

NORMAN'S ENDOWED SCHOOL.

AFTER the benefactions we have been considering, this of John Norman, Mayor of Norwich in 1714, who died 10th May, 1724, is small, and by comparison unimportant. But it has peculiar features, and has served to illustrate the eccentricities of some pious founders, and the disputes and contests arising from such eccentricities. It was on the 19th February, 1720, that John Norman made his elaborate will, so elaborate and far-reaching that to this day it has never been possible to carry out its provisions in anything like their entirety. He devised lands, &c., in the Witchinghams (Great and Little), his house, brewery, &c., in St. Peter Permoungate, his lands, &c., in Catton, Spixworth, and Sprowston, also lands in Kent—apparently at Throwley, near Faversham—in trust to William Cockman and four others to carry out his benevolent intentions, and these five trustees were each to have 30s. annually for their meetings to manage the trust. John Norman was of the parish of Old Catton, and there is in the vestry of the Church there a memorial tablet to his memory, whereon his benefaction is recorded. The testator's chief directions were:—

1. That two years after his death the trustees should agree with some parent or parents, *being relations of himself or of his first wife, Ann Mace*, who should have a son of four years of age or upwards, to cause such son to be put to school to learn reading, &c., and Latin and Greek, as his capacity would allow, to the age of fifteen, to be maintained by his parents, or, in default, by some suitable person, for which £10 should be paid yearly, in quarterly instalments; that £15 should be paid for the binding out of such boy, or sending him to sea, and that when he arrived at the age of 22 he should have £10 towards setting up his trade.

2. That at the end of every second year afterwards another such boy (*i.e.*, one of the family) should be provided for in the same way, until the number should reach thirty, and as any one should die or go out apprentice, another should be similarly provided for, so that at the end of sixty years there should be thirty boys together maintained at school under the benefaction.

3. The minister of St. Peter per Mountergate was to keep a register of the relations of the testator or of his first wife, Ann Mace, for which he should receive 20s. yearly. But, whereas some of those relations had only daughters the sons of such daughters were to be entitled to participate in the charity; and if there should, to the best of the knowledge of the trustees, be a deficiency of sons of the prescribed relationship, other boys of eight and

not over ten years from Ber Street Ward, Conisford Ward, or Catton should be appointed.

4. The testator empowered the trustees to continue one boy in every fifteen, who they were satisfied would be a diligent scholar, at board and school to the age of 16 or 18, and then to send him to Cambridge, to be admitted as a sizar, and educated for six years, and to be allowed £30 per annum ; and that there should always be one boy so provided for. A *sizar* is a poor Cambridge scholar, whose *size*, or allowance of food, is given him. Such scholars at Oxford were known as *servitours*.

5. When the Trustees should find any surplus after carrying out the foregoing provisions, they were to put the money out at good interest, and buy other lands, &c., to be added to the endowment of the school—and the testator reckoned that his real and personal estate amounted together to £260 per annum.

6. The testator further directed that at the end of sixty years the trustees for the time being should choose fifteen more, of whom the Bishop of Norwich, the Dean, the Chancellor of the Diocese, the two Parliament Men for the County, and the two Parliament Men for the City, should be seven, the other eight to be chosen from the Court of Mayoralty.

7. That such trustees should build on some part of the land at Catton for the maintenance and education of 120 boys, that the thirty already appointed should be placed there, and that two, three, or four boys should be placed

there every year, being of the proper kinship, if possible, otherwise chosen as already indicated, or if need be out of the neighbouring parishes of Norwich, until the number of 120 should be complete, and that the children should be chiefly such whose parents should have been reduced by losses, and should have paid to church and poor.

8. John Norman particularly directed that the school house should be built in the Home Close at Catton, should be 260 feet in length, and 220 feet in breadth, with a hall, chapel, kitchen, and other rooms, all to be substantially built at an estimated expense of not more than £4000.

9. The trustees appoint masters, who must, however, be members of the Church of England. They were also charged to appoint a minister to read divine service according to the liturgy, and to preach in the chapel, who might be one or more (*sic*) of the masters. The founder also wished that the head-master might be a Master of Arts of one of the universities, but this he left to the trustees.

10. It was directed that the trustees should keep proper books and records of matters relating to the charity, and if they found the revenues insufficient to maintain 120 boys, they were to arrange for no more than the income would extend to.

11. As to diet and clothing John Norman was very precise; he also appointed that there should be two servants to wait upon the boys,

and that the lads should be provided with books and stationery, and have 6d. a quarter each for pocket money. In the rations eight quarts of beer a week were allowed to each boy.

12. John Norman's will was that for teaching and instructing 40 boys the head master should be allowed £50 per annum, but when the pupils should exceed 40 an usher should be appointed to teach the rest of the boys at a salary not to exceed £50 a year. The master was to be provided with victuals, but was to supply himself with candles.

13. The trustees were required by the will to meet not less than four times a year, and were to pay 10s. yearly to the churchwardens and overseers of Catton for equal distribution amongst 20 of the poorest persons of that parish on the 1st November. Also to pay 20s. to the ministers of Catton and St. Peter-per-Mountergate on alternate years, and 2s. 6d. to the clerks.

The above paragraphs are numbered for the sake of clearness, to bring out the salient points in Norman's bequest. On his death the personal estate fell short of his debts and legacies by £860, which sum, however, was ultimately paid, with interest, out of the produce of the real estate, the rents of which then amounted to about £270 a year, but which now would represent a good deal more.

Notwithstanding the elaborate provisions of Norman's will, he did not specify the exact sites and bounds of his property, and there has

been an uneasy feeling among the members of the "Claimant's Unity," as it is called, that the property which to-day produces the revenues of Norman's Charity does not include all which the founder intended. The will has been several times printed, and contains some quaint clauses, such as that each boy on his foundation shall have every year "two shirts of *hussiff's* cloth," and that the mending of the shirts, &c., is "to be done in a good and *hussiffly* manner." The housewives of these days were evidently skilled with their needles and good managers. The lads were to be clothed in "caisey cloth" of a hazel colour.

In 1733 the Trustees began to accumulate the funds, but in 1738 paid, out of an estate at Throwley, in Kent, £268 18s. 6d., on the decease of Mary Norman, according, as it seems, to an agreement made by the testator himself. From 1743 to 1754 £900 was placed out at interest, and in 1755 Nockold Thompson was appointed treasurer, which office he held till his death in 1777, when it was found that, of the sum due to the charity, £890 18s. 10d. was irrecoverably lost, and only £150 was recovered from the executors.

In 1784, the appointed term of 60 years having expired, the five trustees then in office elected eight others to act with themselves, viz., Bishop Bagot, and the other official trustees nominated by John Norman. When this new body met it was found that what was left of the endowment fund and the produce of the estates would by no means suffice to build

the hospital at Catton and establish it on the basis desired by the founder of the charity, so that the original system under which it started was maintained. In this same year, 1784, several orders were made to search for deeds relating to the estates, but the minute books of the charity contain no record of any such deeds being found, which is to be regretted. In 1820 it was ordered that the real estates of Norman's Charity should be conveyed from John Morse, the surviving Trustee, to George Morse, John S. Patteson, and G. Harvey, but this order seems only to have related to part of the Catton Estate.

In 1832 the income from Norman's endowment was £652 a year, of which £571 was derived from rents, the remainder from 3 per cent. dividends on Old South Sea Annuities and Consols. At that time there were 37 boys educated under the charity, whose parents received £10 a year each towards maintenance and school charges, while each boy received an annual gift of 1s., instead of the founder's 6d. a quarter. This last reduction was particularly mean, seeing that from 1826 to 1832 sums of usually from £14 to £20 odd were spent by the trustees on the annual dinner! Only one solitary boy seems to have been sent to Cambridge from Norman's endowment, and that was in 1742; one feels curious to know if the tradition that this favoured youth died in a lunatic asylum is true. In 1826-7 the funds, from some un-

explained reason, were so low that the admission of scholars was suspended altogether, but not so low as to suspend the annual dinners, which in those two years amounted to £26 12s. 6d. In 1881 the income of this charity was between £900 and £1000 a year, and in that year £258 was paid to the parents, £105 in apprenticing, £112 in benefactions or gratuities, and the rest for the school and repairs. In the year 1839 the claimants under the will of John Norman established their protective association, called the "Claimants' Unity," and there can be no doubt that this society has done a great deal to prevent official interference with the maintenance of the charity as nearly as possible in accordance with Norman's wishes. The great year of battle was 1886, when a stout stand was made against the Government Commissioners, and the trustees, notably Canon Hinds Howell, vigorously championed the cause of the claimants against the bureaucratic Jack Horners, who were so anxious to get their fingers in the pie. This determined opposition sadly vexed the London officials, as was evidenced in various ways. Thus a Select Parliamentary Committee of 1887 remarked on "the violent opposition often raised to schemes for removing restrictions to the use of schools for a special class, such as founder's kin. Alderman Norman founded a boys' school in 1724, with a preference for the relations of the founder and his wife. About 1000 families are stated to be descendants, and to regard their

rights as sacred. The general policy of the State has been against perpetuity in founder's kin as regards property, and the Commissioners believe that they were justified by this policy in framing a scheme which, while it reserved some rights to founder's kin, opened the proposed school to the general public. Without expressing any opinion on this scheme and other schemes for Norwich, which are not yet confirmed, your committee think that the general policy of the Commission should be rather to remove than maintain restrictions which limit the use of educational endowments."

As yet, however, the descendants of the kinsfolk of John Norman and Ann Mace who claim the privileges conferred upon them under the founder's will have held their own in spite of all the schemes of all the schemers. In consequence of the prevailing fall in farm rents the income of Norman's charity has steadily decreased, and in the year ending 31st December, 1896, the net income from real estate was only £495 2s. 2d., which, with a balance at the beginning of the year of £109 10s. 5d., made the net receipts only £604 12s. 7d. Of this sum the stipend of the schoolmaster and his assistants absorbed £170, schoolmaster's rent £25, school plant, rates, &c., about £40, apprenticeship fees £85, payment to parents £72, insurance about £10, gratuities and treat to the boys a little over £12, clerkship and agency £45. There are, of course, many minor expenses, besides payments under the testator's

will, and the balance-in-hand at the end of the year was but £125 6s. 9d. Most of the Norwich property belonging to Norman's School consists of the poorest class of tenements, and the collection of the rents can be no easy matter.

The gross income of the charity in 1896 was £914 6s. 4d., but the "outgoings and deductions" amounted to no less than £419 4s. 2d., made up of heavy tithe rent charges, besides repairs, rates and taxes, and commission to the rent collector.

In May last the claimants secured the election of their energetic secretary, Mr. E. F. Howard, as a trustee, and it may be added that the claimants keep a register, and investigate the pedigrees of boys who wish to enter the school.