profession instead of regarding it as a temporary occupation to be abandoned when anything better turned up. The position which confronted him was not an easy one, and called for both tact and courage. But Fergusson threw himself enthusiastically into the work, and with the loyal co-operation of Smith, who now became second in command, he was able to take up and carry forward the improvement already begun. Let it suffice to add that from that moment the School has never looked back.

It was a time particularly favourable to development, for everywhere the educational tide had turned. The Board of Education had been constituted in 1899, with the duty of co-ordinating the unwieldy and unsystematic educational provisions of the country. In 1902 the Education Act had given local authorities the power to organize and maintain their secondary schools, and two years later

the first Regulations for Secondary Schools were issued, laying down the requirements to which all schools recognized by the Board must conform: the most important of these were, firstly, a four-year course embracing English, History, Geography, at least one foreign language, Mathematics, Science, Drawing, Manual Work and Physical Exercises, and secondly, provision for pupils up to and beyond the age of 16. Most of the old grammar schools were at first rather suspicious of the Board and of the local authorities in whose areas they were situated, but gradually they came to see in them the hope of future progress, and one by one sought recognition and the financial help which followed recognition.

Among these was Bideford. The new Headmaster saw from the first that recognition by the Board was essential if the School was to go forward and prosper, and he made it his chief aim. All thought of closing or amalgamation was put aside, as the numbers continued to rise and the School took on a new vitality, and the Governors did their utmost to support Fergusson in his efforts to secure efficiency and to earn the recognition of the Board. The Board for their part responded with vigorous criticism: the premises were unsatisfactory: there was no provision for Science: the staff was inadequate: more scholarships must be provided. Accordingly the Governors began to consider how to remedy these defects.

The first essential was to enlarge the premises: with the generous help of the Devon County Council, who contributed £600, they erected in 1908 at a cost of £647 an extension to accommodate an additional forty boys. Two spacious classrooms with large windows were added to the south of the old schoolroom, one of them fitted with a demonstration bench and other minimum requirements for the teaching of science. The former cloakrooms and washroom were converted into a corridor, into which the new rooms opened, while new cloakrooms, washroom and lavatory were added at the west end of the building. The School thus assumed the form which it retained till it was abandoned in 1935 (fig. 4 and Plate 3). The new wing was opened in 1908 by Sir Thomas Acland. The accommodation was now good, judged by the standards of the day, and quite adequate while the numbers remained small.

Having provided the buildings, the Governors lost no time in strengthening the staff by appointing an additional assistant and also an Art master. Open scholarships, in addition to the old Foundation scholarships, were awarded to make up the Board's required quota of 25 per cent.: and in 1908 the School was recognized as an efficient secondary school and also as a pupil teacher centre by the Board of Education.

Meanwhile it was growing in numbers, in scope and in achievement. Minor improvements were constantly being introduced,

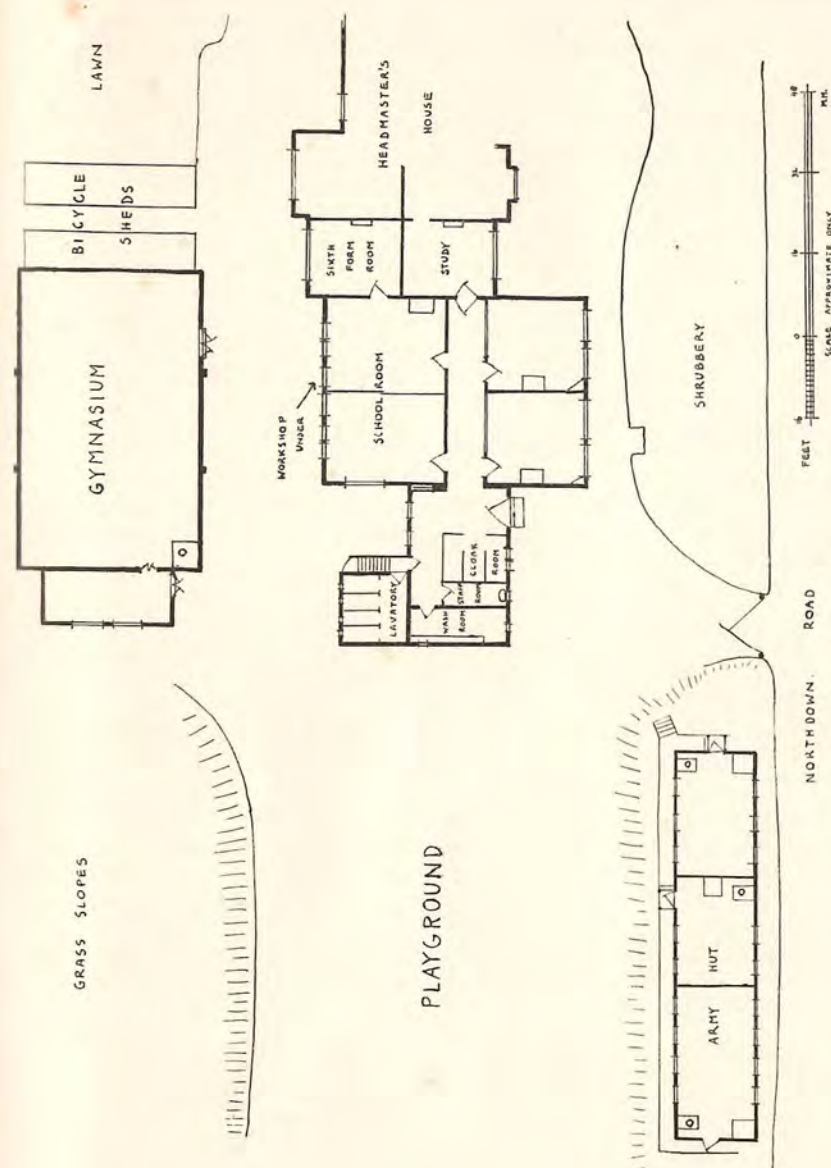


FIGURE 4.

The Northdown Road School in 1935.

(Based on rough plans by Mr. B. Fenton, with the help of photographs and personal recollections. Many details are probably not quite accurate.)

more books, better equipment. A prize fund was started, and the first regular Prize Day since the re-foundation held in 1906. Boys were entered for the Cambridge Locals : in 1906 five of them were successful.

The effort the School was making to put its house in order was reflected in an increased interest among the Governors and elsewhere, which resulted in the foundation of a number of scholarships to benefit boys attending the Grammar School. In 1907 the Bridge Trust founded a bursary for this purpose (at the same time creating one for girls at Edgehill College) : one of the Governors, Mr. A. G. Duncan, endowed the Duncan Scholarship (open to fee-payers under 13) in 1908 : while the Headmaster himself in 1910 undertook the provision of a similar scholarship, known as the Headmaster's Scholarship, which, however, was not endowed and came to an end at his retirement. In 1914 Sir Hugh Stucley, an indefatigable champion of the School in its struggles to obtain recognition, founded the Stucley Scholarships in memory of his mother and father : these were entrance scholarships open to boys attending elementary schools in a number of parishes in Devon and Cornwall where the Stucley family owned property, and have brought a steady stream of boys to the School.¹

Another important improvement to the premises came in 1911 with the erection of a gymnasium at a cost of £348 on ground to the north of the School buildings, where the gymnastic apparatus had stood. (See fig. 4 and Plate 6.) It was an admirable building of its kind, equipped with the latest apparatus, and good use was made of it, not only for its proper purpose, but as a play-room in wet weather. In later years its uses became even more numerous, and it served as an Assembly Hall and as a room for debates, entertainments, and school gatherings of all kinds.

The needs of the School games were beginning to engage attention about the same time. An attempt was made to level the School playground by voluntary labour, but this proved impracticable. Middleton Marsh was inspected, but was quite properly rejected as being too wet and liable to flooding. Eventually facilities for cricket were obtained on the ground of the Bideford Cricket Club in Clovelly Road. It was not till after the war that the playing fields in Abbotsham Road were purchased.

¹ The scholarships were divided into three classes : (1) for Home parishes (Bideford and Northam) ; (2) for Neighbouring parishes (Abbotsham, Littleham, Weare Gifford, Westleigh) ; (3) for Outlying parishes (Hartland, Welcombe, West Worlington, Chawleigh, Marwood, Pancrasweek and Bridgerule in Devon, Launcells, Stratton, Kilkhampton, St. Gennys, Poundstock and Jacobstowe in Cornwall). The period of tenure was four years, and in the case of some of the scholarships for Outlying parishes a maintenance allowance not exceeding £15 a year was attached.

Still the numbers went on increasing, and in 1913 reached what must have then seemed the almost incredible total of 100. This was the sign for renewed agitation about improvement of premises, and the Governors began to consider schemes for considerable development. Two plans were put forward. One suggestion was to provide a new house for the Headmaster detached from the School, and to convert the existing house into classrooms, with a lunch room, art room, staff room, and lavatories. Obviously the building did not lend itself to this, and the scheme was not entertained further. The other suggestion actually reached the stage of architect's plans. This was to extend the School buildings to the west and north in two storeys, with an art room above the gymnasium. There is no doubt that this would have been done if it had not been for the war. But luckily for the future of the School buildings it was not done. The war came, and in spite of the Governors' protests the whole thing was immediately thrown over by the County Education Committee, and all that was done to improve the premises was the erection of a glass screen dividing the old schoolroom into two classrooms.

The general call for economy now caused all thoughts of even small improvements to be put on one side, and staff and boys resigned themselves to making the best of the existing accommodation till peace should return. School life, as in all schools, went on much as usual, with the addition of certain war services and sacrifices. The boys contributed their prize money to the Devon Patriotic Fund, receiving certificates instead. The School field was cultivated and made to yield potatoes and other garden produce as an addition to the food supply. (It was at this time that the apple trees, some of which still exist, were presented by Mr. A. G. Duncan.) Several members of the School served on patrol duty as scouts. Belgian refugee boys were admitted to the School free. Old Boys and masters joined the Forces—there were forty-three serving in the first year of the war—and mistresses appeared on the staff to take the place of those who were on active service. So the end of the war came. In all, thirty-five Old Boys and one master were killed or died on service during the war : their names and regiments are inscribed on the brass memorial tablet, which was erected on December 3rd, 1919, by public subscription, in the old School, and now occupies a prominent position in the Assembly Hall at the new School.

Numbers began to increase rapidly again after the war, and in 1920, in which year there were fifty new boys, they reached 126, a total which could not be properly accommodated in the existing premises. Very fortunately, as things have turned out, the scheme for enlarging the old buildings was not revived. The Governors were beginning to hope that before long the School

might be taken over by the Devon County Council, becoming a maintained instead of an aided School, and that entirely new buildings might then be possible. An army hut (a type of sectional building, which was being disposed of in large quantities after the war; see fig. 4) was therefore purchased, and converted into three classrooms, as a temporary expedient to accommodate the increasing numbers, while negotiations proceeded with the Devon County Council. Although no doubt at first it was pleasant to be able to expand into more commodious quarters, it was not long before this building became one of the bugbears of the School. With its smoky coke stoves, its leaking roof, its easily broken and far from sound-proof asbestos partitions, its absence of lighting (till 1933, when electric light was installed), and its general air of dirt and decay, no one who has ever worked in it will ever forget it.

In spite of handicaps, the School made very rapid progress. A full Board of Education inspection in 1922 commented favourably on its vitality, while condemning the premises and the absence of most of the amenities to be found in up-to-date schools at that period. Examination results improved progressively, and for the first time the School entered candidates for the Higher School Certificate Examination and for the County Major Scholarships, the first of which was won in 1921.

In 1927 a stimulus was given to advanced work by the foundation of a number of valuable North Devon close scholarships to the University College of the South West at Exeter: these were endowed by two natives of Appledore, the great Cardiff ship-owners, Lord Glanely and Sir William Reardon-Smith, whose wish was to provide openings for boys and girls from their native district. While not of course limited to pupils of Bideford Grammar School, they were in most cases limited to areas served by Bideford Grammar School, and most of those awarded have been won by Bideford Grammar School boys. In the ten years since the scholarships were founded, thirteen boys from the School have thus been provided with a University education, who could not otherwise have afforded it.

Further help in the same direction was given in 1929, when the Duncan-Hedden Exhibition was founded by Mrs. M. G. Hedden in memory of her father, Mr. A. G. Duncan, who had been a Governor, and of her husband, Dr. R. Hedden, with the object of providing means for Bideford Grammar School boys to enter a University, preferably for the study of medicine. Exhibitions were also awarded from time to time by the Governors from the Stucley Scholarship Fund (as provided for by the original deed) and from the Foundation endowment. Bideford Grammar School is thus fortunate in the amount of assistance available for Old Boys who pass on to Universities.

Concurrently with the expansion of the School, the fees were increased to £7. 10s. in 1921, and two years later to ten guineas, without checking appreciably the flow of entrants. About the same time the adoption of the Burnham Salary Scale set the staff free from the anxiety and uncertainty which had necessarily been their misfortune before.

Certain developments in the corporate life of the School were made possible as the numbers grew. The house system, which was becoming general in day schools, was introduced in 1928, when the total of 150 was reached: there were four houses, Britons, Normans, Romans and Saxons, which, however, were known as "Nations" or "Tribes" till 1931. Since the introduction of houses a number of silver challenge cups have been presented by well-wishers, for which the houses compete, as in most other schools. A beginning had already been made with the prefect system by the appointment of senior boys from time to time to posts of responsibility. Regular games were arranged (in School hours, owing to the difficulty of securing the attendance of country boys at other times), and something was done in the way of organizing debates and other social activities. A full day school excursion to some place of interest was arranged every summer term. Bideford was thus gradually coming into line with other secondary schools, though heavily handicapped by its buildings and grounds.

Meanwhile the Headmaster and the more foreseeing of the Governors and friends of the School were working with the object of getting the Devon County Council to take over its entire maintenance. There were some who feared that if this happened the School would lose its individuality. Fortunately, however, their opinion did not prevail, and in 1928, some ten years after the idea had been first raised, the School became one of those maintained by the County Council. There was perhaps little outward sign of the change, but it was a fundamental one for all that. A new scheme was drawn up, leaving the administration of the endowment and trust funds to the Governors, but in other respects requiring them to conform to the regulations of the County Education Committee.

There were many advantages in the new arrangement. Above all the Education Committee, backed by the Board of Education, took over all financial responsibility, freeing the Governors from the anxiety of never knowing whether they could make both ends meet: it was now only necessary to persuade those at Exeter that any particular expenditure was desirable, and within reason they were prepared to foot the bill. This provided enormous scope for the improvement of the School, the full effect of which was only felt some years later. It should be added that the absence of any attempt at educational dictatorship in the County of Devon, combined with an increasingly progressive attitude towards education,

has made the new relationship not only beneficial but harmonious and pleasant.

During these years the need for new buildings was becoming more and more pressing as the numbers still increased and as the standard of education elsewhere improved and it became obvious that Bideford Grammar School could not possibly attain that standard in its existing buildings. The Governors had already reached the conclusion in 1924 that a new site was imperatively necessary, and a year later the present site in Abbotsham Road had been acquired by the County Council from Sir Hugh Stucley, who had been reserving it for the purpose: further land was added in 1928, making in all an area of about twelve acres. Though the whole of the ground was on a slope, making it unsuitable for games without levelling, it was obviously a splendid position for a school. On the outskirts of the town, and adjoining the grounds of Moreton House, the residence of the Stucleys, it could never be entirely built round, while its lofty situation ensured health and good drainage, combined with a magnificent view down the estuary of the Torridge.

The new grounds were used immediately for games. The School, however, lacked the means to level and develop them, or even to keep the grass properly cut and to maintain football grounds and cricket pitches. The first attempt to improve the situation came appropriately in 1929 from the Old Boys' Association, which had recently revived and was seeking means of benefiting the School. An entertainment was held in the Palace Theatre to raise funds for improvements: the resulting sum of £50 was devoted to the levelling of a cricket pitch in the centre of the western portion of the grounds. It was not possible to do more, and the pitch remained isolated on a terrace in the midst of shaggy, uncut grass: but it enabled proper cricket practice to be obtained, and remains in constant use, even now that another cricket ground has been laid down.

With a fine site in their hands the Governors were eager to extend the scope of the School. When in 1927 a large house opposite the new grounds, known as Marsland, came into the market, they considered buying it as a boarding house. It is doubtful whether, if they had done so, it would have been possible to attract enough boarders to make it pay, especially as North Devon already possessed two small boarding schools in Shebbear and West Buckland. At any rate the policy of the County Education Committee was strongly opposed to any attempt at introducing boarders. When next year a deputation of Governors visited Exeter to ask for a new school with accommodation for 200 to 240 boys, including forty boarders, the suggestion of the school was favourably received, but the idea of boarders was rejected.

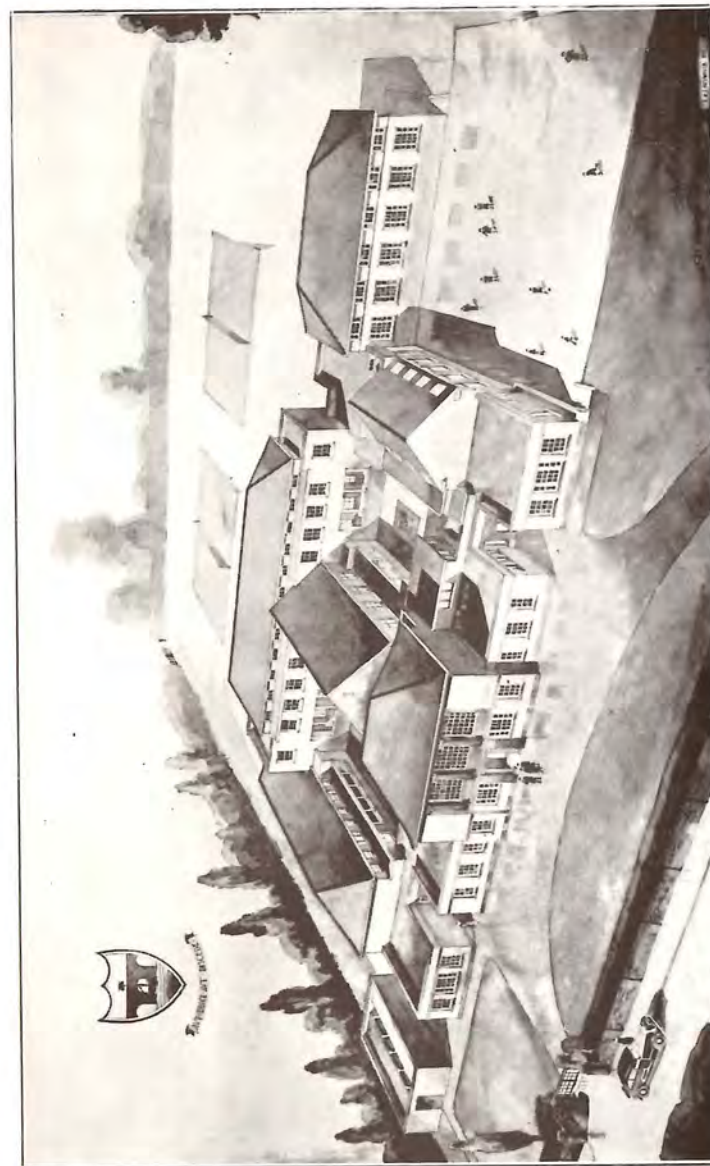


PLATE 7.

The New Buildings (1935).

(From a drawing by Mr. L. A. J. Heywood, an Old Boy of the school, made from the architect's plans and elevations. As actually built the school differs slightly from what is here shown.)

A little later the new School seemed to have become almost a reality, when it was announced that building would commence within three years. From that moment the thoughts of all were concentrated on the future, and the old School seemed to have become merely a temporary resting-place: as little as possible was spent on repairs and nothing on improvements. But there were delays, and it was not till 1931 that the County Architect, Mr. Percy Morris, reached the stage of presenting plans. In that year a party of Governors, accompanied by the Headmaster and the architect, visited a number of other new schools in Devon, in order to decide what seemed most suitable for Bideford. The plans were then prepared, and it appeared that at last something was going to be done.

This was the moment that Fergusson chose for his retirement. He had now spent twenty-six strenuous years in the service of the School, for which he had probably done more than any previous headmaster, and the climax of his efforts was approaching. But greatly as he would have enjoyed planning the arrangements for the new School and supervising the transfer, he took the view that in the interests of the School this should fall to his successor, who in any case would take charge soon after the move. To this magnanimous decision he adhered, though many tried to dissuade him, and at the end of the Summer Term, 1931, he went into retirement, amid the tributes of Old Boys and Governors, parents, staff and boys.

MORRIS MARPLES, M.A. : 1931-37

HIS successor was the author, appointed on May 1st, 1931, from some 300 applicants: he had been educated at Exeter College, Oxford, and for the previous five years had been an Assistant and House Master at Dulwich College.

No sooner had the new Headmaster taken up his duties in September than the world financial crisis caused the plans for a new school to be shelved indefinitely. This was a sore disappointment to everybody, and protests from all sides were loud and long, but the best had to be made of a bad job, and the development of the School had to go on, ready for the day when it would at last move into its new quarters.

There were thus a number of innovations, affecting especially the corporate life of the School. A full choir and orchestra were formed, which met once a week and thereafter combined in a public performance every Christmas, while the Dramatic Society at the same time produced plays in English and Latin. For these purposes a stage had had to be constructed, with appropriate scenery and lighting system, a piece of work which was carried

out in the School. The proceeds of the entertainments were devoted to the resuscitation and maintenance of the School Magazine, *The Bidefordian*, which had been defunct for some thirty years. Arrangements were made for parties from the School to take part in Continental cruises, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland being visited in this way by Bideford boys in the course of a few years. Weekly lectures by outside speakers on careers and subjects of general interest for senior boys were made a feature of the winter terms: while in accordance with a growing practice a Careers Master was appointed to look after the interests of boys leaving School. Prefects were made a regular part of the School organization, the activities of the Houses were extended, and a Sixth Form was started, which in a few years reached a considerable size and gained many academic successes. Rugby football, which was played by most of the neighbouring schools, was introduced instead of Association, and games once a week became obligatory for all boys. In order to simplify the management of the games, two half holidays a week, on Wednesday and Saturday, were substituted for the whole day Saturday holiday which had been in vogue for some time. Swimming classes in School hours were started at the Westward Ho! baths, to which boys were conveyed by special 'bus. Three new public functions, the Christmas Concert, the Swimming Sports and the Display of Physical Training were added to the School calendar.

The proper organization of games was made possible owing to the further development of the School grounds, which the Governors had been able to effect despite the crisis. In 1932 a football ground was levelled, and in the following year a cricket ground (which, however, did not become available for use for several seasons owing to the failure of the grass seed). Two other football grounds were laid out on the sloping land at the upper part of the field. There was still no changing accommodation at the playing fields, except a little black shed which had been in use for some time, and it was necessary to hire a room with baths at a café in the town. The next requirement was thus obviously a fully-equipped pavilion. Plans for this were drawn by the Borough Surveyor, Mr. F. R. Gray, as a gift to the School, and a subscription list was opened to meet the cost, which was to be £400. By 1934, thanks to a generous contribution of £250 from the Devon County Council, enough money had been raised to justify its erection.

The building, constructed of wood, contains a large central room with storage lockers, and two changing rooms, each for thirty boys, with shower baths, wash basins and lavatory accommodation. In front is a long verandah, while at the back is a shed for the motor mower and other tools. The roof is of grey-green tiles, surmounted by a gilded weather-vane: the exterior is painted

green and white, the interior varnished. A flag-staff, presented by the builder, Mr. Adrian Beer, stands beside the pavilion. The opening ceremony in July 1934 was made the occasion for inaugurating Old Boys' Day, with a cricket match and other festivities.

The School organization at this time consisted of eight forms, taught by eight full-time masters and two part-time masters, in addition to the Headmaster. There were about 170 boys. Morning Prayers took place daily in the gymnasium, which was used for all School gatherings. Science continued to be taught at the Technical School, in the absence of proper accommodation in the School itself. Physical training, which since the war had superseded gymnastics, and was rapidly assuming a more important place in education, was taken by a visiting master shared with Barnstaple Grammar School. A full-time master for art and handicraft had been appointed in 1931, and these subjects also were entering more fully into the curriculum. There were of course specialist masters for every subject. All boys in the Upper Fifth Form were entered for the Cambridge School Certificate examination, while members of the Sixth Form who stayed the full two years of the Sixth Form course took the Cambridge (later London) Higher Certificate examination. The standard of achievement in both these examinations continued to improve.

A further addition to scholarship facilities was made in 1932, when, the Bridge Feoffees having resumed payment of the annual sum of £100 after a long lapse, the Governors decided to devote part of it to a series of internal scholarships for fee-payers similar to the Duncan Scholarship. Two of these were for boys who desired to enter the Sixth Form, while there were three others for boys under 14, 12 and 11 respectively.

About the same time the School lost its preparatory form, the County Education Committee having declined to admit any more boys under 10 (who were, of course, not grant earning), owing to pressure on space. This was regarded at the time as a minor disaster, but its ill effects have been minimised by the appearance of an independent preparatory school, Lindfield School, which has specialised in preparing boys for the Grammar School.

A Board of Education inspection in 1933, the first since 1922, was followed by a favourable report on the general development of the School, and especially of its corporate life and Sixth Form work, accompanied by much criticism of certain faults which had not as yet been remedied. In particular it was pointed out that the entrance examination was too easy, that many boys unsuitable in age or in attainments were being admitted, that the average leaving age was too low (at one time the lowest in Devon), and that not enough boys remained at School beyond the age of 16. In these respects

the School had not yet reached the standard proper to secondary schools.

The economic crisis still continued, and in 1933, as there seemed no prospect whatever of new buildings and parents were beginning to complain, it was decided to make the old premises a little more habitable. The army hut was accordingly reconditioned, equipped with electric light, and surrounded by an asphalt path. The washing room and lavatories, primitive in the extreme, were modernised. Better lighting was introduced into the workshop, and a window provided for a part of it which had hitherto been unlighted. An additional bicycle shed was erected. A quantity of tools, and much geographical and scientific equipment was acquired, and the laboratory at the Technical School was adapted to the needs of modern scientific work. It was perhaps only to be expected that after all this had been done the end of the crisis should render it unnecessary.

In 1934 the Board of Education loosened its purse-strings once more, and the County Education Committee seized the opportunity of going on with their delayed building programme, which of course included Bideford Grammar School. The plans for the new School were accordingly re-drawn by the new County Architect, Mr. H. V. de Courcy Hague, to embody the latest ideas, and more quickly than anyone had anticipated the work of building commenced. The contractors were Messrs. A. N. Coles of Plymouth. The total cost of the School, including equipment, was about £18,500, considerably less than had been expected. During the summer holidays of 1934 the first sod was turned, and despite very bad weather the work went on rapidly throughout the winter. The building was completed in the spring, the decoration and fitting carried out during the summer, the furniture and equipment installed at the beginning of September under the supervision of the Headmaster, who had been responsible for selecting it, and at the beginning of the Christmas Term, 1935, a year after operations had commenced, School was reopened in the new premises. All books and such equipment as was retained had been transferred from the old buildings previously, and there followed a few days of comparative disorganization while boys and masters were settling in. Within a week, however, the transfer was complete and conditions were normal.

The official opening, by Sir Francis Acland, Chairman of the County Education Committee, took place a little later, on October 2nd, and was attended by many hundreds of visitors, who filled not only the Assembly Hall, where the speeches took place, but the entrance hall and the art room, to which the proceedings were relayed. Among those present was Mr. Fergusson, the late Headmaster, who thus saw his dream realised. A bronze

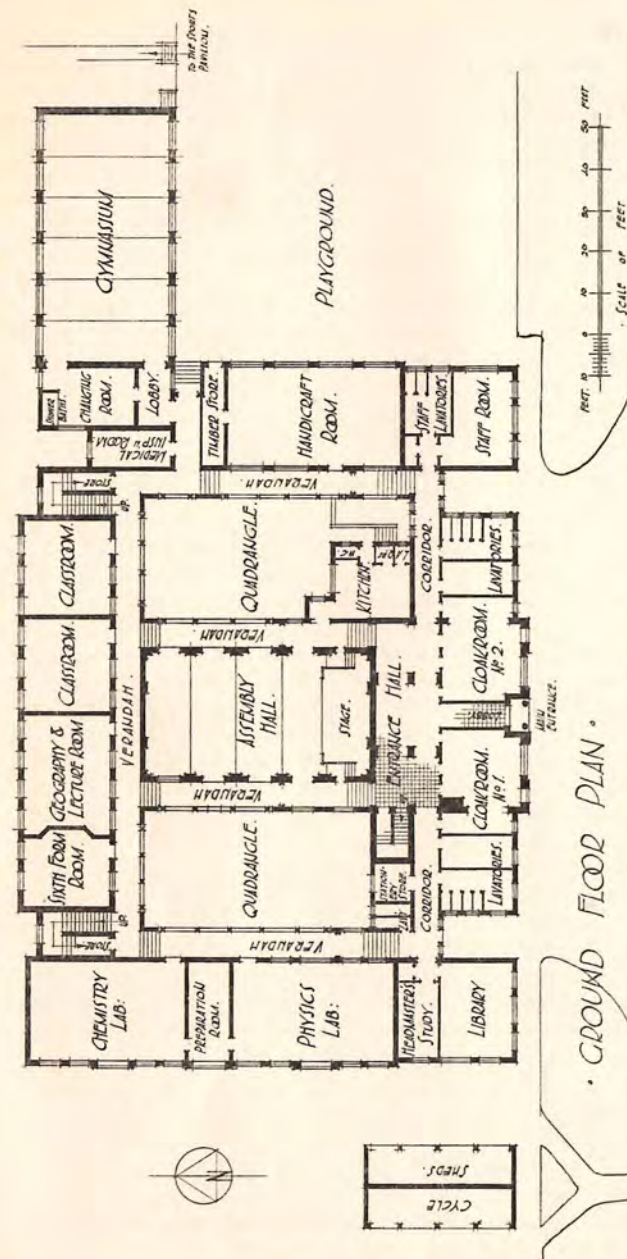


FIGURE 5.

The New School (Ground Plan).
(Drawn by Mr. L. A. J. Heywood.)

tablet¹ in the entrance hall commemorates this historic occasion. It was appropriate that the Chairman of the Governors for the year should be Sir Hugh Stucley, whose ancestor had endowed the School in 1689, and whose family had been closely connected with it ever since: although unfortunately not present himself owing to illness, he was represented by his eldest son, Mr. Dennis Stucley.

The general plan of the new School (Plate 7 and Fig. 5) is developed round two small grass-laid quadrangles. These are surrounded by cloisters into which open the various classrooms and other departments of the School. The central feature is the Assembly Hall, where the School meets for morning prayers, and where all public functions and entertainments take place. It is a plain but dignified room, decorated in white and pale grey, with a barrel roof and a permanent stage fitted with lighting and other necessary equipment for dramatic work. The seats, like all the furniture in the School, have a dark oak finish, which contrasts pleasingly with the pale walls. Here are collected all the inscribed tablets and other historic relics which the School possesses, with the Honours Boards recording Head Boys and Senior Prefects and important scholastic successes gained. Adjoining the hall is the kitchen, from which a hot midday meal is served each day for those boys who are unable to return home. Along the front of the School on either side of the main entrance are the cloak-rooms and offices, opening into the entrance hall, which has a lantern roof, and contains the notice-boards and glass cases for House trophies. Above this is the art room, a beautifully spacious room with large windows facing north and commanding a wide view of the Torridge estuary. At the front of the School also are the library, with oak tables and arm-chairs, the Headmaster's study, and the staff common room, each of the latter with its own private entrance. There is also a stationery room and a number of store-rooms. The east wing consists of two large laboratories, for physics and chemistry respectively, with a preparation room, while the west wing is a workshop for wood and metal work containing a forge and electric lathe, with the accompanying timber store. To the south, that is furthest from the road, is a two-storey block containing six ordinary classrooms, decorated in a number of unusual

¹ The tablet reads as follows:—"Bideford Grammar School. These premises were opened by The Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Dyke Acland, Bt., J.P., M.P., D.L., C.C. (Chairman of the Devon County Education Committee), on October 2nd, 1935. Governors: W. E. Ellis (Mayor), Sir Hugh Stucley, Bt. (Chairman), A. R. Adams, W. Ascott, G. Boyle, A. W. Cock, J. S. Dymond, H. W. Fulford, J. U. Fulford, A. Galsworthy, T. A. Goaman, W. Harris, J. Heywood, A. H. Hopson, H. A. W. Huxham, H. I. Meredith, J. M. Metherell, M. F. Phelan, J. Squance, W. D. K. Wickham, M. Marples (Headmaster) C. T. Braddick (Clerk)."

but cheerful colour schemes, with a Sixth Form room provided with chairs and tables instead of desks, and a fully-equipped geography room. The gymnasium, one of the finest features of the School, with adjoining changing room and medical room, projects from the main block towards the west, where it forms one side of the playground. Two furnaces in the basement maintain the central heating and hot-water systems respectively. (There is of course a full-time caretaker, one of whose duties is to attend to these furnaces.) There is a bicycle shed to accommodate eighty machines. The two main gates of the School are in the Abbotsham Road, from which the grounds are divided by a wall of stone-ditching surmounted by a privet hedge. The grounds in front have been planted with a large number of flowering trees and shrubs, among which in the grass are thousands of daffodils and other bulbs. Here also stands a flagstaff, presented by a former head boy of the School, Mr. T. A. Goaman, to commemorate his mayoralty during the years 1935, 1936 and 1937: from this the red and black School flag flies on special occasions. The external decoration consists of cream roughcast with green paint, giving it a bright, almost tropical, air, which makes it one of the most attractive buildings in Bideford.

It had originally been intended to provide a headmaster's house, and in 1935 and 1936 a number of houses in the vicinity of the School, including Marsland which was again for sale, were inspected by the Governors with a view to buying one. As none of them seemed suitable, however, it was decided to build one at the top of the grounds behind the School, and plans were drawn by the County Architect. In 1937, however, the idea was abandoned, and the Headmaster, who continued to live for the time being in the old School House in Northdown Road, was thenceforward to be left to find his own accommodation.

In the new premises School life became an altogether different thing from what it had been in the past. Such evils as coal and coke carrying, muddy boots, flickering gas and smoking fires, dust and dirt, physical training in ordinary clothes and lunch round the classroom fire were abolished at a stroke. Existence became more complicated, and at the same time, owing to the presence of every amenity, more easily organized. Among other things the social activities of the School, and especially of the Old Boys' Association, were greatly stimulated. But of the details this is no place to speak. Let it suffice to say that the first year in the new School opened with the record number of 202, and closed with an Honours List unequalled in the history of Bideford Grammar School, containing one Open Choral Exhibition at Oxford, three County Major Scholarships, three close scholarships to the University College, Exeter, four Higher Certificates, two Intermediates, ten London

Matriculations, twenty-eight School Certificates, six admissions to the Royal Air Force and one to the Royal Navy.

In the spring of 1937 the Headmaster resigned. He had been appointed to the headmastership of Wolstanton Grammar School, Staffordshire, where he took up his duties in April.

He was succeeded by Mr. W. J. Langford, M.Sc., of Reading University, previously an assistant master at the Bec School, Tooting, who was selected from over 400 candidates, and now presides over the destinies of Bideford Grammar School.

CONCLUSION

WE have traced the story of Bideford Grammar School from the Seventeenth Century to the present day, and have seen how within the space of three hundred years it has changed from a self-contained little institution where a single individual taught a handful of boys to become in the end part of a national system controlled from the Board of Education. We have watched the slow development of the School: the curriculum, which in the beginning comprised only Latin, Greek and Hebrew, gradually widening to take in the range of subjects which are taught to-day: the buildings changing too—first a single room where all worked together, then a schoolroom with a few other rooms attached, now an elaborate and well-planned structure with numerous different departments. We have noted the evolution of the scholarship system—free scholars, Foundation scholars, County Free and Special Place holders—and the corresponding change in the character of the School, somewhat exclusive at first, but now (after a brief attempt to become still more exclusive) democratic and without social distinctions. The character of the teaching staff too we have seen transformed, professional schoolmasters, who are laymen, now taking the place of the one clerical Master and his underpaid assistant; and have watched the control of the School, which rested originally with its own Trustees helped by certain other bodies, pass into the hands of the Devon County Council, working through the Board of Governors.

It has been a story of constant change, slow perhaps and almost unnoticeable at some periods, very rapid indeed within the last thirty years, change too which on the whole has been for the better. In following it we have had before us an epitome of one side of the history of English education during the three centuries we have covered. Many other schools have passed through a somewhat similar succession of phases as Bideford Grammar School, and like Bideford Grammar School many others have had their ups and downs, dwindling sometimes to a mere handful or less, sometimes dying out altogether; some of them launching forth as boarding

schools, others trying to do so in vain; some of them wealthy and growing still more wealthy, others crippled for lack of endowments; but all in the end sharing in the educational renaissance of the Twentieth Century.

The climax of this process, we may be sure, has not yet been reached. There will be changes in the future, still greater developments in education, not necessarily on the same lines as in the past, yet developments for all that, growing out of the past. Bideford Grammar School will have its share of these changes: other subjects will come in and some will be dropped; the emphasis will shift from the practical to the cultural, from the mental to the physical and back again; the buildings will become out of date, too small, and will be altered, perhaps rebuilt; the numbers will increase and decrease again. Still more revolutionary changes of every kind may take place, affecting the very nature and aim of education itself. Yet, as long as civilization exists in England—for civilization is impossible without schools—Bideford Grammar School in some shape must continue. It has a future before it as long perhaps as its past, and it will not finally disappear till our civilization sinks once more into barbarism or is blotted out.

APPENDIX I

HEADMASTERS OF BIDEFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL

c. 1660.	Bartholomew Umbles.
1695 - 1716.	Rev. Richard Roberts.
1717 - 1732.	Rev. Zachariah Mudge.
1732 - 1750.	Rev. Richard White.
1751 - 1753.	Rev. Humphry Marshall.
1753 - 1803.	Rev. William Walter, M.A.
1803 - 1812.	Rev. Thomas Ebrey, M.A. (Cantab.).
1813 - 1815.	Rev. William Woodcock, B.D.
1815 - 1826.	Rev. Francis Harriman Hutton, B.A. (Oxon.).
1826 - 1849.	Rev. Henry Alford, M.A.
1849 - 1854.	Rev. Hugh Fowler, M.A. (Cantab.).
1854 - 1868.	Rev. Abraham Kerr Thompson, M.A. (Oxon.), D.D.
1868 - 1873.	Rev. J. L. Kitchen, M.A. (Cantab.).
1879.	Rev. Richard Ford Heath, M.A. (Oxon.).
1879 - 1885.	Rev. William Mathias, M.A.
1885 - 1894.	Isaac Brooks.
1894 - 1904.	Rev. John Faulkner, M.A. (Dublin).
1905 - 1931.	James Stuart Fergusson, M.A. (Cantab.).
1931 - 1937.	Morris Marples, M.A. (Oxon.).
1937 -	Walter James Langford, M.Sc. (Lond.).

APPENDIX II

THE following is the full text of the earliest extant agreement between the Trustees and the Master, concluded with the Rev. Richard Roberts in 1695. It is endorsed on the outside "Mr. Richard Roberts schoolmaster his Articles of agreement with the Towne Aprill 1695." "30 march" is added in a later hand.

"Articles of Agreement indented had made concluded and agreed upon the Thirtieth day of March in the year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred ninety and ffive between John Darracott John Bucke John Langford Thomas Ford George Strange John Smith John Clifton Daniell Darracott Jonathan Hooper Peter Luxon Thomas Chope Coriolanus Coplestone George Coldham John Marks George Buck & John Cawsey Gentlemen and Merchants of Bideford in the county of Devon of the one parte and Richard Roberts of Bideford afforesaid & county afforesaid Schoolmaster of the other pt as ffolloweth

Inprimis The said Richard Roberts doth hereby covenant promise and agree to and with the said John Darracott John Bucke John Langford Thomas Ford George Strange John Smith John Clifton Daniell Darracott Jonathan Hooper Peter Luxon Thomas Chope Coriolanus Coplestone George Coldham John Marks George Buck & John Cawsey that he ye said Richard Roberts shall and will duely and ffaithfully to the utmost of his power teach & keep in the schoolhouse of Bideford one schoole for the bringing up and educating of youth in the Lattin Greeke and Hebrew tongues soe farr as the youthe afforesaid shall be capable and their parents willing on the ffirst day of Aprill next ensuing ye date hereof and alsoe yt he the said Richard Roberts shall teach & instruct each & every yeare after the expiration of the first yeare six poore children of Bideford afforesaid to be ellected by all the parties to these presents or the major pte of them.

Item That for the consideration abovesaid the said John Darracott John Bucke John Langford Thomas Ford George Strange John Smith John Clifton Daniell Darracott Jonathan Hooper Peter Luxon Thomas Chope Coriolanus Coplestone George Coldham John Marks George Buck and John Cawsey doo hereby covenant and promise to pay or cause to be paid unto the said Mr Richard Roberts the summe of Twenty pounds yearly by quarterly payments out of a summe collected for the benefitt of the said Schoole or out of the Interest of the same till such time as the moneys soe collected as afforesaid shall be conveniently laid out in some Estate of ffee simple for a ppetuall advance of an Able Schoolemaster for the schoole afforesaid And that after such

purchase made with the moneys soe collected as afforesaid noe such summe of Twenty poundes yearly shall be paid unto the said Richard Roberts as afforesaid But that then he the said Richard Roberts shall have and receive the yearly benefitt of such purchased estate dureing such time as he shall Remaine schoolemaster in the schoole afforesaid.

Item And the said Richard Roberts for the consideration next abovesaid doth hereby covenant & promise to and with all & every the pties to these p'sents that he the said Richard Roberts neither shall or will take upon him to preache the Gosple Marry Bury Baptize or Administer the sacraments dureing such time as he shall Remaine Schoolemaster in Bideford afforesaid without the Approbation of them the said John Darracott John Bucke John Langford Thomas Ford George Strange John Smith John Clifton Daniell Darracott Jonathan Hooper Peter Luxon Thomas Chope Coriolanus Coplestone George Coldham John Marks George Buck & John Cawsey as afforesaid their heires executors or Adms

Item The said Richard Roberts doth for himself further promise to and with all and every the pties to these presents their heires executors & administrators by these presents that if he the said Richard Roberts shall at any time be desirous to remove from the schoole of Bideford and to exercise some other function he the said Richard Roberts shall give unto them the said John Darracott John Bucke John Langford Thomas Ford George Strange John Smith John Clifton Daniell Darracott Jonathan Hooper Peter Luxon Thomas Chope Coriolanus Coplestone George Coldham John Marks George Buck & John Cawsey such sufficient notice thereof as that the schoole afforesaid may be fitted with some other able schoolemaster at his departure.

Item The said Richard Roberts doth for himself further covenant & promise to & with all and every the pties to these presents that he the said Richard Roberts dureing the time he shall remaine schoolemaster in Bideford schoole afforesaid shall well and sufficiently repaire the said schoolehouse afforesaid and shall soe yield up the same quietly & peaceably unto the custody of them the said John Darracott John Bucke John Langford Thomas Ford George Strange John Smith John Clifton Daniell Darracott Jonathan Hooper Peter Luxon Thomas Chope Coriolanus Coplestone George Coldham John Marks George Buck & John Cawsey

Item And the said Richard Roberts doth alsoe further covenant to and with all the pties to these presents that he the said Richard Roberts neither shall or will take for the entering of any child whose parents have been contributors towards the Raiseing of the schoole afforesaid whose names shall be written on a table & fixed in the schoole five shillings and twenty shillings yearly for their schooling and no more to all posterity And shall receive from all other

children whose parents have not contributed towards the raising of the schoole afforesaid ten shillings entrance money and fferty shillings yearly for each childe schooleing All to be paid by quarterly payments And a Record of all such entries therof shall be made in a Booke for that purpose by the said Mr Richard Roberts and left by him in the schoole afforesaid whensoever he shall happen to departe In witness whereof the pties afforesaid their hands and seals interchangeably have sett thereon the day and year first above written."

The deed is sealed and signed by Richard Roberts, but there are no other seals or signatures.

On the back is the following :—

" Memorandum that these words (To all posterity) were interlined between the ffourth & ffifth lines upward from the bottom before the sealing & delivery thereof

And then sealed & delivered in the presence of us

Narcissus Hatherley Junr
Christopher Dunning
Saml Reed "

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