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Rise + progress
of
the charity

A Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Charity School, or Blue Coat Hospital, in Liverpool, made by M^r Bryan Blundell, Treasurer, from the year 1709, to near the time of his Death in 1755.

He relates how wonderfully the good Providence of God has done for this school since its Institution in the year 1709.

M^r Robert Stithe, one of the Rectors, at that time, and myself were very intimate. I was then master of a ship in the foreign trade. We agreed to use our best endeavours to found a Charity-school, and applied to the Mayor, and some of the most respectable inhabitants, who joined in the business, and subscribed, some twenty, some thirty, and some forty shillings a year, to the amount of sixty or seventy pounds per annum.

We then built a little school-house, which cost thirty-five pounds, and appointed a master, at twenty pounds per annum, which was paid out of the money collected at the sacraments, and took fifty poor children into the said school, clothed and gave them learning.

M^r Robert Stithe was then made Treasurer; and I went to sea on my employment, telling M^r Stithe that I hoped to be giving him something every voyage for the school.

In 1713 M^r Robert Stithe died; from 1709 to the time of his death I had given him two hundred and fifty pounds on my several voyages; two hundred pounds of which he had put out to Interest. When I came home and found he was dead, it gave me much concern for the school, as M^r Richmond, the other Rector, was much indisposed at times, and not able to undertake such a charge.

I therefore determined to leave off the sea, and undertake the care of the school, and was chosen treasurer 1714; at which time there was two hundred pounds at Interest which was all the school had. In a little time I saw some of the children begging about the streets; their parents being so poor as not to have bread for them, which gave me great concern, insomuch that I thought to use my best endeavours, to make provision for them, so as to take them wholly from their parents, which I hoped might be promoted by a subscription.

I therefore got an instrument drawn out for that on parchment, went about with it to most persons of ability, and many subscribed handsomely. On the strength of which I went to work, and got the present Charity-school built which has cost between two and three thousand pounds and was finished in 1718; at which time also I gave for the encouragement of the Charity, seven hundred and fifty pounds, being a tenth part of which it pleased God to bless me with, and did then purpose to continue to give the same proportion of whatever He should indulge me with in the time to come, for the benefit of the said charity. So great has been the mercy and providence of God in prospering me in business that I have made up the seven hundred and fifty to two thousand pounds, which I have paid to the use of the school, and my children (six in number, the youngest of them now near thirty years of age) are so far from wanting, or being worse for what I have given to the school, that they are all benefactors to it, some of them more than one hundred pounds at a time.

I may truly say, whilst I have been doing for the children of this school, the good providence of God, hath been doing for mine, so that I hope they will be benefactors to this charity when I am in my grave.

In 1726 ten more children were taken into the school.

In 1735, the sixty children were taken to lodge and diet, wholly from their parents.

In 1742, ten more children were admitted, which made our number seventy.

In 1744 M^r. Foster Cunliffe gave one thousand pounds for the use of the school, which was put out to interest to the Corporation at 5 per cent. Our Stock by good Providence increasing, and being very desirous of seeing one hundred children in the place before I died, I got a second instrument drawn on parchment in 1747, and solicited subscriptions to enable us to take in thirty more children. Accordingly two thousand pounds was subscribed, upon which we determined to trust the good providence of God, which hath always made up our deficiencies; and in 1748 we took in thirty children more, so that there now are seventy boys and thirty girls in all, one hundred - a sight I much, and earnestly desired to see before I died. The charge is now seven hundred pounds per annum, towards which we have, by the blessing of God, attained to a stock or income of four hundred pounds a year, the other three hundred pounds comes in by gifts and legacies, so that we have never wanted, at the year's end but always continue increasing a little. I have now been treasurer thirty-seven years, in which time more than four hundred children have been put out apprentices, mostly to sea, in which business many are masters, and some makers of ships, several of them have become benefactors to the school, and useful members of society. We take the children into the school at eight years of age, and put them apprentices at fourteen, and give forty shillings fee with each. The method observed with the children in the school, is as follows, viz. one half of the day the boys are employed in picking oakum, by which they earn fifty pounds a year, the girls are employed in spinning cotton, and earn about twenty pounds per annum, in all about seventy per annum, to their maintenance: the other half of their time is applied to their instruction in reading, writing, and common arithmetic. It is so useful a charity that I have frequently wished to see as many charity-schools, as we have churches in town, which are four, and I yet hope the good providence of God may bring it to, in the next generation.

Soon after the school was built in 1720, we applied to get a charter, but it was not granted, the school not being upon a Royal foundation.

In August 1739, we obtained a decree in chancery, by which is vested in fifty trustees, any twelve, of which make a committee, who meet quarterly at the school, to admit children and do other necessary business.

So far M^r. Bryan Blundell's narrative.

M^r. Treasurer Bryan Blundell died in the 1756, and his son Richard Blundell Esq^r was appointed treasurer in his room.

1759 twenty more children were admitted, which made the number 120

1760 M^r. Richard Blundell died, and his brother Jonathan Blundell Esq^r was made Treasurer. 1763 eighty more children were admitted; made the number 200;

150 boys and 50 girls. 1770. twenty more boys admitted; made the number 220
1779, twenty more boys admitted; made the number 240.
1781, ten more boys admitted; made the number 250.

1783, ten more boys admitted; made the number 260: 250 boys and 50 girls.

The children are wholly taken from their parents and subsisted by the charity

The number of Children continued to increase, and in the year 1798 there were 327, since
which period the number ~~has~~ varied according to the prosperous or adverse state of the
funds, until the year 1827 when it was increased to 357 viz 250 Boys and 100
Girls, who have been boarded, educated, and clothed at an expence of from £4000 to
£5000, to meet which the Institution is only provided with a permanent Income
of about £1600, leaving the Trustees dependant upon the liberality of the public
for an annual sum of £3000. —

The anxious wish of the Trustees is, not only to relieve distress, not only
to protect, feed, and clothe the Orphan and the Fatherless, but to supply the Com-
munity with industrious and well behaved Servants, Seamen, and Artizans, to send
out into the World young persons qualified to be useful in their several Callings
and grounded in those sound principles of religion, which alone can impart to
them true peace of mind here, and the hope of happiness hereafter.

The Trustees of the Institution cordially invite the public to be present
at the Catechetical Examination and the Service in the Chapel on Sunday Afternoon
at 2 past 4 o'Clock