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## **Endowed Charity in Bristol and Gloucestershire**

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## ENDOWED CHARITY IN BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE

An Address by WILFRID LEIGHTON, F.S.A., *President.*

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THE term Charity taken in its widest sense has been defined as all the good affections men should bear towards each other. It is unnecessary to consider in detail the religious significance of this definition, but it has been suggested that its interpretation followed three definite lines: that of St. Bernard, who invigorated the monastic movement and helped to make the monastery a centre of charitable relief: that of St. Francis, who revived and reinvigorated the conception of charity and gave it the reality of a social service: and that of St. Thomas Aquinas, who analysed the problems of charity and almsgiving, associating them with definite works which he defined as the seven spiritual acts of counselling, sustaining, teaching, consoling, saving, pardoning and praying, and the seven corporal virtues of clothing, giving drink, feeding, freeing, sheltering, assisting in sickness, and burying. In course of time these became 'Good Works' incorporated in the exercise of the Christian religion and available in the after life, bringing definite boons and remissions and also enjoined as penances. Within the limits of this address I shall try and record their practical application and endowment from the beginning of the mediaeval period, illustrated, as far as possible, by examples drawn from Bristol and Gloucestershire, and to indicate the events which influenced the history of endowed charity through the centuries which followed.

In the Middle Ages endowments were limited almost entirely to land and its incidents, and the practice of vesting property in trustees was unknown. The only

method at that time by which an endowment could be made permanently available was by vesting it in a corporate body, such as a monastery, which had a continuous existence. The alienation of land for religious and charitable purposes and its consequent release from feudal dues, was watched by the Crown with a jealous eye. Both by Magna Carta and a statute of Edward I providing against the transfer of land for such purposes without the consent of the overlord, and by statutes of Edward I and Richard II, reserving the consent of the Crown, provision was made against Mortmain—the dead hand. Nor could these enactments be disregarded with impunity. In 1313 the abbot and convent of Cirencester had to pay a fine of no less than £200 for acquiring land and property in Cirencester without the late King's licence, and the following year a further fine of £20 for obtaining Ampney St. Mary without leave. The administration of endowed charity was almost entirely in the hands of those who had assumed definite religious obligations, and chief among these were the monks. The endowment of monasteries in this country, especially during the 12th century, was enormous, and although it is now considered that the amount distributed in alms or applied to other charitable uses, was not as great as was at one time thought, in the aggregate it must have been very considerable. Of the great Benedictine priory of Durham we are told—'the benevolence thereof, and alms of the whole convent, was always open and free, not only to the poor of the City of Durham, but to all the poor people of the Country beside', while the abbey of Croyland, becoming exceedingly rich, 'relieved the whole country round so that prodigious numbers resorted to it'. The number of monastic establishments was very large. Dom. Gasquet records seven monasteries, or friaries, in Bristol, four in Gloucester, and many in the county. All monasteries had an almoner, a principal monk, who—'should have his heart aglow with Charity—he must be the helper of

Orphans, the father of the needy, and one who is ever ready to cheer the lot of the people and help them to bear their hard life'. Almony schools were usual, and the almoner of Tewkesbury Abbey made provision for clothing sixteen poor scholars, and provision was made for a number of boys to be fed, clothed, and educated, at the expense of his office. In 1199 a charter of King John placed under the control of the canons of Llanthony Abbey a school which had existed in Gloucester before the abbey was established. All monasteries had guest halls or chambers—a large establishment might have several, and the cost of hospitality when a religious house was situated on a main route, or in a populous centre, was considerable, as in 1311, when the monks of St. Augustine, Bristol, complained that hospitality in a port like Bristol was a serious burden. The guest master was also a monk of importance, for, according to the Benedictine rule, guests were to be received like Christ himself. In their social work the activities of the monks extended far beyond the relief of the poor. To an embarrassed family loans might be granted secured on land, while provision might be made for old age by securing from them a corrody, an annuity or maintenance for life, a form of speculation which provided a monastery with immediate funds often at the expense of future embarrassment. The charities of the monks might be charged against the general income of a monastery, or particular funds might be applied to the purpose. At the great abbey of St. Peter, at Gloucester, the income from the manor of Standish was appropriated to charity from an early date and given away in corn, gowns, and money, but this, we are told, led to 'brawling, blaspheming and fighting—sick and unthrifty persons resorting thither to the great disquiet of the monastery'. At the Abbey of St. Mary, Tewkesbury, the income received from Chettle, in Dorset, land at Pequeminton, an enclosure at Winchcombe, and a tenth part of all the monks' victuals, were devoted to

hospitality. The charitable work of the monks might suffer in times of dearth and misfortune as in the case of the Cistercian abbey of Flaxley, which the King in 1281 commended to the special care and protection of the Keeper of the Forest of Dean for three years—'it being burdened with debt and impoverished, and could no longer perform its customary distribution of alms or other works of mercy'; or by mismanagement and wilful neglect as in the case of the Priory of Horsley, where, in 1283, Bishop Giffard found that hospitality had been withdrawn, and the profits of the priory converted to alien and strange uses; and Hales, where John, Abbot of Beaulieu, in 1270, ordered that the alms which used to be given away at the great gate should not be withdrawn. References such as these to the charitable activities of the monks may be multiplied almost indefinitely and to their efforts must be added those of the Friars. The buildings of the latter were situated in populous places and in addition to preaching they relieved the poor and needy, also visiting them in their own homes. In Bristol there were habitations of the four principal orders; the Black and Gray Friars had houses in Gloucester, and the Crutched Friars had a house at Wotton-under-Edge, which, at the time of its dissolution had an endowment in land of the annual value of £10. From the nature of their rules the friars however can hardly be classified as administrators of endowed charity, as they relied for their own support and the maintenance of their charities on the alms of the faithful.

A foundation of a somewhat different nature was the College at Westbury-on-Trym, dating from 716. The Bishop of Worcester revised its ordinances in 1447, founding and endowing a chapel in the church to be served by six priests, and building almshouses for six poor men and six poor women, and, in 1463 he appropriated to the College the parish church of Clifton, with a proviso that the Dean and Chapter should find a master

to teach grammar to those meeting in the church and all others who came to him, without any charge.

A second class of endowed medieval charities was the hospitals, a term which had very little relationship to its modern equivalent. A medieval hospital might house the old and infirm, the sick or the leprous, provide a school, or serve many other purposes, and might be attached to a chantry, or controlled by some major or minor religious order, or by some guild or fraternity for religious and charitable work, of which there were a great many. One of the most interesting and oldest of such guilds, that of the Kalendars of Bristol, endowed with considerable property, and meeting first in Christ Church, and later at All Saints, combined religious observances with the recording of municipal and other important events, the visitation of the sick, burial, prayers for the dead, and mutual help. The guild maintained a free library and provided lectures, and at the time of its removal to All Saints Church, it is stated to have been entrusted with the control and mastership of a school in Bristol for the education and conversion of Jews: powers which William, Earl of Gloucester, subsequently transferred to the monastery at Keynsham, in Somerset, which he established in 1171. The hospital of St. Mark, or Gaunt's Hospital, Bristol, was in the first instance entrusted by its founder, Maurice de Gaunt, to the Abbey of St. Augustine: but later gained independence. At the time of its dissolution it had a master, 12 clerical and 5 lay brethren, 15 poor men, and 12 choir boys who were clothed and educated, and it gave a daily meal to 100 poor people. The Hospital of St. Bartholomew, Gloucester, is stated to date from the reign of Henry II, when Nicholas Walred, a chaplain, began to build the West bridge in association with William Myparty, a burgess of Gloucester, who provided a building in which the workmen, and sick men and women, found shelter, and for whom a priest was provided. A chantry chapel was authorised in 1232, and Henry III gave to the

prior, brethren and sisters of the hospital, which had become a separate incorporation, the church of St. Nicholas for the support of the poor. In 1333 there were ninety inmates, amongst them being both men and women, sick, lame, halt and blind. The hospital of St. John the Baptist at Lechlade, was founded by Isabella de Mortimer in or before 1246. According to the foundation ordinances the community consisted of seven Augustinian priests and a number of lay brothers and sisters to administer to the poor and sick, both men and women, who came to the hospital. Bishop Giffard reformed the hospital in 1291. One kind and courteous brother was to be chosen to entertain guests, and another to receive the sick, as hospitality 'should be observed with charity and cheerfulness'. The maintenance of the bridge at Lechlade was a charge on the hospital, and Edward III twice granted the foundation the right to take tolls for a limited period. Trinity Hospital, Bristol, was founded by John Barstaple, a burgess and mayor, who in 1395 obtained a charter from Richard II, particulars of which have been lost, but which is referred to in a further charter which he obtained from Henry VII in 1408. This charter authorised him to found a house of hospitality or alms of two chaplains to pray for the founder and his wife and their souls after death, and 24 poor persons, and a fraternity or guild of themselves and others who might wish to be of it. The two houses were to be separately incorporated and one chaplain was to be master or warden of the almshouse and the other to hold similar office for the guild, and it is of particular interest that powers were also given for the masters, or wardens, to hold land, etc., by succession—one of the most characteristic capacities of a corporation—at a time when such powers had not been expressly granted to municipal bodies. It is also of interest as an example of the steps taken by benefactors to protect their foundations that Barstaple in 1399 obtained from Pope Boniface IX

a letter inhibiting under pain of the greater excommunication, not to be removed by other than the Pope himself, except in the hour of death, anyone from interfering with the execution of his will by which he proposed to endow the hospital he had founded for the 'sick poor'. The guild apparently maintained a spital, or lodging house, for wayfarers who entered the city by Lawford's Gate, near which Barstaple's buildings were situated. The number of hospitals was considerable, Dom. Gasquet records 16 so-called institutions in Bristol and its suburbs, of which 2 were in Somerset. He also lists 4 in Gloucester and 3 in Cirencester. The examples I have given indicate their diverse foundation, objects and control, and there were many which provided only for lepers, a term which seems to have been interpreted very loosely in times when the country was subject to many forms of pestilence and plague. Leper hospitals were invariably sited on the outskirts of towns without the walls—an obvious precaution. Their original purpose might in course of time be changed, as in the case of the hospital of St. Lawrence, Cirencester, which was originally founded for lepers, but, in the early part of the 14th century, was converted by the Abbot of Cirencester into an almshouse for women, to the great discontent of the townspeople.

A further class of endowed charity was provided by the Chantries established in nearly every parish church and most hospitals and almshouses. Many churches had several—St. Nicholas in Bristol had no less than eight. Founded to provide a priest, or priests, to celebrate the obit of the founder, and pray for the repose of his soul and those of his kindred, the endowment almost invariably provided an annual sum for alms for the poor. Although generally in shillings, the relative value in the aggregate of the amounts so distributed must have been very considerable. In some cases the chantry priest was charged with additional duties. At Stow on the Wold, in the 15th century, the priest of the chantry of the Holy Trinity in

the parish church, was paid £6 yearly to keep a school and instruct the children of the town. Many schools have similar origins, such as Cheltenham Grammar School, whose foundation is traced to the Chantry of St. Katherine and Cirencester Grammar School, which derives from the chantry of St. Anthony (or St. Mary), while other schools such as that at Wotton-under-Edge, endowed as a separate foundation by Katherine, widow of Thomas, third Lord Berkeley, in 1384, no doubt owe their inception to the inspiration of William of Wykeham.

In the 15th century and earlier, with the growth of the wool and cloth industries, and the increase in commerce, there came into being a great number of first Trade, and later, Craft Guilds, which differed from the Religious and charitable fraternities which I have already mentioned by combining religious observances with the control of trade and occupations. Members of these guilds frequently left endowments for the support of decayed members and journeymen, the education of their children, the portioning of their daughters in marriage, and similar objects. In the reign of Henry IV, the weavers' fraternity of Cirencester was endowed with a hospital for poor members, although it did not obtain a charter until much later. Many of the guilds maintained almshouses often situated under their halls. This was the case in Bristol where both the Tuckers' and Weavers' Companies provided such accommodation under their halls in Temple Street. In 1493 the Bristol Society of Merchant Venturers which derived from the Bristol Guild Merchant, built a chapel in honour of St. Clement, the guardian and patron saint of mariners, and the almshouse adjoining, which they established later, was known as St. Clement's Almshouse.

In early times municipal corporations which had much in common with the trade guilds, do not appear very prominently as administrators of endowed charity ; but the corporation of Bristol is stated to have received land

from Simon Burton in 1292 for the relief of the poor in the almshouse in the long Row which he is reputed to have founded, and in the middle of the 14th century the burgesses of Gloucester had secured control of the leper hospital of St. Margaret. In the 15th century, Trinity Hospital, Bristol, was administered by the corporation of Bristol; and the endowments and control of the almshouse and chapel of the Three Kings of Cologne, established by John Foster in Bristol, were transferred to the Corporation by his executor, John Esterfeld, in 1506. Both Foster and Esterfeld had held high office in the city.

I have so far attempted to summarise the various categories of endowed charity to the beginning of the 16th century. The system which had been built up, and which apparently met the needs of the community for many centuries was now approaching its end. It is unnecessary to consider the personal, religious, political and social influences which led to its decline and suppression, for the general historical facts are well known; but I must refer briefly to the fate of its various components and the future of the very few which survived. As early as 1529, a Statute passed by Henry VIII in the twenty-first year of his reign, made superstitious uses—obits, prayers for the dead, etc.—void, but had little effect on the educational and eleemosynary activities of the Chantries: but the appointment of Cromwell as Vicar-General and the Visitation of the Monasteries, was followed by the Act of 1536 which decreed the dissolution of all houses having an income of less than £200 a year and twelve religious, who were to be transferred to the larger monasteries assumed to be less corrupt and better administered. The fate of these, however, was only postponed. The methods which secured their surrender varied: persuasion, bribery and promises were general: an obdurate prior or abbot might be deposed for one more compliant, and other failing, more violent methods might be used. These so-called voluntary surrenders were

confirmed by an Act passed in 1539, which transferred all other monastic property to the King and extended to colleges and hospitals. It was ostensibly an intention that the charitable and educational work of the monks should be continued, and in the foundation charter of the Cathedral and Dean and Chapter, in succession to the Prior and Priory of St. Peter, Gloucester, it is recited that the King 'affecting from the bottom of his soul nothing more than that the true religion . . . should be restored in its integrity and reformed . . . with double sincerity, correcting the enormities into which the life and professions of the monks had through lapse of time deplorably lapsed, laboured . . . that for the future the muniments of sacred eloquence be purely administered, and good morals be sincerely observed, that youth may be freely instituted in letters and old age shorn of its strength be worthily nurtured with necessaries, and lastly that the largesses of alms to Christ's poor, repair of roads and bridges and all other duties of every kind of Charity be there performed, and spread thence far and wide' and under its provisions the King's School was established at Gloucester. Similar provisions applied to Bristol, where the Augustinian Abbey became the cathedral of a newly-formed Bishopric. The final blow to the system was dealt by the Chantries Act of the first year of the reign of Edward VI, 1547, which protesting against blindness and ignorance and seeking 'to convert the property of the chantries and guilds to good and godly uses, as in erecting Grammar Schools to the education of youth . . . and better provision for the poor and needy', authorised the appointment of Commissioners to enter with some exceptions on all corporations, guilds, fraternities, companies or fellowships or mysteries of crafts. Commissioners appointed following the Act had full power where a guild or fraternity, or the priest of any chantry should have kept a grammar school, or where there were endowments for the poor and other works of charity, such as bridges

and havens, to exonerate for their support such of the chantry property as they thought fit. Almshouses and Hospitals under lay control, such as those administered by municipal corporations and craft guilds were exempt. The interpretation placed by the Commissioners on their duties and the results in particular cases are sometimes difficult to understand and appear contradictory. In the case of Greyndower's Chantry, which provided a priest with chantry duties who was also to keep a grammar school at Newland, the whole was appropriated; the chantry known as Ferby's Service at Chipping Campden, provided a free school and maintained an obit and 40/- yearly in alms, but the endowment was left untouched. In Bristol the Commissioners decreed that the chapels attached to Trinity Hospital and Foster's Almshouse were the property of the Crown, and ordered that the equivalent of the priest's stipend should be confiscated from their endowments. This decision appears to have been overlooked until 1577 when the Corporation had to pay £66 13s 4d to secure a reconveyance of the property from two legal sharpers who had discovered the omission and obtained a grant from the Crown. In the case of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Bristol, of which the family of West, Lords la Warr, claimed to be founders and patrons, and which had a varied career as a hospital, almshouse, fraternity of both men and women, and, in the 15th century, by licence of the Master, the home of a guild of mariners dedicated to the Virgin Mary, St. Clement and St. George, and all the Saints of Heaven, and consisting of a priest and 12 poor mariners to pray for the King, Mayor and all merchants and mariners passing on the sea out of the port of Bristol, the coming storm was apparently anticipated, for in 1532 the buildings and endowment were conveyed to Robert and Nicholas Thorne, and their co-executor of the will of their father, Robert Thorne, to establish therein within six years a free grammar school. This transaction gained the royal approval, as by letters

patent of Henry VIII of the same year, the establishment of the school—Bristol Grammar School— was confirmed. Somewhat similar action without licence appears to have been taken in other cases, for in one of the Chantry Acts it is stated ' that many of the Donors, founders or patrons, or such as pretend to be, of their own avaricious and covetous minds, and of their own authority, have of late entered into the same and have expelled the Priests, Wardens, Masters, etc., of the same, and do occupy the Masters' houses and do convert rents to their own proper uses' and also asserts that some incumbents have in agreement with Patrons, made leases for lives. Where this had been done, while the Crown obtained the property it was of little value until such leases had expired. A very interesting foundation made during the suppression period is that of the Crypt Grammar School, Gloucester. John Cooke by his will in 1528 left certain lands to his wife for life and thereafter to such uses as she should declare, as she knew his mind. Joan Cooke, the widow, having obtained the King's licence, conveyed the lands to the Corporation of Gloucester in 1539-40 to provide a free grammar school, the support of the poor in St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the repair of the West bridge and causeway. Foundations such as this and of the Thornes, and the more widely known foundation of Christ's Hospital, London, provided a pattern for the refoundation of many of the old chantry schools, and the endowment of new Grammar and Blue-coat schools which took place during the next two centuries, such as those established at Newland, Stow on the Wold, Chipping Campden, Winchcombe, Northleach 1559, Tewkesbury 1609, Tetbury 1610, Thornbury 1642 and Wickwar in 1683. Christ's Hospital was expressly named as the patent and example to be followed by Carr's foundation of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, in 1586, and by Sir Thomas Rich in 1666 for his School in Gloucester. Of somewhat the same category was Whitson's Red Maids'

School for girls in Bristol opened in 1634 for 40 poor women children whose parents should be burgesses, deceased or decayed, and whose pupils should be apparelled in red cloth.

With the Reformation the relationship between charity and religion changed. Charity, no longer allied to remissions and penance, became a matter of personal justification. The old system had passed and a new had to be built up. In the later years of Henry VIII and the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth we have seen the establishment and endowment of many places of education—sometimes in the buildings of the deposed religious houses. A definition of endowments which were considered charitable was necessary, and this was provided by the Statute of Charitable Uses passed in the 43rd year of Elizabeth's reign, 1601—definitions which still hold good although the statute has been superseded by later legislation. The charitable objects and purposes enumerated by this Act were: Relief of aged, impotent, and poor people; maintenance of sick and maimed soldiers and mariners; schools of learning, free schools, and scholars at universities; repair of bridges, ports, havens, causeways, churches, sea-banks and highways; education and preferment of orphans, relief, stock or maintenance for houses of correction; marriage of poor maids; supportation, aid, and help of young tradesmen, handicraftsmen, and persons decayed, relief or redemption of prisoners or captives; aid or ease of any poor inhabitants concerning payment of fifteens, setting out of soldiers, and other taxes. It will be seen how closely these definitions correspond to the activities of the hospitals and guilds of the earlier period; and by the latter part of the 16th century endowed charity and its administration had also fallen into several well-defined groups: such as Charities controlled by the Municipal Corporations, Charities of, or controlled by, the Trade Guilds or Companies, Parochial Charities generally controlled by the

Incumbent and Churchwardens, and Charities controlled by individual bodies of Trustees. It is impossible within the limits of this address to make more than a superficial reference to the charities founded since the Reformation, and especially those founded in the last century. Their number is enormous, and previous to the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1836, many of the most important were entrusted to the care of the old municipal corporations. The mayor and burgesses of Gloucester had controlled the Crypt School since its foundation, and Queen Elizabeth granted them St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1564, and the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene in 1599 ; but pride of place must go to the city of Bristol, whose opulent merchants, in life or on death, provided for practically every object specified in the Statute of Charitable Uses. The Rev. John Cranidge recorded no less than 122 endowments and benefactions between 1540 and the end of the 18th century enrolled in the books of, but not in all cases administered by, the Corporation, who however already controlled the educational foundation of the Thornes, and the richly endowed almshouses of Barstable and Foster. Some of the new bequests were for particular parishes of the city ; others for augmenting the endowments of existing institutions, such as Francis Codrington's endowment in 1572 for providing bedding at Trinity Hospital for poor travellers, and that of Dr George Owen, physician to Henry VIII, who, having received from the king the property of the former Hospital of St. John, appears to have had some compunction in appropriating a charitable foundation, and granted a long lease of the property to the Corporation, subsequently turned into a freehold, for maintaining additional inmates in Foster's Almshouse. The endowment of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, the Blue-coat school founded by John Carr in 1586, which was the subject of a special Act of Parliament, and also had a grant of Arms with supporters from the Heralds' College, was increased considerably

by the endowments of William Bird, Lady Mary Ramsey, Gollop, Dowe, Colston, and others, the additional boys supported on these foundations wearing on their blue tunics badges bearing the initials of their respective benefactors. Dr Thomas White, more famous as the founder of Sion College, London, had in 1613 established Temple Hospital for poor men and women near Temple Church, Bristol, of which parish he was a native. Later he provided for poor prisoners, and by his will in 1622 he made provision for Marriage Portions to poor maidens, Loans to tradesmen, and for the repair of highways leading to Bristol within a compass of five miles round, and also for the way to Bath and ten miles towards Oxford. As an aside, I might mention a further bequest of Dr White of £40 for the purchase of chains so that the men and women prisoners in Newgate, might be manacled and sparred hand to hand and brought to St. Dunstan's in the West, so that the air might benefit their bodies, the preaching their souls, and their sight and shame an example to the people. John Whitson, Mayor and Member of Parliament for the City, in addition to founding the Red Maids' School, provided for poor householders and widows, women in childbed and scholarships at the Universities. Alderman Robert Kitchen in 1594 left money annually to enable his poor kindred to start in business or for their preferment in marriage, and other charities, Robert Redwood in 1613 gave his house for a Free Library; George White in 1634 left money to provide loans to clothiers, materials to keep the poor at work and for the relief of prisoners in Newgate; Mary Ann Peloquin provided for distressed Freemen, their widows and daughters, and for apprenticing poor orphans. In 1784 John Merlott endowed annuities for the blind, and the Rev. Charles Sloper in 1727 left money for Bibles for the poor. These are a few examples taken from the many. As trustees of so great a number of endowments the Corporation became owners of large estates and lords

of the manors of Congresbury and Burnett in Somerset, and jointly with Sion College and St. Paul's, London, of Bradwell in Essex. The administration of the charities and their estates was a major pre-occupation of the mayor and common council, and in the 17th century there were appointed annually four Aldermen, Custodes Clavium, or keepers of the keys of the muniment chests ; six Aldermen or Common Councilmen, auditors of accounts ; four Elder Councilmen, assistants in the care of orphans ; four more with the Mayor, for the loan money charities ; one treasurer and one assistant for the Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, with two supervisors ; two Aldermen, supervisors for Trinity Hospital ; four supervisors for the Grammar School ; five supervisors for placing out poor children and the provision of coals ; four supervisors for the gift-money of Sir Thomas White and others for the repair of the highways ; and it was ordained in 1633 that no person should stand in any of the offices above two years together at one time, the office of Auditor excepted.

In 1835 the Report of the Municipal Corporations Commission revealed much inefficiency and many abuses in the administration of the old close Corporations, and was followed by the introduction of the Municipal Corporations (Reform) Bill. During the heated political discussions on the Bill, it was found impossible to arrange for the future administration of the charities which the Corporations had controlled, and it was finally decided to insert a clause leaving the charities in the control of the Corporations until August 1836, when, if Parliament had not directed otherwise, new trustees were to be appointed by the Lord Chancellor on application from each locality. This course was adopted in the case of Bristol, and a new body, known as the Trustees of the Bristol Municipal Charities, was appointed in that year. On a thorough investigation of the affairs of the charities, it was found by the new trustees that very considerable portions of the endowment and income of some of the charities had been

mis-applied by the old Corporation, against whom claims were lodged for no less than £240,569 in the case of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, and smaller sums in the case of some of the other charities. These claims, which led to litigation, were eventually compromised, but it was not until 1842 that by a decree of the Lord Chancellor it was finally settled that the Corporation should retain the management of some of the small gift charities for sermons, or the poor of particular churches. The administration of Dr White's Temple Hospital did not pass to the new trustees, but remained with the 'four antientst aldermen' in accordance with his original directions.

The trade and craft guilds and fraternities, later more generally known as companies, survived the dissolution and, in some cases, subsequently occupied part of the buildings of the former monasteries and hospitals as their halls. The Cordwainers' Company of Gloucester had part of the chapel of St. Kyneburgh's Hospital, and the Bakers', Smiths', and Tanners' Companies all found new homes in the former Dominican Friary at Bristol. Numerous and active in all towns, in the provinces they rapidly declined during the 18th century: the Merchant Taylors Company of Bristol, whose almshouse in Merchant Street was in existence in 1587, when John Wilson left property for the support of its inmates, was rebuilt and greatly enlarged by the Company in 1701; but by 1823 the last member died, and the Company came to an end, but the almshouse was continued under trustees. The Merchant Venturers Society of Bristol is now the only company surviving in Bristol and Gloucestershire. I have already referred to its almshouse, but its charitable activities were greatly increased in 1696, when Edward Colston, the great Bristol philanthropist, placed in its charge the almshouse which he established on St. Michael's Hill, and in 1710, when he also placed in the Society's care the school which is known by his name. In 1753

William Vick left £1,000 to the Society, to accumulate and eventually be applied in building a bridge over the Avon Gorge, a bequest which led to the erection of the Clifton Suspension bridge many years later. It is of interest that the almshouse and lectureship at Newland, founded by William Jones in 1615, was placed by him in the charge of the Haberdashers' Company of London.

Endowed Parochial Charities are to be found in almost every parish in the county. They vary from an annual income of a few shillings in some small country parish available for doles to the poor or a distribution of bread, to rich endowments in some city parish or former township, providing almshouses, annuities, scholarships, apprenticeship fees, clothing and coal. Many are of ancient date, and when their original endowment has been in land or buildings their value has often increased considerably and its distribution became a matter of difficulty. As an example I mention the parish of St. Nicholas in the centre of Bristol. In 1857 the income of its parochial charities invested in property in the city had so increased that its distribution at Christmas led to many worthless people crowding into the parish and living in miserable lodgings to qualify for the doles. In this case the Charity Commissioners made a scheme abolishing the dole charities and applying the income to the support of the almshouse, which the parishioners had built in 1652, and in the support of the parish schools. Non-ecclesiastical parochial charities are now administered by the Parish Councils.

And now I come to my final class of endowed charities those administered by individual bodies of trustees under the terms of wills, deeds, schemes of the Charity Commission, or Board of Education, etc. Such trusts are numerous and often of great interest, but it is impossible within the scope of this address to consider them in any detail. In earlier days generally confined to Almshouses and Schools, some of which I have mentioned, they now include many institutions with varying activities, annuities

for the needy and sick, and the provision of Scholarships, and other objects. Some of the larger institutions ranking as charitable foundations are also incorporated under the Companies Acts or by Royal Charter.

In the latter part of the 18th century slackness and maladministration of endowed charity had become notorious. In 1786 and 1788 Committees of the House of Commons reported on the subject, and in 1818 a committee of enquiry into educational charities was appointed, chiefly through the instrumentality of Lord Brougham. In 1819 another Commission was appointed to investigate, with some exceptions, all the charities for the poor in England and Wales. This and subsequent Commissions continued their enquiries until 1835, when a select Committee of the House of Commons issued a strong report. The reports of the Commissioners are of great value and are often supported by printed documentary evidence; they also contain, however, statements made by trustees and their agents which err from ignorance or intention and often require careful verification. In 1853 the Charity Commission was appointed with most of the powers which had been exercised from an early date by the Court of Chancery. In 1869 and 1870 Acts were passed establishing the Endowed Schools Commissioners, whose activities were far-reaching. These Acts also provided that the trustees of useless endowments, such as dole funds, might apply to the Commissioners that they should be devoted to education. Subsequently the Endowed School Commissioners were merged in the Charity Commission, and a further change was made by the Education Acts of 1900 and 1902, which transferred the jurisdiction over Educational Charities to the Board (now the Ministry) of Education.

The activities of the Endowed School Commissioners and the facilities provided by the Charity Commission for revising obsolete charities have led to beneficial changes in the objects and administration of many charities

during the past century ; but they have also led to the merging of many charities and the loss of their individuality, and often the names of their founders and benefactors are forgotten. It is possible that a time has come when social changes will again affect profoundly the course of endowed charity, and it will be to the transactions of societies such as ours that students in the future will look for the history of many institutions which like the guilds and hospitals of the past will fade away.