

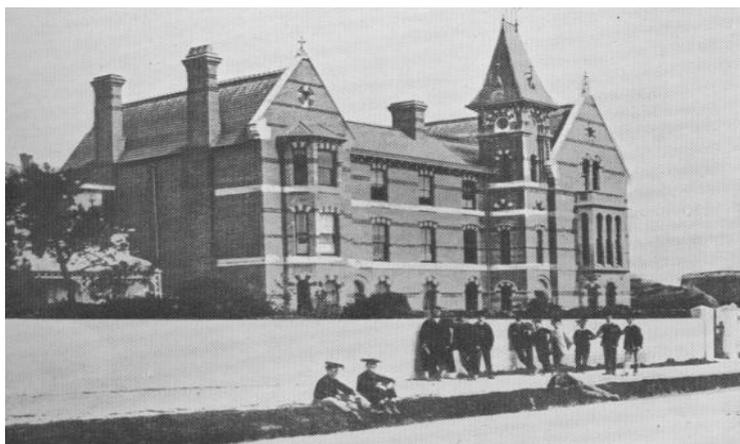
## Weymouth Dorset

John Meade Falkner's mother, Elizabeth Grace Mead, was living at her family home at 5, Brunswick Buildings, Weymouth when she accepted Thomas Falkner's proposal of marriage. The seaside resort was to play a central part for the whole of her son's life. He left Manningford when only one and, although Dorchester was his home until he was twelve, he was a regular visitor to his aunts Ellen, Lucy and Charlotte Mead in Weymouth. Their house was in the last row of houses in the town's built-up area and "was so exposed to south west winds that the windows had been equipped with iron shutters to ward off the shower of pebbles thrown up from the beach in wild weather". Then, in 1871, Falkner's father became assistant curate to Talbot Greaves, Rector of St Mary's in Weymouth. The family moved into 82, St Thomas Street.



Tragedy was to strike the family only three months later. At dinner on Thursday 2 March, one of them noticed that the water bottle on the table contained the tail of a rat. Its body was found in the water tank which fed the tap. Typhoid followed and on 12 March Grace Falkner succumbed. In July, Falkner became a pupil at the Weymouth Grammar School [later known as Weymouth College]. He

remembered his time there with affection, but he left in December 1872 for Marlborough College in Wiltshire.



**Weymouth Grammar School**

Although from 1883 much of Falkner's life was spent in the North, he regularly visited Weymouth – many of his surviving letters have the town at their heading. Of course, his most famous novel, *Moonfleet*, was set in the area. During what was to be his final bout of ill-health, he stayed at The Royal Hotel in May and June 1932. Later that month he went home to Durham, to die on 22 July.