

The Johnian Society

THE Johnian Society were privileged to hold their thirty-fourth annual dinner in the House of Commons on 4th January, 1963. The occasion was well supported: the Members' Dining Room was filled to its capacity of nearly 190 and many Johnians travelled considerable distances despite the weather.

Mr Frank Law, Chairman of the Committee, presided over the annual general meeting. He announced that following the death of Sir John Hunter, K.C.M.G., who had been elected President of the Society for 1962, Mr C. W. Guillebaud, C.B.E., had very kindly consented to take office as President a year early and to take the Chair at this dinner, if the Society wished. This suggestion was warmly welcomed by the meeting. Sir John Pasking, K.C.M.G., M.C., was then elected President for the following year.

Mr Guillebaud, in proposing the toast of the College, began by paying a tribute to his immediate predecessor as President of the Johnian Society, the late Sir John Hunter. Sir John, who was born in October 1890, and died in November 1962, was educated at the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle, and at St John's College. He came into residence in October 1910 and took both parts of the Historical Tripos, being placed in the second class in each. The greater part of his active career was spent in the Malayan Civil Service; but in 1938 he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Malta, and in 1940 he was made Governor of British Honduras, where his tour of duty lasted till 1947, in which year he retired and returned to England. He was created C.M.G., in 1940, and K.C.M.G., in 1942. Unlike a few Governors of British Colonies (a notable exception to the general rule being Sir Hugh Foot, also a member of the College), Sir John Hunter was not involved in any very dramatic events during his career, with the result that his name was not known to the general public; but he served his country well by maintaining those standards of integrity, justice and fairness which by and large have characterised British Colonial administration.

The Society owe a debt of gratitude to one of the Johnian M.P.s, Mr F. T. Willey, Member for Sunderland North, for having made it possible for their annual dinner to be held on this occasion in the Members' Dining Room of the House of Commons. It would seem indeed to be not inappropriate that members of the

College of which Castlereagh, Palmerston and Wilberforce were alumni, should be assembled within the Houses of Parliament.

It might be that not all the younger generation of Johnnians were aware of the fact that at that moment there were five Johnnian Heads of Houses in Cambridge:

Mr Boys Smith, Master of St John's College.

Professor Sir Neville Mott, Master of Gonville and Caius College.

Professor Hodge, Master of Pembroke College.

Sir John Cockcroft, Master of Churchill College.

Professor Chadwick, Master of Selwyn College.

But at least equally distinguished in the academic hierarchy were the Vice-Chancellors of British Universities, and by a coincidence there were at that moment five Johnnian Vice-Chancellors:

Sir Edward Appleton, Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University.

Professor Noble, Vice-Chancellor of London University.

Professor Brynmor Jones, Vice-Chancellor of Hull University.

Mr Frank Thistlethwaite, Vice-Chancellor of the University of East Anglia.

Professor Charles Carter, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the North West.

Moreover, in October 1963, Mr Boys Smith would become Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University. Astronomers were wont to talk of galaxies and clusters of stars; surely this group of distinguished men might be said to constitute a very remarkable constellation in the academic firmament. The College had also every reason to be proud of its four Nobel Prize Winners: Sir John Cockcroft, Professor Paul Dirac, Dr F. Sanger, and Dr M. H. F. Wilkins.

If to these names were added the large number of holders of Chairs in other Universities, it could be seen that the College had been exercising a potent colonising influence extending far and wide in the world of learning. But its impact went much beyond the relatively narrow field of academic achievement. In the measured Elizabethan prose (it dates from 1564) of the Bidding Prayer, with which the Preacher of the University Sermon always prefaced his sermon in Great St Mary's, he invoked a blessing on all "seminaries of sound learning and religious education", especially "the Universities of this Land and the particular Colleges, that there may never be wanting a supply of persons duly qualified to serve God both in Church and State." This college had in fact played a very full part in sending out into the world "persons duly qualified to serve God both in Church and State". There was a particular facet of this which deserved special mention. For many years past the College had regarded it as an eminent part of its duty to reserve a number of places for overseas students,

and in particular for those coming from India, Ceylon and other countries in the East; and it had done this more consistently and on a larger scale than perhaps any other Cambridge college—and at times we had been criticised for this policy. What stood out, however, was the big proportion of our former Indian, Pakistani and other students from the East, who were now occupying high and important positions in administration, in the law, in industry, commerce and banking, and in the academic field, in their own countries. In this way we had been able to make a valuable contribution to countries which had formerly been dependent, but now were standing on their own feet. No one who had recently been in tropical Africa could fail to realise how sorely the lack of academically trained and professionally qualified people was handicapping countries like Kenya and Tanganyika as they struggled to manage their own affairs.

A College was an enduring corporation, a body that was perpetually renewing itself: there were good grounds for the belief that we were maintaining our high standards, and that the College of St John the Evangelist was proving not unworthy of the ideals and the hopes which inspired our founders, the Lady Margaret and Bishop Fisher.

The Master, in replying to the toast, spoke of the present activities of the College. He referred especially to the growing importance of Research Students and other graduate students in Cambridge, to the success of the College in the Tripos Examinations in 1962 (17.7% of the Johnnian candidates in these examinations were placed in the First Class), to the progress of the restoration of the Second and Third Courts of the College, and to the plans for new College buildings made possible by the great benefaction referred to elsewhere in this number of *The Eagle*.

Johnian Society

THE Johnian Society held their thirty-sixth annual dinner in the Clothworkers' Hall. Mr F. W. Law, F.R.C.S., K.St.J., the Society's President for 1964, was in the chair.

The President, rising to propose the toast of the College, said he could not refrain from expressing his gratification and pleasure to the Committee for nominating him as President, and to the members of the Society for their gracious acceptance of the nomination. He felt very deeply conscious of the honour that the Society had done him in spite of the deplorable sense of seniority which accompanied it. Equally, he could not resist bringing to the meeting the photograph which members had seen outside the dining hall. In 1923, Sir Edward Marshall-Hall, with a few others, including himself, got together with the idea of founding the Johnian Society, and this was a photograph taken at the first dinner, with Sir Edward there in the Presidential Chair. It was very gratifying to note the large number of members in that photograph who were present there that night.

His first very pleasant duty was to welcome all the members to the thirty-sixth annual meeting and Dinner. He also took great pleasure in welcoming the two official guests of the evening, the Master and the Clerk of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers. To this welcome, he would add the thanks of the Society for the privilege of dining in their beautiful hall. The halls of the City Companies and the Wren Churches seemed to suffer quite disproportionately from the air raids of the last war, and the hall of the Clothworkers was one of the victims. This was the sixth hall to be erected on this site. He had had the opportunity of seeing many of the restored and re-built halls and he felt that this Company had done a superb job in this instance; it was, in his view, the most attractive of the newly built halls. The President went on to give a short history of the Company, making particular reference to their wide-spread charitable activities. The Company received its Charter in 1528, having been formed by the union of the Company of Fullers and the Company of Shearmen. This union was referred to very successfully in the heraldic achievement of the Company. The Arms of both the Fullers and the Shearmen bore an ordinary in ermine—the one a chevron, the other a fesse—so this provided an easy start for the heralds. The other features on the Shield were a teasel cob from the Arms of the Fullers and two havettes—a form of double ended hook used in the shearing process—from the Arms of the Shearmen. The

two noble griffins made dignified supporters; the fact that they are "pellety"—besprinkled with roundels—would remind his hearers of similar treatment of the noble supporters of the Shield which appear in the Arms of the College—the Beaufort Yales. Perhaps the most interesting item in the whole achievement was the Crest. This being a ram, the allusion to wool was obvious; in the original Letters Patent, the word was, in fact, spelled rame, which is the technical name in French for a clothworker's stretching-frame. This appeared to constitute a rather engaging heraldic pun.

He would make reference to two activities of the Company which were of special personal interest to him. As an ophthalmic surgeon, he was well aware of their excellent charitable work for the welfare of the blind. The other consisted in the financing of an exchange between Guys Hospital and the John Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore. He, himself, had benefited from this arrangement, and in 1953, had done an exchange with the Professor of Ophthalmology at the Hopkins. This proved an exciting and stimulating experience—exciting in more ways than one, for he recalled that on the first occasion that he entered the operating theatre to carry out a series of operations, the hospital caught fire! He was very relieved to find that, after careful scrutiny of the Registrar General's Report, there was no statistically significant increase in the incidence of blindness in the United States in that year!

Another personal link with the Company came through the order of St John—not in this case St John the Evangelist of Cambridge, if he might so refer to him without disrespect, nor St John the Baptist of Oxford, but St John the Almoner of Jerusalem. After the Israeli/Jordan war which followed the cessation of the Balfour mandate, the Order's ophthalmic hospital, a beautiful building then situated on the Bethlehem Road, found itself unfortunately on the wrong side of the barbed wire. In 1954, he was sent out by the Order to assess the situation, and determine whether another hospital should be built, and to try and find another site for it, the Order meanwhile continuing its activity in two houses within the walls of the old city. Following this visit, and the acceptance of his report by the Order, he had the satisfaction of going out six years later to the opening of a beautiful new hospital, now situated on the north side of, but quite close to, the old city, on the road to Nablus, the Biblical Shechem. The link with the Company lies in the fact that Mr E. J. Reed, the Clerk, is also a member of the hospital Committee.

The President apologised for detaining them for so long, but pleaded in extenuation, in the words of the immortal Bunthorne,—“Such an opportunity may not occur again.” This opportunity

indeed would most certainly never occur again, but he would again express his pleasure that it had occurred. These meetings were essentially social, and not occasions for prolonged after-dinner speaking, always excepting, however, the Master's speech, concerned with the doings of the College over the past year, to which they always looked forward with such pleasure and listened to with such attention.

He asked the Company to rise and drink to the health and continued prosperity of the College.

The Master, who replied to the toast, spoke of current events in the College, of the progress of the restoration of the Second and Third Courts, of the recent installation of central heating and hot water throughout the New Court, and of the new College buildings already under construction. He recalled that at more than one annual dinner of the Society he had been able to refer to the great benefaction that had made the erection of these new buildings possible. The donors had wished to remain anonymous until their intentions were fulfilled. This was the first occasion on which he could refer to them—the Cripps Foundation—by name and to the scale of their benefaction, which would amount to about one million pounds, as the College had recently been allowed to make known (see *The Eagle*, No. 263). He expressed the profound gratitude of the College for this great gift and for the unstinting interest and help of Mr C. T. Cripps, the chairman of the Foundation, and his son and co-trustee Mr Humphrey Cripps (B.A. 1937) at every stage in the preparation and development of the scheme. It was the hope that the buildings would be ready for occupation in October 1966.