

The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harrington [ed. N.E. McClure, 1930] describing the royal protocol in respect of seating enjoyed by King James I and his son, Prince Henry, at a banquet offered by the Merchant Taylors' company, July 1607 (pp. 34-37).¹

Harington was in London in July, 1607. With many others he attended King James and Prince Henry when they dined at Merchant Taylors' Hall. After the King had been welcomed, "at the upper end of the Hall there was sett a chayer of state

1. *Nugae Antiquae*, 1804, I, 390-397.

where his Majesty sate and viewed the Hall, and a very proper child well spoken being clothed like an Angell of gladnes with a taper of fracinnence burning in his hand delivered a short speech contayning xviii verses devised by Master Benjamin Johnson the Poet, which pleased his Majesty marvelously well. And upon either side of the Hall in the windowe neere the upper end were galleries or seates made for musique in either of which were seaven singuler choice musitions playing on their lutes. And in the shipp which did hang aloft in the Hall three rare men and very skilful who sang to his Majesty. And over the skreene cornettes and lowd musique, wherein it is to be remembered that the multitute and noyse was so greate that the lutes nor songes could hardly be heard or understood. And then his Majesty went up into the Kinges Chamber where he dyned alone at a table which was provided only for his Majesty and the Queene (but the Queene came not). In which chamber was plaied a very ritch paier of organs, whereupon Master John Bull, Doctor of Musique, and a brother of this Company, did play during all the dynner tyme. And Master Nathanyell Gyles, Master of the Children of the Kinges Chappell, together with divers singing men and children of the said Chappell did sing

melodious songes at the said dynner. And be it also remembered that the Prince did dyne in the great Hall and that the long table at the upper end of the Hall was taken away and three tables distainct one from an other placed in the rome thereof, viz. one table in the midst where the Prince sate alone in state, and the tables on ether side were wholly furnished with Ambassadors and noble men. And the service to the King and Prince for the first course was carried up by the knightes, aldermen, maisters, assistauntes and Lyvery, having their hoods upon their shoulders, the service being ritch and bountifull as by the charge will appeare, unto which dynner the Prince sent three brace of bucks. And Sir Thomas Challoner did by letter written by his highnes commaundement signifie that his highnes with his owne hande plaied the woodman to kill them. And when the Kinges most excellent Majesty had dyned and withdrawne

¹ See <https://archive.org/details/lettersepigramso00hari/page/36/mode/2up?q=merchant+taylors> .

himself into his inner chamber, the Master and fower wardens and Master Baron Sotherton and the Aldermen of the Company resorted unto his Majesty, and Master Recorder of London, being there present, did in the name of the whole Company most humbly thanck his Majesty that it had pleased him to grace the Company with his presence that day. And the Maister of the Company did present his Majesty with a faier purse wherein was one hundreth poundes in gould. And Richard Langley, the common Clarck of the Company, did moast humbly deliver unto his Majesty a Rôle in vellam which he had collected out of the auncient bookes and recordes of the Company . . . wherein was entred the names of seaven Kinges, one Queene, seaventeene Princes or Dukes, two Dutchesses, one Archbisshop, thirty-one Earles, fyve Countesses, one viscount, twenty-fower bisshops, threescore and six barons or Lordes, two Ladies, seaven Abbotts, seaven Pryors and one Sub-Prior, omitting a number of Knights, esquiors, etc. who had bene free of the Company, which his Majesty most graciously accepted and said that he himself was free of another Company, yet he would so much grace the Company of Marchauntailors that the Prince, his eldest sonne, should be free thereof. And that he would see and be a witnes when the garland should be put upon his head.

And then they in like manner resorted to the Prince and the said Master presented his highnes with an other rich purse wherein was fyfty poundes in gould and the Clarcke delivered his highnes a like role which were alsoe graciously accepted, and his highnes said that not only himself would be free of the Company but commaunded one of his gentlemen and the Clarck of the Company to goe to all the Lordes present and require all of them that loved him and were not free of other companies, to be free of this company. Whereupon these Lords whose names ensue, with humble thancks to his highnes, accepted of the freedome. . . .¹ And then the Master and Wardens according to their usuall manner went with their Garlandes on

1. Seventy-eight names follow, including "Sir John Harrington."

their heades to publish thelection, it pleased the Kinges moast excellent Majesty to resort into the little lobby out of whiche there was a faier windowe made of purpose for his Majesty to looke into the Hall, and there his Majesty observed the whole manner of the Ceremony. And it did moast graciously please the Prince to call for the Maisters garlande and to putt the same upon his owne heade whereat the Kinges Majesty did very hartely laugh. And so the old Master and Wardens proceeded to the publicacion of thelection of the newe Master and Wardens who were all here present, to the good liking of the Company. After all which his Majesty came downe into the greate Hall and sitting in his chayre of state did heare a mellodious song of farwell song by the three men in the Shipp being apparelled in watchet silke like seamen, which song so pleased his Majesty that he caused the same to be sung three tymes over. And his Majesty and the noble Prince and honorable Lordes gave the Company harty thanckes and so departed."¹