

PROLOGUE

Ladies and Gentles all, behold in me
a bashful Prologue on occasions three;
my first I gave in simple native rhyme,
Nasonian measure served the second time;
my third it had been my intent to speak
un-understood in a mist of Greek
(save in so far as, here and there, a dame
from learned *Girton* or from *Newnham* came);
but, woe is me, I must perforce give way
and utter unconcealed an English lay.

And first, Right Reverend Sir, 'tis plain we owe
our grateful thanks to you for coming so,
with learned eloquence our feast to grace
and urge us onward in th' appointed race.
Yet while we owe we cannot still forget
a something you owe us—an ancient debt.
For sacred *Isca* (as is widely known)
derived her see from older *Crediton*;
and *Crediton* ('tis writ in History's page)
from *Sherborne* drew her holy heritage:
therefore, my Lord, I beg you take no shame
to own to-day our grand-maternal claim!
Moreover, good my Lord, long years of use
do lend our suit to you a fair excuse;
we, who for decades leaned on *Temple's* powers,
account *Devonia's* Bishop all but ours,
and when, or foes invade, or doubts perplex,
instinctive turn to him who lives on Exe.

Since last we gathered in this *Kingly* hall
the months have sped with smoothness magical;

times so untroubled have our portion been,
waters so calm, and climate so serene;
that (so to speak in figure) half we seem
to've been enveloped in a blissful dream.
Yet even so our life's harmonious flow
has brought us much to tell, and much to show.
Where yonder chapel rears its modest pile
there may be seen, what was not seen erewhile;
'tis but a slab of stone, which would display
twelve names embowered 'neath a crown of bay,
with this plain legend graven underneath
'*their souls they loved not even unto death.*'¹
These be our brothers' names, who freely gave
their lives for *England* far across the wave;
recked not of self with calculation nice
but based her grandeur on their sacrifice.
Nor is this all; the eastward wall is bright
with figures ten in various garb bedight;
apostles, bishops, martyrs, all express
of self-forgetting love the blessedness;
and points the moral One of old made plain
to lose one's life is oft not loss but gain.

Next would I turn to give a word of praise
to those who've honoured us in other ways:
success unusual in learning's field
this year our efforts intellectual yield;
Oxford and *Cambridge* with judicious eyes
have carried off from us a fourfold prize:
one college has annexed his father's son;²
his brother's brother has attracted one;³

¹ *The memorial in Chapel to the twelve O.S.S. who lost their lives in the S. African war was unveiled by General Lord Methuen, before a large and distinguished company, on Saturday, January 30th.*

² *J. D. E. Richards, Classical Scholar of Wadham College, Oxford.*

³ *E. B. A. Somerset, Classical Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford.*

to *Pepys*, his ancient haunts, the third will go;⁴
 the fourth — ask others if you fain would know.⁵
 And while the brain has reaped its full reward,
 there has not lacked a meed for muscles hard :
 where schoolboy pugilists in combat close
 our stalwart champion floored the weightiest foes ;⁶
 football has had her victories as well,
 as vanquished *Paulines* and *Tonbridgians* tell.

There may be present who are not acquent
 with Sherborne's all but proudest monument—
 that mystic company, that loving band,
 where her dear sons foregather hand in hand.⁷
 The names of scores are writ on that fair roll,
 hundreds have blithely paid the pious toll ;
 but while so many have devotion shown
 few've had the hardihood the tie to own ;⁸
 before men's eyes that awesome sign to wave
 dismayed the timid, and appalled the brave !
 But now (glad thought !) no valour is required
 in *Sherborne's* livery to walk attired—
 two pleasing circlets of harmonious green
 united by a strip of white between.
 A parable it is, I dare aver ;
Shirburnia's sons are one in hope for her :
 darker or brighter let her prospects be,
 still burns the pure white flame of fealty.

⁴ C. B. Brown, *Classical Scholar of Magdalene College, Cambridge.*

⁵ P. E. Rebbeck, *Classical Exhibitioner of Merton College, Oxford.*

⁶ K. Langaard, *Silver Medal for Heavy Weights in the Public School Boxing Competition, Aldershot.*

⁷ The 'O.S.' Society, which (under Mr. King's auspices) has grown to such dimensions.

⁸ The late 'O.S.' colours were a terrifying blend of blue and yellow and chocolate.

If I a guess may hazard, ladies fair,
 you'll probably to London town repair;
 shopping (undoubtedly) and art (maybe)
 will draw you thitherwards the sights to see.
 There 'mid the wonders of the plastic art
 is one wherein ourselves can claim a part;⁹
 the sculptor's skill defies the envious urn,
 and bids the loved and lost one to return.
 Amazed we gaze upon the kindly eyes
 of him who longtime swayed our destinies,
 scan the broad brow, the lips' dominion trace,
 and look for wisdom from the speaking face.

Nor, ere I end, must unremembered be
 the year wherein *Charles* keeps his jubilee;¹⁰
Charles, who 'tis said (so ancient tales relate)
 once as a lad did serve our grateful state;
 and still factotum in these ancient halls
 prompt springs responsive to a thousand calls.
 When studies blaze before the affrighted view
 for whom goes up the cry but, *Charles*, for you?
 when ravens wildly strew the littered court,
 'tis *Charles* that has to rue their frolic sport;
 when morals totter—discipline is slack;
Charles helps to bring the erring brother back.
 In fine, where much is dubious, this is not
 we should not be ourselves, without *Charles Scott*.
 Friends one and all, who cherish *Sherborne's* name,
 if one compendious wish t'were mine to frame,
 where could I find a happier prayer than this,
 may we all do our work, as our old friend has his!

⁹ *A bust in bronze of the late Archbishop of Canterbury by G. Frampton, R.A. (shortly to be presented to the School) is exhibited in the Academy of this year.*

¹⁰ *Mr. Charles Scott, our well-known 'Custos,' a link between Shirburnians of many generations, has now been in the service of the School fifty years.*