

PROLOGUE

Kind Friends, I make my bow and bid you all
a hearty welcome to this kingly Hall,
and then proceed (for such my pleasing fate)
on *Sherborne* matters to expatiate,
and unrepentant (tho' the wise abuse)
discard for English rhyme the Latin Muse.
Ten years ago and four, mine had it been
to con my grammar in this pleasing scene,
I might have heard with ears and heart intent
a learned Bishop, passing eloquent; ¹
and now to-day to counsel willing ears
a Bishop of the selfsame name appears:
for so from sire to son the torch is sped;
the younger leads where once the elder led;
and like the Church is proved to Vergil's bough,
'rend one away, another straight will grow.'
When in the forenoon of this happy day
we gathered in the Abbey Church to pray,
and raise our voices in thanksgiving high
to the great Potentate of earth and sky;
all seemed familiar, sermon, prayer and song
that wave-like rolled the fretted vault along;
yet one great change was there; one voice was not,
long time close wedded to that hallowed spot.
Our good old Vicar, *Sherborne's* ancient son,²
born 'neath the roof, where his long race was run;
whose honoured father, whom yon pictured see!
raised this old School to high celebrity,

¹ *Brooke Foss Westcott, late Bishop of Durham, preached at our Commemoration in 1893. Foss, Bishop of Chota Nagpore, his son, preached to-day.*

² *The Reverend William Hector Lyon, a very old O.S., has resigned the living of Sherborne since last year's celebration.*

breaking the sequence of full many a year
 bore not the part he had been used to bear.
 Yet well we know that all his failing powers,
 his thoughts, his life, his love, are knit with ours.
 Now, in his reverend place, 'tis ours to greet
 him who now occupies the pastor's seat,³
 commended highly by his name and blood—
Selwyn for fire and zeal has ever stood,
 for Apostolic fervour wide renowned,
 at home, abroad, where'er our Church is found.
 In him one Governor making his *debut*
 'tis yours, good friends, this happy day to view;
 and you may here descry another yet
 the happy choice of wary *Somerset*,⁴
 whom often may we welcome in this place
 now the great House of Talk will miss his face!
 And (please you) listen sympathetic, still,
 while with the best of unpoetic will,
 upon a *Sherborne* poet's grave I lay
 a feeble trivial wreath of fading bay.
 Upon yon boards 'twas carved in days long gone—
 the learned Scholar's name—himself anon
 far larger, grander, with the poet's art
 engraved it on the People's grateful heart;
 while he rehearsed in smooth and tuneful rhyme
 the favourite tales of legendary time:
 but now, alas! himself too soon will be
 a bygone hero and a memory.⁵
 One vanished Scholar of the days of yore
 thus has our Alma Mater to deplore;

³ *The new Vicar of Sherborne (an ex-officio Governor of the School) is the Rev. S. A. Selwyn, M.A. of Caius College, Cambridge. Many Shirburnians will remember the occasion when his kinsman, the late Bishop John Selwyn, held a Confirmation in our Chapel.*

⁴ *Mr. W. H. Bateman Hope, M.P. for N. Somerset, is representative Governor for his County.*

⁵ *Sir Lewis Morris, author of the 'Epic of Hades,' was an early pupil of Dr. H. D. Harper. His lamented death has left the Country and the Sherborne world much poorer.*

another who won honour long ago
 at School and College as our records show,
 still upward mounting, by a happier fate,
 assumes high office in the world of state;⁶
 so that the stoutest Tory here can see
 at least one merit in the powers that be—
 Come we to bricks and mortar, and proceed
 to show what change has met our growing need.
 Where in the Chapel lately tiles were seen
 despoiled by usage hard of all their sheen,
 now meets the eye and gratifies the sight
 a comely marble floor of black and white,⁷
 fitly conferring on that hallowed place
 an added touch of dignity and grace.
 Next where proud Science stately port assumes,
 dispensing broadcast lore—and pungent fumes—
 strange transformation meets the startled eye,
 a very palace for Queen Chemistry!⁸
 Nor ends the matter here, for whispering fame
 (a lying jade I hold, nor love the same)
 avers that Science in her zeal to live
 cries here as elsewhere, 'give, give, still give.'
 And so (belike) before twelve months are sped
 another Laboratory will rear its head;
 and as sweet Chemistry has her retreat
 so Physics will possess an ampler seat.
 One other building, if I did but dare,
 transformed beyond all knowledge I'd declare;
 where once stray books and ownerless were stowed
 now turned into Authority's abode;⁹

⁶ *The Right Hon. T. R. Buchanan, M.P., now under Secretary for India.*

⁷ *A marble pavement has been placed in the Sanctuary of the Chapel since last year at a cost of £170.*

⁸ *The Chemical Laboratory has been greatly altered and improved since last year. The Physical Laboratory is to be similarly reorganised.*

⁹ *The Masters' Common Room, converted out of the so-called 'Pound' (where stray books were impounded).*

till this we ask, with modesty profound,
 'Why have they put our Masters in "the Pound"?'
 But, 'tis not walls or roofs, as wisdom sees
 (witness the words of sage Thucydides),
 but rather human lives that do create
 the essence of a body corporate.
 So we, altho' we love our buildings grey,
 the heritage bequeathed from far off day;
 still with a wise discretion recognise
 in honest boys and men our choicer prize.
 And one has lately left us, you must know,
 who grieved to part, as we to see him go,¹⁰
 the truest, kindest, honestest of men
 that ever passed within our Mother's ken;
 and it would ill become a Sherborne boy
 not to recall his name with pride and joy,
 and wish him warmly (as do all of us)
 a happy '*domus*' in his chosen '*rus*.'
 And now, before concluding, I would press
 one thought upon the minds of O.S.S.
 Such as are Masons (if they have the will)
 may Masons be and yet Shirburnians still,¹¹
 and doubly satisfy their genial mood—
 a brotherhood within a brotherhood.
 To these, their Founders, and all Sherborne's breed
 parting I wish a true and deep 'God speed.'

¹⁰ Mr. Thomas Ward Wilson, of King's, Cambridge, who left Sherborne at the end of last term, after a long and happy sojourn here.

¹¹ An 'O.S.' Masonic Lodge was inaugurated in town the other day with great ceremony. The originator of the idea was Col. Watts, C.B. (O.S.)