

THE SHOW FIGURE

The event of the month was the function on May 10th, when the Panelling, the Seating and the Bishop's Throne were publicly dedicated. We had many great ones with us, the Bishop bearing his ninety-two years with vigorous equanimity, and keeping the Hall in laughter by his speech at lunch, the Provost, a goodly array of potent, grave, and reverend Fellows, the Member that will be for the East Grinstead division, and Mr. Baring Gould. And much as we value and esteem the others it may be doubted whether Mr. Baring Gould were not on this occasion, vulgarly speaking, the show figure and whether many of our friends were not greatly spurred on by the hope of a glimpse at the author of "Mehalah," "John Herring," and the "Curious Myths." During the little time he was here we heard enough to be able to appreciate Mr. Campion's description of him in ancient days, telling stories to listening crowds, and to feel quite sure that we could walk with him to Chanctonbury, and home via Lewes, and listen all the way to a story in one thrill. His tale of the acrobat who because he did not know a prayer went into Church and there stood on his head, because that was the best he had to offer, will live. During the six years that Mr. Baring Gould was a Master here he did so much, and left so many marks of his personality, that we cannot but understand that he was destined to be as famous as he has become.

The visit of the Bishop was a recognition of our work for which we cannot be too grateful, and we venture to think that Hurst has always its full share of his favour. The widespread fame of Mr. Baring Gould as an author, prolific, versatile, and full of old world lore, attracted many who knew him in his books, and the hearty greetings of friends who remembered Ms Hurst days proved - if that were necessary - the permanence of the impression his character set upon those then privileged to know him.

Punctually at 11.45 a.m. the Choir, Scholars, Fellows, Preacher, Provost, and Bishop mustered at the Library. Before the Bishop was carried the Pastoral Staff, and before the Provost his Cross. On entering the Chapel which was practically filled, the Provost accompanied the Bishop to the Visitor's Stall, and formally invited him to take official possession thereof. He then presented for dedication to the service of God, the stalls, panelling, window and other recent gifts. The Bishop then recited prayers appropriate to the occasion, and the Te Deum was sung as an act of thanksgiving.

Mr. Baring-Gould then preached the sermon, to which it is vain for us in this report to do justice. With singular grace of illustration he drew from the simple phrase "an instrument of ten strings," a noble vindication of the definite religious teaching which our Schools are founded to provide. He began characteristically with a beautiful story, told by Clement of Alexandria, of a competitor at the Greek games who was dismayed, as he came forward to play his prelude for the prize awarded to the best musician, by the snapping of one of the strings of his lyre. Then there leaped upon the lyre a little cricket from the earth and began its shrill song, and to its note the musician so tuned his lyre strings that the mighty concourse broke into a roar of admiration and awarded him the crown of victory. Thus, said the preacher, did the many notes of earth, however good, need for their perfect harmony the sound of the gospel of truth. Strongly he protested against strewing young lives with the cut flowers of Christian sentiment instead of planting in the root of sound doctrine. The

Apostles were teachers of definite truth, and not mere amiable nonentities. The Christian teacher must not scatter salt that has lost its savour, nor the preacher blow Sunday soap bubbles of empty iridescence - or of emptiness without the iridescence. He panegyricized the beauty of our Chapel and ended an eloquent sermon with a comparison of life to a peal of bells, now mournful, now joyous, but always melodious, always sweet, if dominated by the note of Divine truth.

During the collection of alms was sung Mr. Baring Gould's well-known hymn, "Hail the Sign," and during the day upwards of £50 was contributed to the Chapel Completion Fund.

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