



TITLE PAGE OF THE MINUTE BOOK.

ORMSKIRK GRAMMAR SCHOOL: THE FIRST  
MINUTE BOOK, 1613-1890.

*By the Rev. J. R. Bate, B.A., B.Sc.*

Read 22 Feb., 1923.

THE Grammar School of Ormskirk is peculiarly fortunate in possessing a more or less complete record of the activities of the governing body from 1614 to 1890, in a single manuscript volume, well preserved, and except a few passages here and there, quite legible.

This book, which is the basis of the following notes on the early history of the foundation, consists of 370 leaves of excellent paper, with a pretty water-mark. The size of the paper is  $10\frac{1}{2}$  ins. by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins., and the book is in all  $2\frac{3}{4}$  ins. thick. It is bound in full calf with flap over bends and buckle, and is sewn on cowhide bands and flexible-stitched so as to lie flat when opened. The over bands are laced with vellum, and the stitching is still perfect—not a stitch being missing or broken. The cover has quite recently been delicately and faithfully repaired under the expert direction of Mr. Marples, principal of the Liverpool School of Art.

The title page occurs on the eleventh leaf, and is quite an elaborate affair; a large capital A, with florid ornamentations; and suspended between the arms of the letter are leaves and a single open flower, of six petals and a cushion centre, perhaps intended for a sunflower, and the name of the scribe, Elize Longe (*cp. infra*) together with the date año dñi 1618. The book is called

A REGISTER FOR THE SCHOOLE OF ORMISCHURCH.

At the foot the date is repeated in bolder figures.

Of the ten leaves in front of the title page, the first two are blank; on the next at the uppermost edge is written Mr. William Knowles, and below a list of the deeds etc., as existing in July, 1664; the fourth is blank; the fifth contains a list of conveyances and leases appertaining to the school in July, 1658; the next is blank, but the seventh has written in a bold hand:—

Ex dono W. Knowles vicarii  
& Concionatoris Regii  
April: 26: anno dñi 1614

Eight, nine and ten are blank. Thirteen pages immediately following the title page are devoted to a list of benefactors and benefactions from 1613 to 1722.

These are succeeded by a copy of the original order establishing the school, occupying three pages. Then the story of the work of the governors commences; it occupies 617 pages of the rest of the book, as written, and ends in Jan., 1890, when a new minute book was procured. The last forty-one leaves are blank.

In addition to this book, there are in the governors' possession various documents: Sixteen 17th century deeds of various kinds, orders, decrees, leases, indentures and assignments; Twelve 18th century conveyances, bargains and sales, leases and releases, and a faculty (1718), to erect a dwelling house for the master on the north side of the parish church. There are various 19th century documents. There is also an account book, fairly complete, beginning 1769 and ending 1890.

The Free Grammar School of Ormskirk, to adopt the name originally given to the institution, was the outcome of various gifts of money made for the specific purpose of establishing a school in the township during the opening years of the 17th century. Henry Ashcroft, or Ascroft, as it was indifferently spelled, of Preston—will 1601, inventories 1607, 1611—directed his executor, William Laithwett, a brother-in-law, "to give and pay towards

and for the maintenance and the use of a Free Grammar School to benefit at Ormskirk aforesaid £100 of current money of England within the term of five years, be it ensuing after the day of my death." Henry Ascroft died on 7 January, 1600-1, his will being dated on 22 December, 1600; he held houses and lands in Ormskirk, Scarisbrick, Harleston and Skelmersdale.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately I have been unable to trace his place of burial in the registers of any parish churches in the neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup> The school records state that "Mr. Henrie Ascrofte was borne in Ormischurch but living mostwhat in Preston, of which town hee was freeman," and also satisfy us that the money was "accordingly payed by his executor." It appears from the earliest deed in the possession of the present governing body that in all a sum of £136 11s. 8d. had been received before 27th Sept., 1610, to give the Free Grammar School its start in life.

At this point, perhaps the best method of proceeding will be to examine in detail the oldest deed mentioned above. This is a decree of the chancery court of the County Palatine of Lancaster by certain esquires and gentlemen by virtue of his majesty's commission, on the 28th Sept., 1612. The decree first refers to a former commission which held an inquisition at Ormskirk on 27th Sept., 1610, when the amount given above was found to be in certain hands for the purpose mentioned, and proceeds:

"Now for the due employment and disposition of the several sums of money aforesaid and of the use and benefit thereof: and to the intent that the Schoolmaster for the time being shall not be withdrawn from his function of teaching of children, about the gathering of his stipend and wages, but that the same may be

<sup>1</sup> Duchy of Lanc. Inq. p.m., xviii, 8, 28. He had a daughter and heir, Margaret, born Sept. 1598, but wished his lands to descend in the male line, naming Henry and Richard sons of Silvester Ascroft, deceased, John son of James Ascroft of Skelmersdale, and Hugh Ascroft of Eccleston by Prescot.

<sup>2</sup> The Preston registers do not begin till 1611.

half-yearly paid to the said Schoolmaster; and for that such persons may be employed touching the putting forth of the money and stock, and the disquisition thereof, as are inhabiting within the said parish of Ormskirk aforesaid and in respect thereof are most likely to have care of the preservation of the said stock, and the increase thereof "

certain things are decreed:—

1. Names of Governors appointed: These include the Earl of Derby, and heirs, Sir Cuthbert Hallsal, four esquires, Richard Ambrose, vicar of Ormskirk and successors, William Knowles, the King's Majesty's preacher and successors at Ormskirk, and twelve gentlemen, any six of whom shall dispose and disburse etc.
2. Two of the members appointed collectors to act until Tuesday in Easter week now next: then to render account and Governors to appoint two others. The first collectors were:—William Knowles, the King's Preacher, and Richard Sankie of Ormskirk, gentleman.
3. That a chest be made in which to keep all bonds etc., with three locks and three keys; the constable of the town of Ormskirk to have the custody of the chest, and one key to be in possession of each of the following—the vicar, the schoolmaster, and the two collectors.
4. & 5. Relate to the meeting-place of Governors, namely the church; notice of meeting to be given in church on Sabbath day, and make arrangement for appointment of new Governors within six weeks of the death of any Governor.
6. " That there shall be made a perfect roll or book, wherein shall be written not only the names of all the Governors and Officers belonging to the said School but also a particular or brief of every bond, bill, writing or other assurance taken for the said stock or concerning the government of the said School, which Roll or Book shall be kept in the said chest."
7. The last item of the decree gives authority to the Governors named, or any twelve at least, to appoint " One or more sufficient and discreet person or persons to be Schoolmaster and Usher for the said School, as the profits belonging to the said School will extend and afford, and that they shall conclude and agree with such Master and Usher for such wage, from time to time, as they in their discretion shall think fit and reasonable."

In addition they are to pay to the " Schoolmaster now being for one whole year now past, and this present year now in being, in respect of his pains taken, both as Master and Usher, after the rate of £12 for the year, and to allow Mr. Ellis Ambrose, for the time that he did teach as Usher, the sum of forty shillings, if the interest of the said stock will amount thereunto." The deed is sealed and signed by:

Thomas Tyldesley.	}	Esquires.
Hugh Hesketh.		
Edward Stanley.		
William Knowles.	}	Gentlemen.
John Breres.		

The institution having been endowed and the character of its policy decreed by lawful authority, there remained the necessity of setting the infant upon its feet. The first acts which promised to give concrete existence to the school are recorded in the minute book thus:—

*26th die April, 1614.*

Officers agreed upon for this year next ensuing:

Collectors and disposers of the revenues,  
John Bires and William Laithwaite.

Collectors for the contributors mony toward the building of the Schoole,

William Knowles, cleark, and of every quarter one or more  
Governors.

Overseers of the building of the said schoole to whom the mony collected must be payed.

Richard Hill and John Barton.

The place agreed uppon for the erection of the Schoolehouse is by and with the consent of William Knowles, Vicar of Ormiskerke, on the north side of the churchyearde in or near the place where the olde Schoole was begunne to be erected.

The position of the school in close proximity to the churchyard is interesting and suggests more questions than I can answer. It will be remembered that the present vestry of Halsall church was originally the grammar school of that township. Was the Ormskirk

school within the ring fence of the churchyard or outside it? The fact that it was built in the position stated in the minute—on the north side of the churchyard, by and with the consent of the vicar—rather suggests that it was built on church land and therefore within the boundary of the churchyard. From some entries at a much later date in the minutes it would appear that the church porch, which is now at the south-west corner of the nave, was then on the north side.

Governors' Meeting, Tuesday, April 13th, 1830.

"That it is herein recorded that the plot of land inclosed between the South West Corner of the Grammar School and the corresponding corner of the Porch being (blank) feet or thereabouts is the property of the Parish."

"That £13 6s. 9d., having been already paid by Mr. Palmer (the collector) in furtherance of the proposal made by the Parish, relative to the closing of the entrance to the Grammar School through the churchyard, be allowed."

When the old school, house, garden and yard were vacated, and the buildings (then in a parlous state) were taken down, the parish was allowed to take possession on payment of a sum of £100, which was received by the governors on 3rd June, 1843.

The first collectors are worthy of some notice. John Breres of Bpires, was evidently a most worthy townsman. In a list of original benefactors in the early pages of the minutes book, which I suspect were written by the first master, Elize Long, this John Breres of Marton has a eulogy in Latin: "*Amicus meus integerimus plurimisque modis adamandus, cujus et auspicii schola erecta fuit.*"

Mr. Breres' house is now known as Martin Hall Farm, Burscough, and in the kitchen window, a seven-light, stone-mullioned window, broad and shallow, are to be found in one light his initials and his wife's, and in another, his armorial bearings. His name appears regularly in the minutes until Sept., 1631, and then we was succeeded by his son, Alexander, and he in turn by another John Breres.

Colleton accounted for his next years  
 in his said Gaubts and his  
 Government.

Jo. Lewis  
 Jo. Jones  
 William Smith  
 Edward Gill  
 Jamieson Monroffe  
 John Sawe  
 John Barton  
 Anthony Christoph

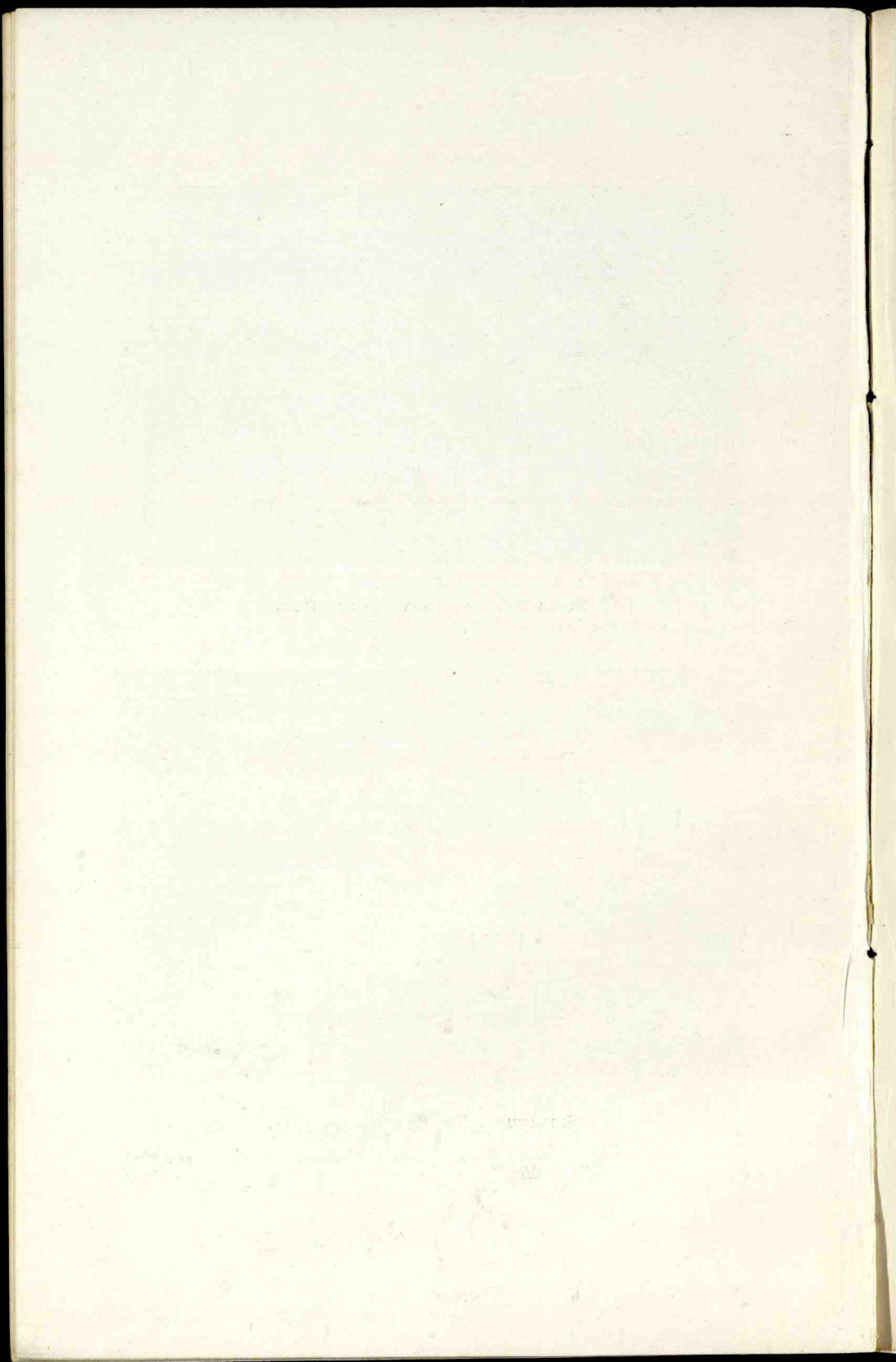
SIGNATURES OF GOVERNORS, 1622.

April 19th 1648

Mr. Wm  
 Wm. Smith has of Shermisdale was deposed  
 of his office above-written a several of his which  
 is in a copy of Mr. Dan. Siffon of James town  
 which is said to be whose name are published  
 which is said to be whose name are published  
 which is said to be whose name are published  
 Mr. Siffon according to a record of the said

Wm. Dan vi. d  
 as my signature  
 Alex. Brown  
 Alex. Brown  
 Geo. Brown  
 Emanuel Brown  
 Mr. Dan. Siffon

SIGNATURES OF GOVERNORS, 1648.



William Laithwaite, the other collector, is probably the William Laithwett who was an executor of the will of the founder, Henry Ascroft, and empowered to pay the £100 to the school: he does not appear to have been a benefactor, but was a very assiduous governor and oddly enough seems to have ended his career at the same time as his first colleague in the office of collector, for both their places are filled at the same meeting, 30th Sept., 1631.

The collector of the money for the building was for the first quarter William Knowles, clerk. William Knowles, king's preacher, vicar of Ormskirk, after the death of Richard Ambrose (father of Isaac Ambrose, vicar of Preston, whom Halley describes as the most meditative Puritan in Lancashire), who died early in 1613 and left forty shillings to the school—*cujus memoriam veneror*, says our early scribe—presented the minute book to the school. He was buried in the high chancel of the church on 2nd Oct., 1617.

The overseers of the building were:—Richard Hill of Burscough, and John Barton of Scarisbricke. John Barton was a benefactor to the amount of 35s.: an early entry in the book states that he "tooke extraordinarie great pains both himselfe and with his cariage." He was succeeded in the office of governor by his son, John Barton, 7th February, 1634. Richard Hill was a governor, and an active one for over thirty years; his very quaint signature occurs over and over again as the years progress. He was succeeded by his grandson, Thomas Hill, in 1646.

It is extraordinary how father is succeeded by son, and how the same names recur throughout the minutes. It is also worthy of note that the names Hill and Shawe which are to be found in the list of first governors, also have a place in the list of the present governors (Dec., 1924).

The next item in the minutes is dated 1st Sept., 1614<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The minutes from 1614 to 1618 are copies, for it is only in 1618 that the signatures are genuine. The title page is dated 1618.

This is an agreement that if the money collected is insufficient for the buildings the remainder required can be taken out of the stock by consent of six governors, but that no part of Henry Ascroft's £100 was to be used in this way. It is signed by ten governors.

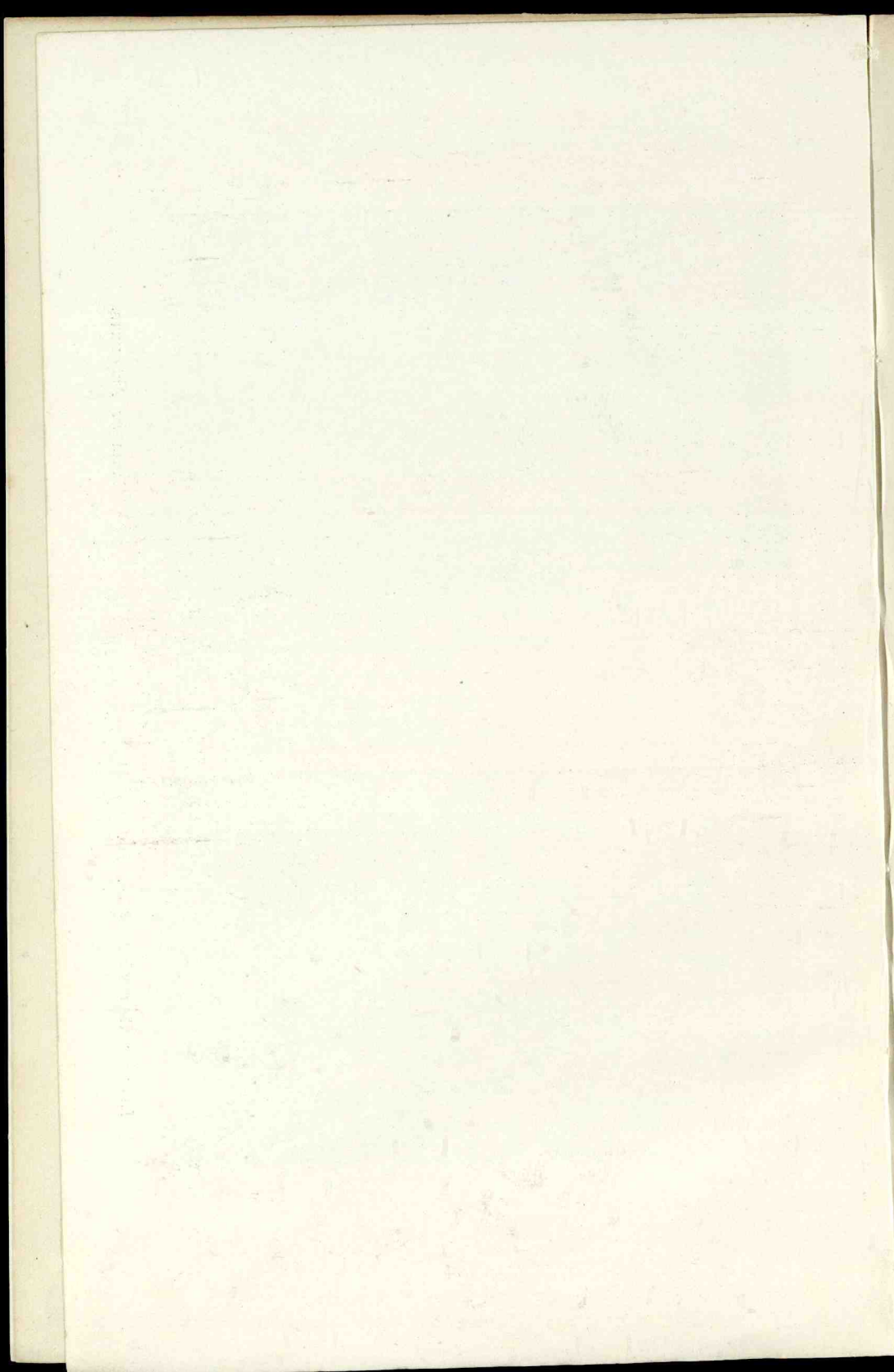
Next comes the account of the collectors, William Knowles, vicar, and Richard Sankie, of the profits and monies given and belonging to the school, and is dated 26th April, 1614. The first statement of accounts is divided into two parts, Charge and Discharge respectively, and occupies rather more than eight closely written quarto pages. The whole consists of a statement of what may be called the assets and liabilities of the institution. The money given by will or otherwise was lent out on bond or bill, the former called technically an obligation. There are eleven of these and it may be of interest to give the complete statement of the first obligation on the list:

One obligation dated secund Februar. 9<sup>o</sup> Jacobi RR'is wherein Peter Leadbetter, Thurstan Aspinwall and Adam Chaddocke were bound to Richard Ambrose, Roger Sankie and Hugh Fletcher in thre score and six pounds for payment of £33 upon the second of Februarie then next.

I imagine Peter Leadbetter was one of the original governors, but his name disappears from the bond on its renewal next year. Thurstan Aspinall's name appears on no less than four of the bonds. In such obligations the persons named are bound for payment of double the amount lent plus one year's interest. The eleven obligations in all amount to a sum of £110 lent.

There are in addition three bills, one dating back as early as 11th November, 1603; the bills were for payment, one of 51s. two of 22s., which of course, will include a year's interest. The rate of interest in each case is 10 per cent.: the rate of interest throughout the 17th century and early 18th century is that customary everywhere at the time. The rates in the minutes I have culled are:—





1613—1625	10%	1660	7%
1626—	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ %	1695—1712	6%
1627—1656	8%	1720—1723	5%

These obligations and bills, called specialities, amount (adding a year's interest) to £126 1s., though the book gives £125 19s., but this error is implicitly corrected in the subsequent discharge statement.

The next assets, without specialities, i.e. without bonds or similar securities as evidence, are money left by will and not yet paid (the inquisition of 7th Sept., 1610, is cited as proof) and money given by Hugh Aspinwall of Bickerstaffe, in the hands of Roger Sankie, amounting in all to £17 10s. 8d., again wrongly added and called £27 10s. 8d. The next group of items are augmentations; legacies not yet paid, £3 2s. left by the late vicar in two separate hands, £1 left by Henrie Cookson in his will, 40s. "as is affirmed by Robert Caddick, but William Cookson says it is only 20s.," and £2, left by Robert Rutter to be paid by his brother John; in all £6 2s.

Next came three "arrearges" of interest, in each case for 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  years, amounting to £6 3s., but of one of them the then schoolmaster had received 30s. Then the interest received is stated, whereby it appears only on eight of the fourteen items was the interest paid; £7 8s. was paid, £3 10s. unpaid. The total amount of the charge was £167 12s. 8d.

The discharge is in most cases a repetition of the charge, but it states in each case which of the obligations were renewed; among them are two variations, as renewal was only made for half a year, thus reducing the amount of interest proportion in the bond; six of the bonds were not renewed. The legacies owing are restated, with the exception of Henrie Parker, £1, which is "discharged by acquittance"; the augmentations and arrearges are restated, and the interest received is deducted. The only two payments noted for the year are:—9s. for engrossing

the original order, and 4*d.* for writing a bond. The interest not received is left as a legacy for the next collectors to gather in. It seems, as one records it, a rather tedious method of stating assets and liabilities, but it is not without interest.

The next year's accounts are very full, occupying ten pages, and are of more varied interest. Receipts take first place. Richard Sankie had paid Roger's testamentary gift of £3 10*s.* and Robert Rutter, his father's 40*s.* William Cookson had paid his father's 20*s.* and had evidently succeeded on his claim that it was no more. Some interest not paid last year is now paid; 30*s.* 9*d.* had been "collected in the towne for the School building," of which Richard Tatlocke of Cunsough had given 10*s.* We get a glimpse of the actual building operations; for Richard Hill had received £6 16*s.* and paid £6 13*s.* 6*d.* for various building accounts: his fellow overseer had paid £26 3*s.* 6*d.* and received only £4 9*s.* 1*d.*, leaving a balance due to him of £21 14*s.* 5*d.* of which he hath freely given to the said school—(not stated, but I presume) £1 14*s.* 5*d.*, so that there is due to him by the school £20.

Disbursements. Collating items of similar character, I deal first with payments for the teaching of the school:

"To Elizabeth Ambrose, for the use of her husband, which was owing upon the last account" 40*s.* [This is the sum which in the last sentence of the orders of 28th Sept., 1612, was to be allowed "Mr. Ellis Ambrose, for the time he did teach as Usher, the sum of 40*s.* if the interest of the said stock will amount thereunto."]

"To Mr. Longe the Schoolmaster which was due to him upon the last account 10 guineas" and further on "part of his wages for this year last past 20*s.*" Paid more to the Schoolmaster £3 16*s.* Still owing to E. Longe for remainder of year's wages due to him £7; of which £3 7*s.* sithence payed to the Schoolmaster.

There is also owing to Mr. Pease for his year's wages now due £3 6*s.* 8*d.*, and paid to him in part of money due to him upon the last account, £1 16*s.* 4*d.*

For the building of the school the following payments are made:

PAID.						
Masons	..	..	..	..	..	£1 2 8
Lime stones	..	..	..	..	..	12 0
Leading of slates	..	..	..	..	..	5 4
Coal to burn lime with	..	..	..	..	..	5 0
Leading of sande and clay	..	..	..	..	..	4
Paid to overseers	..	..	..	..	..	2 0 0
do.	..	..	..	..	..	1 0 0
Laying of floores and other worke	..	..	..	..	..	1 0 0
Leading of bricke	..	..	..	..	..	2 0
A board and expenses	..	..	..	..	..	1 4
Lath guttions and barres	..	..	..	..	..	2 9
40 foot glasing	..	..	..	..	..	16 8
30 foot glasing	..	..	..	..	..	12 6
Stock locke	..	..	..	..	..	3 0
Half of 3 casements	..	..	..	..	..	1 10
(other half 3 given)	..	..	..	..	..	
						£7 15 5
Further paid to overseer	..	..	..	..	..	12 18 4
						£20 13 9
OWING.						
For a cundeth [conduit] of brick	..	..	..	..	..	£1 6 8
Building timber work	..	..	..	..	..	6 4 0
John Bries lent	..	..	..	..	..	4 13 4
Not stated	..	..	..	..	..	1 19 8
John Bries for trees worth	..	..	..	..	..	3 0 0
Bords and bands for School dore	..	..	..	..	..	6 4
Nails for formes	..	..	..	..	..	1 6
						£17 12 6

So that with the amount already paid by the overseers, £32 17s., the school building has cost up to this point £71 3s. 5d.

The new collector for the year ending 2nd February, 1616, started with sundry debts and a balance in cash of 9s. The obligations and bills are again stated in full; some are renewed, others are not renewed but new amounts are lent out in bond at the same rate of interest; on eleven the interest is paid and in two cases arrears of interest have been received.

The next year's accounts are much shorter. More sums are paid for building:

	s.	d.
Floaring .. .. .	6	8
For tearing [daubing] yett undoone and under- taken by William Laithwaith to bee done ..	8	0
Leading and filling of clay .. .. .	2	2
Overseer's debt .. .. .	£2	0 0
Still owing to Overseer .. .. .	7	0 0
This year's cost .. .. .	2	8 6
John Bries who paid Thornton's account ..	5	14 0
Still owing to John Bries on last year's account	4	13 4

The schoolmaster and usher still come badly off. The schoolmaster, fortunately, has some of the school money on bond, interest thereon amounting to £2, which is deducted from amount owing to him: £12 4s. To the usher, Mr. Peaze Neale, of his "ould debt"—£4 4s.—1¼ years remained unpaid.

There were unhappily some "debts owing to the Schoole as yet somewhat desperate." Mrs. Ambrose has not yet paid her husband's legacy of £2. Mr. Robert Smoult by decree of the Chancelie in lieu of his ould debt £20.

Two governors have died and two new ones are elected.

In the year 1617 the finances of the school are placed in a more satisfactory condition, owing to a legacy of £100 by James Wirroll, "citizon of London, borne in Ormskirk," which was received in May, 1617; for which a Governor, "Mr. Richard Sankie, was allowed, for his charges to London to fetch,"—£3.

An interesting item among receipts is:—"Received of Peeter Aspinwall for damages and costs of suits uppon a bond wherein he the said Peeter and others were bound, £6 6s."

The schoolmaster gets £10 15s of arrears, and the usher, Mr. Peaze, £2 4s. 6d. There are yet owing to them £9 9s. and 35s. 3d. respectively, due at the Pur. 1616, the date to

which accounts were made up being Candlemas or the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A new name occurs in payments for teaching: "Thomas Kirkham for one year's wages ending at Candlemas last, 40s.;" and later in the minutes for this year; "Mr. Kirkham is to teach this year for £5, and not to take any wages of any scholar."

There are still debts owing. Mrs. Ambrose has not yet found the 40s. and Mr. Laithwaitt is owing 25s. interest on a 51s. bill, and the school owes the overseer £9 8s. 6d. and Mr. Bries, £10 7s. 4d., on last account, of which the overseer has received £1 4s. 1d.

Building expenses are small:

	s.	d.
Floaring .. .. .	3	4
Leading of clay .. .. .	3	2
Key for chest .. .. .		4
Leading of more clay .. .. .	1	6
	<hr/>	
	8	4
	<hr/>	

The 1618 accounts are more satisfactory. The bonds amount to £222 3s. 10d. and the schoolmaster and usher are now only short of £1 11s. 6d. and £1 respectively. Their wages are now evidently £10 and £5 respectively, and it is satisfactory to know that they were both paid in full, debt and current wages, during the next year. The building is now complete, for beyond a payment of 3s. 2d. owing for "glasinge" there are no more items for the building itself. The building seems to have cost between £70 and £80 in all to erect. Thenceforward for some years the accounts are fairly simple. The schoolmaster in 1621 received an increase to £12, and the usher £6.

This seems an appropriate point at which to say something of the schoolmasters and ushers of the school in the first days. The first schoolmaster, Mr. Elize Longe, is quite an interesting person. He was a native, I think, of

Ormskirk. He is the scribe who wrote the list of benefactors, and he certainly ornamented the title page, for it bears his name. He speaks of the late vicar, Richard Ambrose, as one whose memory he esteemed, and this Ambrose died in Feb., 1612. I find in the first Ormskirk register an Ellis Longe, buried in the church on 22nd June, 1577; a Peter Longe married to Elizabeth Lunt on 10th November, 1582, and Ellis a son of Peter Long, baptised 10th May, 1586—grandfather, father and son probably. I find no record of Elize's marriage, but in March, 1625, Elize son of Elize Longe, gentleman, was baptized.

In the minutes for the year 1622, there is an entry which intrigued me very much. Mr. Longe is allowed "as a gratutie towards his charges to Oxon" 20s. and receives £15 wages in full, but in the following year there is nothing paid him, but "Mr. Hayhearst the Schoolemr. is paid in part of £13 6s. 8d. for his year's wages ending 2nd May, 1623, £10 7s. 6d. and the Schoole oweth to the Schoolemr. £2 19s. 2d." In the year following, however, Mr. Longe returns to his scholastic duties, and is paid in part of his year's wages ending the first of Maie next £11.

Searching the Oxford records to discover what Long was doing, I found the following entries in the register of the university:

1605. 22nd Feb. Brasenose. Longe, Ellis; Lancs., pleb. f., 17 (Vol. xi, p. 279).

And by cross reference (Vol. xii, p. 285)—

Brasenose, Long, Ellis, adm. B.A. 23rd February, 1609, det. 1609.

Elias Longe, B.A., Brasenose, was certified by the Professor of Medicine to be qualified for M.B. and for licence to practise medicine, 26th May, 1631: supplementary M.B. 1631.

In the Ormskirk Burial Register there is this entry:

Mr. Ellis Longe medice buried in Eccl'ia, 29th February, 1639.

His will in the Chester Probate Court shows that he left one half of land at Burscough, Lathom, Bickerstaffe and

elsewhere to Alice his wife, and the rest as trust to his children, Peter, Elize, Hilary, Richard, Henry, Ann and Elizabeth. To the churchwardens of Ormskirk, £5; and 5s. per annum to poor and needy tradesmen.

It is not easy to say what salary exactly Mr. Long received, for he was one of the bondholders, and deductions are made sometimes without record of the interest, often not paid, on his bond, but generally it was £10 in the early years, from 1613-1621, and from 1622-1629 usually £12, but in one or two years, only £10. He seems to have ceased to act as master in the year 1629, and was followed by Mr. Segar, who receives at the rate of £10 a year for two years' service.<sup>1</sup>

The ushers during these years appear to have been Mr. Peaze Neale for a short period, 1613-1615, and 1621-1625, and Thomas Kirkham for some years; the salaries varying from £4 to £6, but being generally £5 or £6. The usual practice seems to have been to pay the master twice as much as the usher: in 7th April, 1634 there is a minute to this effect:—

“ We whose names are subscribed being Gov'nors of the Schoole of Ormskirk doe make elec'on of John Bragge gentleman for Schoolemaster, and of John Walton of Ormskirk for Usher under the said John Bragg. The said John Bragg to have for his wages two parts of the revenewes of the said School, and the said John Walton to have the third part of the revenewes etc. . . . .”

Signed by twelve Governors and by John Bragg.

Peaze Neale, the first usher, sometimes designated Mr. Peaze, appears to have been the curate of Ormskirk church: he may be the Pearse Neale, *fi. Peter, Middlesex, pleb. f., 18*, who entered Christ Church, Oxford, on 27th Jan., 1598. The name is an uncommon one in the Ormskirk parish register, so that he may be the Peaze Neale, who was married on 5th February, 1604, to Katheryne Hatherwood.

<sup>1</sup> A Segar was master at Halsall between 1593 and 1673; in 1673 the yearly pay to the schoolmaster there was £13 6s. 8d.

In any case there are records of the baptism of some of his children in 1613, 1614, 1617, entered as *fi. Peaze Clarke* or *fi. Peaze Curat*: the final entry is the burial of *Peaze Neale curat*, on 20 April, 1637, six years after his last appearance in the school record. Among the marriage licences in the Record Society's volume is one—"Sept. 18 at Ormskirk to *Revds. Broxop* (the vicar from 1628-1643) and *Peaze Neale, Clerks*;" and later in the same volume, one "to *Revds. Cuthbert Halsall* (almoner of Lathom) and *Peaze Neale, Clerks*." The Ormskirk living was but a poor one and the curate may have found it necessary to supplement his stipend by teaching as usher in the school.

The process was reversed at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries when successive headmasters were curates of Altcar. The Rev. William Naylor was appointed to the mastership of the school on the 16th February, 1756, being then assistant master and his successor was appointed on the 11th June, 1821: so that Mr. Naylor was master for more than 65 years. He was for a long time also perpetual curate of Altcar, and very frequently took surplice duty at Ormskirk church, signing himself "*Curate of Altcar*." The episcopal register states that Thomas Hayes was nominated to the curacy of Altcar on Sept. 13, 1778, by William Naylor, the perpetual curate. On 7th Jan., 1825, the Rev. Charles Forshaw was elected master of the grammar school, and was appointed incumbent of Altcar in 1835. He died in 1855 or early in 1856, for his successor in the office of master was appointed on 12th Feb., 1856. This was the Rev. S. Trueman, who held office for only three years, resigning owing to the decreasing number of scholars; he died in a workhouse early in this century.

To return to the early ushers. Of Thomas Kirkham, who acted as usher 1617-1618, and again from 1623-1628, I know nothing, unless he is the Thomas Kirkham (the only instance of the name in the first church register) who

married Margreat Whatton on 2nd Oct., 1608, and whose wife Margrett was buried on 4th May, 1622. In the Croston parish register there is the following entry:

1628 Elline dau. of John C. att Ruff'th (Rufford) ut curat' ibid. certificavit sub manu illius.

Thomas Kirkham, 17th Nov. 1628.

For the first hundred years there were, as far as I can ascertain, nineteen masters, all of whom are mentioned in the minutes, except two. The first, Ellis Rycroft, replied in 1673 to the queries of Mr. Christopher Wace, superior bedell of the University of Oxford, who in that year made certain particular enquiries into the state of the grammar schools. Mr. Rycroft gives the bedell a list of his predecessors in the office of master, which is very defective, for he omits Mr. Long's three immediate successors, John Bragg, Thos. Lathom and Randolph Brownlowe, and four others, but he gives as his immediate predecessor, Mr. Stamp, of whom we have no record. In the next century there were eight masters, and in the third century of the school's existence, five.

Until the office of master was held by William Naylor for 65 years, the periods of tenure had been usually very brief; only one exceeded the sixteen or twenty years of the first master, Elize Long. This was Thomas Lawson, who reigned for rather more than thirty years, from 1691-1722. He signs an acknowledgement of the receipt of a year's salary in 19th April, 1720, in a very shaky hand, as if his powers, at least of writing, were failing, and in the accounts for 1721 there are these entries:

Oct. 7. To Cash pd. Mr. Lawson in full of his salary. £7 7s. 8d. and immediately following, on the same date:

To ditto pd. him in consideration of his resigning ye School £20.

His successor received £39 for 1½ year's salary, and the usher, for the same period, £3 15s.—a truly princely emolument.

In the report above mentioned, made in answer to Mr. Christopher Wace's queries, after a list of masters up to 1673, it is stated: "but none of them authors of books." This reproach, if it be such, cannot be laid to the charge of the masters of the 19th century, for my immediate predecessor, Mr. R. J. Murray, son of Sir James Murray, who was responsible for much of the great Oxford Dictionary, is the author of a standard work on the history of chess.

The governors occupy a much more prominent and important place in the school records than the pedagogues. The book is, *prima facie*, a record of the activities of the governors, or as they are more frequently called, feoffees.

The earls of Derby, by reason of their great influence, deserve some notice, though only one of them seems to have been a busy member of the governing body. They have been generous donors, however, when occasion required. The only earl who appeared frequently at governors' meetings was Charles, the 8th earl, the son of James, the 7th earl, who was executed at Bolton in 1651. Earl Charles signs the minutes fifteen times from 1654 to 1671; his writing seems to improve after the Restoration. Among the school documents is a loose paper authorizing his servant, John Jones, gentleman, to subscribe his name to the election of governors or any other matter thought good and convenient for the school—a power of delegation permitted by a decree of the Duchy Court in 1639. Similar authority is given by Edward, the 12th earl, to Lawrence Wright of Ormskirk to act for him. The Stanleys of Bickerstaffe, one of whom became earl of Derby (1736), in the person of the 5th baronet, Edward, were frequently governors.

The most vigorous governors, however, have been the vicars of Ormskirk, who were responsible for calling the meetings of the governors by announcement in the parish church on Sundays, "immediately after divine service in the forenoon." It would appear that the wakefulness or

somnolence of the governing body depended upon the character of the vicar. There are some striking gaps in the minutes; for one long period, from 1770 to 1796, there is no mention of any meeting of the governors, and all that is recorded is a statement, written in the same handwriting, of the total money received and expended each year: a tribute to the lack of interest of successive vicars, William Knowles and Randal Andrews, in the affairs of the school. An earlier vicar, John Ashworth, seems to have been equally negligent of his responsibilities; there are no accounts to show for the period 1662-1679.

The most active of the earlier vicars was Nathaniel Heywood, who was vicar from 1657 to 1662, being then ejected for refusing to comply with the Act of Uniformity. He signed various minutes and accounts fifteen times, as late as 24th December, 1661. His life is well told in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

John Ashworth's successor was Zachary Taylor. He was the son of the Rev. Zachary Taylor, ejected from the curacy of Rochdale in 1662 for nonconformity, who was successively master of Rochdale, Bolton and Kirkham grammar schools. The son was vicar of Ormskirk for fourteen years, and then rector of Croston for eight. In spite of the father's nonconformity, Zachary the second had a somewhat violent antipathy to Quakerism, as an extract from the minutes will show. In Nov., 1676, the Governors had decided that:—

“Whereas ye Stipend is not now sufficient maintenance for ye Schoolmaster, Therefore . . . . we doe hereby consent that Mr. Hindley, Schoolmr. [who had been elected at that meeting] may also take and receive

for every English scholar	..	16 <i>d</i> .
for every Latin scholar	..	2 <i>s</i> .
for every Greek scholar	..	3 <i>s</i> . quarterly.
for the present year.		

A further note on the same page, dated 20th May, 1678, states “That it be continued for a further year.”

Early in 1680 Mr. Zachary Taylor was appointed vicar, and in January 3rd, 1681, he takes almost a page of the minute book in making this remarkable declaration, which seems to contradict itself:

I, Zachary Taylor, Vicar of Ormskirk, and one of the Feoffees of the Grammar School there: finding an Order made by the Feoffees (in consideration of the Insufficiency of the Stipend, which by the negligence of some former Feoffees I hear was lost and dissipated) to raise the same by imposing on every scholar according to his proficiency a certain quarterly payment:

Not disputing their Power and Authority at first to order it—yet being ordered, do Protest that ye Removall or non-continuance of it is against my Mind. And I do declare that it doth tend to the utter Ruin of the School, the Decay of Religion for want of such Catechizing as an Ingenuous Schoolmaster would exercise them in; the advantage of Quakerism (too much increased) thro' want of knowledge: and many more Inconveniences than at present we can foresee. Therefore to Clear my Innocence as to these insufferable wrongs, which Posterity and Infancy is like to suffer, I declare against it.

In testimony whereof I subscribe my name.

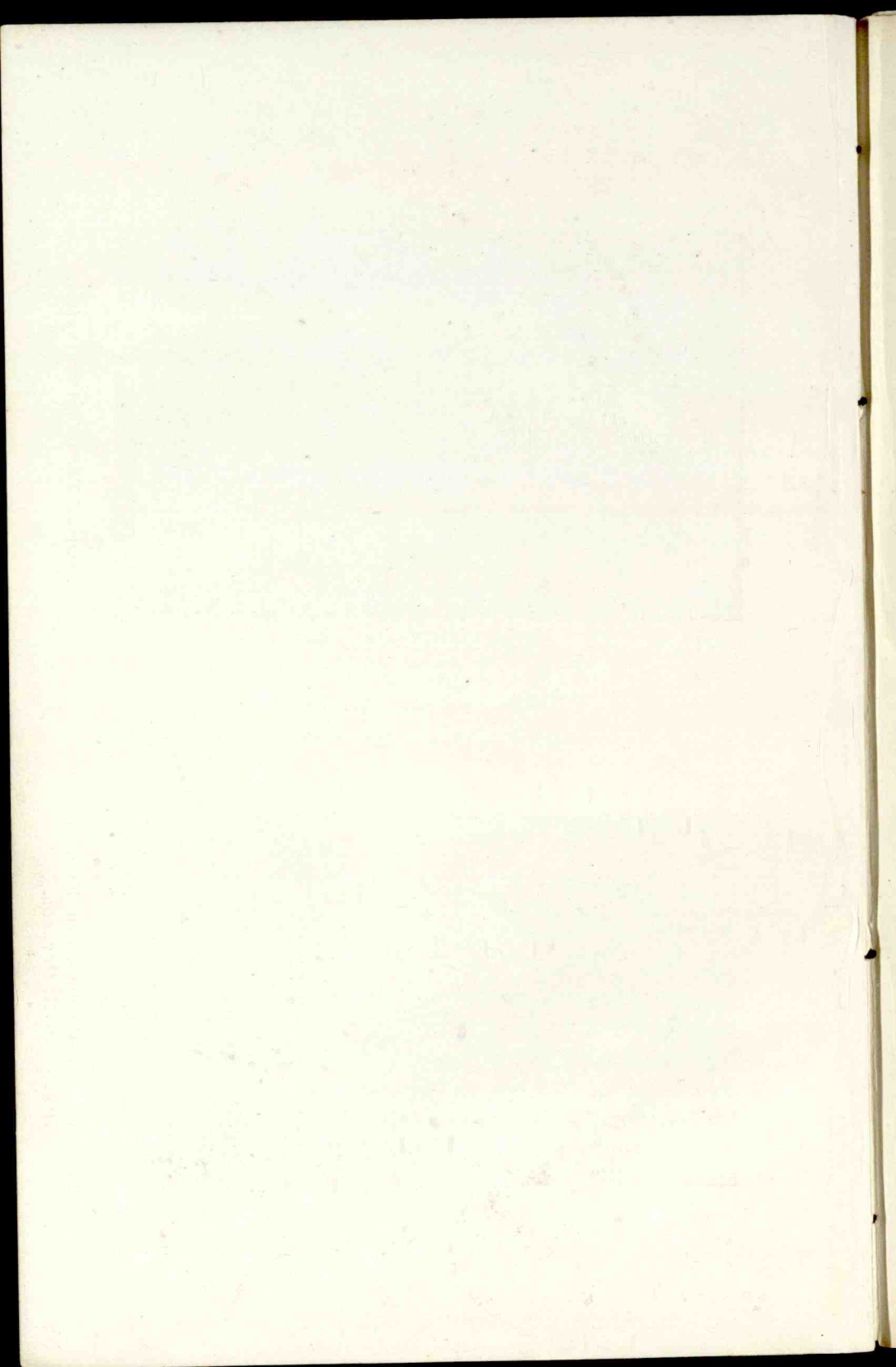
ZACH: TAYLOR, Vic.

Underneath is the statement of another governor, of a balder kind, but much more to the point—Silvester Sutch declares, “that he conceives the Feoffees had no power to make the order aforesaid, that it would tend to the destruction of the freedome of the Schoole, contrary to the intent of the Founder and to the damage of the inhabitants of the Parish.”

Zachary Taylor was the author of “The Surey Imposter,” 4to, 1697, and “Popery, Superstition and Ignorance and Knavery confess'd and fully proved on the Surey Demoniack,” 4to, 1699, and several sermons. This fear of Quakers and Quakerism seems to us strange in one of Nonconformist upbringing and sympathies, but even the saintly Baxter found the Quakers a pestilent and heady race.

Only two out of the series of Ormskirk vicars from 1614





to 1890 fail to affix their signatures in the book, the Revs. G. and E. F. S. Hornby, vicars from 1812-1818; but the first of these Hornbys was vicar for a few weeks only. From 1614 to 1718 most of the vicars of Ormskirk were also king's preachers. The office of king's preacher arose when the funds of the collegiate church at Manchester were transferred early in the reign of Edward VI, to Edward earl of Derby, with the stipulation that part of the rents should be applied to the support of four itinerant ministers who were to be sent at stated intervals to preach the Reformed doctrines in the remoter parts of Lancashire. The original grant was £40, but in subsequent reigns it was increased to £50. It is of some interest to notice in how many different ways these king's preachers described their office when they sign the school minutes. Thus:

John Broxop vicar et regius concionator.

And later:

John Broxip Vicar de Orms<sup>ko</sup> et regis concionator.

After 1637 (the date is significant):

John Broxop (or simply, Vicar).

The next vicar was William Dun, a Presbyterian (reputed), till April 1648:

William Dun Vic. et regius concionator.

But in November of the same year

min<sup>r</sup> *ibid.*

And for the next seven years never anything but minister, or minister there. Nathaniel Heywood never signed himself king's preacher, but simply, if at all, "Vicar." His successor, John Ashworth, "Vicar and King's Preacher." Zachary Taylor—the Sententious—of course, signs in full (but once only):

Regi a Concion. in Com. Lancs.

His successor, Archippus Kippax—a name of euphonious weightiness—signs

Vic' Or' et conc' reg.

The last of the king's preachers was Christopher Gibson, but he never signs anything but " Vicar."

There are two king's preachers in the minutes who were not vicars: Bartholomew Cade, 1626-1628, " Regius Concionator," and John Lewis, 1623-1624. John Lewis, according to Dugdale's *Visitation of Yorkshire*, 1666, was vicar of Preston<sup>1</sup> in 1624. There are a number of entries in the Ormskirk register that are of interest respecting him. On 17th Feb., 1624, the burial of

Judith Lewis ux<sup>r</sup> Mri Johanis in the high cancell.

On 26th May, 1624—

John Lewis, Regs. Conciator married Anne Ambrose [Anne Ambrose fi. Ri. Vic. baptized 2nd Aug. 1587].

On 15th Sept., 1626—

Anne Lewis ux' John Clarke burd. in Eccl'ia.

In Croston's edition of Baines's *History of Lancashire*, there is a surmise as to whether the following entry in the Preston register refers to the same John Lewis:

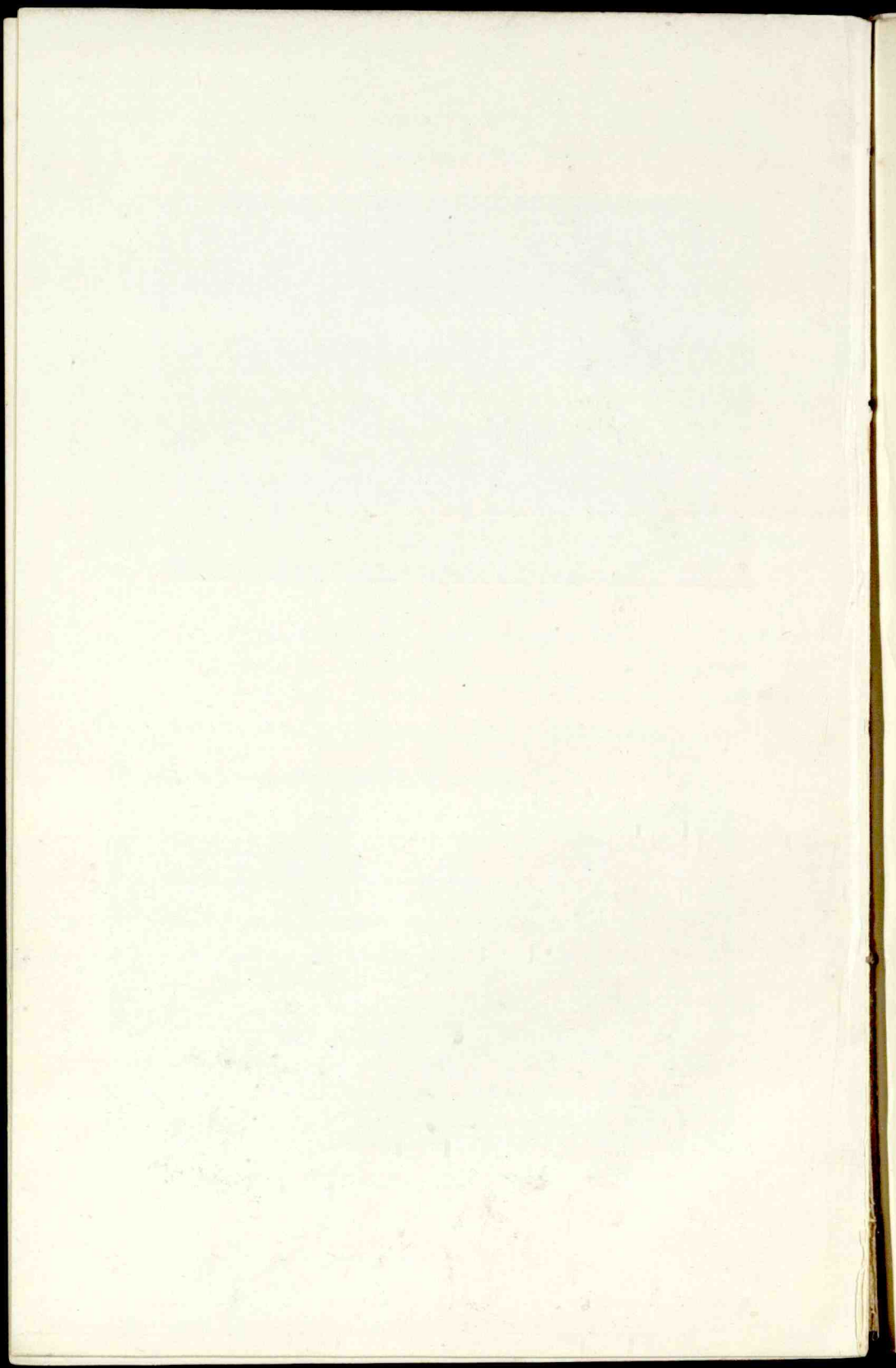
30th Oct., 1626. Mr. John Lewis married Anne More.

Something must now be said of the pupils. Unhappily for 184 years there is no mention of any pupil by name. In 1638 one Richard Hill, aged 20, entered St. John's College, Cambridge, as a sizar, stating that he had been a pupil at Ormskirk school for one year under Mr. Bragg; he was a son of William Hill, yeoman, of Burscough.

In 1798 there is a list of the boys in the school, who then numbered twelve. The occasion was an examination of the scholars by certain of the Governors, and opposite each boy's name is the character of the instruction he is receiving or rather the subject, in each case apparently one only, that he is being taught. One is reading Phaedrus' Fables, one English Grammar, six Accidence (i.e. Latin accidence) and one of these six Latin Grammar, the rest are reading

<sup>1</sup> Not Preston in Lancashire.





English, or painfully learning the same. At the side are brief comments by the examiners of progress, such as "improvement since last exam."; two, Mr. Vanburgh, rector of Aughton, and Mr. Ford, rector of North Meols, highly commend and think them well grounded; two others, the vicar of Ormskirk certifies, are much improved; one is tolerable, says Mr. Ford. The master does not think one of his pupils equal to the strain of this torment; the remaining four, a layman, Mr. Mawdsley, thinks improving, tolerable and middling, and two are marked left, as if they had a pressing engagement elsewhere.

An interesting item in the next year's examination is that there are now sixteen boys, and that two of the older students of Latin Grammar and accidence are now reading Cor. Col. which can only mean the *Colloquies* of Corderius, a favourite text-book of the early 17th Century, written by one of the schoolmasters of Calvin, which served the double purpose of teaching Latin and emphasising the religious side of life. Dialogues are there given between little boys discussing the sermon, confessing that they deserve stripes if they had not succeeded in committing at least a part of it to memory. It may seem strange to find this series of Latin dialogues in use at Ormskirk at the end of the 18th century, but as editions were printed in London as late as 1850 there was still a clientèle for the book.

The question of holidays is always a matter of vital importance to schoolboys, and an entry in the minute book for the year 1699 is of general interest:

At the same meeting, i.e. 6th Dec., 1699, it appearing to us that of late years severall irregularities have been committed both as to the length of the time, and the breaking of the windows in the barring out of the Schoolmaster of the said Schoole, and the same haveing been attempted the present year:

To prevent the like mischiefs for the future wee do therefore order that the boys to be instructed in the said Schoole shall break up an exact fortnight before Christmas and not before that

time. And if any Boys that presume or attempt to Barr out or Comitt any farther disorders of the same nature, they shall be corrected by the said Master of the said Schoole for the time being, and not admitted to any further instruction but by the consent of us the said Feoffees.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1825, an old pupil of the school, who was then editor of the magazine, gives the story of a highly successful barring out in his day. The author was Dr. P. A. Nuttall of Dictionary fame.

The illustrations which accompany this article are from photographs by my colleague the Rev. J. H. Martyn Barrow.

