

**RECORDS AND
REMINISCENCES
OF REPTON**

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Records and Reminiscences of Repton by G. S. Messiter

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G. S. MESSITER

**RECORDS AND
REMINISCENCES
OF REPTON**

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REMINISCENCES OF REPTON

EDITED
IN THE YEAR OF HER SEVENTH JUBILEE
BY
G. S. MESSITER, O.R.

REPTON :
A. J. LAWRENCE, PRINTER TO THE SCHOOL.
1907.

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APOLOGY.

ON looking over the following pages I am reminded of the schoolboy who, when asked to write some account of Tennyson's Princess, could quote no more than the poet's own description of it: nevertheless I trust that my "Medley" will not prove uninteresting to Reptonians both Past and Present.

Many of the items noted are of course trivial, but, like the common shell which has become fossilized, they may be of interest to the geologist of later days.

Of tradition and anecdote I have recorded what I could, but such *έρεα πτερόεντα* seldom come home to roost, and must be captured on the wing.

G. S. M.

RECORDS.

REPTON PRIORY SCHOOL.

THE earliest of our School Buildings included only those known to-day as The Priory, exclusive of The Hall. Hence the School was known as "Repton Priory School."

There are entries in the College Registers at Cambridge of the admission of O.R.s as coming from "Repton Priory School." Moreover the name "Priory" was transferred to The Hall when that house became the residence of the Headmaster in 1768.

Mr. Macaulay dated his school reports from "The Priory," and Canon Macaulay records that letters to Dr. Peile's house were usually addressed to "The Priory" in his day.

After the dissolution of the monasteries our Priory was granted to one Thomas Thacker, whose son Gilbert (the same who demolished the beautiful church of the Priory), sold the buildings, except The Hall, to the executors of Sir John Port in the year 1559, for the sum of £37 10s.

From the first the Headmaster lived in the North end of The Priory and the Usher at the other end.

Meanwhile the Thackers occupied The Hall till 1728, when the property was left to Sir R. Burdett, whose family, forty years later, let the house to the Hereditary Governors, from which date it has always been the residence of the Headmasters. It became School property in 1891.

At the same time it was arranged that both the Ushers should reside in The Priory; the 1st Usher has usually lived at the North end, though this arrangement seems to have been interrupted on two occasions at least.

In the Order sanctioning the migration of the Headmaster to The Hall, it is distinctly ordered that the 2nd Usher, Mr. Daniel Bradney, should use the house vacated by the Head-

master; but this appears to have been merely a temporary arrangement.

Again it is on record that "Dr." (Surgeon) Watkins lived in the 3rd Master's house at the South end, and Mr. Tomkins in the 2nd Master's house, though the latter was the 2nd Usher (or 3rd Master). Moreover the said Dr. Watkins was never a member of the School staff, but lived in The Priory, where he had 8 boarders, renting his quarters from "Parson" Hutchinson, who was the 1st Usher, but was allowed by the Headmaster, Dr. Stevens, to live in the village and take boarders. Tradition says he had as many as 30 in the houses at the bend of the road opposite the new Lych-gate and Church-yard wall. These strange doings lasted till Dr. Sloath came in 1800, when he promptly put things right and turned a few persons to the 'right about.'

Under the Founder's Will "A Grammar School" was to be kept in Etwell or Repton by "A Priest well learned, and graduate, assisted by an Usher."

They were to receive respectively Twenty Pounds and Ten Pounds as their annual salary "for their travail" in keeping the School.

In 1621 King James granted a Special Charter to The Master (of the Hospital), Schoolmaster, Ushers, Poor Men, and Poor Scholars; the management of the estates was entrusted to the said Master, Schoolmaster, and Ushers, together with three of the ancientest of the Poor Men, the Master of the Hospital being appointed as the Bursar of the Corporation.

Over this Corporate Body Sir John Harpur (whose family had apparently managed the estates up to this date), was appointed First Governor; after his death four Hereditary Governors came into office, three of them representing the Founder's three sons-in-law and the other the Harpur family.

Under this Charter the number of Ushers was doubled, the special duty of the 1st Usher was "to teach grammar," of the 2nd "to teach to write, cyphers, and cast account." The Headmaster's annual salary was fixed at £40, while the Ushers received respectively £20 and £15.

The Governing Body has been altered from time to time: in 1874 the greatest change was made after an enquiry by the Charity Commissioners, when a new set of Governors was appointed, including the Hereditary Governors but excluding all persons drawing salaries from the endowments. This scheme has been quite recently modified by the Board of Education.

THE PRIORY HOUSES.

THE earliest description of these buildings as School buildings occurs in the deed conveying this part of the Priory property from Mr. Thacker to the executors of Sir John Fort, in the year 1559, for the "Whole summe of Thyrtye and seven pounds tenn shillings of curraunt money of England." For this value the following property was granted: "One
 " large greate and beygh house sett and sytuate near to
 " the kitchen of Mr. Thacker, comonly called the
 " l'ermyre (Infirmary)" together with " the ground and
 " Soyle upon which the Schoole M^r. his lodgings is now
 " newly erected," and also " the p'cell of ground upon the
 " est pte adjoyning to the side of the s^d. greate long house,
 " which lately was called the Cloyster and one other roome
 " lately called the Fratrye, as the same are now enclosed
 " togeyther with a new wall."

The "roomes," or spaces, here mentioned became the gardens of the Headmaster and his Usher, then living in the present Priory.

The *original* depth from West to East, of this long house is shown by the distance between the thick walls which enclosed the Cellarium of The Priory; this Cellarium being divided by the line of pillars, originally six in number. (See Mr. Hipkins' *Repton and its Neighbourhood*).

The "newly erected Master his lodgings" almost certainly included the old Sixth Form Library and the room below it.

The following Headmasters lived in The Priory; but the dates of the earlier Masters are uncertain and very possibly the list is incomplete.