

## CHAPTER 6

### COVENTRY [48 - 70]

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the freemen as voters. At first they added no more than a further 529 voters to the list, but following the Second Reform Act of 1867, their number increased to over 4,000, while the number of freemen increased to 3,887.

Having successfully completed his apprenticeship by 1792, and become a Freeman of Coventry, William set up on his own in the Earl Street ward of the city, and four years later, on 1 May, 1796, he was married by license at St. Michael's church to Ann Taylor of the same parish. He had already, on 15 November, 1794, taken on an apprentice of his own, a boy named Thomas Child, of Barby, Northamptonshire; he was to employ another, Samuel Taylor of Allesley, near Coventry, in 1800. We have already seen that he inherited a bit of money, £100 from his father's uncle, Thomas, in 1784 and he was to inherit a further £40 from his father in 1799. No doubt these legacies helped him to set up and consolidate his business.

Like so many of his forebears, and indeed William had a large family. His wife may have been about two months pregnant at her marriage, for their son was born seven months later in December 1796. Eight more

children, two girls and six boys, were to follow in rapid succession, the last, John in 1811, only a month or two before his father's death. William's will left all his personal estate, amounting to less than £200, to his wife.

Ann must have been a woman of great courage, as well as a hard

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worker , for on her husband's early death in 1811 at the age of 39 (he was buried at St. Michael's on 24 August), she carried on the business on her own as well as looking after her large family, and in 1816 she took on her son James as an apprentice. Ann herself lived until 1831 and was buried on 16 August at St. Michael's. That she was unversed in business is testified to by her solicitor, Mr Mark Pearman, who wrote to William Nott, the Diocesan Registrar, as follows:

Coventry 16 Oct. 1811

Dear Sir

Wm. Soden decd

Mrs Soden the Widow of the deceased, who is a client of mine but who on Friday last acted under the advice of that fool Mr Grimes the auctioneer has committed a double mistake herein. which you must rectify for her in the best and easiest way you can. She took out Letters of Admon when she had the Will in her hand with you, hov this happened, you can perhaps explain

I made the Will & she is the sole Legatee it is not more than 6 lines - There is another mistake also. Grimes who took the Invy. on account of the book debts amtg. to £145 enquired no further; whereas there is £100 owing on Note to be added - Let me know how these mistakes are to be rectified - It must remain till L.Day to save expense as she has a large family of young children.

Mark Pearman

Of her large family, Sarah marrled Basil Goode at Coventry in 1816; Maria died a week after her birth; the first William died also at birth; James became a cooper and brush manufacturer and narried. Esther Masters at Birmingham in 1844; Mary Ann married Charles Iliffe (of whom we shall hear more later on), at Coventry in 1829; John became an auctioneer and brewer, and the second

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William became a silk ribbon manufacturer, and married Elizabeth  
chambers at Coventry in 1832. The story of the other sons,  
Thomas and Henry, who both became silk ribbon manufacturers, can  
be told in greater detail.

Thomas (1798-1868) and Bessy (1802-1861)

Thomas was born into a very different world from his father, that of a bustling medieval city at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Whereas his father was brought up in the country, of fairly comfortably-off yeoman stock for several generations, the tide of agricultural depression had forced him to change his job and social position to that of an artisan, though one owning his own small business and employing labour. Thomas, on the other hand, was to succeed as one of the new breed of industrialists and to take a prominent part in the public life of Coventry.

Little is known of Thomas's early life until, at the age of 25, he married Bessy Jordan, a daughter of Joseph Jordan and Bessy Biddle, a widow, at St. Michael's, Coventry; Joseph Jordan was a tea and provisions dealer of Spon Street, Coventry. Thereafter there is a gap of six years before his name appears in a Coventry trade directory of 1830, naming him as a partner in the firm of Soden & Iliffe, linen and woolen drapers, hatters, hosiers etc. in the High Street. A reference to the same firm occurs in the 1845 directory, but by now the occupations of silk mercers and trimming manufactures had been added to those previously carried on in the High Street, and additional premises had been acquired in Jordan Well, where the firm was described as fringe and

trimming manufacturers. A further expansion of the business seems to have occurred in 1853 when he was granted a lease for fourteen years of the warerooms on two floors over a gateway leading out of the High Street into the yard of the Rose and Crownn and a vault below his shop at a rent of £30 a year. The partnership with Iliffe is interesting, for it may be remembered that a Richard Iliffe ( sic. ) had been employed by Thomas's grandfather Jonathan on his farm at Combefields. The names of Soden and Iliffe were closely linked for many years, and they were later connected by family ties when Thomas's sister Mary Ann married Charles Iliffe five years after his own marriage to Bessie Jordan. Charles fliffe's son was christened Thomas Alfred Soden Iliffe, and in a Coventry trade directory of 1872 was referred to as a silk thrower of Brandon Mills, Wolston.

it is not clear whether Thomas Soden gave up his partnership with Iliffe, but in the 1850 directory he is shown separately as a ribbon manufacturer of Jordan Well House, Little Park Street. This street (which, apart from one house, was destroyed by German bornbs in one of many air raids on the city in the 1939-45 war) runs south from the junction of High Street and Earl Street, which bisects the city from west to east. In the eighteenth century Park Street continued to be a favourite place for the town houses of the gentry, and in the nineteenth well-to-do

manufacturers were still occupying the older town houses.

The houses on either side of Little Park Street had large gardens at the back. By about 1750 speculators had bought many of these

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premises and built rows of little cottages down both sides of the gardens, with courts between. It was these cottages which were occupied by weavers employed by the owners of the original houses fronting the street. Many new houses were built between 1841 and 1861 in Highfields, the weavers' new town east of the centre of the city, and the old courts in Little Park Street gradually decayed into slums. In time Thomas was to acquire new premises for his ribbon manufactory in Highfields, and to move into a new house on Greyfriars Green, but his family were still living in Little Park Street up to 1855.

The census of 1851 lists the names, occupations, ages and places of origin of all the occupants of the house as follows:

Thomas Soden/head marr. /52 /Trimming manufacturer/ Coventry

Bessy Soden

Charles W. Soden

Thomas Soden

Bessey Soden

Alfred J. Soden

Walter G. Soden

Sarah A. Garnett

Elizabeth Goddard

Charlotte Butler

Caroline Bates

Louisa M. Etchells

wife /49 ; Coventry

son unm. /23 /Graduate of Cambridge University/ Coentry

son unm. /21/ Trimming manufacturer

dau unm./ 16/ Scholar at home /Coventry

son unm. /12 /Scholar / Coventry

son unm. /10 /Scholar

neice unm./ 21/ Visitor/Middlesex, London

visitor unm./ 70/ Proprietor of houses/ Coventry

servant unm./ 19/ House servant/ Berkswell

servant unm./ 20/ House servingmaid/ Newbold

servant /19/ House servingmaid /Coventry

Needing to modernise his production process to keep up with the competition, Thomas bought land in East Street, Hillfields, where he built new weavers' cottage factories. Though the exact site can no longer be identified (much of the Hillfields area has been demolished for redevelopment), their arrangement and design has

been recorded. The cottages, each of three stories, were built in rows, with the looms on the top floor and the occupiers'

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living quarters on the first and second floors. At the end of each row of houses was an engine house containing a steam engine to conduct the power up to the topshop and transmit it by shafting along the row from one topshop to another through the partition walls separating each cottage. The looms themselves were either the property of the factory owner, who let each cottage, inclusive of the loom, to a weaver who would pay him a rent for both, or the loom would be owned by the weaver and rent paid for the cottage loan.

A typical three-storey weaver's cottage is shown in the drawing and photograph\* on page 53. There appears to have been some delay between Thomas acquiring the site in 1848 and the completion of the factory, for it was not until 1852 that he bought the necessary steam engine from Isaac Sansome at the considerable cost of £2000.

In 1855 Thomas and his family moved out of Little Park Street, having bought No. 3 The Quadrant, Warwick Road, one of a fine terrace of three-storey stuccoed houses, just completed, opposite Greyfriars Green, an area of rough common land on which the Great

Fair had been held since 1832, and which was the subject of many complaints because of noise and drunkenness. An Enclosure Act of 1875 extinguished the Freeman's rights of pasture, and the Green was laid out as a public garden. Thomas and Bessy's neighbours at No. 5 were his brother Henry and his wife.

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J.M.Prest. O.U.P. 1960

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While Thomas's manufacturing business had been prospering, his role in the public life of the city was becoming a more prominent one. As far back as 1838 he had become a feoffee (or trustee) of Holy Trinity parish. He was later to be appointed as a trustee of Bayley's Charity and, in 1852, a trustee of the National Schools. Subsequently he was elected chairman of the Gas Company and a director of the cotton company. He first became a city councillor in 1851, and, the following year a city magistrate. Though he declined to stand for the Council when his term of office expired in 1854, he was again elected in 1860, serving as Mayor in 1861 and 1862, the year in which he was also elected alderman. As Mayor, it is recorded that he sent a loyal address to the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of their

wedding in 1863. In politics he was a staunch Conservative, unlike his brother, Henry, who was a Liberal.

Of Thomas's family, the first child, Sarah, born in 1826, died at an early age. Of the five boys, the first, Charles William, was educated at Coventry Grammar School and Christ's College, Cambridge, and was ordained at Worcester in 1853. He married Elizabeth Catherine Wilmshurst, a daughter of Dr. Wilmshurst of Harwick and a sister of Admiral Wilmshurst. He was curate of Tong 1855-6, second master of Market Bosworth school, Leicestershire 1857-8, vicar of Stoke-with-Walsgrave, Warwickshire, 1866-9, and finally vicar of Kirkwhelpington, Northumberland, from 1869 until his death in 1895.

The second son, Tom, followed in his father's footsteps and

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became a trimming manufacturer, but nothing of his later life has been uncovered; apparently he died on 11 May, 1883 this according to the diary of his brother, John Jordan, though the place is not recorded. John Jordan Soden's life is described in detail later on.

Alfred James, the fourth son, after being articled to I,fa jor Barlow, a Cambridge solicitor, and practising from 1860 to 1963

in Coventry, was also ordained in 1864. In turn he held curacies at Kings Norton, Warwickshire (1864-6) and Blockley, Worcestershire (1866-8), and became vicar of Aston Magna, Gloucestershire (1878-88) and Hogsthorpe (1888-91) and Scamblesby (1891-1914), both in Lincolnshire.

The last son, Walter Garnet, was recorded in the 1861 Coventry census as a solicitor, and he moved sometime afterwards to Lincolnshire, where his tracks have been lost. Walter was named after his mother's sister Sarah's husband, John Garnet.

Elizabeth, the sole surviving daughter, married George Ingle Finch, a son of the Rev. Henry Finch, rector of Great and Little Shelford, near Cambridge, in 1864. Her brother, John Jordan, married George's sister.

So Thomas ensured that all his children had a good education and, apart from Tom, all the boys entered the professions of the church or the law.

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From 1860, when Coventry was feeling the results of a three months' weavers' strike, Thomas's fortunes were in decline. By this time 30,000 men, women and children in Warwickshire were

dependent on the weaving of ribbons and fringes, of whom 20,000 were working in Coventry and its immediate neighbourhood. The demand for ribbon suddenly ceased, just as stocks were at their highest, and many families left the city, having drawn all their savings from the banks. Though there was a rally in the trade the following year, it was only temporary, and increased competition from the French and Swiss caused acute depression. By 1865 the number of ribbon manufacturers had fallen from eighty ten years earlier to a mere twenty.

Writing of the crisis of 1860, Prest\* wrote: But charity can take many forms, and not the least charitable people in city were landlords like Mr T. Soden, who made no attempt to collect his rents or to turn his tenants out.

To have raised himself from poverty to comparative wealth in a highly competitive business, and to have given his children the best education possible, while at the same time showing such kindness to his tenants and employees, shows Thomas to have been a man possessing all those characteristics we now think of as the best Victorian virtues.

particularly after the death of his wife, Bessy, in 1861, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to improving the lives of his fellow citizens while facing a severe crisis in his business and a considerable loss of income. He died suddenly of a heart attack on 6 February 1868, and the circumstances of his death

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\*Prestm J. ibid.

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were investigated at an Inquest which was reported in the  
Coventry Evening News in the following terms:

#### CORONER'S INQUEST

An inquest was held at No. ' 3 , Thg Quadrant, on Monday  
night, be fore Thomas Dewes Esq. the Coroner in view of  
the body of the late Alderman Thomas Soden,who explred  
suddenly on the morning of Saturday the 8th. inst. The  
following gentlemen were sworn upon the jury;George  
Woodcock Esq. foreman, Messrs. F. Browett, R. A.  
Dalton, T. Dodd, R. Hands, T. Lovett, David Spencer,  
John Dell, T. Willerton, Joseph Bishop, John Ward,  
H. Markham and N.Poole. Mary Wilkins said: I am a  
domestic servant to the deceased and have been so for  
the last eight years. ' He was as well as usual but  
sometimes ailing.He was 69 years old last birthday  
and was Justice of the Peace for the city' He was as

well as usual last Friday night. He came home 10 o'clock , and had a glass of gin and water and went to bed about 11 o'clock. He had taken supper before he went out. About 7 o'clock on Saturday morning I heard him vomiting and went to his assistance. I sleep in another room a few yards distance.

The deceased always slept with his room door open. When I went into his room he was in bed and said he felt very faint. I gave him some brandy and water and applied it to his head. I had done so before when he had complained of his head but this time it appeared to do no good and he said "Oh, my head!" I had previously sent for Dr. Dewes who came immediately but the deceased was dead before he arrived. - By a Juror : it is as much as three months since I had applied cold water to his head before. By another Juror - The deceased had not thrown up anything when I went to him, he only appeared to be trying to vomit . Dr. Dewes said - A few minutes past 7 o'clock I was called to see the deceased. When I arrived, I found him dead. There was a little moisture upon his nightshirt as if he had been vomiting but not to any great extent. I had attended him about seven years ago.

At this point it was thought best to take the evidence of Dr. Lynes who had been his usual medical attendant.

Dr. Lynes said it was three years last August since I last attended him. From the evidence of the last witness and from my personal knowledge I think the deceased died of a disease of the heart or of some of the large blood vessels of the heart being ruptured. My belief was that he was predisposed to feebleness of the heart.

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Dr. Dewes was then recalled. He said from the evidence of the servant and the appearance of the body my impression is that in the effort of vomiting the deceased fainted and being predisposed to feebleness of the heart it never recovered its action and he died from syncope. Dr. Phillips, who was present, said he entirely concurred with the evidence of Dr. Lynes and Dewes.

The Jury returned a verdict the deceased died from natural causes.

The Coventry Standard also reported his funeral, which took place on 13 February, 1868 :

#### FUNERAL OF ALDERMAN T. SODEN

The funeral of this highly respected gentleman took

place on Thursday. Many of the principal tradesmen and shopkeepers showed their respect and sympathy, to the memory of the deceased by putting up their shutters during the funeral. His remains were followed to the grave by at least a thousand people, whose sorrowful and orderly demeanour indicated that Coventry had lost a good man and deservedly esteemed citizen. The following is the order of the funeral procession which left 3, The Quadrant at exactly a quarter past two o'clock. The first carriage contained the Rev H. T. Harris, Dr. Dewes and Dr. Lynes. In the second carriage were the pall-bearers - Alderman Lynes, Alderman Wyley, William Odell Esq. and J. Wilmshurst Esq. The hearse came next. The first mourning coach contained the Rev. C. Soden, Mr. T. Soden, the Rev. J. Soden, and in the second were Mr. Garnett Soden, Alderman H. Soden and Mr. Charles fliffe.

The funeral was served by Messrs. Hitchin & Higinbotham. At the gates of the cemetery the funeral was joined by the scholars of Catherine Bayley's School of which the deceased- was a trustee and a sincere supporter and friend. The Rev. H. T. Harris read the funeral service and at exactly 3 o'clock the mortal remains were committed to the tomb and the sincere regrets of hundreds of spectators. A funeral peal was rung by the bells of St. Michael's church in the

evening.

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Henry Soden (1806-1888)

A short account of Thomas's brother, Henry, is not without interest for the careers of both ran in parallel. He too was a ribbon manufacturer or silkman.

After his marriage in 1832 to Mary Ann Proof of Corley Hall he set up house in Much Park Street, which was situated immediately to the east of Little Park Street. Corley was a village a few miles to the north of Coventry, where the Hall Farm was described by the novelist, George Eliot (Mary, Ann Evans) in Adam Bede as the Poyzers' farmhouse. In 1855 Henry was to buy No. 5 The Quadrant, next door to Thomas and his family, where they were to live until their death. At 18 Much Park Street he traded as Soden, Slater & Green, ribbon manufacturers, but the partnership must have been dissolved sometime later, as an 1868 Coventry directory shows William Slater to be trading at 42, Earl Street and E- Green & Son at 46-47, Earl Street. Henry took an active interest in public affairs, serving two terms as Mayor of the city in 1859 and 1873, was a trustee of church charities, and a shareholder in the Coventry Corn Exchange and the Public Room Company. He retired from business in 1861 at the beginning of the depression in ribbon manufacturing, and, perhaps because of this and the

fact that he and Mary Anne were childless, he had managed by the time of his death in 1882 to generate the not inconsiderable fortune for that time of £163,000. By his will he left £1,000 to Coventry church charities, £2,000 to general Coventry charities, £1,000 to the Coventry Provident Dispensary, and £100 each to two lying-in charities. The income from his legacy to the Dispensary was to be applied to the provision of beds for patients who could

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not be treated at home. The Dispensary was eventually dissolved in 1947, and the income arising from the bequest was subsequently applied to the provision of medical and nursing amenities for sick poor people. The residue of Henry's estate, after providing for his wife during her lifetime, went to numerous nephews, nieces, cousins and friends. The name of Iliffe crops up once again in his will, his nephew Charles Webb Iliffe being appointed one of his executors. Mary Ann was to survive him by no more than five months.

Henry is remembered, at least by his family, for a punning retort he made to the Prince of Wales when he and the Princess were paying an official visit to Coventry on their way back from Packington Hall, where they had been staying with the Earl of Aylesford. Wishing to make haste, the Prince sent a message to

Henry who, as Mayor, was leading the carriage procession through the city, to hurry up. Whereupon Henry sent back to the Prince the message: 'The mayor of Coventry never trots !' .

John (1830-1912) and Eleanor ( -1919)

We now turn our attention to Thomas and Bessy's second son, John Jordan Soden, who lived through the reigns of William IV, Victoria, Edward VII and part of George V's. Born in October 1830, in Little Park Street, Coventry, he suffered at the age of eight a partial paralysis of his right side, and for two lonely years he had to lie on his back at the London Spinal Institution. This treatment proving a complete failure, he returned home and, being urged by Dr. Jephson of Warwick to try and live a normal

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life, he gradually recovered, though losing the use of his right arm. He went first to a school run by the famous professor Thomas Huxley, and then to Coventry Grammar school. At that time the school premises were in the Old Hospital of St. John the Baptist which, after its Dissolution in 1545, had been bought and converted into a Grammar School. Old and inconvenient throughout John's time both as a pupil and master, it did not move to its new buildings in Warwick Road until 1885.

Dissatisfied with the education his son received at the Grammar School, and despite his rise to head boy, John's father transferred him to King Edward's school, Birmingham, as a boarder, where the headmaster was Dr. Lee, afterwards the first Bishop of Manchester. Under Lee the school produced such notable scholars as Archbishop Benson and Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, as well as many other prominent men.

From King Edward's John went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1850. Here he at first read classics, and later mathematics, and graduated in 1854. In that year he started to keep a diary\*, which he continued, with some gaps, until sometime after 1901.

Four volumes, from 1858 to 1901 are still in the family's possession, but the first and last are missing. They provide a valuable record of his activities, though lacking much personal or social commentary on the times. At Cambridge he was to meet and become friends with two Coventry men, Tom Jeffcoat and John

\*A copy of the four volumes is in the Coventry Central Library.

Sheepshanks (afterwards Bishop of Norwich); the former was an intimate and life-long companion and, though he was to lose touch with Sheepshanks for many years, they were to meet again when he became vicar of a parish near Norwich.

It was while he was at Cambridge that he met his future wife, Eleanor Fanny Finch, one of the six daughters of the Rev. Henry Finch, rector of the nearby parishes of Great and Little Shelford, whom he was to marry in 1863. Through his acquaintance with this family his only sister, Elizabeth, met and married, in 1864, Fanny's brother, George Ingle Finch, and thus a double relationship between the Sodens and the Finches came about. The Finch's family seat was Little Shelford Manor, bought by William Finch, a successful merchant, who was born in 1717, and died a bachelor.

His sister Elizabeth married a wealthy neighbour, William Ingle, who inherited the estate and whose son, William Finch Ingle, acquired two other estates, Swaton Prior in Lincolnshire and Sible Hedingham in Essex. His son, also named William Finch Ingle, changed his surname to Finch. This William married twice, firstly Anna Bettina Beevor, daughter of Sir Thomas Beevor of Hethel Hall, Norfolk, and secondly Elizabeth Wheldon, daughter of John Wheldon of Nottingham. The eldest son of the second marriage, Henry, became rector of Little Shelford, and it was his children, Eleanor Fanny and George Ingle Finch, who both married Sodens.

Of Fanny's and George's six brothers, three emigrated to Australia. The eldest, Charles Henry, born in 1808 and a Captain

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in the 17th Regiment of Foot, acquired a ten thousand acre estate, Nubrygn, at Wellington, New South Wales, and was elected Speaker of the state parliament at Sydney.

Two of his descendants, his grandson George Ingle Finch and George's son\*, Peter Ingle Finch, were to acquire international fame, George as a member of the 1922 Everest expedition and leader of the assault which reached the highest ever point (27,300 ft.) on the mountain up to then, and later as director of the National Physical Laboratory of India, and Peter, one of the foremost actors of his time.

Returning to Coventry in 1854, John spent his time teaching his brothers Alfred and Walter, and reading for the Cambridge Voluntary Theological examination which he passed first class . His leisure time was spent walking, talking, playing such games as hockey, whist, billiards and quoits, and lunching and dining with friends Jeffcoat, Sheepshanks and many others.

After an interview with Bishop Pepys of Worcester, he was

ordained deacon there on 23 September, 1855 and, on returning to Coventry, took up duty as curate of Stivichall. There he took one service every Sunday and when not so engaged he took services at many other churches in and around the city. On 20 September of

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\*Peter Finch's parentage has been disputed. In a private letter dated 10 October 1918 George Finch denied paternity, alleging that he had been cuckolded by a Captain W. E. D. Campbell of the Poona Horse. Much later, in 1962, Peter claimed that Campbell had recently admitted to him that he was his father. Nevertheless Peter was brought up by George's mother, and later, in Australia, by one of his relatives, and the truth of the matter is not absolutely certain. For the full story see Finch, Bloody Finch by Elaine Dundy (Michael Joseph, 1980)

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that year he and his parents spent their first night in the new house at The Quadrant.

John's salary as a curate was clearly proving inadequate to support him in his style of life, and so he sought and secured the post of second master at Coventry Grammar School, starting there on 4 August, 1857. He continued in this position until he

left Coventry twenty-six years later. At the same time he became curate of Binley, where so many of his ancestors had been baptised and buried since 1700.

The grammar school was founded in the reign of Henry VIII by John Hales, who endowed it with lands which at the time produced an annual income of 200 marks, rising by 1832 to £900, of which the headmaster received two thirds and the second master one third.

At this time the schoolroom was part of the hospital of St. John, built in the reign of Henry II. Samuel Levis, in his

Topographical Dictionary of England (1831), described it as

'... a spacious room, lighted with windows in the decorated style, with rich tracery, and fitted up with the ancient carved seats, removed from the choir of the church belonging to the monastery of the White friars the wester end, taken down to widen the street, has been rebuilt in an appropriate style, ornamented with two handsome turrets.'

The school was endowed with two exhibitions worth £10 each and two worth £5 each to Oxford or Cambridge universities, and two fellowships to St. John's College, Oxford, and one fellowship and one scholarship to St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge. So though

the accommodation was spartan, the standard of education was excellent. Sir William Dugdale, the antiquary, and Archbishop Secker were both pupils at the school where Dr. Philemon Holland, the distinguished classicist and translator, was once headmaster. During John's time at the school life seems to have continued much as before, apart from three events between 1861 and 1863. Let his diary explain.

1861

Feb. 6. Poor Mother was taken suddenly worse, with faintings and difficulty of breathing about 7 o'clock, & died in the presence of all the family except Charles & Tom & Alfred who went to fetch Tom, about half past 9. Her end was very calm, & apparently without much pain. Aetat 59. A sad blow to all of us, to Father who felt it most bitterly. On the same day in the afternoon poor Mrs Evans of Little Park Street, a kind friend & former neighbour also died. God's will be done.

Feb. 7. At home all day. Poor father at times almost uncontrollable in his grief. Tom came home.

Feb. 8. Many calls & letters of condolence. A day of gloom.

91 oom .

Feb. 10. Charles & I read a suitable service at home.

Uncle & Aunt Garnet came & stayed all the evening.

Feb. 11- The funeral. A sad scene. Mourners - Father

& 5 sons Charles, Tom, myself, Alfred and Walter.

Pall-bearers - Mr\_Lynes, Mr W. Odell, Mr W. Stephenson,

J. Wilmshurst, Eli Green & Uncle Garnett. Underbearers

Iliffe (manservant), Elburne (rent collector)

Paine & Horsfall (sextons of Tr. Ch), Jeayes & Noon (of

St. Michael's) . Dr Dewes & Rev. H. T. Harris who

performed the service, also there.

1862

Oct . 9 - Took possession of my house at No.2 Barrs

Hill.

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1863

Oct. 20 [Nellie & I] were married by the Rev. James

at Little Shelford church near Cambridge. She was the

youngest of 12 children of the Rev. H. Finch who was rector of Little Shelford & vicar of Great Shelford. He also held the living of Long Stanton & was Lord of the Manor of Cottenham & Little Shelford. At the time of our marriage he had been dead some years. His widow with 2 maiden daughters & a son in Holy Orders was living in the parish. The day before I left Coventry for Shelford together with my father, Lizzie, Alfred, & Walter. That evening we all dined at Col. Wales' where T. Jeffcoatt and my father were staying. The rest of the party were quartered in the village. The auspicious day was bright & clear, & all passed off well. The bridesmaids were Lizzie & the 2 Miss Perkins, & my great friend T. Jeffcoatt was best man. The reception was held after the ceremony at the Finches. In the afternoon we proceeded to Hastings & stayed at the Marine Hotel.

The births of four children followed their marriage: Julia in 1864, Hermine in 1866, John Ernest in 1868 and Francis Leopold in 1870. These happy events were only marred by the death of little Francis of pneumonia in 1880.

For some time before John's appointment to Coventry Grammar school its affairs had been deteriorating. From the time in 1834 when Thomas Sheepshanks ( the father of John's friend at Cambridge) had been appointed headmaster, the running of the

school had been criticised. Sheepshanks retired in 1857, to be followed by Henry Temple, until then Headmaster of Worcester Grammar school, with John as second master. New statutes had been made, dividing the school into classical ,and commercial departments, and the tuition fees fixed at 7s.6d. a quarter for sons of Freemen, though others had to pay £6 a year for commercial and £10 for classical tuition. By 1860, due to the

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depression in the silk trade, numbers rose to 98, the Freemen keeping their sons at school because there were no occupations available to school leavers. But by 1867 numbers were reduced to 54, of whom 34 were the sons of Freemen and only 17 boys were left in the classical department. At the same time the Schools Inquiry Commission condemned the building.

By 1883, having had twenty-six years at the school, and for a long time at College House as well as having charge of the boarders, teaching many private pupils, and usually taking three services every Sunday, John was beginning to feel jaded and run down, and in need of a change. So a letter from Dr. Pearson, the Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, offering him the living of Little Melton, near Norwich, came at an opportune time . In 1876 John had bought The Villa, a house in Little Shelford, so the

whole family went there for a holiday and to look over Little Melton. Though the stipend was tiny, a mere £94 a year, they liked the place so much that he decided to accept the living, intending that, by taking pupils for the Cambridge entrance examination, and with the help of his private income, they could somehow manage.

After saying goodbye to their friends at Coventry, and receiving the gift of a silver pocket communion set from the vicar of Wyken, a marble clock and a silver-plated tea and coffee set from the master and boys of the school, and a purse of money from friends, John was instituted on 1 November by Dr. Pelham, Bishop of Norwich.

