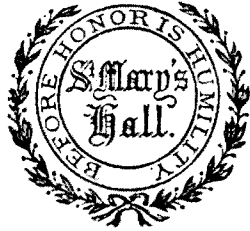




A Brief History
of
ST. MARY'S HALL
BRIGITON
1836 - 1956

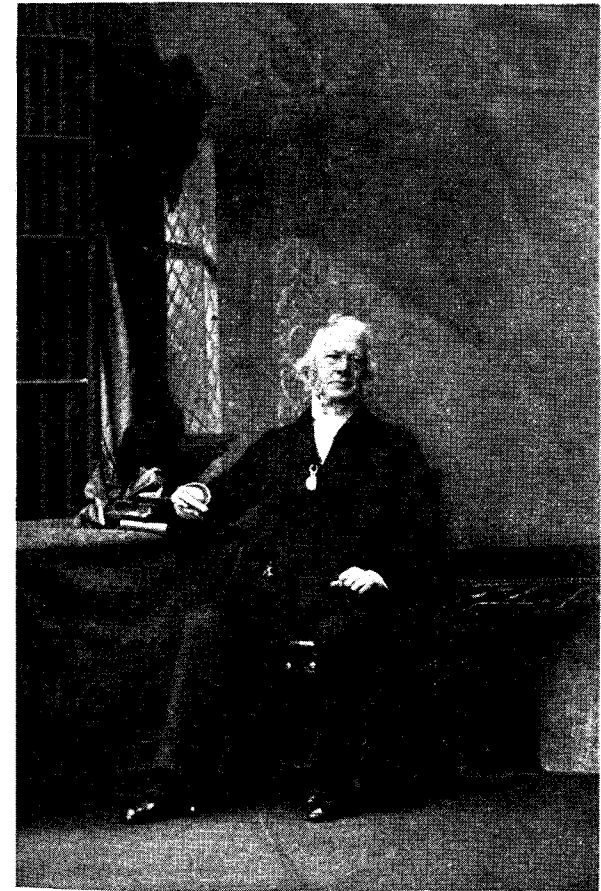
By
Delora E. Meador, B.A.



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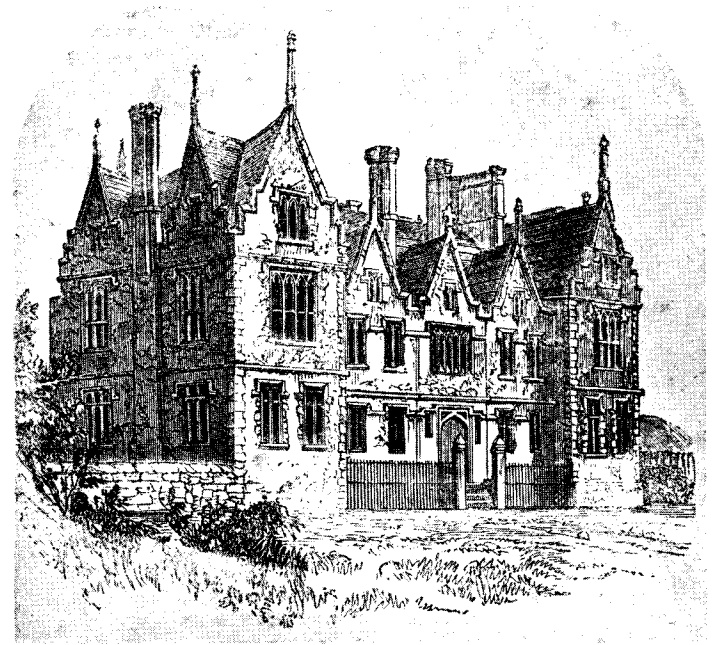
by
Eileen E. Meades, B.A.

THE FOUNDER



THE REV. H. V. ELLIOTT

THE SCHOOL



1836



1956

THE MATERIAL for this Brief History of St. Mary's Hall has been obtained principally from the Life of the Rev. H. V. Elliott, by J. Bateman, the Annual Reports issued by the Trustees from 1837 to 1943, and the News Letter published annually since 1896 by the St. Mary's Hall Association. The Author gratefully records her thanks to Miss Conrady, for making available those sources of information; to the Bishop of Chichester, for permission to quote his Address on the occasion of the Thanksgiving Service; and to Miss Ghey, who not only gave the benefit of her criticism and advice but has also written the Preface.

E.E.M.

PREFACE

MISS CONRADY permits me to preface this delightful account, so lovingly compiled by Miss Meades, of the History of St. Mary's Hall, with a few words of my own. This privilege led me to read again the Life of the Founder, and to renew my pride in all that has been lavished upon us by that great scholar and great Christian, and by the succeeding generations of the Elliott family, even to this day. I believe that the first Henry Venn Elliott would have been foremost in rejoicing that his Foundation should be enriched and enlivened by wider connections; and I as firmly believe that on those survivors from earlier days who remember the School of the past, is laid the obligation to restore what may be restored of the original benefactions, by providing more help for what our Founder called "that dear nursery for the daughters of God's poor ministers". As our Bishop reminded us when the School was re-opened, "St. Mary's Hall has both the forward-looking mind and also continuity with the past". For that two-fold gift let this brief account sound a note of praise.

F. L. GHEY.

“ O GOD, by whose manifold grace all things work together for good to them that love Thee ; stablish we pray Thee the thing that Thou hast wrought in us, and make this School as a field which the Lord hath blessed, that whatsoever things are true, pure, lovely and of good report, may here for ever flourish and abound. Preserve in it an unblemished name ; enlarge it with a wider usefulness, and exalt it in the love and reverence of all its members as an instrument of Thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

SCHOOL PRAYER.

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY nineteenth century saw a sudden and rapid development of education in England. The conscience of public-spirited men and women was at last being aroused to the need for more schools, and already, as a result of the work of Dr. Bell and Joseph Lancaster, many voluntary schools, maintained through the charitable donations of their founders and others, had come into existence. In 1832 the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott, first minister of St. Mary's Chapel, Rock Gardens, Brighton, issued a prospectus for his proposed School for the Daughters of the Clergy. Some months later, in October, 1833, he visited his friend the Rev. W. Carus Wilson at Casterton and was greatly impressed by what he saw of the Clergy Daughters' School which he had founded. " I would rather have built this school and church than Blenheim or Burleigh I offered up a little prayer that the Brighton School might receive a similar blessing when I saw, in going over all the rooms and offices of this Clergy Daughters' School at Casterton, how perfectly everything was arranged and with what looking up to God it was begun." Brighton, with its sea breezes, seemed a most suitable place for a similar foundation. The proposed school was to serve as a 'nursery for governesses for the higher and middle classes', and there was to be accommodation for one hundred pupils, each of whom was to pay £20 per annum. For this they would be educated, boarded and partly clothed. French and elementary Music were included in this general education, but Drawing and the finishing parts of Music were to be charged for as extras, Music at £3 per annum and Drawing £4, and the Trustees reserved to themselves, in the case of each pupil, the decision whether, after due trial, there was a prospect of success sufficient to justify the continued pursuit of these accomplishments.

The proposal met with a ready response, and within twelve months donations amounting to £2,339 had been received. The Marquess of Bristol gave an acre of land on the Downs in the newly-developed Kemptown ; the architect George Basevi, whom Mr. Elliott had met during a tour of Greece, made a gift of the plans for the building ; Queen Adelaide became its Royal Patroness. On April 21st, 1834, the foundation stone was laid. Mr. Elliott himself has left us a description of the ceremony :

“ We laid the first stone of the ' Clergy School ', without pomp, or procession, or previous notice ; for the message came hastily that all was ready. Lady Augusta Seymour, as Lord Bristol's daughter, laid the first stone. Miss Wardell was carried there. Mr. Lawrence Peel, as one of the Trustees, attended, and

Lady Jane, as his wife, and as one of the largest contributors, accompanied him. Their children were also there A few friends were there, and the contractor with his family ; but no one else besides the workmen. They all took off their caps, and I read from the Prayer-book a few collects. Psalm 121 followed ; and that was all ; and then we returned to our respective homes."

The original cost was £4,250 ; but later additions to grounds and buildings, together with the purchase of the furniture, and the laying out of the gardens by Sir John Nasmyth and Mr. Basevi, increased the total outlay to nearly £16,000. To this sum Mr Elliott himself contributed ostensibly £2,250, together with gifts of land, furniture and books ; but his anonymous gifts amounted to much more, and he also left to the School a legacy of £1,000, land valued at £2,500, and one thousand books out of his library. His gifts were supplemented by the donations of the many benefactors—members of the nobility, Church dignitaries and private individuals—whom the School commemorates each year on Founder's Day. The list of Donations and Annual Subscriptions published in the First Report, July 1st, 1837, shows how diverse were the sources from which this financial support was received. It is headed by an annual subscription of £10 from Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, and a Donation from Their Majesties of £30 for repair of damage done by the hurricane of November 29th, 1836, and includes such items as :—

	£	s.	d.
A Clergyman	300	0	0
A Footman		10	0
A Thank-Offering	1	0	0
A Baptismal Offering	10	0	0
Collection at St. Andrew's, Hove	20	14	0
Collection at St. Mary's, Brighton	100	0	0
Fancy Sale, including Week's Hymns sold for £20	500	0	0
Lord Bishop of Gloucester	10	0	0
Marquess of Abercorn	20	0	0
Young Ladies in Regency Square	3	3	0

The Hall was opened on August 1st, 1836, with the arrival of the Lady Superintendent, Miss Tomkinson, and the first pupil, Mary Bryan, even though the building was not quite ready. Mrs. Elliott described the scene in a letter : " We swallowed a little dinner as quickly as might be, loaded a fly with linen and provisions, and went up. You may think how our hearts beat. Oh ! if you could but have seen us, and been with us, in the pretty little mullion-windowed room over the entrance. It looked so pleasant ; a bright fire, the floor carpeted, the table spread with tea, happy faces round it, our hearts full of a thousand mingled emotions ! It was the beginning of the accomplishment of hopes so long cherished, the dawn of a day that should go on in increasing brightness ! "

Two other pupils were entered on the first day—Jane Cory and her sister Charlotte. At first there were only twelve pupils, but the number was increased to twenty-five at Christmas, and on June 1st, 1837, the Hall had thirty-five children, " a Superior and five other Governesses " (two of them " Parisian ladies " for the teaching of French), and six maidservants, besides the gardener and his wife at the Lodge. In the second year the number of pupils was raised to fifty ; in successive years to sixty, seventy, eighty and ninety ; the admission book gives the name of the hundredth girl, Mary Anne Morpew, under the date October 16th, 1839, but it is stated in the Fifth Annual Report (1841) that the School received its full complement of pupils on August 1st, 1841. The age of admission was between nine and fourteen, and the girls had to be able to read and spell with ease and to be versed in the first four rules of arithmetic. Donors of £50, or subscribers of £10 per annum for five years, were entitled to nominate a child.

It is interesting to compare the boarders' clothing list with that of the present day :—

" Each child is to bring with her a	8 pocket handkerchiefs
Bible and Prayer Book,	8 pairs of white cotton stockings
A new umbrella	4 pairs of lamb's wool stockings
Work-bag and sewing implements	4 brown holland pinafores or aprons
Combs, brushes and gloves	2 short coloured dressing gowns
6 day shifts	1 flannel dressing gown
4 night shifts	2 pairs of shoes
3 night caps	1 pair of thick shoes or boots
2 flannel petticoats	A silver dessert spoon, tea-spoon
3 white upper petticoats	and fork, which will be re-
1 stuff petticoat	turned."
2 pockets	

The Hall provided frocks, tippets, cloaks, shawls, and bonnets for its pupils.

Holidays were very different from nowadays, for at first there was only one vacation—from June 1st to August 1st—in each year. Not until 1862 were two vacations allowed—the longer one as before and the shorter one a month at Christmas—though a concession was made in 1850 when three weeks' optional holiday, which had to be spent with parents or guardian, was allowed at Christmas. Pupils could be visited by parents or guardians every day except Sunday, and taken out. Within certain limits, they could be visited, but not taken out, by other relatives or friends, at the parents' written request, on the first Monday in each month between the hours of two and four. No other visits or holidays were permitted. No pupil might remain absent beyond one week after August 1st, as the absentee's place would then be filled.

The first few months of the Hall's life were not uneventful, for on November 29th, 1836 a hurricane threw down some chimney stacks, unroofed a part of the house and demolished part of the garden wall. The damage amounted altogether to about £250 ;

but the greater part of the loss was made up by the prompt liberality of sympathising friends. Among these was His Majesty King William IV who, with Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, contributed £30.

Other gifts received during the first year were a pair of globes, an organ, three pianos, maps, sheeting and towelling, books, and a generous gift of 56 pairs of blankets and 105 yards of fine blue cloth for cloaks from Benjamin Gott, Esquire, of Armley House, Leeds.

The existing accommodation soon proved to be inadequate as the number of pupils increased, and during the year 1841-1842 the Hall was enlarged by the commencement of a new wing which was to include practice rooms for music pupils and an additional dormitory. There was also to be a hospital suite of rooms, the need for which had been shown when an epidemic of measles had affected twenty-eight of the pupils, one of whom had died from the after-effects of the illness.

Three years later the gardens were laid out according to the plans which had been drawn up by Mr. George Basevi and Sir John Nasmyth.

On November 16th, 1848, the Hall received its first Royal Visitor, the Duchess of Gloucester, who was entertained by the pupils with singing, pianoforte playing, and callisthenics—the nearest approach to gymnastics which girls were allowed to make in those days—and also with an exhibition of some of their work in Art. As a result of this visit, the Duchess became an annual subscriber to the funds of the Hall until 1857. Queen Adelaide, who had been its Royal Patroness from its foundation, remained so until her death in 1849.

In 1849 the Marquess of Bristol officially became the first lay patron, and the Archbishop of Canterbury became its Ecclesiastical Patron.

Hitherto, pupils had attended Sunday services at their Founder's church, St. Mary's Chapel, Rock Gardens, and for a time the senior classes were to continue to do so; but on September 21st, 1849, St. Mark's Church was consecrated, and was to be the sole church for the Hall. "This was a great day in my life," wrote Mr. Elliott, "on which the Lord granted me to see the topstone thus put to St. Mary's Hall." The church was chiefly the gift of the Marquess of Bristol and, as a result of further gifts from two other well-wishers, 158 sittings were set aside for the inmates of the Hall. At a later date, Mr. Elliott erected the galleries at his own cost in order that the occupation of the seats by the inmates of St. Mary's Hall might not infringe upon the accommodation available for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

During the year 1850-1851 the property of the Hall was enlarged by the acquisition of a plot of ground of over an acre, facing the whole southern front of the gardens. It was intended that the eastern, western and southern sides of this land should be let on lease and produce ground rents, while the northern, opposite the Hall, should be open and made into a garden.

The School had now completed the first twelve years of its existence, a period marked by steady expansion in every direction. Already, 252 pupils had passed out from it, most of them to earn their living as governesses, so fulfilling the hope of the Founder.

In 1857 the first chapter in the history of the Hall came to an end when Miss Tomkinson, who had been Lady Superintendent since its foundation twenty-one years earlier, offered her resignation. A successor was found in Mrs. Mills, formerly Lady Resident of Queen's College in Harley Street. Her first year saw further improvements, which were rendered necessary by the size of the community, for in addition to one hundred pupils there were sixteen governesses and eighteen servants. A servants' hall was created out of a spacious cellar formerly used for storing coal, the wash-house was converted into a scullery, the former scullery into a housemaids' room, a new wash-house was constructed, and a new tradesmen's entrance opened by the present area steps.

Another link with the earliest days of the Hall was broken by the death of the Marquess of Bristol in February, 1858. It is fitting that his numerous benefactions should be recorded here, that those present members of the Hall who are asked to commemorate him, among many other Benefactors, on Founder's Day should know something of the debt which they owe to him:—

1. A gift of £500 towards the purchase of the site of the building.
2. The conveyance to the Trustees of St. Mary's Hall of the land on which St. Mark's Church now stands "for the building of the Chapel which I have so long and so anxiously wished to provide for St. Mary's Hall, and the immediate vicinity of Kemp Town". He later built the walls of the church, roofed it, and glazed the windows, at a cost of £2,000. Later he also gave £500 towards the final cost of some £5,000 which was needed to complete and endow it.
5. He gave to the Hall its drilling room, which had formerly been a painting room, and sold to the Hall for £500 (half the real value) the house No. 6 Hervey Terrace, which had been connected with the drilling room.
6. In 1842-1843, he gave a donation of £200 towards the cost of the play garden and kitchen garden. (These were purchased for £500, but it cost £700 more to reclaim the land after it had been walled and stocked.)
7. A cottage and half an acre of land at the North-West extremity of our premises, together with his Lordship's share of right in the road leading to it—a gift in itself worth £4,000."

In the Founder's words, Lord Bristol's noble acts were "apples of gold in pictures of silver" . . . "All these, as a king, did Lord Bristol give to St. Mary's Hall."

By the schoolgirls who had known him, however, he was remembered for the invitations, issued to a class at a time, to tea at his house in Sussex Square, when the two footmen stood aside, and he himself helped his young visitors to tea or coffee.

CHAPTER II

WHAT WAS the life of the School like in those early days? Music, even then, formed an important part of the curriculum and twice in each half year, friends of the Hall and parents living in Brighton were invited to a musical evening. The programme for one such evening, on December 15th, 1859, was as follows:—

PART FIRST

Chorus

"With a laugh, May Queen."
BENNETT

Solo—Piano

"Improvvisata"—HELLER
A Pupil

Quartett Vocal

"Il cor e la mia fe"—BEETHOVEN
By four Pupils

Song

"Se'l ver il cor"—BEETHOVEN
By a Governess

Quartett—Two Pianos

"Marziale"—ASCHER
Andante et Allegro

Chorus

"Buon Giorno"—PINSUTI

PART SECOND

Chorus

Dettingen Te Deum—HANDEL
"To Thee Cherubim, etc."

Quartett, Duet and Chorus

By four of our Pupils
"O Lord, Thou hast searched me"
MENDELSSOHN

Two Pianos

"Les Huguenots"—MEYERBEER
Two of our Musical Governesses

Chorus

"For unto us is born"

These concerts ended with a hymn or anthem, followed by a short evening prayer.

About four of the older girls had a Sunday School class at St. Mary's. They went to Mattins, and had a sandwich lunch in the vestry, and stayed till the School and Afternoon Church were over. Mr. Elliott's two daughters taught too, and the girls often went to his house.

What punishments were meted out to the persistent young offenders of those days? They were such as sound rather strange to modern ears: hours spent lying flat on the back on the Nursery floor, guarded by the Elliott scholar as she sat in grim silence mending her white stockings; days spent sitting on the lockers which lined the large schoolroom, hemming dusters; solitary meals eaten at a side table in the dining room; or being sent to bed frequently throughout the day, and then as frequently being obliged to get up and dress (a process shortened by the fact that the culprits made a practice of slipping on their nightdresses over all their day clothes!).

Although there was a Board of Eight Trustees, the management of the School lay in the hands of Mr. Elliott. Every four-night he gave a divinity lecture in the large schoolroom (now the downstairs common room). "On that occasion the whole school assembled, the pupils seated in rows in front of him, the governesses at the sides, and the servants in the rear. Often, too, friends and benefactors would be present. The subjects of the lectures varied. Sometimes the Founder explained a difficult point in the previous Sunday's sermon; sometimes the lecture was based on a Scripture biography; sometimes it centred round some fault which had been brought under his notice. But his visits to the Hall were of almost daily occurrence, and he would often be seen standing in the entrance to the dining-room during one of the meals, or taking tea at one of the tables in the open air on some festive occasion". Everyone was sure of a sympathetic hearing from him; and it is recorded that very often as he was leaving the Hall, a lady would suddenly emerge from some ambush: "Might she have some conversation with him?" and even the children were sometimes naughty on purpose hoping to attract Mr. Elliott's notice, and to have a private interview with him. Often, too, he had several of the pupils to tea with him at his house in Brunswick Square, and after tea he devoted himself to their amusement, playing games with the younger ones, reading to the older ones, and showing his curiosities and pictures. Few schools can have received greater devotion than that which he lavished on the Hall. In the words of the Report for the Twenty-eighth Year: "No sufficient record can ever be given on earth of the time and thought and affection and prayer that he devoted to its welfare". The subscription lists for those early years bear eloquent witness to his work on its behalf, for they include the names of hundreds of Subscribers and Donors—King William the Fourth, Queen Adelaide, H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester, the Marquess of Bristol, the Earl of Chichester, the Marquess of Exeter, and many others equally prominent in society. His death on January 26th, 1865, at the age of seventy-three, was a heavy blow to the Hall. He was buried at Hove, and on the following Sunday, funeral sermons were preached in many churches. The general esteem in which he had been held was shown by a widespread demand for some memorial to his memory, and for that St. Mary's Hall seemed the most fitting object. In one week £1,100 had been contributed: this was later increased to £2,000, with which two permanent scholarships, in value about £48, were founded, each tenable for two years by a senior pupil who was to be elected by the Trustees for good conduct and proficiency in her studies. Another memorial fund was raised to remunerate the annual Examiners, and before long Founder's Day—in October—was instituted to perpetuate his memory. His son, the Rev. Julius Marshall Elliott, was elected as a Trustee and at the same time the Rev. John Babington, his brother-in-law, became Secretary. A legacy of £1,000 from the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott was a last proof of his thought for the Hall, which also received one thousand books from his valuable library.

A single copy of an address given by him to the Staff, pupils and friends on August 1st, 1859, the anniversary of the opening day, and written out from memory, remains. It is worthy of being quoted in part, both on account of the details connected with the foundation of the Hall, and also because in it there speaks the voice of the Founder, not only to the audience assembled before him, but also to all succeeding generations.

The reading was the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh Psalm, after which the address was delivered :—

“ My dear children, it has been my privilege and pleasure to read this Psalm here twenty-three times, and this will make the twenty-fourth time. Many and great have been the mercies which St. Mary’s Hall has received from God, and I would desire most heartily to thank Him for them, and solicit a continuance of His gracious favour You, the present generation know nothing of the earlier trials and difficulties of St. Mary’s Hall. You come and find a handsome house ready furnished to receive you, with a nice garden, and habitations surrounding you on all sides ; but of the time when the spot on which the house now stands was considered one of the waste places of Brighton, you are quite in ignorance The idea of building St. Mary’s Hall was suggested to my mind after visiting the Casterton Clergy Daughters’ School, when I thought to myself that there was no place like it in the south of England where the daughters of clergymen with limited incomes could be educated ; and it struck me that it was a long way to Casterton. So one day, while sitting in Lord Bristol’s drawing-room, with Lord and Lady Bristol, after dining with them and giving his Lordship an animated account of Casterton School, of which I spoke with much warmth and enthusiasm, I ended by saying : ‘ I have some thoughts, my lord, of beginning some such institution at Brighton ’. Now, let those that love the Lord mark the openings of His providence. The next morning’s post brought me a letter from Lord Bristol, saying briefly : ‘ If you should follow up the project you mentioned last evening, *let me know* ’. The question is, what was the value of those words, ‘ let me know ? ’ Some people would have considered them as good as a bank-note at once ; yet there was no promise of help, merely the words, ‘ let me know ’. I have the very letter in my possession now

The plan of the building was constantly in my mind. I thought of it, and dreamed of it. Soon afterwards, by mentioning it to my friends (for I had at that time large scope, and free access to many rich and influential persons), I raised some subscriptions ; not very large, it is true, but still pretty well for a beginning. My dear father, who, if he had lived, would have been a most worthy and liberal patron to St. Mary’s Hall, was the first to promise me a hundred pounds, which however he did not live to pay ; but I paid it for him, as his executor. Many, however, amongst even my old friends, looked with coldness on the scheme, and were not slow in expressing their disapprobation of the attempt.

One clergyman in Brighton said to me : ‘ Sir, it will prove a splendid failure ’. Certainly this was not very comforting. But I had collected some subscriptions, and was obliged to proceed.

Then I remembered Lord Bristol’s letter ; but I did not like to trouble him on the subject. However, I thought I owed it to the institution which was about to be born ; so I put modesty in my pocket, and sat down to write to his lordship enclosing a list of the subscriptions already received. In a day or two an answer came, saying he would give the land on which to build. This, then, was the value of the words, ‘ *let me know* ’. Shortly afterwards his lordship took me himself to see the land which he proposed giving. It was situated in the open place where St. Mark’s Church now stands, but which was then a field ; he pointed it out to me, and said, ‘ This is the land ; it cost me twelve hundred pounds : but I will give it you ’. I noticed, however, that there was a mews just in front, and I did not like the idea of building St. Mary’s Hall overlooking a mews. So I said, ‘ I fear, my lord, you will think me very insensible of your generosity, and ungrateful for your kindness, but I do not like to build St. Mary’s Hall close by a mews ’. Instead of being vexed or annoyed, or saying, ‘ Well, I have done the best I can for you, and if you do not like this you must manage for yourself ’, he brought me into the field where this present house has since risen up, and said, ‘ Do you like this situation ? ’ I answered ‘ Yes, my lord ’. ‘ It is not mine,’ he replied, ‘ but I know to whom it belongs, and I will buy it for your Hall, but not the whole piece ; the frontage piece is too expensive, but I will give you about thirty feet for an entrance ’. Soon after there came a cheque for £500 from Lord Bristol, with which I bought the land. It was afterwards found necessary to buy the frontage piece also, as well as the playground. Lord Bristol has been a most liberal patron to the Hall. Besides various other gifts, he gave the body of St. Mark’s Church, where many of you go on Sundays ; when I am dead you will probably all go there, but the Trustees, out of a kind consideration for me, arranged that the first and second classes should attend St. Mary’s Chapel during my life-time

The funds of St. Mary’s Hall were not, however, at that time, sufficient to allow of our having a good architect ; but let us mark how Providence provided for that want. One day, whilst travelling outside the ‘ Age ’ coach, a gentleman took his seat beside me, whom I recognised to be Mr. Basevi, whom I had met at Athens some years before, and whom I had not seen since. In the conversation which ensued between us, I mentioned the project which was ever uppermost in my mind, and he said, ‘ I am not rich, but I will do what I can ; I will be your architect for nothing ’. Accordingly he drew the most beautiful plans, worth about £500 in all, which are now in the Trustees’ room.

I then selected eight Trustees, men whom I believed to be of firm Christian principles and blameless conduct ; and it is a

remarkable fact that out of those eight, only one has died during twenty-two years. That one was the Rev. H. Blunt, then a curate at Chelsea. One day he sent me a cheque for £50; I quarrelled with him about it, thinking it too large; but the answer he returned me was, 'I have only given you out of what the Lord commands the ravens to bring me'

Many pupils who have left us have reached a high standard; and I am thankful to say that those who have disappointed me have been the exceptions and not the rule.

I have almost invariably found that my first class¹ has been my best class. Let me find it so still. You, now before me, are a new first class, and have influence in the school-room. Keep up the tone of your class, and endeavour to use your influence aright. Think in the morning, 'What good can I do to such a person with whom I shall come in contact today?' And in the evening, 'What good have I done today?'

All of you choose your companions from amongst those who fear God. We know that all are not good here; the tares must grow with the wheat; but you may be careful with whom you associate yourselves. I wonder whether any of those who have lately come to us have ever thought, 'Does the companion I have chosen fear God?'

Have true unity. Humility and love are necessary to produce it. Pray for me. St. Paul asks the prayers of his youngest converts, and I will ask yours. Pray for your superintendent; pray for the governesses. Remember that without the blessing of God on their teaching it is labour in vain; you learn music in vain; you learn drawing in vain; you learn arithmetic in vain; you learn everything in vain, if God is not with you, to bless both those who teach and those who learn

Let none who are in authority be discouraged if trials come, and you find your pupils do not improve and advance as you wish. Do always your best, earnestly and prayerfully, and leave the rest with God, assured that He will prosper you in the earth, if you only put your trust in Him."

¹ i.e. the top class

CHAPTER III

AFTER THE DEATH of the Founder, the Hall, its interests cared for by those who had been his fellow-workers on its behalf, continued to flourish under the guidance of Miss Newport as Lady Principal. Mrs. Mills had resigned in 1861, and her successor, Miss Wood, had been obliged to retire in 1862 through ill-health. The new Lady Principal, Miss Newport, had herself been first a pupil and then a class teacher at the Hall. She was to hold the position of Principal for more than twenty years, during which time there were many important developments, both structural and educational.

In 1867 the Hall was further improved by the laying down of gas from the entrance gates to the door at a cost of £40. An enlargement of the building which followed shortly was due to the fact that in 1868, for the first time, a portion of the English Examination was taken by the Rev. T. Markby, who was connected with the Cambridge Local Examinations. He reported favourably on the work, but pointed out that greater efficiency in teaching would result if the number of classrooms was increased. This led to a proposal by the Rev. J. M. Elliott that he and his sisters should erect a North-West wing, and although he himself died shortly afterwards as the result of a mountaineering accident in Switzerland, the work was completed by another brother in India, Mr. C. A. (later, Sir Charles) Elliott. The building was opened in 1870, and formed the block which at present houses the kitchen and the Chemistry Laboratory. Hot and cold water was also laid on the upper floors.

The year 1870 saw also the foundation by the Old Girls of the St. Mary's Hall Association, to keep up their interest and to help their old school financially by making an annual contribution to the funds of the Hall. What the affectionate loyalty of this Association has meant to the Hall during eighty-five years is partly revealed in the following pages.

Scholastic progress was maintained. In 1872, in order to see how St. Mary's Hall compared with more recent educational establishments, application was made to the Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, as a result of which one of its members was appointed to examine the School in the work of the past half year. The resulting report was highly satisfactory, and it was decided to repeat the experiment with a view to its permanent adoption. In 1873, for the first time, a pupil was presented for the Cambridge Local Examination of Women and passed with credit in most subjects. Another former pupil continued her studies at Queen's College in Harley Street. In 1876 the experiment was made of presenting candidates for the December Local

Examination of the Cambridge Board, in addition to the regular Midsummer examination of the School by a member of the Cambridge Syndicate, and six girls satisfied the examiners, while one of them, the Senior Elliott Scholar, passed with Honours. At Christmas, 1878, fifteen pupils were presented for the Cambridge Local Examination, of whom seven passed, one with Honours. In June, 1879, the four upper classes were examined by a Cambridge Examiner in the following subjects: Religious Knowledge, Shakespeare (the play was "The Merchant of Venice"), English Grammar, English History, Geography, Arithmetic, Political Economy, Physical Geography, Grecian History, Composition, French, German. The writing of most girls was noted as being clear and legible: "some, however, write peculiarly angular or bad hands, which require attention and correction. The spelling was generally correct."

In 1869 the date of the summer holiday had been slightly altered: thenceforth it was June 15th to August 15th. Five years later the Christmas holidays were extended to five weeks, with eight weeks still in the summer.

The year 1880 saw an important change as regards dress. Thenceforth the dress was not to be provided by the Hall, nor would uniformity be required, "but only such neatness and propriety as are becoming for Daughters of the Clergy." In consequence the admission fee of three guineas was remitted, and the annual fee for each pupil was reduced from £21 to £20. Two other scholarships were created in addition to the Elliott Scholarships. These were to be of the value of £30 each, tenable for one year, and were to be awarded after the Midsummer Examination to the most deserving pupils, character as well as proficiency being taken into consideration. They were provided by the Trustees out of the General Funds, and one of them was named "The Babington Scholarship". This appears to have been altered almost immediately, however, as the Report for the Fifty-First Year names six Scholarships: "two of £50 a year each, . . . one of about £35 a year, one of £30, and two of about £17 10s. od. a year each . . . The first two were founded in memory of the Rev. H. V. Elliott, and are called the Elliott Scholarships; the third is the interest of £1,000 given by the Rev. Canon Babington, and is called the Babington Scholarship; the fourth is given by the Trustees out of the General Funds and is called the Trustees Scholarship; the two last were founded by the Rev. Prebendary R. Snowdon Smith (through a gift), and are called the Snowdon Smith Scholarships."

Another important change occurred in 1884 when, as a result of the rapid increase which had been made in educational requirements, the Trustees decided that it was important to place the Hall under a Principal who was herself familiar with the higher branches of education and so qualified to direct and superintend the instruction of her pupils. So it was that at Midsummer 1884, Miss Birrell was unanimously elected out of some fifty candidates to fill the post.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIFTEEN YEARS during which Miss Birrell was Principal saw many important changes at the Hall.

Canon Babington, who had held the office of Honorary Secretary ever since the death of the Founder, died in 1885, and a Scholarship was later founded to perpetuate his memory. Tenable for one year, it could be renewed for one year at the discretion of the Trustees.

The same year saw an important addition to the School buildings. This was the completion of the Sanatorium, at a cost of some £2,000. The money for this had been obtained largely by subscription, but the pupils had also made their contribution: "a Sale of Fancy and Useful Work" which they organised with the help of their friends brought in £110, and they also collected some £11 or £12 in cash.

The Report for 1885 stated that "Great inconvenience resulting from the breaking up of classes, consequent on some of the children learning to draw and others not, the Trustees have thought it advisable drawing should be taught to all". So in place of the £4 per annum formerly charged for drawing, a fee was to be charged of £1 a year for those in the Lower, and £2 a year for those in the Upper School. The total fees therefore, including Music, became £28 a year for those in the Upper, and £26 a year for those in the Lower School. "For this an education is given that probably would cost, in many schools, £100 or more."

The Cambridge Examiner's Report for this same year, while still praising the written work for neatness and legibility, noted that "the spelling in all parts of the School is a very weak point; even the best papers I received were disfigured by mis-spelt words. This matter requires most serious attention".

The regular vacations remained two—eight weeks in the summer and four at Christmas—but a week at Easter was now added, though pupils were not expected to go home unless parents particularly wished it.

It is most interesting to note the numbers of overseas pupils. In 1885 the number of children from the several dioceses, in addition to those from British dioceses, was: 1 from Abyssinia, 11 from Africa, 5 from Australia, 1 from Basle, 2 from Calcutta, 10 from Ceylon, 3 from China, 5 from Demerara, 4 from France, 3 from Hamburg, 29 from India (C.M.S.), 10 from India (S.P.G.), 6 from Jamaica, 3 from Jerusalem, 1 from Nassau, Bahamas, 2 from Antigua, 1 from Natal, 4 from North America, 1 from Prussia, 3 from Smyrna and Syria, 1 from Rupertsland.

The Golden Jubilee of the Hall, in 1886, found it in a most favourable position. The hopes of the Founder had been fully justified; there was a full complement of pupils, and a long waiting list. Year by year, however, the number of original Subscribers and Donors was reduced by death. That of the Earl of Chichester, in 1886, deprived the Hall of one of the oldest and most valued members of the governing body, for he had been a Trustee from its Foundation, and had always shown keen interest in its affairs.

In 1887 the School again obtained a Royal Patroness when H.R.H. the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein graciously consented to fill that post, which had been vacant ever since the death of Queen Adelaide in 1849. Two more scholarships, the "Snowdon Smith" Scholarships, were founded, and were to be competed for by the younger pupils under fifteen years of age, and if they failed, by those under seventeen. A "Snowball Fund", organised by friends and inmates of the Hall, provided money for improvements in the way of furniture for the use and comfort of both governesses and pupils. Success in various public examinations was also recorded, including that of three girls in the London Matriculation Examination. One girl, J. Francis, not only satisfied the examiners in the Oxford Local Examination (Senior) but also obtained an open scholarship offered by the Clothworkers and tenable at Somerville Hall, Oxford, and obtained the History Prize, Oxford University Extension Lectures (Brighton Centre). Other girls were successful in the examinations of the College of Preceptors and of the Royal Academy of Music.

In 1888 it was decided that the School should become a Special Local Centre for the Oxford Examinations. Six girls were entered as Junior Candidates, all of whom passed, as did five of the eight Seniors.

The year 1889 saw the establishment of the Catherine Dighton Memorial Fund, yielding £10 per annum, to be awarded £5 each term to the pupils under thirteen years of age who should pass the best preliminary examination on entrance. Another Scholarship, the "Nellie Jones Memorial Scholarship", was founded in the following year (1890).

During the year 1892 the curriculum was enlarged by the addition of courses in cookery, laundrywork, house management and advanced needlework. Three vacations were established—one of not more than three weeks in April, one of six weeks in August and September, and one of four weeks at Christmas.

Hitherto, Founder's Day had always been observed in the Autumn, but in 1893 the date was changed to July 26th, and this practice of a Summer commemoration was continued in subsequent years. The Diamond Jubilee Year was marked by a visit from the Princess Christian, the School's Patroness, in October, 1896. She was received at tea by the Countess of Chichester, Lady Elliott, the Trustees, and the Lady Principal, Miss Birrell, and was presented with a bouquet from the pupils and an album of photographs of the School. A short concert was provided for her entertainment. The year was again a successful one as regards examinations.

Five pupils passed the Oxford Higher Local Examination with five Distinctions, and four passed the corresponding Cambridge Examination; fourteen were successful in the Senior and eleven in the Junior Local Examination; two passed the Senior Local Examination of the Associated Board of Music; the drawings of ten were commended by the Royal Drawing Society; and one obtained a bronze star.

Once again the existing accommodation proved to be inadequate for the needs of the community, and so in 1897 an appeal was launched for funds to provide six additional classrooms, at a cost of some £2,000, and so relieve pressure on dormitories and existing classrooms. The appeal was so successful that by the end of March 1898 more than £1,200 had been collected or promised, and the work was placed in a contractor's hands. By October the new building—the present Elliott wing—was ready for occupation; one of the classrooms, provided at the cost of Sir Charles Elliott, was named the "Lady Elliott" room, and the others were called after present and former benefactors of the Hall. In this instance, as on so many similar occasions, the work of improving the Hall gave an opportunity to former and present pupils to show their affection by assisting: by sales of work, subscriptions, and contributions which they collected from relations and friends they raised the sum of £362. On November 7th, 1899—a memorable day in the history of the Hall—the new annexe was formally opened by H.R.H. the Princess Christian, and named thereafter the Princess Christian Annexe. Her Royal Highness was met at the station by the Mayor and Mayoress and the Trustees. On arrival at the Hall, where she was received by the Mayor, the Chairman, Sir Charles Elliott, the Honorary Secretary, the Rev. Prebendary Snowdon Smith, and the Lady Principal, Miss Potter (who had succeeded Miss Birrell the previous year), she was conducted over the building, while the Choir sang Bishop Walsham How's Jubilee Hymn. When she entered the School Hall the pupils sang the National Anthem; a bouquet was presented by the youngest pupil, and the Senior Scholar read an Address which had been designed and illuminated by another of the senior girls and was presented to the Princess in a casket made of Indian mother-of-pearl. The Princess named the building and declared it open, after which purses to the value of nearly £250 were presented, and Her Royal Highness then presented the prizes.

The School News Letter, an annual publication first produced by the St. Mary's Hall Association in 1896, contains an interesting description of the new rooms: the windows were shaded by yellow cretonne curtains; engravings of Roman antiquities hung on the walls; the desks had been scraped and varnished till they looked like new; the floors were polished. The girls took such pride in their new accommodation that a prefect undertook to dust the pictures daily, and to remove finger-prints from the shining brass finger-plates.

The year 1910 formed an important landmark in the educational development, when, as the result of an inspection by three Inspectors of the Board of Education, it was placed on the Board's list of schools recognised as efficient. In the years which followed, with its position in the educational world now fully established, it was to make even greater progress than in the past.

CHAPTER V

MISS POTTER held the position of Head Mistress from 1899 to 1911. She was no stranger to the Hall, as for ten years before her appointment she had been Assistant Mistress and Vice-Mistress, and under her quiet rule, in which she was aided by her sister, Miss Helen Potter, still a valued Vice-President of the St. Mary's Hall Association, the work of the School continued to reach an increasingly creditable standard. Moreover, the contribution of Old Girls of the Hall to all kinds of missionary and social efforts all over the world, always prominent in the School's history, was fostered by Miss Potter to an extent which would have brought thankful joy to the heart of the Founder.

In 1903 the teaching of Science was aided by the addition of a Science Room (now the Domestic Science Room). The School had for years felt the lack of a School Assembly Hall, for the large schoolroom on the ground-floor (now the Common-room) was the only place available for physical training, concerts and indoor recreation. The money required for the building of the present Elliott Hall, together with the cost of heating and lighting it, formed the last gift of Sir Charles Elliott, son of the Founder, whose death in 1911 severed yet another link with the past. Later, as a memorial to him, the wing was completed by the addition of music rooms and a cloakroom.

The Snowdon Smith Prize for Divinity was founded in 1907 in memory of the Rev. Prebendary R. Snowdon Smith, who had died in 1905, and a Memorial Fund, to provide grants to pupils leaving the Hall for further training elsewhere, was started in gratitude for the work of Miss Birrell, who had died in 1906.

From its foundation the Hall had been maintained largely by charity. The fees paid by each pupil had never sufficed to meet the cost involved, and the balance had always to be met by donations and annual subscriptions which supplemented investments and, on occasion, by special appeals. In 1908, rising costs and a decline in subscriptions, which resulted increasingly from the deaths of those who had been intimately connected with and interested in the earlier history of the Hall, obliged the Trustees to introduce a new scale of fees which led to a slight increase in most cases, though in order that the intentions of the Founder should be observed, bursaries were instituted for those girls whose parents were in special need of help. At the same time, in response to many requests, it was decided to admit as day pupils the daughters of clergymen resident in Brighton.

CHAPTER VI

Miss POTTER was obliged to resign in 1911 on account of ill-health. Her successor, Miss Ghey, was to hold the position of Head Mistress for twenty-five eventful years, during which the School was to pass successfully through a world war and to expand far beyond the original plan of its Founder.

Year by year there had been a long list of girls waiting for admission, and by 1914 the number of applicants was so large that two houses in Hervey Terrace (site of the present Elliott House) were occupied to provide sleeping accommodation for twenty additional boarders and three staff. The outbreak of war led to no diminution of numbers, for in those days there seemed little danger of direct enemy attack, even on the South Coast. The large schoolroom was divided into three by partition screens, the dining room was redecorated as a result of a two-year effort on the part of the girls to earn the £20 required, and the organ for the Elliott Hall was presented by friends and pupils of Miss Potter in memory of her years of devoted service to the School.

The War left its mark on the School chiefly in rising costs, and expenditure more than doubled between 1914 and 1920. Consequently the Trustees were obliged again to increase the School fees, and it was also decided to extend the scope of the School by taking as boarders other than Clergy Daughters. The admission of non-Foundation boarders was sanctioned by the Charity Commissioners with the proviso that the fees payable for them should be such as to preclude them from taking advantage of the original Trust. This meant that more accommodation would be required; and in November, 1920, during the Chairmanship of Sir W. Mackworth Young, St. Hilary House, Number Two Sussex Square, which was capable of holding forty girls, was dedicated by the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott, Vicar of St. Mark's Church and grandson of the Founder. Within two years the number of boarders had risen to one hundred and fifty, and in 1921 a second large boarding house was opened for junior girls at 22, Sussex Square, and named St. Nicholas House. Day girls were organised into a house named Bristol House. The status of the Hall was changed; it became a company, and in 1922, in order to provide the capital required for further expansion of the School, and for extinguishing the overdraft which had accumulated since 1915, the Governors gave the Head Mistress a free hand to try to raise debentures, with the result that upwards of £20,000 was subscribed, in debentures of ten pounds and upwards, on certain securities of the Hall.

This magnificent response was proof, if proof were needed, of the innate power of St. Mary's Hall to grow into something

even greater, and to furnish to its members wider opportunities of justifying the good intent of our Founder.

By 1922 the number of pupils had risen to one hundred and eighty-nine, including forty-two day girls. Twelve months later there were two hundred and one pupils, and it became necessary to hold a separate Prize-Giving for the Junior School. In 1925 Number 21, Sussex Square was purchased and adapted as additional premises for the juniors. One hard tennis court had been laid down in 1922, and now part of the School kitchen garden was converted into two hard tennis courts in memory of the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott, the Founder's grandson, who had died on August 26th, 1922.

Still the School continued to expand; by 1931 there were two hundred and forty-two pupils, and a new house, to be known as Hebbert House, was opened at Number 4, Clarendon Terrace. In May, 1932, a Kindergarten Department was opened at Number 4, Hervey Terrace, and this was largely responsible for a further increase in numbers to two hundred and seventy-one by October. As a result, an additional classroom had to be provided, a new sanitary block was erected, and part of the kitchen garden was levelled to make a second field and to improve the existing tennis courts. Babington House, at Numbers 2 and 3, Chichester Terrace, was opened in September, 1933, and the less convenient Hebbert House was closed. New playing fields were also acquired in Manor Road. Nor were the older parts of the Hall neglected. During the year 1928-1929 electric light had been installed in the dining room, classrooms and dormitories of the Hall. Gone were the days, recalled by many former pupils, when "a Governess came round with a candle to see that we were all in bed, and then again without a candle to see if she had set fire to anything". Friends of the late Miss Nora Waugh, who had been Art Mistress at the Hall for more than thirty years till she resigned through ill-health in 1920, presented as a memorial to her the teak front door carved in linen fold. Central heating had been installed in the Sanatorium and the lighting was completed—the cost of the latter being defrayed by the money raised as the result of a bazaar which had been organised by the mistresses and the girls.

A familiar object in the School garden until recently was the summer house, brought from the Founder's early home at Westfield Lodge, Brighton, in which his sister Charlotte Elliott wrote her well-known hymns: "Just as I am, without one plea," "My God, my Father, while I stray," "Christian, seek not yet repose." The tablet commemorating this fact was dedicated on October 9th, 1930.

A memorable day in the post-war history of the Hall was Tuesday, November 22nd, 1921, when it was honoured by a visit from H.R.H. the Princess Mary. She was met at the front door by the Chairman, Sir George Casson Walker, Miss Ghey and members of the Council, and as she entered the Hall the National Anthem was sung by the Lower School and the maids who were drawn up on the stairs. The Prefects and Captains were presented to her and each shook hands in Brownie fashion; she then went to

the Elliott Hall where the mistresses and the rest of the school were waiting for her, and the girls sang Parry's "Jerusalem". She was presented with a bouquet, a casket from the mistresses, and a blotter painted by some of the Middle School; after which she was shown the Studio and some of the form-rooms. Before leaving the Princess graciously presented a signed photograph of herself. When she left, the School drew up on the terrace, and the Brownies formed a guard of honour on the front steps.

In 1926, Her Highness Princess Marie Louise graciously accepted the office of Patroness, left vacant by the death of her mother, H.R.H. Princess Christian, in 1922.

It was natural that with the steady growth of the School and the consequent strengthening of the teaching staff, the number of girls competing for Entrance to the Universities, and obtaining Scholarships, Exhibitions, and Honours Degrees, should also have mounted steadily, and the reputation of the Hall for scholarship (as well as for character) should have reached a high level.

The great event of Miss Ghey's period of office, and the one which marked the end of her twenty-five years as Head Mistress, was the celebration on the centenary of the School in 1936. Months of careful preparation bore fruit in a week of commemoration at the end of the Summer term. On Wednesday, July 29th, the Governors gave a garden party, at which the School presented the "Pageant of One Hundred Years" to the twelve hundred guests assembled on the sloping lawn; and the story of the Hall was unfolded, from the day in 1832 when the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott dreamed of such a foundation, to the moment when the Bishop of London appeared as the Guest of Honour at the Garden Party itself. Colonel A. C. Elliott, Chairman of the Board of Governors, himself played the role of his grandfather, the Founder. As the closing words of the Pageant, Miss Ghey announced that the Birthday Gift "sent in love from the four corners of the earth by Governors and by friends and girls of the School of all ages, from ten to one hundred, is being offered to our guest of honour, the Bishop of London, with our gratitude to the first Henry Venn Elliott, our Founder and greatest benefactor". A purse containing the Birthday Gift of £1,848 10s. od. was then presented to the Bishop by Miss Joy Orde, great-great-granddaughter of the Founder. Saturday, August 1st, the actual day of the Centenary, was observed as a day of commemoration, with special services, and Old Girls were entertained at the Hall for the week-end.

CHAPTER VII

THE OPENING of the second century of the School's history seemed full of promise. Under its new head, Miss Stopford, the high standard which had been achieved was maintained. The year 1937 saw the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, and the gift from the Governors of a radiogram enabled those of the School who were not in London to listen to the Coronation Service. A party of girls was sent to the Youth Rally in the Albert Hall, and the Coronation was celebrated by the addition of a week to the summer holidays.

Founder's Day 1939, held on July 26th, was a memorable occasion, for it was the first time that an Archbishop of Canterbury had visited the School although it had been under their patronage for ninety years. For the second year in succession the ceremony was held at the Dome, and it was before a record audience that Dr. Lang rose to present the prizes. A scheme was announced for granting a school exhibition for each diocese, and a plan for organising a group of "Friends of St. Mary's Hall", with a former head girl, Lady Jacob, as president. The aim was to bring together all friends of the Hall and to enable them to express their interest in a practical way. Contributions could be made by either a single donation, an annual contribution, a 'covenanted subscription' by which Friends undertook to contribute annually for not less than seven years, or support of the Seven Years' Programme in support of an Endowment Fund.

But already the shadows of war were falling over Central Europe; Brighton Air Raid Precaution authorities were making intensive preparations for a gigantic black-out rehearsal; and when the School re-assembled in September the conflict had begun. Some of the boarders did not return, as parents preferred to keep them at home; but fifty girls of Streatham Hill and Clapham High School were evacuated to Elliott House. This led to a general re-arrangement. The new-comers were given the use, at a small charge, of one ward in the Sanatorium, and of the Playing Fields from ten till eleven-thirty daily. Air Raid precautions had been taken; the cellars under the terrace at the Hall were equipped with splinter-proof windows and two means of exit; many of the mistresses were qualified Air Raid Wardens; sanatorium wards had been provided in the Hall where it would be easy for patients to be carried to the basement shelter in the event of an air raid warning, and the Junior House and Kindergarten had lessons in the former Sanatorium. The junior boarders continued to sleep at the Hall, and in the boarding houses of the older girls the basements were made gas proof. As the year progressed, however,

and particularly in the summer term after the fall of France, girls were sent for to go home almost daily; it became obvious that so few girls were likely to return in September that it would be financially impossible to keep the Hall going except at a great and constantly recurring loss. So it was that at a meeting of the Finance Committee on June 22nd it was reluctantly decided that the School should be closed for the duration of the War as from the end of that term.

Founder's Day, on July 15th, was a very informal occasion. All the prizes were National Savings Certificates. That morning bombs had fallen barely five hundred yards from the Hall, and though it had not been damaged, neighbouring houses had been less fortunate.

In August the Hall had a miraculous escape during an air raid over Brighton. Babington House had nearly every door and window on the front blown in and shattered by bombs, and St. Hilary also suffered some damage. During one night heavy bombs were dropped all round the Hall. One fell in the playing fields opposite; one made a large crater in the entrance drive and blew down the retaining wall; two others fell at Bristol Gate. Yet in the Hall itself not a single pane of glass was even cracked. It was plain, however, that the building could not have re-opened as a school.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHOOL had closed, and soon afterwards the Hall itself was taken over by the Military Authorities. The Common Room became the Sergeants' Mess, the Officers took possession of the Drawing Room, and the Staff Room became the office of the Commanding Officer.

The Governors were faced with the problem of the three boarding houses, for which it proved impossible to find tenants. The cost of repairs and other outgoings was a severe drain on financial resources which already were heavily depleted; and in 1941 it was decided to sell the equipment of the boarding houses, to approach the Trustees for consent to sell the houses themselves after the War, or earlier if it appeared desirable, and to maintain the Hall and the immediately surrounding property to be available for use as a school as soon as it should be released by the Military Authorities, retaining for this purpose any equipment necessary. In July the Bishop of Chichester explained this policy to the St. Mary's Hall Association at a party which Miss Ghey and Miss Galton gave at Blunt House, Oxted, for the Old Girls. He said that the probability was that after the War it would be difficult to revive St. Mary's Hall as it had been, and that it would have to be revived as a day-school. The Governors had therefore decided that the minimum number of day-girls should be eighty, who could be accommodated in the main Hall building; there should also be twenty boarders. The Hall was to be re-started as soon as possible after the War for girls of the same tradition. The Bishop said that, as a friend, he did not see how the Governors could have reached any other decision; he wanted St. Mary's Hall not only to survive but to develop, because he thought it could give something to the educational world which it was not so easy for other schools to give. The Hall had closed, but St. Mary's Hall Association went on; a Sussex Branch was formed, and it was arranged that meetings should be about three times a year, in addition to other meetings of the Association. Miss Ghey was asked to act as President of the Association until such time as there should again be a Head Mistress, and Miss Stopford, by this time Head Mistress of St. Elphin's, Darley Dale, in Derbyshire, accepted an invitation to act as Vice-President. So the name of the School was kept alive, and past members continued to work and to pray for the time when it should re-open; lapsed membership was renewed, and new members were added. At last, in June, 1945, the War came to an end, and then the faith and generosity of the members of the Association helped to bring the School back to life. The year 1946 dawned, and as no move had been made by the Governors

towards re-opening the Hall, Miss Ghey and Miss Galton approached the Bishop of Chichester, who called a meeting of old influential friends at the Diocesan House in February, 1946. Miss Ghey was asked to see what response the St. Mary's Hall Association would make; an Appeal was launched and offers of financial help were received from many quarters; the sum of £3,000 was promised, and a letter was sent to the Governors in which the Association expressed its keen interest in the re-opening of the Hall, and pledged itself to help financially. This letter, with its generous promises of gifts and loans, and its hope, so warmly expressed, that the School might live again, preserving its old traditions and remaining faithful to the intentions of its Founder, turned the scale. Gifts continued to pour in. Miss Stopford sent from her own school a cheque for £100—the result of a sale on their Sports Day—as a token of sympathy with “a sister School that had been a war casualty”; a Bring and Buy Stall at Miss Ghey's and Miss Galton's Garden Fete realised the sum of nearly £200, which was used to furnish two of the new bedrooms—each for five boarders—at Babington House. By the autumn the sum of £5,000 had been raised.

So, encouraged by the prayers, the gifts, and the firm belief in the future of the School, of friends of all ages, the Hall did indeed re-open in September, 1946, though not in the main building, for that was still in the dismal state in which bombs and Army occupation had left it. At first there was only the Junior School at Babington House, where the Rev. B. Crane, Vicar of St. Mark's Church, took the opening service—a short and simple one, consisting of prayers, a reading from the New Testament, and the hymn “O God, our help in ages past”. His congregation was a very small one—Miss Robinson, the new Head Mistress; Miss Tanner, representing the Governors; and about twenty day-girls in white socks and new blue overalls.

In the empty and echoing main building, with no hot water and no comfort of any kind, Miss Robinson valiantly shouldered the task of re-creating the School, endowing it from the first with her own high standards of dignity and courage and responsibility. The difficult conditions laid too heavy a burden on her strength; but in her four years of office she brought back to life a School of whose spirit and demeanour the Founder would have been proud:

The new House Mistress, Miss Birney, and her assistant, Miss Alexander, were faced with a difficult task, with workmen in the house from roof to basement, and dust, plaster, wet paint and ladders in the most unexpected places. Nor was the task easier elsewhere. The furniture which in 1940 had been reserved for future use had been stored in the houses in Hervey Terrace, and much of it had been lost as a result of the bomb which destroyed two of those houses. The remainder had later been stored on the premises of Messrs. Stead, and there now began the dusty task of sorting that which was past repair, and repairing and cleaning those pieces which could still be used. This task was nobly undertaken by Miss Galton, in conjunction with Mr. Dingwall, who at

this juncture was enlisted to help the Hall and has remained a valued friend ever since. Miss Galton was also of great assistance in the refurnishing, on which thousands of pounds (raised partly by private contributions) had to be spent. In January, 1947, the School moved from Babington House to the Elliott Wing of the Hall, and it was possible to re-open Babington as a boarding house. Three girls who had been at the School when it closed in 1940 had returned. The Junior School was housed in the Sanatorium, and some of the old dormitories at the Hall had been painted cream and turned into physics, biology and chemistry rooms, and the library. A new kitchen had been made behind the dining-room, where formerly there had been music rooms. By the end of the Spring Term there were ten children in the Kindergarten. In July pupils were again entered for the School Certificate Examination. By November numbers had risen to over one hundred and seventy, including sixty boarders, and Babington was full.

On Saturday, February 22nd, at 3.30 in the afternoon, a Thanksgiving Service for the preservation and re-opening of the Hall had been held at St. Mark's Church. It was snowing, but the church was almost full with those who had come for the occasion—Governors, parents, past and present Staff and members of the School, and old friends and retainers. The service, which was conducted by the Rev. B. Crane, assisted by the Vicar of Brighton, Canon F. N. Robothan, took the form of a shortened Evensong, with special prayers, and there was an anthem sung by St. Mark's Choir. The Preacher was the Bishop of Chichester, Dr. G. K. A. Bell, President of the Hall. Taking as his text the words, “Look unto the Rock whence ye were hewn”, the Bishop said:—

“We have come here this afternoon to offer heartfelt thanks to Almighty God for a fresh beginning in the history of St. Mary's Hall, and to ask His blessing upon it. The company present is only a portion of that large body of former pupils, teachers, parents and friends who rejoice at the re-opening, and one in particular who was Headmistress at the temporary closing, Miss Stopford, has sent a special greeting through me.

And what makes us especially thankful is the strong sense of loyalty, and the generous giving, which together with the planning and energy of old and new friends, have made the new start possible from the human point of view. We thank God for what He has done. There were so many difficulties to be overcome in the actual re-opening, that we must surely believe that God has some special work for St. Mary's Hall to do in the years ahead.

And we ask His blessing for the future. Certainly we can help the Hall with our prayers—and we must pray for the new Headmistress, Miss Robinson, and her Staff, and for the girls from the youngest to the eldest. And we shall ask that in every department of its educational and social life God may give it prosperity.

What shall be our motto? I suggest we should take as the watchword for our voyage the text which I read.

“ Look unto the Rock whence ye were hewn. ”

The Hall was founded over one hundred years ago for the education of girls, based upon the teaching of the Church of England. The moving spirit was H. V. Elliott, a well-known Evangelical churchman. He and his friends were pioneers at that time in the schooling of girls, convinced that it was vital to the girls, vital to the homes which they might afterwards build, and vital to the nation, that their schooling should both be of a sound academic standard and also inspired right through by the Christian religion. The founders knew that though instruction in the Bible and the Prayer Book was absolutely necessary to the girls' religious education, it was the general influence and atmosphere of the School, the attitude of the teachers in all their subjects, the disposition of the girls, and the mutual confidence of all members of the society, that really made the education received in the true sense religious. They had a special desire to help the children of the clergy, and of Army and Navy officers, but they did not confine membership of the Hall to them. Their idea was, that for the good of the nation, generation after generation of girls should go from the Hall to all parts of England, and indeed wherever the British were to be found, imbued with Christian principles, attentive to Christian worship, and maintaining the Christian standard in all walks of life. And from the early times until now, under a succession of fine principals, with the help of a devoted staff, aided by an energetic Council, St. Mary's Hall has trained girls for all sorts of callings, who may be truthfully described as continually looking to the Rock from whence they were hewn.

Today we are making a new start. Once again, just as before the war, the Council has a member of the Founder's family at its head. A new Headmistress possessed of wide experience, with the help of an able and loyal staff, is calling the Hall back, step by step, into life and activity as a centre of knowledge and religion. Sixty girls have arrived, the first pupils in the post-war era. There is much, no doubt, to be learnt—old things to be repaired, new equipment to be added, old lessons remembered, new emphasis sometimes given, new subjects, it may be, taught: but there are two things St. Mary's Hall has for which the girls of today and their parents may well be grateful. St. Mary's Hall has both the forward-looking mind and also continuity with the past. We look to the future with hope, and we wish to take our full part in new creative tasks. But we are not just starting from zero. We have all the memories of our history to spur us on. And the Hall has as its permanent mark the Rock of Christ's Religion. It looks to the Rock of the Church from which it was hewn. Yet the School, for all its traditions, does not return to its quarters ready made. You who are its heirs today have to shape and make it for tomorrow.

The teachers have an immense part to play by their faith, and skill, and humour and patience. And the girls have theirs, by doing their bit in work and in play, by their friendship to one another, by their good spirit and good temper, by their zest, and their joy.

It is not for nothing that you have been brought here. You have a duty to the future of Britain. Britain needs the very best ability and the very best character that the young can give it. And if with happiness and friendship, and each working to the best of her ability, you receive here what St. Mary's Hall has to give, in religion and in learning, you will be doing a service of the greatest value for the well-being of Britain, and you will be helping your country to fill the role which it is called to fill in the moral leadership of Europe.”

CHAPTER IX

LITTLE REMAINS to record of the Hall's long history. Thanks to the devoted efforts of its friends and well-wishers the work of restoration went on. The gardens were re-created. Numbers 21 and 22, Sussex Square were re-opened and named St. Hilary; but the repairing of Number 2, Lewes Crescent involved too heavy a financial burden for the limited resources available at that time, so the house was sold and became an annexe for Brighton Training College.

In March, 1950, after four years of strenuous labour in re-organising the Hall, Miss Robinson retired to South Africa, and Miss D. Conrady was appointed to carry on the work of consolidation and development of the post-war School. The Governors had by that time prepared plans, in conjunction with Miss Robinson, for the rebuilding of the former Hervey Terrace site as a Boarding House for the Junior Girls. Work began on the building in the early summer of 1950. In October the foundation stone was dedicated by the Bishop of Lewes and bears the following inscription :

Priore ab hostibus proruto
Novum apparet tectum
More Phoenicis illius
Cui vita inter flammas deposita
Restituta pace renovatur
MDCCCCL

The new House, named after the Founder, was blessed by the Bishop of Chichester, President of the Council, in September, 1951. In the following year, the old Science room on the drive was repaired, re-decorated and equipped as a modern Cookery and Housecraft room, and the Hall was able once more to offer an all-round education. This completed the post-war additions to the building. In October, 1953, a full-scale inspection by the Ministry of Education—the first since 1936—showed that the School was well on the way towards recovery of its former position in the academic world, and that many of the problems which marked the early years after re-opening had already been solved. During the last two years further changes have been made. A room has been equipped with special desks for Geography classes, and the Elliott Hall has been furnished with black-out curtains for use at film shows and dramatic performances. The beautiful old staircase, damaged by military occupation during the War, has been replaced. Comfortable common-rooms have been provided both in the boarding houses and in the Hall itself. The reference library and the fiction library have again been built up

after the heavy loss and damage of the War years. A School orchestra has also been formed.

In every department of the School's life is visible the initiative, the courageous energy, and the devotion of Miss Conrady, as together with her staff of mistresses and other helpers she carries on into its second century the School our Founder created and committed to the faith of his successors.

So, with its old dignity restored, and new beauties added, the Hall faces the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of its foundation, looking back with gratitude to its past, and facing the future with confidence, yet mindful always of its motto, "Before honour is humility".

HEADMISTRESSES OF ST. MARY'S HALL

1836-1857	MISS TOMKINSON
1857-1861	MRS. MILLS
1861-1862	MISS WOODS
1862-1884	MISS NEWPORT
1884-1898	MISS BIRRELL
1898-1911	MISS POTTER
1911-1936	MISS GHEY
1936-1940	MISS STOPFORD
1946-1950	MISS ROBINSON
1950-	MISS CONRADY