Chapter Four

TUDOR ENGLAND

WITH THE ACCESSION of the Tudors, the old medieval traditions in England gradually passed away. Such families of the old nobility who had survived the Wars of the Roses turned their ancient and uncomfortable castles into dwelling houses, or leaving them to crumble into ruins, moved into simpler and more practical manor houses, similar to those in which the new landed gentry were now living—men who had grown rich on English wool.

Some of the yeomen of the English countryside worked the farms which their families had owned for generations. Others rented them from the hard-pressed nobility or from the monastic houses.

Wycliff's attempts at religious change during the previous century had had little immediate effect, and the Church was as rich and powerful as it had ever been, owning a fifth of England's wealth in land and buildings, and prospering on rents and tithes: and many of the bishops were also counsellors of state, thereby wielding secular as well as ecclesiastical power.

More landowners were turning from arable farming to the more profitable rearing of sheep, which entailed less labour. At the same time, the population was increasing and labourers who, a few generations earlier, had been in a strong enough position to demand higher wages, now sometimes had difficulty in finding work. Some made their way to the towns, where increasing trade and foreign commerce offered more opportunities, but unemployment grew into a serious problem and hundreds became homeless vagrants, who lived as best

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

they could, sleeping in the woods and forests and seeking food and alms from the monasteries, which served them well at this time and became true havens to many a starving and desperate man.

During all the upheavals of the early part of the fifteenth century and the bitter feuds of the Yorkists and Lancastrians, there had been little opportunity for the development of education. The Church had become lax and their interest had flagged. In London the monopoly of establishing schools rested with the bishop, and by 1450 so many old-established grammar schools had ceased to function that there were only three left in the entire city.

Life moved slowly. Four-fifths of the country's three million people were country dwellers, the pace of their lives controlled by the quiet rhythm of the seasons, but events which had taken place in eastern Europe began gradually to affect the west, eventually making themselves felt on this small island on its north-western fringe.

During the Barbarian invasions of the fourth and fifth centuries the capital of the Roman Empire had been moved to Constantinople, and here, throughout the long years, succeeding generations of Greek scholars had kept alive the learning and traditions of the old Empire. The western world had made contact with the Arabs and this eastern Empire during the thirteenth century, but during the succeeding years, as the Greek scholars of Constantinople watched the advance of the Turks through Asia Minor, they took the precaution of moving to the Aegean Islands and the mainland of Italy with their treasures, thereby re-introducing to Europe, with far greater impact, the ancient pre-Christian classical culture.

In Rome and Florence began the Renaissance, a revival of interest in art and literature, philosophy and science, inspired by the writings of ancient Greece and Rome: and eventually the culture of the whole of western Europe was to come under its influence.

With the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, the ancient trade routes between the Italian city states and the East,

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

by way of Syria, were blocked. The mariners of western Europe began to explore the Atlantic, hoping to find an alternative route to the East by sea. Before the end of the fifteenth century, Bartholemew Diaz had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, Christopher Columbus had landed in the West Indies and John Cabot, financed by Henry VII, had discovered Newfoundland.

In England these discoveries had little immediate material effect and it was to be another generation or more before men's thoughts turned to colonization, but mentally and spiritually the impact was revolutionary. To people who had been brought up to believe that the world ended in a vague cloud, somewhere beyond the Atlantic horizon, it came first as a shock and then as a stimulus. They realized that they had been accepting as fundamental truth much which was patently false. The fallacies of their old geography lessons were now all too obvious, for a start. It set men thinking, questioning, experimenting. Within the next few years Vesalius, the Flemish student of anatomy and physiology, was to disprove the theories of Galen and Aristotle, on which doctors had been trained for more than a thousand years, and Copernicus was to show that, contrary to the teaching of the Church, the earth was not the centre of the universe but a sphere moving round the sun.

Erasmus, the Dutch theologian and scholar, and a leader of the new learning of the Renaissance, paid a visit to Dean Colet at Oxford early in Henry VII's reign, and several years later he returned to meet Sir Thomas More. These three men were deeply concerned at the widening gulf between the conduct of the organized Church in Europe and the concept of Christianity expressed in the New Testament: and Erasmus, steeped in the literature and philosophy of Greece and with a brilliantly clear mind, was saddened to see the obscure ritual of the Church enmesh so many of its members in a tangle of vague superstition. Henry VII was also deeply interested in the new learning of the Renaissance, but he remained a devout Catholic all his life, showing no sign of doubt in the omnipotence of the Church of Rome, despite the growing feeling amongst an

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

increasing number of English intellectuals, influenced by Erasmus, that they could no longer accept some of its doctrines.

With the changing concepts of religion and of life in general, many fine and promising words were written about the education of girls, remarkably few of which were to bear fruit: but Sir Thomas More set an example, not only by the way in which he supervised the education of his own daughters, but by the kindness with which he treated them.

Under his training and that of her tutors, Margaret, the eldest girl, became an accomplished scholar and linguist, amply proving her father's contention that learning may 'equally agree with both sexes. . . .'

When he was away from home, Margaret and the other children wrote him a letter in Latin every day. Margaret also wrote a number of Latin poems and orations and translated into English the Latin work of Erasmus on the Lord's Prayer. Her Greek was as sound as her Latin and she also studied philosophy, astronomy, arithmetic, logic, rhetoric and medicine.

Amongst the visitors to their riverside home at Chelsea was Juan Luis Vives, a Spaniard born in Valencia, who had become a pupil of Erasmus at Louvain University and came to England in 1523 to teach the new learning at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Henry VIII asked Vives to draw up a plan of education for the seven-year-old Princess Mary and to supervise her studies. Vives devised a course of reading which included Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch and Plato. She was also to study the works of the Christian Fathers and read her Bible twice a day: and he recommended a study of More's *Utopia* and some of the work of Erasmus, all of which must have been pretty heavy going for a seven-year-old.

Queen Catherine, herself a woman of intellect and scholarship, and greatly drawn to Vives, as a fellow-Spaniard, commissioned him to write *The Instruction of a Christian Woman*, but this was not translated into English until 1540, after Catherine's death. And despite the high standard of education he had

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

set for Princess Mary, he seems to have regarded the intellectual capacity of most women as negligible and saw no place for them outside the home. He granted that education had a stabilizing effect on a woman's character, and made her more amenable to reason, but said that the new learning should be for men only and that women would do better to keep to the old routine of reading and writing, needlework and household duties.

Sour as all this was, he did lay stress on the importance of the mother in the early training and education of her children, particularly in regard to proper speech and good behaviour: and on the broader social problem of the treatment of the poor, Vives was less pompous and more practical. He advocated differing treatments for the various kinds of poverty. Begging should be prohibited and all paupers able to work given some useful employment. Hospitals should be provided for the sick and infirm, asylums for the insane, and the children of the poor should be educated so that they could support themselves in later life, thereby breaking the vicious circle of pauperism. Abandoned children should be cared for in an orphanage until they were six and then sent to a school which provided maintenance as well as education and training. Boys were to be taught to read and write, but 'let them first of all learn Christian piety and the right way of thinking'. The quicker learners should stay on, help with the teaching of the younger children and continue their own education to prepare themselves for entering a seminary to train for the priesthood. The rest should be put to whatever trade or occupation for which they showed an inclination or aptitude. The curriculum for the girls was the usual one of spinning, sewing, weaving, embroidery, cookery and household management, but Vives did concede that 'If any girl show herself inclined for and capable of learning, she should be allowed to go further with it,' though he had no end in view for her and he disapproved of women teachers, on the assumption that few could grasp plain facts and would therefore teach things all wrong.

It was only three years after Vives' arrival in England that

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

King Henry began his divorce proceedings against Queen Catherine. She turned to Vives for help and advice, but he was no lady's man and as a Spanish Catholic he felt the position too delicate and dangerous to handle. Even so, he was arrested, imprisoned for a time and banished.

There began the long quarrel with the Pope, culminating in the final breech, in 1531, when Henry proclaimed himself the head of the Church of England. And four years later Sir Thomas More, refusing to take the oath of supremacy, was arrested, tried and beheaded.

By this time the King had married Ann Boleyn and the Princess Elizabeth was two years old. Within the next year, Ann was executed and the King had married Jane Seymour. And in 1537 Prince Edward was born, but Jane died in childbirth.

King Henry built a palace at Chelsea, close to Sir Thomas More's old house, for his two small children, who were put under the care of Lady Bryan. From the outset, they were carefully trained and educated. Elizabeth in particular acquired a sound knowledge of Greek and Latin and was an accomplished musician and elegant dancer. She was cleverer than Edward but they loved each other dearly. Like the children of the grammar schools, they spoke to each other in Latin and wrote to each other in Latin when they were separated.

The dissolution of the lesser monasteries had taken place in 1536 and by 1539 the abbeys had been suppressed. Some of the buildings were turned into manor houses but the rest were either deliberately destroyed or left to fall into ruin. Some of the abbots and priests became Protestant clergymen in the newly-established Church of England. Others were pensioned off and cast into the world to live as best they could or seek protection in monasteries abroad. The valuable estates they had been forced to abandon fell into the hands of the King and many he sold to wealthy yeomen and merchants, who established themselves as a new landed gentry. Grammar schools attached to the abbeys and monasteries inevitably disappeared with the Dissolution, but some of the funds from the endowments—

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

though by no means all—were used in re-establishing some of the old schools or founding new ones. Henry VIII himself re-founded eleven important cathedral schools and by the end of his reign fifty new grammar schools had come into existence.

The closing of the nunneries was no great loss to the cause of girls' education, for the nunnery education had become almost negligible. Nevertheless, an opportunity was missed at this stage, despite the protests of many educationists, to use the money derived from the nunnery estates to establish girls' schools comparable with the new grammar schools for boys.

Many excuses were made but the general attitude was that the money could be put to far better purpose. Good or bad, the nunneries were all swept away and there were no reprieves.

Amongst the casualties of the Dissolution was the convent of the Grey Friars, which since 1225 had been established on the north side of Newgate Street in the City of London. Here in 1327 the Friars had built their beautiful church and a century later Richard Whittington had added a magnificent library for their valuable collection of books: but after the Grey Friars had been disbanded, the convent[1] stood empty and neglected.

For the increasing numbers of unemployed and destitute in England, their problem aggravated by the growing practice of enclosing the common lands, this was the time of even more terrible hardship, for although the closing of the nunneries had had little social effect, the suppression of the monasteries was disastrous for those who had turned to them for shelter and food during their hopeless search for work. In London they lived as best they could, in squalor and near starvation, with nowhere to turn for the succour which the monasteries had been able to give them.

Only a few weeks before he died, King Henry, on the advice of Sir Thomas Gresham, bestowed the convent of the Grey Friars and their church on the City Corporation, for the relief of the poor, provided the citizens contributed to the funds for its maintenance. The church, re-dedicated as Christ's Church,

[1] The term 'convent' was used to describe a religious community of men as well as of women.

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

was to be regarded as a foundation of King Henry VIII and opened for public worship.

A month later Henry was dead and the boy king, Edward VI, was on the throne. The exchequer was low and his regents were occupied with the Chantries Acts, by which more than two thousand chantries and chapels were to be dissolved, and their estates sold to private purchasers, on the grounds that they were improperly administered and had been turned to superstitious uses. This was another serious threat to the cause of education, for so many of the chantries had schools attached to them: and in many cases the purchasers felt no obligation to continue them. In the course of these transactions some three hundred grammar schools disappeared and also the song schools. The government promised to use some of the confiscated money to establish many more grammar schools but all it achieved was a few dozen and in the end Edward VI's government sacrificed far more schools than it ever established. Hugh Latimer appealed to the rich to donate to the furtherance of education the money they would have spent on chantries and pilgrimages, but these pleas yielded little until the reign of Queen Elizabeth a generation later.

Nothing was done about the Grey Friars convent and from time to time it was used as a storehouse. And in the meantime the numbers of paupers and orphans, disabled and sick, most of them totally ignorant and near to starvation, still haunted the narrow lanes and alleys of London, a living reproach to the newly-established Church of England. The church and hospital of St. Bartholemew was doing valiant work, admitting as many of the destitute as they could, but the almoners said that the numbers in need were so great that they were hardly making any impression on the problem and were taking in less than a tenth of those desperate for help.

One Sunday in 1552 Bishop Ridley, the Bishop of London, preached at Westminster before the young King Edward, on the subject of mercy and charity, making an eloquent plea for the plight of London's poor. The message went home and Edward sent for the bishop to make practical plans. The result

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

of that meeting was a letter to the Mayor, Sir Richard Dobbs, which Ridley himself delivered to him that same evening. The following day Sir Richard invited the bishop, two aldermen and six councillors to dine with him and make the first plans. They decided to enlarge this committee to include six aldermen and twenty-four commoners.

They adopted Vives' method of classifying the poor into three categories, firstly the poor by impotency, which included the orphans, sick, aged, blind and lame, secondly the poor by casualty—wounded soldiers, decayed householders and others who had fallen on hard times through no fault of their own—and thirdly the thriftless—the wastrels, idlers and petty criminals.

In all there were 2,100 people to be cared for and the categories into which they fell were further subdivided. For the sick and wounded the religious house founded in honour of Thomas à Becket was to be restored and known as St. Thomas's Hospital, to supplement the work of St. Bartholemew's, and a separate lazar house established for the lepers. For the orphans and children of the poor—both boys and girls—it was decided that the Grey Friars house should be re-established as Christ's Hospital.

There remained the able-bodied, uneducated unemployed, some rascals, some merely helpless and thriftless.

On the right bank of the broad estuary of the Fleet river, where it flowed into the Thames, was the royal palace of Bridewell, standing in the precincts of the holy well of St. Bride and the little church which had been built alongside it. Wolsey had acquired this land but Henry VIII had claimed it and built here a beautiful red-brick palace, similar to that of St. James, with stone facings and out-of-date but impressive turrets. It was here that his last quarrel with Catharine of Aragon took place and after she had left for ever the king also deserted the palace, allowing it to be used as a residence for the French ambassadors.

King Edward inherited the Bridewell Palace and Bishop Ridley now begged him to allow it to be used for the third

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

main category of the needy as a place of corrective detention—a house of reform, discipline and employment, where by technical training, education and correction the men and women housed there would be transformed into worthy citizens. It was a wise and merciful policy, far in advance of most sixteenth-century thinking, and the young king, only a few weeks before his death, granted his charter to the Bridewell Hospital.

The ambassadors moved out, albeit somewhat unwillingly, and the new inmates moved in. However, during Queen Mary's brief reign, the Bridewell Hospital did not function as the original governors had intended, the detention being more apparent than the correction, although they were given plenty of work to do. There were two treadmills, each using eighteen men at a time, which were used for grinding corn. In the smithy nails were made and offered for sale. The women wove cloth and baked bread. Though far from the original idea of providing a useful training for the homeless and indigent, the idea of putting prisoners to work spread through the country, and when other towns opened gaols as penitentiaries for vagrants and vagabonds they were called 'bridewells'.

St. Thomas's Hospital and Christ's Hospital fared better. In the autumn of 1552 St. Thomas's admitted two hundred sick and aged persons and on November 23 of that year three hundred and eighty boys and girls arrived at Christ's Hospital, one hundred of them babies. This may be claimed as the opening day of the first endowed boarding school in England for girls, and since it flourishes to this day in Hertfordshire, it may also be claimed as the opening day of the oldest girls' school in the country.

The governors had agreed that the purpose of Christ's Hospital would be to supply meat, drink, clothes and lodging to the needy children of London, as well as learning and officers to attend upon them. Babies and those too young to learn were to be cared for in the country.

Appeals for funds were sent to the clergy, church wardens and sidesmen of every parish in the city and to every house-

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

holder of substance. Collecting boxes were handed to the landlord of every inn and to the wardens of every company. The response was generous and quick. Within six months the old monastery building had been renovated and made ready to receive five hundred children. Mr. Calthorp, a member of the committee, contributed five hundred feather beds for them, with straw mattresses, blankets and sheets. And these were luxuries indeed, which many worthy and prospering country people did not yet enjoy in England, still making do with straw pallets and a log of wood for a pillow.

The staff was assembled and included a grammar master, his assistant, the usher, a writing master, two elementary teachers for the petties, a music master, a surgeon, various assistants and also a matron, Agnes Sexton, who had twenty-five women under her. One of her duties was 'twice or thrice in every week' to 'arise in the night and go as well into the sick ward as also into every other ward, and there see that the children be covered in their beds, whereby they take no cold', a remarkably gentle and humane touch in a world where so many children had known nothing but neglect and cruelty.

The first problems in dealing with the assortment of poor London children who arrived at the hospital more than four hundred years ago were discipline and hygiene. Some of the children were said to have 'died of the hygiene', terrified perhaps by their first serious encounter with soap and water, and there were certainly some who, in the early days, were afraid of so large an institution and tried to run away. They 'would watch duly when the porters were absent that they might steal out and fall to their old occupations, so that a number of them were punished before they could be brought to abide within the bounds of their houses', but it was only a matter of weeks before they all settled down contentedly, beguiled by the comfort and kindliness of the place, the regular food, not to mention the feather beds, which were rare even in the days of Queen Elizabeth.

The records do not show how many girls there were at the

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

hospital during the early years, but as there were six masters and only one mistress, they were clearly in a minority. Their ward, with forty beds, was part of the Whittington library over the north cloister, next to the maidens' 'schoole' in the ditch playground. This does not sound particularly salubrious, but in the fullness of time the ditch was filled in.

By Christmas the girls were in a uniform of 'russet cotton with kerchiefs on their heads' but by the following Easter this had been changed to the blue dress, white, green or blue apron and white cap and collar which they were to wear until 1875.

The girls' education was far more limited than that of the boys, comprising for many years only reading and needlework, with the Bible as their only book. Their school hours were seven till eleven in the morning and one to five in the afternoon, with half holidays on Thursdays and Saturdays: and two or three times a week they were given lengthy and searching catechisms, the purpose of which was to teach them the Christian religion according to the Catechism of the Church of England, so that the children would be ready at all times 'to give an account of the fundamental truths'. The catechizer also had to see that the girls behaved reverently in Church, that they had good manners and behaved respectfully to all persons and deported themselves properly in their wards.

The accounts for the hospital show that in June, 1553, 6s. 8d. was paid as salary to the governess and there were also small payments to Goodwife Smoothing and Goodwife Saepsched—the wives of the steward and the porter, both of whom seem to have combined the duties of schoolmistress and nurse.

This was the year that the young King died. On his accession, six years earlier, at the age of ten, he had been moved to the palace at Greenwich, and the widowed Catherine Parr, herself well educated, and with a court of women who studied Latin and Greek as carefully as the scriptures, retired to the palace at Chelsea, where Princess Elizabeth still lived, with her governess Mrs. Ashley.

The standard of learning remained very high throughout

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

Tudor times amongst the royal queens and princesses and the women of the nobility. Nicholas Udall, that grim headmaster of Eton, notorious for his flogging, inflicted, as one victim ruefully recalled, 'for fault but small or none at all', remarked in a letter to Catherine Parr on the studiousness of these young women of noble birth, who read and studied as easily in Greek and Latin, French and Italian as in English.

Jane Seymour and Katharine Howard had both been well educated and spoke French fluently, while Ann Boleyn had been carefully trained from the age of seven, when she was taken to France as one of the retinue of the accomplished Mary Tudor, on the occasion of her marriage to Louis XII. But Anne of Cleves, like the rest of her countrywomen, had neither learning nor accomplishments, save her needlework.

Catherine Parr re-married, but her new husband, Tom Seymour, made such unseemly overtures to the fourteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth that she was removed to Cheshunt. Here, from 1548 to 1550, her tutor was the Greek scholar, Roger Ascham. She became a brilliant linguist, equally fluent in French, Italian and Latin, and in later years Ascham declared that there were not four men in the whole of England who understood Greek better than Elizabeth.

Born in 1537, a year or two after Elizabeth and only a few months before Prince Edward, was Lady Jane Grey, granddaughter of King Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary. From the age of nine, Jane was brought up at Catherine Parr's Court and stayed with her until Catherine's death in 1548.

Few doubted that the frail and ailing young King Edward would die very soon, and in order to save the Protestant succession Jane's father had planned to marry her to Lord Guildford, son of the Lord Protector, the Duke of Northumberland, and when the time came, put her on the throne, in place of the rightful heir, the Catholic Princess Mary. To this end, Jane had been carefully brought up and educated by her father's chaplain, John Aylmer, and of all the Tudor children, she was perhaps the most outstandingly quick and intelligent. Before she was six she was reading the Bible to herself and learning

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

Latin, and then she began to study Greek, Spanish, Italian and French, and ultimately Hebrew and Arabic.

John Aylmer was devoted to her but this was the only affection she was to know, apart from that of her young husband, during their brief marriage, for her childhood was wretched, her upbringing by her ambitious parents made spartan and joyless, in marked contrast to that of Sir Thomas More's children of a few years earlier or even of the little girls who were shortly to be living in Christ's Hospital.

Ascham grieved for Lady Jane, for he hated to see a child ill-treated, and in his most famous book *The Schoolmaster*, which was not published until 1570, two years after his death, he wrote: 'Love is better than fear, gentleness better than beating to bring up a child rightlie in learninge.'

After Edward VI's death in 1553, at the age of sixteen, the erudite little Jane Grey, duly placed on the throne but never crowned, was arrested with her young husband after a few days, committed to the Tower, tried at the Guildhall and executed on Tower Green.

The sick, unhappy Mary Tudor succeeded to the throne and the Papal Legate sailed up the Thames to Westminster to receive England back into the Mother Church of Rome. During the next five years of violent and bitter religious persecution, when Bishop Ridley, to whom Christ's Hospital, St. Thomas's and the Bridewell owed so much, was among the victims to be martyred at the stake, Christ's Hospital was at times in jeopardy, but it weathered the storm and by 1558, when Mary was dead and Queen Elizabeth safely on the throne, it was well launched.

At the same time, the governors of the Bridewell were able to improve conditions. After the Statute of Artificers of 1563, which enacted that every craftsman must serve an apprenticeship of seven years, they introduced a system of apprenticeship at the Bridewell which was available not only to the homeless and destitute, but also to children of poor freemen of the City of London.

The boys' school at Christ's Hospital developed into an important educational establishment comprising several schools

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

in the same foundation. There were an upper and lower grammar school organized by the grammar master and his usher. The writing school was endowed in 1577 and a music school in 1609. The reading school was run by the 'petty' masters and the girls were taught separately in their 'maidens' school'. Numerous bequests provided fellowships and scholarships for the most able boys to pass on to the universities. Boys less academically inclined, having mastered their ABC and moved on to the writing school, qualified as apprentices to work in the counting houses of the city merchants or were sent each day to the Bridewell, to be apprenticed to such trades as tailoring, weaving, tapestry, spinning, needle and pin-making. By providing this technical training as an alternative to an academic education, Christ's Hospital was unique, and in later years other schools were to adopt the same plan, but in the records of this time there is very little reference to the training of the girls, although the cooperation between Christ's Hospital and the Bridewell was close. The Bridewell baked all the bread for Christ's Hospital. Some of the Christ's Hospital boys received a preliminary training in such crafts as spinning and needle-making before beginning their apprenticeship at the Bridewell. And in 1644 there is a record that Mr. Drake, one of the Christ's Hospital governors, seeing five little girls and a small boy at the Bridewell, far too young to take part in the work of the hospital, arranged for them to be taken in at Christ's Hospital until they were at least twelve years old, in exchange for the apprenticeship of five of their older boys.

Children stayed at Christ's Hospital until about fourteen or fifteen years of age, when, if they were not passing on to the university, suitable work or apprenticeship was found for them. The girls would have had little difficulty in finding work as seamstresses in some substantial household, though there are no precise details of their destinies at this time, and even a century or more later, when John Evelyn visited the school, though he was full of praise for their appearance and their singing, he was vague about their future.

In the early days and up until the eighteenth century, girls

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press

took their meals in the same hall as the boys, at their own table, and the food was ample. Beef, mutton, fish, bread, milk, butter, cheese and beer all appear in the accounts of the sixteenth century, but the infants did not always fare so well. On admission they were sent away from London to the country, mainly to Hertfordshire, where they were boarded out in batches of eight or ten, in private households, and stayed until they were about ten years old. The hospital paid for their clothing and board and they were visited as often as possible by the matron or one or other of the governors, but there were sometimes complaints from the children that they were ill-treated or underfed. Occasionally, conditions were so blatantly bad that they had to be moved, and ultimately it was arranged that they should be visited every quarter, for an examination of their diet and clothing and to check that they were receiving proper instruction from a local schoolmistress.

At Christ's Hospital, the girls spent hours of their time in sewing. They sewed their own caps and collars, as well as the nightshirts and neckbands of the boys, and they stitched all the household linen. With the boys, they attended the services at Christ Church, sitting at the end east of the north gallery. In Easter week they marched through the City to attend the sermon at St. Mary's Spittal and then to the Lord Mayor's house to receive his annual gifts: and although in the years to come the scope of their education gradually broadened, until, after many vicissitudes, Christ's Hospital Girls' School was to become the distinguished school that it now is, at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign we must leave the poor young things at their interminable sewing, their Bible reading and their catechisms.

Yet their condition was infinitely happier than that of the children of the Bridewell. In its early days it had been commended as a good school, where children were brought up in godliness and the idle and unprofitable drones set to useful work. But before the idle could work they had to be corrected and cells were adapted from the old servants' quarters and stables of the palace to accommodate them. Before long

© 2023 The Lutterworth Press