

EDUCATION IN MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL.



MR. GLADSTONE'S address on the occasion of presenting the prizes to the Art Students at Greenwich, not long since, has directed public attention to those educational institutions which are specially connected with City Companies, and may stimulate still further the growing desire of parents to place their children at schools where they will receive the benefits of careful and liberal teaching, without the necessity for remov-

ing them from the influences of family life.

It is encouraging to know that one of the oldest, if not actually the most ancient school in the City of London, has within the last few years taken a new lease of life, and has worthily continued an eminently useful career, by adapting its provisions to modern organisations without relinquishing the reputation which it has for many generations enjoyed, in relation to high scholarship and complete preparation for the curriculum of the Universities.

It was in the third year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth that the school was founded by the Master, Wardens, and Court of Assistants of the Merchant Taylors' Company, one of the chief ancient "guilds or mysteries" of the City. They lost no time in setting to work—these City Fathers—for the scheme having been first considered by the Company on the 21st of March, 1560—1, arrangements were at once made for buying a suitable building in Suffolk Lane, in the Ward of Dowgate, and appointing as the Head Master, Richard Mulcaster, a famous philologist, who was not only "learned in good and cleane Latin Lrature, and also in Greeke, yf such may be gotten" (which was the proviso of the earliest school statutes), but also introduced instruction in Hebrew, a distinguishing characteristic of Merchant Taylors' which has ever since been carefully observed.

Sir Thomas White, who had then recently founded St. John's College, Oxford, was a member of the Court of the Company, which will account for the large number of scholarships at that College belonging to the school—he having settled upon it thirty-seven out of his fifty Fellowships; while Master Richard Hills contributed £500 (a large sum in those days) towards the purchase of a portion of a house called "the Manor of the Rose." This building was even then historical, for it was originally built by Sir John

Poultency, or Pulteny, Knight, five times Lord Mayor of London, in the reign of Edward III.

The original building was destroyed by the Great Fire, but a new one, with a Head Master's house adjoining it, was erected in 1675; and when the purchase of extra ground was made, in 1859, it was intended to extend the school still further when the leases of other tenements fell in. The plan was, however, put an end to by the opportunity which presented itself of purchasing the premises of Charterhouse School, in 1867, including the spacious play-ground attached to that institution. This the Company availed themselves of, at the expense of £90,000, and it is in a building on the open space adjoining the old Carthusian foundation that we find the young Merchant Taylors of to-day.

There are few signs of the antiquity of the school about this modern pile, where the class-rooms, the dining-room, and the various corridors and appurtenances are plain and useful enough, but without any particular indication of the old foundation from which they were derived. But there is a fine and lofty assembly-hall, which, with its high timber roof and handsome window of stained glass, bears no little resemblance to those of some of the Inns of Court; and in this hall, the three antique chairs on the dais, and the old table and desks of black oak, representing the eight head-form monitors on "the Table," and the eight prompters on "the Bench," are relics of the past, and are deeply scored and carved with names, cut by the knives of those, some of whom were famous scholars in their time, and afterwards cut their names pretty deeply into the tablet of history. It is scarcely likely that any one of the 250 boys now shouting, leaping, and running in the great play-ground, where they are bringing out what few echoes are left in the old precinct, will contribute to the curious chasing on these quaint pieces of furniture, but that a good many of them will have a place, not only in the "Fasti," but in the records of the next generation, when it counts up its eminent men, we have very little doubt. At all events, they look as though they could play heartily enough; and as this is the hour between twelve and one, some of them have just come from the dining-hall above, as no scholar is allowed to quit the school premises between the hours of nine and four, except by special permission. Dinner is provided for those who desire it, at a charge of tenpence a day, with the addition of a single glass of beer for a penny; for there are no boarders now as there were in the old school at Suffolk Lane, and though some of the masters take boys to live with their families, nearly all the scholars come daily to their work in the morning, and do not leave till four o'clock, except on the half-holidays of Wednesday and Saturday.

Indeed, although the course of instruction remains much the same as it has been of late years, there can be traced a very complete recognition of the altered

conditions of society, and of modern demands on the subject of education, of which the division of the upper school into Classical and Modern is some indication ; while the improved organisation and advanced methods of teaching which have been adopted by the present Head Master, Dr. Baker, and the gentlemen who are his able coadjutors, have contributed materially to the reputation of the institution.

That these adaptations to modern requirements are appreciated, may be known from the fact that the 250 boys will soon be increased to 300, which will be as many as the present building can accommodate ; and though admission to the school is by presentation of the members of the Court of Assistants of the Company, who have the gift in rotation, the full number will doubtless soon be returned. Any one desiring to make his boy a Merchant Taylor may obtain a list of this Court at the Hall of the Company in Threadneedle Street, and if the lad is entered in the lower school, will have to pay an entrance-fee of £3, and twelve guineas a year quarterly in advance ; while if the pupil be already advanced enough for the upper school, the fee will be fifteen guineas a year—sums which include everything except books, of which, however, there are a considerable number, because of the wide range of subjects of instruction.

In the Classical Side are taught all such branches of knowledge as shall prepare pupils to enter the Universities. The course of study embraces English, Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, and for the upper forms, German and Hebrew.

In the Modern Side the subjects of instruction are mathematics, Latin, French, German, the elements of natural science, modern history and literature, geography (including physical geography), drawing, English composition, with arithmetic and mercantile subjects. Greek is also taught to all pupils intended for the Universities, and others who may desire it.

The lower school is preparatory to the upper, promotions being made from the lower school to the upper school twice a year, according to individual proficiency.

To this lower school no boy is eligible for admission unless he is over nine years of age and under fourteen ; and he has to undergo a preliminary examination, which, though it is not formidable, he must pass, or forfeit his presentation.

At nine years of age he must be able to read and write pretty well, to pass an examination in the four elementary rules of arithmetic, and in writing English from dictation, and must have learned certain parts of the Public School Latin Primer. He is also examined in the Church Catechism, and in the early Scripture history.

If a boy is over ten years of age, he must also know the parts of the Latin Primer required of boys before leaving the first form ; if over eleven, the parts required before leaving the second form ; if over twelve, he must be well acquainted with the Latin Primer generally, and be able to do Latin exercises, to construe easy passages of Latin, and to work sums in simple

proportion. He must also know the French auxiliary verbs "avoir" and "être."

If a boy is over thirteen, he will in addition be expected to have some knowledge of Latin verse-making, and to have learnt to the end of the pronouns in Wordsworth's Greek Primer.

As a rule, all boys must be at least three months in the lower school before they are admitted into the upper ; but no boy is allowed to remain in the lower school after he is fourteen years of age, without special permission from the Head Master.

There are ten scholarships awarded annually by competition to boys who have been at least one year in the school. Four of these, called senior scholarships, are open to boys under sixteen, and are of the value of £30 per annum, and are tenable as long as the holder remains in the school. One at least of these senior scholarships is awarded every year for modern subjects. The remaining six, called junior scholarships, are open to boys under fourteen, and are of the value of £15, tenable for two years, or until the holder is elected to a senior scholarship. The examination for both senior and junior scholarships is held on or about June 19th and following days.

The examinations for these scholarships for next year will afford a good indication of what is required of boys in each division who may compete for them ; for instance :—

"Candidates for the senior scholarships will be examined in Latin and Greek composition and grammar ; they will also be required to translate at sight passages from Latin and Greek authors.

"One at least of the senior scholarships will be awarded for modern subjects, provided that a candidate of sufficient merit offer himself for examination. The subjects of examination for this scholarship will be arithmetic, Euclid, algebra, plane trigonometry, and conic sections ; translation of Latin into English, with grammatical questions ; French grammar ; translation from French into English, and from English into French ; English history—the four Georges ; Sir W. Scott's 'Lady of the Lake.'

"Candidates for the junior scholarships will be examined in Latin and Greek grammar, and in the rudiments of arithmetic. They will be further required to translate a piece of English into Latin prose, and to translate into English easy passages from Latin and Greek authors. A paper will likewise be set in French grammar and translation ; also in the early Scripture history, the history of Rome to the commencement of the first Punic War, and the leading facts and dates in English history."

The scholarships are held subject to the Head Master's certificate at the conclusion of each half-year, as to the continued industry and good conduct of the holders.

There are ten forms in the school, to which the boys are drafted in proportion to their classical proficiency.

The course of education has, ever since the foundation of the school, embraced Hebrew and classical literature. Writing, arithmetic, and mathematics were

introduced in 1829, French and modern history in 1846, drawing in 1856, and writing from dictation (for the lower forms) in 1857. Especial attention has always been paid to religious training; one of the oldest regulations passed by the Company says of the masters—"They shall teach the children, yf neede be, the Catechisme, and instruccions of the Articles of the Faith, and the Ten Commandments in Latin." The morning of Monday is throughout the school devoted to this important subject. Prayers, chiefly selected from the Prayer Book, are used at the commencement and close of morning and afternoon school.

Of course, when we pass from the lower to the two divisions of the upper school, we come to the more important scholarships at the Universities.

All boys who have been in the school two years are considered to be on the foundation—that is, are eligible to the twenty-one scholarships at St. John's College, Oxford, until the 11th of June preceding their nineteenth birthday. Candidates for school exhibitions may in some cases have passed their nineteenth birthday, but must have been a certain time in the school, and attained a certain rank in it, and passed certain examinations.

The preferments attached to the school are numerous enough to stimulate the ambition of lads who look forward either to College or to professional advancement. They consist of twenty-one scholarships to St. John's College, Oxford, the value of each being £100 per annum, including all allowances; the subjects of examination and the election to scholarships being under the control of the Master, Wardens, and Assistants of the Company. There are also six exhibitions of £60 each to the same College, for candidates between sixteen and twenty years of age; one exhibition of a similar amount at the option of the senior scholar who is "superannuated," has been five years in the school, and is on the head form at the time of his leaving. One exhibition, worth £61 11s. 4d. a year, to any

College in Cambridge; four other exhibitions of £50 a year each, also to any College of the same University; and various exhibitions to either University, founded by the Company, and under their direction, are among the preferment. Then there is an exhibition of £62 a year to Oxford, and two scholarships worth £30 each, for classics, founded by old scholars; while four new exhibitions are given by the Court for mathematics, one of which is given to the second best mathematician leaving the school in each year, if not otherwise provided with school preferment. There are also two exhibitions of £30 each, founded by the Pitt Club in 1845, for the best scholars in the school who are going to College; and six exhibitions founded by Mr. Fish—four of £48 and one of £40; five others of £10 each, and a gift of £12 a year to a scholar of Oxford and Cambridge alternately, for the purchase of books.

Of medical exhibitions to St. Thomas's Hospital there is one granted in each year, tenable for three years, and worth £30 per annum; and there is the "Barnes Scholarship" at Cambridge, open to undergraduates in their first year who have been educated at Merchant Taylors' School.

In addition to this long list of exhibitions and preferment, there are a large number of prizes in books and money, including "mercantile prizes," so that there is encouragement to work well even among the boys who cannot obtain the scholarships, or who are not likely to enter on a career at the Universities. That the reputation of the old school should be maintained with such liberal support as it receives from the present representatives of its original founders is scarcely surprising, and it may be hoped that when the present building is full, and the voices of 300 persevering young scholars may be heard making the play-ground ring, there will still be room for growth and further development in an institution which may be regarded as one of the most suggestive and illustrious in the City of London.

THE GATHERER.

In Haste for a Doctor.

People often fall ill at inconvenient hours, and all maladies are not so steady-going that patients are secure against bad turns in the dead of night. To obtain the services of a doctor at such times is often far from an easy affair. In Paris this has lately been made the subject of an excellent decree by the Prefect of Police, and that city has now a complete system of night medical attendance. At every police-office the names are entered of those doctors who are willing to rise at night. The public can see the list at any hour, and choose what name they please. A policeman calls up the doctor, brings him to the sick house, and gives him a cheque for ten francs by way of fee. Those patients who are well-to-do are asked afterwards to reimburse the municipality; those who are unable to pay, however, receive medical succour gratis.

Night-work is one of the hardships of the medical

profession, and often makes serious inroads upon a doctor's health. To undertake it requires a larger share than ordinary of enthusiasm and the spirit of self-sacrifice. If any one doubts it, let him try the experiment of turning out just once from the genial climate of Blanket Bay into the cold street on a dark night of wind and rain.

Hungry Birds Disappointed.

When a bird sits in a bush, watching a man sowing seed, it looks forward to a feast. Indeed, newly-sown seed often causes the gardener no little anxiety, small birds make away with so much of it. If he can command plenty of nets and protectors he can keep them at a safe distance, but few have a sufficient stock of these things.

A practical gardener has contrived a method by means of which birds are effectually scared off. He