THE FOUNDER'S TABLE

The Founder's Table is so called because it belonged to Dr. George C. Shattuck, Jr., who founded St. Paul's School in 1855. Several years before Dr. Shattuck was born, his father had bought the table in Paris and moved it to his house in Boston, where it remained almost fifty years. In 1847, Dr. Shattuck, Senior, gave his son, then a man of thirty-four and married, the Millville property that had come into his possession only a few months previously through non-payment of the mortgage. This property consisted of 140 acres of land, a mill where Hargate now is, and a large brick dwelling house on the site of the present Lower School. Dr. Shattuck, Junior, and his wife and young children spent their summers in Millville from 1848 through 1855.

The table was moved up from Boston and placed in the large ground floor room which was known as the "Common Room" after the building became the "School". The first meeting of the Board of Trustees of St. Paul's School took place in this room on September 5th and 6th, 1855, and the paper work preparatory to Dr. Shattuck's transfer of his Millville property to the School was done on this table. He evidently had a great affection for the table, because in after years, when he and his family used to spend parts of the summer in the Shute Cottage, it used to be moved up there for his use.

The table also played an important part on the opening day, April 3rd, 1856. St. Paul's then consisted of five persons, Dr. Henry Coit, aged twenty-five, his young wife, to whom he had been married a week before, and three boys, aged nine, ten, and twelve. They came up from Boston on a morning train and drove out together in a carriage. School began at once, and at the Founder's Table! Dr. Coit allowed Frederick Shattuck, who was only nine, to go fishing, but he set George Shattuck and Horatio Bigelow to writing compositions. The former's theme was "The Adventures of a Lion"; the latter's "Strength of Purpose".

Again, in 1860, the Founder's Table played a role that deserves to be commemorated. The Missionary Society had appointed a Committee of Publication to bring out a new magazine (now the oldest existing magazine in the United States), the sale of which should provide revenue for the Society; one of the four members of this committee was Henry Ferguson, later the School's third rector; he must have been very young, for he did not graduate till 1864. Dr. Ferguson later told Mr. Malcolm K. Gordon that the organization and naming of the *Horae Scholasticae* all took place on and around the Founder's Table in the Common Room of the School.

On July 21, 1878, a bolt of lightning struck the cupola of the School, caus-
ing a fire which destroyed the building completely. Dr. Coit hurried back from Campobello and somehow managed to get the school started on time less than two months later—with 204 boys in it, ten more than the year before! The table, which had been carried out along with some of the other furniture, including Mr. James Knox's piano, was taken by Dr. Joseph Coit to his quarters in the Old Upper (then known as the Upper School). Dr. Joseph Coit, Henry Coit's younger brother, was Vice Rector at the time, as well as head of the Upper School and teacher of mathematics. He had been in the Canadian wilderness all summer, fishing and camping, and far beyond the reach of mail or telephone; the first he heard of the fire was from his driver as he was coming out from Concord two days before school opened.

Dr. Joseph Coit had a great veneration for the table and often spoke to the boys about it. When the new school building was built in 1880 (on the site of the present Schoolhouse), he became head of it and he brought the table with him and had it placed in the Main Hall. Nearly every evening, he had special students doing advanced mathematics. The table was used by these boys only.

Dr. Joseph Coit became the school's second rector on his brother's death in 1895 and moved to the Rectory, but the table remained in the Main Hall of the School under the care of Mr. James Knox who became head of the House. The table stayed there until the building was torn down in 1929—almost fifty years. It was then moved to Hargate, which had just been built. From that point on, there were quite naturally fewer and fewer people at St. Paul's who had any intimate knowledge of the school's early days or knew anything whatever about the table and its rich associations.

The table's reappearance is due in the first instance to the interest and perseverance of Malcolm Kenneth Gordon, '87. Mr. Gordon was at the school as a boy from 1882 to 1889 and as a master from 1889 to 1917. He knows all about the table, has a clear and retentive memory, has supplied us with the facts we have given above, and can cite good authority for every one of them. He got much of his knowledge of the table from Dr. Ferguson, Dr. Joseph Coit, Mr. Knox, and Mr. Hargate, who frequently spoke about the table and its early history. Those men considered the table almost sacred.

After some years at Hargate, the table was placed in storage in the basement of the Lower School. John Rexford, '40, and Omar Marcoux, janitor of the Lower, also took an active interest in the preservation of the table. It is now being repaired and refinished as is indicated by our photograph taken outside the School shop. In a later issue, we intend to include another photograph showing the table after its refurbishing and in its new location at the school. Mr. Gordon has offered to furnish a bronze plate stating briefly the history of the table. Meanwhile a vote of gratitude is in order to Messrs. Gordon, Rexford, and Marcoux for their interest in what Mr. Gordon truly describes, in a recent letter, as "a precious heritage of St. Paul's School."