

## Classical Oxford as it was

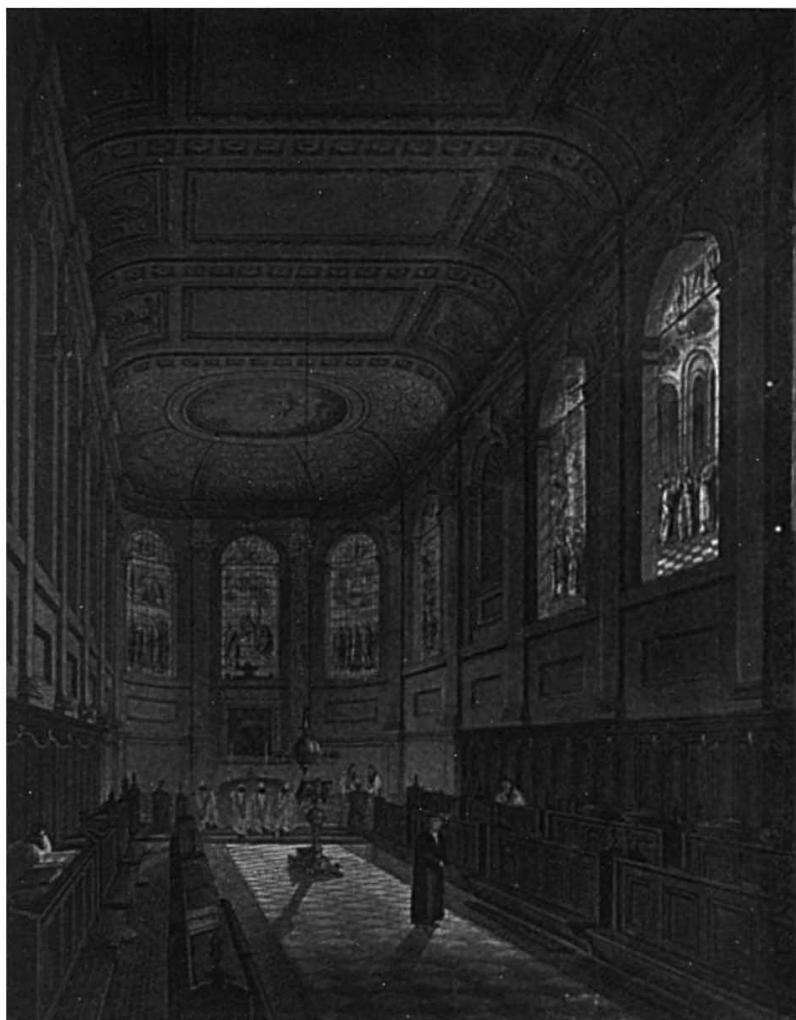
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IN THE OXFORD OF THE RESTORATION PERIOD THERE LIVED AN obscure and solitary antiquarian called Anthony Wood. He was a Master of Arts, and a member of Merton College; and he liked to write his name "à Wood." His contemporaries ignored the existence of this individual; but it is mostly through his writings that their memory has survived. He set himself to write the Annals of the University. By adopting the existing legends on the origins of Oxford he added a good two centuries to the length of its life; but in all other respects his Annals are admirable. Guided by written records, of which he had immense knowledge, Wood pieced together a chronicle of the Middle Ages, on which all later writers have drawn. In his second volume he came to his own times; and the closer they approached the sphere of Wood's own knowledge, the spicier the Annals became. In a final work, called the *Life and Times of Anthony à Wood*, all pretence of history is dropped, and the author resorts to straight and vigorous gossip.

Wood's point of view was that of a disappointed man. He was "utterly unknown to the generality of Scholars" and "by the vulgar at least taken to be a *Rom. Cath.*" For his part, he was persuaded that Oxford was not what it had been. As for the scholars, "their aim is to live like gentlemen, to keep dogs and horses, to turn their studies and coalholes into places to receive bottles, to swash it in apparell, to wear long periwigs, etc.; and the theologians to ride abroad in grey coats with swords by their sides." The age, he complains, is "given over to all vice—whores and harlots, pimps and panders, bawds and buffoons, lechery and treachery, atheists and papists, rogues and rascalls, playmakers and stageplayers, officers debauched and corrupters—aggravated and promoted by presbytery." Later, it is "bawdy houses and light huswives giving divers young men the pox so that that disease is very common among them and some obscure pocky doctors obtain a living by it"; and "brandy much drank since



55 The Radcliffe Camera



56 Queen's Chapel (*Ackermann's "Oxford"*)

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this war began with the Dutch." The poor, bitter, dim little man showed little discrimination in his criticisms. At one time he curses the "multitudes of ale-houses"; a few pages on he states that "the decay of study, and consequently of learning, are coffee-houses, to which most scholars retire and spend much of the day in speaking vily of their superiors." Coffee, he records, was introduced to Oxford in 1650 by Jacob, a Jew; it was specially favoured by the self-esteeming "virtuosi or wits" of All Souls.

Wood was particularly happy when he could bring home some scandal against an individual member of the university. "Mr. R. B., a chaplain of Christ Church, one much given to the flesh and a great lover of Eliz the wife of Funker"—so starts a long and scurrilous tale of mistaken identity.<sup>1</sup> Exeter College, he reports in 1655, is "now much debauched by a drunken Governor," and is a "rude and uncivil house": the Rector is a good scholar but "much given to bibbing." A newly elected Master of Balliol is described as having "spent most of his time in bibbing and smoking, and nothing of a gent. to carry him off." At St. John's, "a most debauched college," are four undergraduates known to be atheists, who "come drunk into chapel and vomit into their hats or caps there. . . . The next college that wants a thorough reformation is New College, much given to drinking and gaming, and vain brutish pleasure. They degenerate in learning." A would-be Warden of Wood's own college is described as "the very lol-poop of the University, a most lascivious person, a great haunter of women's company and a common fornicator": Merton College had better be "dissolved again, rather than Tom Clayton should be warden thereof." Yet Warden he became, this "common subject of every lampoon."

Wood's picture of the depravity of Oxford is not altogether imaginary. So far as drink is concerned, this is a reproach that has been made in every age. Dudley Earl of Leicester, as Chancellor, had rebuked the scholars in 1582 for a propensity to "jelt in the Stretes and to tipples in Tavernes." A contemporary of Wood's records in 1674 tells how a student of Christ Church was found dead of drink with a brandy bottle in one hand and the cork in the other. Thirty years later a gentleman commoner at Magdalen died of a surfeit of brandy. In every century there have been strange tales of senior fellows found in compromising situations, and chaplains taken unawares. That Oxford suffered in its moral standards by the Civil Wars cannot be doubted. For

<sup>1</sup> Years later this same gentleman reappears. "Richard Berry being either besotted with drink or with love of Bess Faulkner, did stab himself with a knife in the breast and belly several times on the 7 of June about 6 in the morning in his chamber in the Chaplains' Quadrangle at Christ Church." After this episode he was "not permitted to keep his place," but was "sent into Ireland" and "got into some cathedral. This Richard Berry was a fiddler's son of Burford."

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three years it had harboured a court of highly sophisticated persons. Poor Dr. Kettell, the President of Trinity, had been hurried into his grave by the profligacy of the fine ladies who trespassed in his college and garden. Standards were relaxed, as they were after the Great War. Puritanism stood at a heavy discount, and no wonder. But the age of Wren was emphatically not an age of decadence.

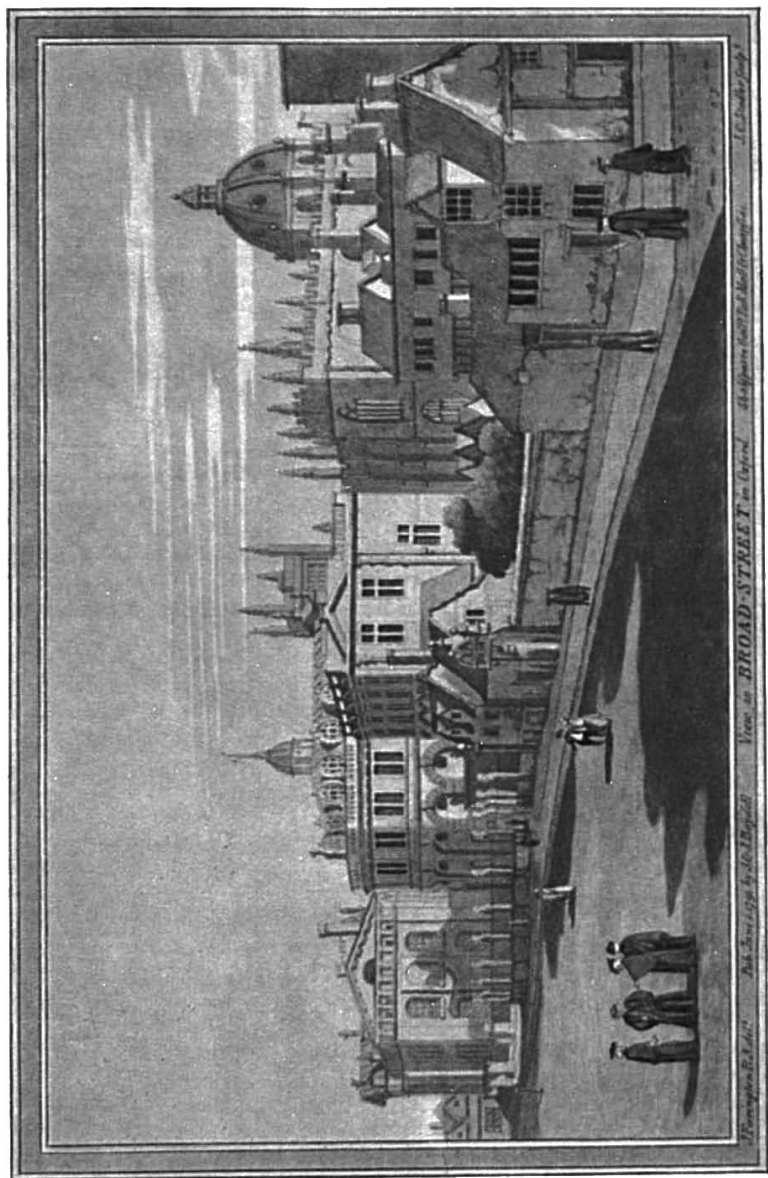
In 1660, when all England was rejoicing at the Restoration, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, became Chancellor of Oxford. This appointment began a period of high favour for the loyal university. In 1663, Charles II paid a state visit of a week with his Queen, the Duke of York, and Lady Castlemaine.<sup>1</sup> Two years later he returned again to sojourn at Christ Church while London lay beneath the plague. This time he brought the Queen, Lady Castlemaine, and the lovely Miss Stuart. The Duke of Monmouth lodged at Corpus; the Spanish ambassador at New College, and the French ambassador at Magdalen; in Merton, Lady Castlemaine gave birth to a future Duke of Northumberland<sup>2</sup>; while an obstructive Parliament debated in the Convocation House.

Fifteen years later, when Charles was fighting an unscrupulous enemy for the preservation of his throne, he bethought himself again of Oxford and its unwavering loyalty. The situation which faced him was much the same as that which his father had mis-handled by his policy of appeasement. Treason and fanaticism had claimed victims enough in the previous three years; Charles saw that he must bring off something in the nature of a *coup d'état* if Monmouth was to be outwitted; but the Earl of Shaftesbury's private army made it impossible to carry off such a stroke in London. Therefore in January 1681 he summoned a Parliament to meet in Oxford. There were good precedents for such a measure; and it was just possible for him to ignore the outcry that it caused. So in March the King arrived at Christ Church; and his angry opponents were obliged to follow him, trooping in one by one over Magdalen Bridge with whatever gangs of ruffians they could get to tramp the sixty miles. Here Charles was safe.<sup>3</sup> He had negotiated with the King of France a contract which should make him free from the insane demands of his Whig parliaments; in Oxford he was not to be intimidated into giving away the succession to his throne or the lives of his supporters.

<sup>1</sup> "1663, 28 Sept., the king touched divers score of people affected with the king's evil in the choir of Ch. Ch. after that morning service was done. . . . The cage and pillory was taken down to make room for the King's passage in North Gate Street."

<sup>2</sup> "Libel on the Countess of Castlemaine's door in Merton College:  
'Hanc Cæsare pressam a fluctu defendit onus.'"

<sup>3</sup> "The general cry was 'long live King Charles,' and many drawing up to the very coach window cried 'Let the king live, and the devil hang up all roundheads'; at which his majesty smiled and seemed well pleased."



57 The Broad in 1706 : from *Boydell's History of the River Thames*

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The Commons met in the Convocation House, and on March 28th they were to debate once more the exclusion of the Duke of York. The Lords sat in the Geometry School, which was in the Old Schools Tower, just across the quadrangle. There Charles betook himself in ordinary clothes, as if to indulge his common amusement of listening to the debate. His robes of State, needed for a dissolution, followed in a sedan chair. In secrecy, he put them on, faced the Lords, and sent across to summon the Commons. This message was taken by the Whigs for a sign of immediate surrender. Through the Divinity School they came, in highest spirits, across the quadrangle, and singly up a spiral stairway in Bodley's tower. When they had crowded in, to hear as they supposed the King's submission, he coolly dissolved the Parliament and sent his enemies about their business. Within a few hours he was at Windsor. His victory was complete. Taken by surprise and robbed of their unconstitutional support, the Whigs made haste to shake off the dust of the loyal city, and fled each man to the safest refuge he could find.

Oxford was true to Charles II because Charles was true to the Church. When the university differed from his brother James, it showed as little fear or servility as the most arrogant Whig could desire. Upon James's accession, many secret Catholics avowed their faith; and among these was Obadiah Walker, the ancient Master of University College. The university was alarmed when Walker opened a Catholic chapel in his college; it was staggered when another Catholic was made Dean of Christ Church in succession to Dr. Fell. Yet this office was in the gift of the Crown, whereas the Presidency of Magdalen was not. In 1686 the latter became vacant. What followed thereafter is text-book history. James "beat his head against the walls of Magdalen," trying to push in a disreputable Catholic of his own choice. It was the beginning of the end for him.

All these vicissitudes showed that Oxford had become entirely wedded to the reformed established Church. The university was the great mother of loyal churchmen; and here at least, the establishment was safe from the attacks of Papist and Presbyterian alike. Translated into politics, this allegiance meant Toryism; and Oxford's Toryism incurred the suspicious enmity of William III, who visited the university only to insult it. So doubtful did he feel, or affect to feel, as to the loyalty of Oxford that he declined to eat a banquet that had been prepared for him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The University was at great charge in providing a banquet for the king; but the king would not eat anything, but went out; and some rabble and townsmen that had got in seized upon the banquet in the face of the whole University." On the occasion of James II's visit to Oxford to rebuke the fellows of Magdalen, he had been given a banquet in the Selden End of the Bodleian. This was a different kind of failure, as "none did eat but he, for he spake to nobody to eat," despite the presence of 20 large dishes of sweetmeats,

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"The Bear," they called him in London for his hateful manners ; it took him less than an hour to write himself down at Oxford as something worse than a bear.

Queen Anne, throughout her life, treasured nothing above her devotion to the Church of England. Her relations with Oxford were cordial and lasting. She was warmly welcomed in the year of her accession, on her way to Bath. During her reign, two singular men adorned the high table at Magdalen. One was Addison, a moderate Whig ; the other was Dr. Sacheverell, the oleaginous High Churchman whose impeachment proved the undoing of the Whigs. The extreme Tory Atterbury was Dean of Christ Church for a while.

Oxford was lukewarm towards the Protestant Succession. Wadham might cherish its portraits of William and of George I ; but there were many non-jurors among the Oxford clergy to whom the Hanoverians were usurpers ; and nowhere was there much enthusiasm for their cause. There were even certain active demonstrations of disloyalty to the new regime. A "Constitution Club" organised by the Whig minority attempted to combat the "vast torrent of treason which overflowed the University" by celebrating the new King's birthday on May 28th, and by burning Dr. Sacheverell in effigy. Their meetings at the King's Head were broken up by riotous Tories. The following day, May 29th, being the anniversary of the Restoration, afforded to the Tories an opportunity to stage a much more successful demonstration by way of rejoinder. June 10th, moreover, was the Pretender's birthday ; so in that age of bonfires this was an anxious fortnight. The worst that happened was an attempt to shoot a Jacobite student from the windows of Oriel. The authorities visited all these disturbances with strict Tory partiality. It was reputed that the proctors kept a "black book" of the names of all "whigs, constitutioners, and bangorians." They suspended the steward of the Constitution Club for two years from taking his degree as a punishment for having compelled one of the proctors to drink the health of King George I.

Oxford's doubtful allegiance was the cause of two celebrated epigrams. The authorities in London took a sufficiently grave view of the recurrent Jacobite riots to dispatch some soldiery to Oxford. The fervent loyalty of low-church Cambridge shone so brightly by contrast in the eyes of the King that he made a handsome gift of books to that less independent university. On this an Oxford wit wrote these lines :

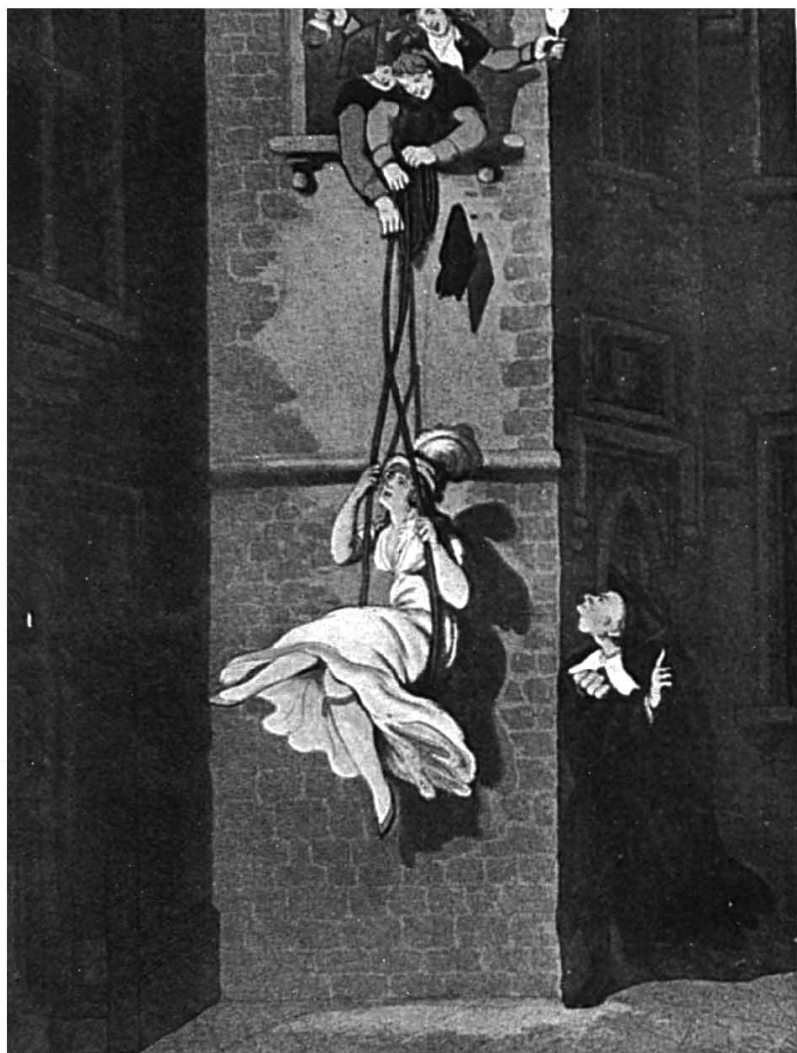
The King, observing with judicious eyes  
The state of both his Universities,

"piled high like so many ricks of hay," 24 plates of wet sweetmeats, 28 large dishes of cold fish and flesh, 3 hot dishes, and 86 plates of salads. At Carfax, "the conduit ran claret for the vulgar, which was conveyed up there in vessels."





58, 50 Scenes of Oxford Life, ca. 1815, from drawings by Thomas Rowlandson



60 "A Varsity Trick—Smuggling In," from a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson

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To Oxford sent a troop of horse, for why ?  
That learned body wanted loyalty :  
To Cambridge books he sent, as well discerning  
How much that loyal body wanted learning.

This was immediately answered by a Cambridge man :

The King to Oxford sent a troop of horse,  
For Tories own no argument but force :  
With equal skill to Cambridge books he sent,  
For Whigs admit no force but argument.

The latter of these epigrams is not merely neat : it contains two of the soundest generalisations ever made upon English politics.

The mantle of Anthony Wood fell in Hanoverian times upon another antiquary, equally bitter and equally observant. Thomas Hearne was intended by nature for a librarian ; the Bodleian was his paradise : but he could not take an oath of loyalty to the new King, and all his hopes of useful employment were frustrated. Like Wood, when he was not poring over the records of other ages, he was recording the faults and vices of his own. His point of view was that of the thorough-paced Jacobite. To him the reigning King was and remained "the Duke of Brunswick." In his view nothing good could come out of Germany. Even when Handel himself, the darling of the Court, the rage of London, came to give concerts in the Sheldonian, poor Hearne could only grumble about "one Handel a foreigner," and his "lousy crew of foreign fiddlers," having the use of the theatre.

Hearne is for ever on about the decay of learning, and the desuetude of old manners and observances. The strange thing is that his criticisms are largely corroborated by a writer whose point of view was diametrically opposed to his own. Nicholas Amhurst was a young and outspoken Whig. Possibly because of his political views, he was expelled from Oxford in 1719 ; and he took his revenge by issuing a periodical in which the university was systematically attacked and satirised. He called his paper *Terræ Filius*, which was the name applied to a participant in the annual Encænia, whose part it was to enliven and sometimes to disgrace the solemnity by much licensed buffoonery and ribaldry. The name was well chosen. If *Terræ Filius* is to be believed, Oxford in the 1720's was a sewer of all imaginable vice and corruption.<sup>1</sup> Every don was carrying on an open liaison with his bedmaker ; every undergraduate had his particular "toast" among the loose women with whom the town abounded. Magdalen Grove and Merton gardens were the particular centres of

<sup>1</sup> For example, "I have known a profligate debauchee chosen professor of moral philosophy ; and a fellow, who never looked upon the stars soberly in his life, professor of astronomy ; we have had history professors, who have never read anything to qualify them for it, but Tom Thumb, Jack the giant-killer, and such-like valuable records."

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dalliance and picking-up. Learning counted for nothing; holy orders were meaningless. Drink, wenching, and disloyalty were the three obsessions of the Oxford man. Extravagance in money and dress were further abuses. The Tory swells of the High Borlace Club, with their money and their insufferable arrogance, set a standard of expense which was ruinous to their imitators. Tick abounded; the tailor and the coffee-house fastened their burden of debt upon every undergraduate who fell into their hands.

How much of all this can have been true? Amhurst was a satirist, who wrote for effect; but it does not follow that he was an absolute liar. Much of what he describes is still true to-day. Oxford is still the scene of some heavy drinking; and with its execrable climate, it is likely to remain so. The Oxford tradesmen are still permitted to ensnare the young by way of high prices and boundless credit; indeed, the scandalous expense of lodgings is an extortion added on since Amhurst's day. In any age, a community of thousands of young men will force some relaxation of monastic standards.

Undoubtedly, the eighteenth-century dons often set a bad example. Their tenure was secure, sometimes irremovable. The exaction of an oath of allegiance which few honest churchmen could take meant that the plums of office went to the easy-going time-servers. Nepotism was common, sometimes even statutory; by the terms of Chichele's statutes, for instance, more than half the fellows of All Souls were "founders' kin," elected for no other reason. Celibacy was imposed upon the fellows; and many of them preferred to contrive a liaison with some wench below stairs rather than lose a comfortable sinecure. When the fellows of All Souls employed the university's own press for pornographic ends; when the Provost of Worcester could be seen "in the great window next the quadrangle," "seen by Mr. Dean himself and almost all the house," in company with a Madam Walcup, "toyeing with her most ridiculously and fanning himself with her fan for almost all the afternoon"—it was not to be hoped that the junior members of the university should observe much higher standards, or spurn the advances of the tradesmen's daughters.

Some heads of houses made very light of their duties. Hearne records that Mr. George Wigan, the Principal of New Inn Hall, has shut up the gate of it, and lives wholly in the country. Mr. Wightwicke was Master of Pembroke, doubtless as "founders' kin," since he bore the same name as the co-founder; he was "famed for a great Racer," and conducted the college services "with incredible Swiftness and confused Rapidity" as if he was running a race. A seventeenth-century canon of Christ Church, "a boon companion," preached upon one of the New Testament

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miracles to this effect : " every good fellow could turn wine into water ; but who or any mortal could turn water into wine. This I say makes the miracle the greater."

Though the modern examination system has proved a very mixed blessing, there was little merit in the methods by which degrees were awarded in the eighteenth century. The qualifications were in theory both doctrinal and scholastic, and the former consisted in reading the 39 Articles. " The Dean of the College invites the young man to breakfast—a couple of articles are read—then succeeds a wadding of cold meat—an interlayer of boiled eggs divides the third and fourth ; the doctrine of Predestination requires to be swallowed down with a cup of tea, and the Dean reads the newspaper, while the candidate reads the remainder." As for scholastic qualifications, their scrutiny was a pure formality. The proctors selected the examiners, and by paying a crown to the proctor's man, the candidate could get the examiner he wanted. Amhurst says that " it is the custom for the candidates to present the examiners with a piece of gold, or to give them a handsome entertainment, and make them drunk ; which they commonly do the night before examination, and sometimes keep them till morning, and so adjourn, cheek by jowl, from their drinking room to the school where they are to be examined." A few stock questions, with answers " handed down from age to age," were then set to the examinee ; his testimonium was signed ; and a few weeks later he found himself a Bachelor of Arts.

The drinking was undoubtedly terrific. Mr. Inett, a gentleman commoner of Magdalen Hall, drank himself to death at a drinking-party ; as for Lord Lovelace, the Principal of his hall " never knew him sober but twelve hours," which is not surprising, since he drank a quart of brandy every morning.

An excellent picture of the Oxford parson, entirely convincing because of its ingenuousness, is drawn by that observant traveller, Pastor Moritz, as late as 1782. Moritz was a Lutheran pastor, the son of a regimental oboist at Hameln ; his sophistication was small ; and he travelled through Georgian England with wide-open eyes, on foot. He had high hopes of Oxford, " that seat of the muses " ; but as a foot-traveller, he got short shrift from the taverns on the way, where he was refused admittance. Past Nuneham, late at night, he was overtaken by a jovial companion who announced himself as the curate of Dorchester ; and they proceeded into Oxford together. Moritz was tired out ; and it was midnight when they arrived in " the longest, the finest, and most beautiful street in Europe." The curate, Mr. Modd, was sustained by the hope of still finding company in an ale-house, and accordingly they looked in at the Mitre, where Moritz saw to his astonishment " a great number of clergymen, all with their gowns and bands on, sitting around a large table, each with his

pot of beer before him." The conversation was "loud, general, and a little confused." One Mr. Clerk started "sundry objections to the Bible." First he maintained that the Bible said "that God was a *wine-bibber*, and a *drunkard*."

"On this Mr. Modd fell into a violent passion, and maintained that it was utterly impossible that any such passage should be found in the Bible. Another Divine, a Mr. Caern, referred us to his absent brother, who had already been forty years in the church, and must certainly know something of such a passage, if it were in the Bible, but he would venture to lay any wager his brother knew nothing of it.

"'Waiter! Fetch a Bible!' called out Mr. Clerk, and a great family Bible was immediately brought in, and opened on the table, among all the beer jugs. Mr. Clerk turned over a few leaves, and in the Book of Judges he read: 'Shall I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man?'

"Mr. Modd and Mr. Caern, who had before been most violent, now sat as if struck dumb. A silence of some minutes prevailed, when all at once I said, 'Why, gentlemen, you must be sensible, that is but an allegorical expression; how often, in the Bible, are Kings called Gods?'

"'Why, yes, to be sure,' said Mr. Modd and Mr. Caern, 'it is an allegorical expression; nothing can be more clear; it is a metaphor, and therefore it is absurd to understand it in a literal sense.' And now they, in their turn, triumphed over poor Clerk, and drank large draughts to my health. Mr. Clerk, however, had not yet exhausted his quiver; and so he desired them to explain to him a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, where it is said, in express terms, that *God is a barber*. Mr. Modd was so enraged at this, that he called Clerk an impudent fellow; and Mr. Caern again still more earnestly referred us to his absent brother, who had been forty years in the church; and who therefore, he doubted not, would also consider Mr. Clerk as an impudent fellow, if he maintained any such abominable notions. Mr. Clerk, all this while, sat perfectly composed; but turning to a passage in Isaiah, he read these words: 'In the same day, the Lord shall shave with a razor the head, and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard.' If Mr. Modd and Mr. Caern were before stunned and confounded, they were much more so now. I broke silence a second time and said: 'Why, gentlemen, this also is clearly metaphorical, and it is equally just, strong, and beautiful.' 'Aye, to be sure it is,' rejoined Mr. Modd and Mr. Caern, both in a breath; at the same time, rapping the table with their knuckles. 'Aye to be sure it is; anybody may see it is; why, it is as clear as the day.' . . . Mr. Clerk made no further objections to the Bible. My health, however, was again encored and drank in strong ale. . . . At last when morning drew near, Mr. Modd suddenly exclaimed, 'Damn me, I must read prayers this morning at All Souls!'

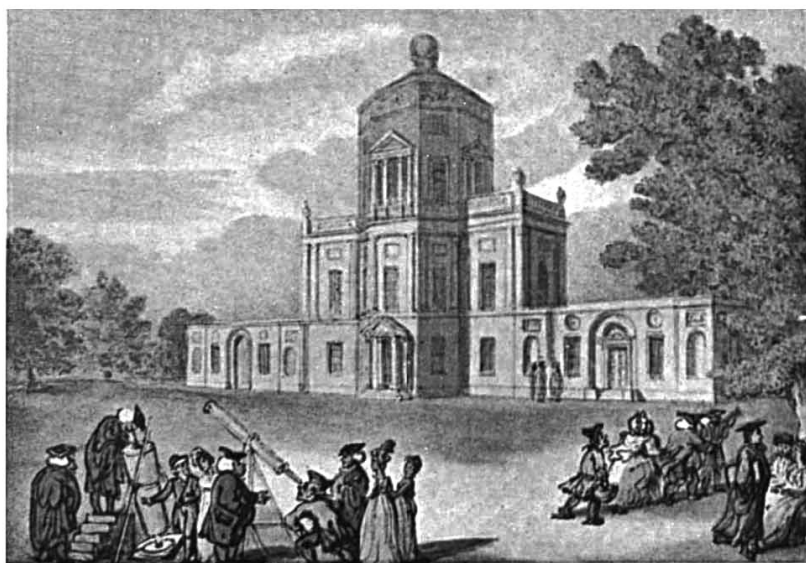
Mr. Modd was in fact the chaplain of Corpus, whose President and Fellows once had to admonish him for his drunkenness.

Moritz's photographic impression of the futility of the lesser clergy is really far more striking than the celebrated and sonorous denunciation of Edward Gibbon. Gibbon went up to Magdalen



61 "College Service," from a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson





62, 63 The Radcliffe Observatory, Ackermann's and Rowlandson's Views



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in 1752, when he was not quite fifteen years old. He kept four terms before his conversion to the catholic faith made it impossible for him to return.

“To the university of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life: the reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar; but I cannot affect to believe that Nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. . . . The fellows of my time were decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder; their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience; and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal: their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth; and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the House of Hanover.”

All these fine sentences betray his self-centred and censorious mind. Gibbon was a home-bred prodigy before he went up to Oxford, and he hoped too much. Let us counterbalance his experience with that of another man of still more active mind. Charles James Fox came from Eton to Hertford in 1764. The head of his college was Dr. Newcome, “a good, wise, and learned divine.” Fox was rich and profligate; he had a multitude of Eton friends, with whom he shared a mania for cards: yet he read so intensively at Oxford that Dr. Newcome had to implore him to desist. At Oxford, he acquired a considerable culture and a boundless intellectual appetite. Gibbon was always a weakling; but Fox showed himself as tough in the physical as in the intellectual sphere. At the end of term he came home on foot from Oxford to Kensington.

Fox’s friend and contemporary, Lord Malmesbury, found his two years at Merton “most unprofitably spent.” “A gentleman commoner was under no restraint, and never called upon to attend either lectures, chapel, or hall. My tutor, an excellent and worthy man, gave himself no concern about his pupils.” Such criticism assumes that the university should base itself like a public school upon a system of compulsion; whereas it has always been the merit of Oxford that it leaves the learner to seek out knowledge for himself.

A class of men who came to Oxford determined to make the

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best use of their time were the "servitors," known to their masters as "barbers." These were poor scholars from country grammar schools and the like, who worked their way through the university on a capital of a few pounds. Their presence was tolerated on the terms that they should fetch and carry meals, clean shoes, and shave their more fortunate brethren. Their learning was also employed in writing essays and declamations on behalf of others. "Impositions" were still in use as a penalty at Oxford, as they are to-day in more conservative schools; but as a matter of course the independent undergraduate would depute his servitor to "barbarise" his imposition for a few shillings.

George Whitefield, whose fame was to resound on both sides of the Atlantic, was a servitor at Pembroke; in this capacity he found his previous experience in the Bell Inn at Gloucester of great use to him. The father of the three Wesleys was a servitor at Exeter. These men did not make sacrifices and face great hardships for the sake of a worthless degree at a decadent university. If they were so earnest to pick up the crumbs, there must have been some sustenance on the table. Old Wesley showed his own sense of obligation by sending all his three sons, John, Samuel, and Charles, to be educated at Christ Church.

John Wesley remained for some years as a fellow of Lincoln, and was invited to preach before the university even after the inception of methodism. But Oxford would repel with horror any suggestion that it was the cradle of Wesleyanism.

The most celebrated undergraduate of the eighteenth century was Samuel Johnson. He came up from his humble home at Lichfield to Pembroke in 1728. He was almost penniless, and extremely proud. "Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolick. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority."

He had a friend, one Taylor, across the road in lordly Christ Church. "Mr. Bateman's lectures were so excellent that Johnson used to come and get them at second hand from Taylor, till his poverty being so extreme that his shoes were worn out, and his feet appeared through them, he saw that this humiliating circumstance was perceived by the Christ Church men, and he came no more. He was too proud to accept of money, and somebody having set a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation."

Of his tutor, Johnson said that "he was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his instructions. Indeed, I did not attend him much." Sent for to explain why he had absented himself from four successive tutorials, Johnson explained with much nonchalance that he had been sliding in Christ Church meadows.

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*Boswell.* That, Sir, was great fortitude of mind.

*Johnson.* No, Sir; stark insensibility."

Johnson's time at Oxford was not only unhappy, but short. He kept barely four terms: yet the pages of Boswell are full of his praises both for his university and his college. He loved to revisit the place. Showing the sights of Pembroke to Hannah More, he would explain how many poets the college had produced—"we are a nest of singing-birds." Dr. Routh, who as President of Magdalen lived until 1854, once saw Johnson going up the steps of University; while University, by his own account, once witnessed him drink three bottles of port without being the worse for it.

Assuredly it was no mere sentimentality that bound Johnson so closely to Oxford. It may have been that if some chance had sent him to Cambridge, Johnson might have developed into a canting Whig. As it was, the Toryism which lay so deep in his nature made him love Oxford as the great home of Toryism. But it was a form of political faith which underwent much evolution even in Johnson's lifetime. As a student, he was of Jacobite sympathies, fitting in one who had been touched for the King's evil by the last of the Stuarts. In his day probably a majority of members of the university remained Jacobites. The tradition died hard. As late as 1746, the opening of the Radcliffe Library was the occasion of a furious Jacobite harangue by the Principal of St. Mary Hall. It was George III who skilfully disarmed his enemies at last by reviving a Tory party. Neither of his predecessors had visited Oxford; and indeed there would have been riots if they had. But George III was able to come down in 1786, with Fanny Burney tittering in his retinue, and the occasion passed off with great success.

Johnson had by then long since made his peace with the House of Hanover. But the Tory prejudice still held fast to its ancient victim, the dissenter. At Oxford, the tests were maintained in all their severity, not to be abolished for another century. Johnson heartily approved of them. In 1768, a group of six dissenters were expelled from St. Edmund Hall on this account. Boswell thought this measure harsh, and lamely pleaded that he had heard they were "good beings." "*Johnson.* I believe they might be good beings, but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in a field, but we turn her out of a garden."

He carried this prejudice into the smallest concerns of life: "One day when Dr. Johnson and Sir Robert Chambers were together in the garden of New Inn Hall, Sir Robert occupied himself in collecting snails and throwing them over the wall into the adjoining premises. The Doctor thereupon reprimanded him, and

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pronounced his behaviour unmannerly and unneighbourly. 'Sir!' said Sir Robert, 'my neighbour is a Dissenter.' 'Oh!' exclaimed the Doctor, 'if so, my dear Chambers, toss away, toss away as hard as you can!''



