



Person: Thomas Baxter (1809 – 1872)
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1873 May 4: Worcester Journal

Testimonial to Mr. Baxter. – We have profound pleasure in announcing that at a private meeting, held in the Guildhall on Wednesday, a resolution was carried heartily and unanimously, wherein it was determined that a substantial recognition of the services of Mr. Thomas Baxter should be presented to that gentleman. We are certain that the proposal will meet with cordial acceptance and support throughout the city and neighbourhood, and that an eager desire will be manifested to do honour to Mr. Baxter, whose claims to public regard are not only numerous but to a great extent exceptional. Those who rightly estimate the responsibilities involved in an ordinary discharge of the duties of a tutor must feel that deep gratitude is due to such a performance of those duties as has characterised Mr. Baxter's labours as second master of the Cathedral School for the long period of three and thirty years. A contemporary, who has for many years been intimately acquainted with the value and importance of Mr. Baxter's services, writes thus in regard to them: – "We fully sympathise with the object of the meeting, and trust that the testimonial will prove adequate to the manifold merits of Mr. Baxter—adequate to his indefatigable exertions not only in the discharge of his scholastic, but a variety of extraneous and often self-imposed duties. This most assiduous and painstaking tutor has assisted at the studies of several generations of pupils, and in connection with various local societies, religious, musical, and philanthropical, his services have been for long years freely and heartily rendered. His industry has ever been incessant, his good nature inexhaustible; in contributing to promote any pious or charitable object he has continually stood I foremost. He has been always ready with help for every worthy purpose. His great capacity for work, his orderly and methodical habits, and his invincible application have enabled him to get through a prodigious amount of business, and to acquit himself with precision and exactitude. Mr. Baxter has in his time laid a wide circle under obligations of gratitude. He has deserved so well, by long service and constant devotion, of the authorities presiding over the Cathedral School; he has deserved so well of the long array of pupils whose intellects he has aided in developing and whose minds he has helped to store with good literature and learning; he has deserved so well of the religious and educational societies whose mission he has conducted to forward, and of the public at large in various auxiliary ways, that we are sure a large and liberal, as well as wide and general, recognition is awaiting him. When it is borne in mind that to Mr. Baxter's exertions as a genial, conscientious, and accomplished scholar there have been added remarkable assiduity and astuteness in the furtherance of almost every project that could benefit those around him, the public will hail with satisfaction the opportunity now afforded of sympathising with him in his present indifferent state of health, and of testifying the warm regard entertained for his varied, disinterested, and valuable public services.

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1873 August 3: Worcester Journal

Death of Mr. Thomas Baxter .— It is our painful duty to record the decease of Mr. Thomas Baxter, late second master at the Cathedral School, who expired on Thursday morning, at his residence in Sidbury, at the age of 63. About eighteen months since Mr. Baxter's health began to fail, and a few months afterwards he found it necessary to relinquish his professional duties. Some time since he went to Barmouth, from which place he returned on Tuesday last, greatly fatigued by the journey, but on the following day he was apparently better, and was able to write letters bearing on the business of one of the diocesan societies of which he was secretary. On Thursday morning he rose from bed, sat in a chair in his room, and fell asleep. When one of the members of the family shortly afterwards went to him he was dead. Whether a paralytic stroke was the immediate cause of death, or he expired from heart disease, is not certain. The intelligence of his decease has excited profound regret among a very large circle of friends and acquaintances in the city and county. His high scholarly attainments, allied to great simplicity of manner, unflagging energy in all matters of business, perfect rectitude, urbanity, and kind-heartedness, were qualities which won for him the highest regard of all who were in any way associated with him. The deceased gentleman, whose father was an artist of great ability, was born in London, but nearly the whole of his life has been spent in this city. He was educated here, and about 40 years since was appointed to a mastership in the Cathedral School. He was a man of great erudition. His knowledge of the classics was very extensive, he was an eminent mathematician, and was an ardent student of natural science. He had an especial fondness for botany; he took great interest in teaching that branch of study to his pupils, and he was the author of a small botanical work that is a most original and effective guide to proficiency. He was a very active and valued member of the Worcester Naturalists' Field Club, and in one of his excursions he was so fortunate as to discover a fossil fish, of which there was no other existing specimen. For his services to geology he was made a member of the Royal Geological Society of England. He was also a member of the local antiquarian society, and from time to time contributed papers at its meetings. At Midsummer of last year he felt it necessary, owing to bodily infirmity, to resign his position at the Cathedral School, the duties of which he had fulfilled so long and honourably. Throughout the whole period of his connection with the school he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the Dean and Chapter, the respect of his colleagues, and the affection of his numerous pupils, and his enforced retirement was greatly regretted. Since the death of the Rev. R. Sergeant he had held the post of librarian to the Cathedral, and in this capacity rendered most valuable service. All the books and manuscripts were re-arranged by him in the most admirable manner, he undertook the onerous task of preparing a catalogue, and the very successful result of his labours in this direction is highly appreciated by those who have occasion to refer to the library. The duties of secretary to the Diocesan Board of Education and the Diocesan Church Extension Society were discharged by Mr. Baxter with marked zeal and ability, and his services as secretary of the Cathedral Restoration Fund obtained deserved commendation. He had an excellent knowledge of music, and for a great many years took an active part in the operations of the various musical societies, doing everything which lay in his power to promote their success. Recently a subscription was commenced with a view to the presentation of a testimonial to Mr. Baxter, and the prompt and liberal response made by noblemen and gentlemen resident in the county and by the citizens indicated the respect in which he was universally held. Unhappily he has not been spared to receive this well-merited recognition of his public services and private worth. The mortal remains of the deceased will be interred at the Cemetery on Monday next. It is a singular fact that on the evening previous to Mr. Baxter's death, the list of subscriptions amounting to upwards of £500, which it had been proposed to present to him, closed. Referring to this, we hope that a small portion of the fund may be apportioned to the setting up of an illuminated brass, a space for which doubtless, the Dean and Chapter, remembering Mr Baxter's services for so long a period in connection with the Cathedral School would cheerfully

accord. In the death of Bro. Thomas Baxter, P.M., Semper Fidelis Lodge of Freemasons, the craft in Worcestershire in general, and his own lodge in particular, have sustained a loss that warrants a brief account of his Masonic career. Initiated in 1851, his interest in the grand principles of Masonry, and his ability in the promulgation of them, was sufficient very soon to induce his election to the highest office, that of W.M., the duties which he discharged zealously and faithfully in the years 1856-7; nor did his interest diminish upon leaving office, for subsequent masters may tell how cheerfully his assistance was at all times rendered in any ceremony where he could be of service. Subsequently Bro. Baxter filled the three principal chairs of St. Wulstans Chapter of Royal Arch Masons.