

NEW COLLEGE

1856-1906



HENRY FROWDE



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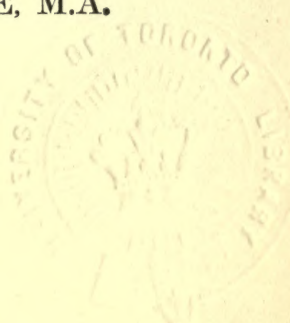
NEW COLLEGE

1856-1906

BY

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SENIOR FELLOW



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SECTION I

INTRODUCTORY

THE development of New College, which from the smallest has become very nearly the largest College in Oxford, is one of the most conspicuous facts in the history of the University since the first Commission. Moreover New College was able to take the lead in making many of the changes which in the aggregate have transformed Oxford. Thus its history ought to interest in some degree all who care to trace out the process whereby Oxford has renewed its youth. And its history ought specially to interest its own *alumni*, who have a patriotic pride in its success, and a good right to know how that success was gained.

My pretensions to tell the story rest upon the accident that I alone have been concerned in it all. I was a Fellow before the great changes wrought by the Commission took effect, and have been resident, save for a short interval, ever since. I have taken part in the deliberations which have led to every new step, and in the administration of the College under the gradually changing conditions. No one else, as it happens, has had this fortune; my colleagues in the earlier and more critical years went away to other spheres of duty: my colleagues in the later period entered the College after the chief difficulties had been conquered. I do not claim for

myself any conspicuous share in the credit due, whatever that may be, very much the reverse: all that I claim is to have had unique opportunity of knowing what was done, and when, and why. In truth I think that the College owes nearly all to its singular good fortune in never having had any serious dissensions among the resident Fellows. Differences of opinion on points of detail, on the best means of attaining a given end, there have necessarily been: but there have seldom been any as to the ends desirable, and those who have been overruled have always loyally acquiesced. One Fellow or another has originated something new, but once adopted it has become the property of the whole body. Hence there is no occasion to mention individual names in order to make the story clear, and I greatly rejoice that it is so. Personal references easily degenerate into gossip, and may still more easily offend: if such were necessary, I should leave this unwritten.

There are, however, three persons who in different ways form exceptions—the late Warden, Alfred Robinson, and Edward Charles Wickham, now Dean of Lincoln: and I wish to record here once for all what the College owes to each of them. Warden Sewell's own feelings were all against change; by disposition he was essentially conservative. Nevertheless he accepted every decision as binding on himself, not only legally but in spirit, and was always anxious, if a change which in itself he deprecated was resolved on, that it should be made in the best and most effective way. In reference to several such measures, he had the magnanimity to say publicly that he recognized after experience that he had been wrong

in his opposition. I believe that the College owes very greatly to him the continuity of its life. New men have joined its ranks, but they have fitted themselves into the old framework: new ideas have become dominant, but they have blended with the old, not expelled them.

Alfred Robinson became a Fellow after the great changes had been made, when the College was already growing in size and importance. The value of his services, both as a teacher and as an administrator, cannot be over-estimated. For the last twenty years of his life, cut short in 1895, he was the most important person in the College. He had an extraordinary power of working into practical shape new ideas, whether originally his own or not, and of seeing how to carry them out with the least friction. He attached to himself successive generations of undergraduates, scholars and athletes alike, who all felt that they could rely implicitly on his sympathy and judgement. Far more than any one else he assured and consolidated the success beginning to accrue when he first entered the College, success which without him might have been precarious. That he was capable of playing a more creative part still no one who knew him well can doubt: but, as a matter of fact, he only came in time for the later measures.

The real moving spirit in the all-important decade which began in 1860 was Edward Wickham. He did not of course originate every reform, but he did suggest many: more important perhaps, he aroused in others the spirit which to some old-fashioned Fellows of that date seemed abominable restlessness. He was never content with the existing state of things if he could see a way to

improve it. The new ideas were, so to speak, in the air: but Edward Wickham, by inducing us to take them up, conferred on his College the distinction of being the pioneer in several important changes which rapidly became general in Oxford, and have stood the test of time. That he could have done what he did without steady and active support would obviously have been impossible; but his former colleagues know full well how little would have been achieved without him. Of a living man the less said the better, but it is only common justice to say so much. And now, having discharged that duty, I can promise my readers that there shall be no more naming of individuals.

I am, of course, writing from my own recollections, and expressing my own opinions, so far as any opinions are involved. About the facts, strictly so called, there can be no doubt: but in stating the reasons why things were done or opposed, though I am certain that I am telling the truth, I may not be telling the whole truth. I may have omitted to mention some of the motives which were operative, even influential, in one direction or another. Nor do I pretend to give all the arguments that might be adduced against, or even in favour of, steps that the College has taken. I was satisfied at the time that practically all of them were expedient, and I am satisfied still: but that does not mean that nothing could be said on the other side. I am not even a steward giving account of his stewardship, for what I am telling is the history of a large corporation, of which I am but one member. I am merely trying to record, as faithfully as I can, the facts of an eventful period.

SECTION II

BEFORE THE FIRST COMMISSION

THE reconstruction of most parts of the English social system followed, sooner or later, on the Reform Act of 1832: but it was more than twenty years before the Universities had their turn. There was plenty which needed reform, for there was no power anywhere to alter the statutes of the original foundations, many of them mediaeval. Gross abuses had prevailed, not in all Colleges or at all times, but sufficiently widely to be scandalous: and though these had greatly diminished under the growing sense of public duty, though corruption was dead and favouritism dying, Oxford was very far from being an ideal seat of learning. External assailants were often unjust, because they ignored the fact that the individuals who then constituted the Colleges were bound by their statutes: but they were entirely in the right, not only in declaring that reform was urgently needed, but in the general nature of their complaints. They were right in arguing that professorships ought to be real working offices, not dignities with few or no duties and (most of them) trifling emoluments—that a large proportion of the Fellowships were wasted in giving a maintenance to men who did nothing in return—that the limitations which restricted many endowments to founders' kin or to natives of particular localities were obsolete and mischievous.

There was absurd exaggeration in the abuse which began to be heaped unsparingly on the Universities and all connected with them about 1851. It was cheap and easy to picture all Fellows of Colleges as living in idleness and luxury on the munificence of past ages, wasting revenues which might suffice to educate half England, but it was entirely untrue. The revenues of Fellowships were in those days far too scanty, with very few exceptions, to admit of much luxury, unless it were paid for out of the individual's private means. Idleness there was: a certain number of Fellows might continue to live in Oxford without any real occupation, doing themselves and the world no good. But the large majority went out into the world, their Fellowships supporting them while they made their way in some lay profession, or converting a curacy or an under-mastership into a decent livelihood until their turn came for a benefice. Better use might be made of the revenues, when Parliament should give powers, but it was exaggeration to say that they were squandered; and the value of the endowments, great as it was even then, was enormously overstated.

New College naturally came in for a large share of this abuse. Conspicuous for the size of its foundation and for the beauty of its buildings, it was not equally conspicuous for the number of its scholars, or for their success in the examination schools. There were no commoners: the only undergraduates, besides three or four bible-clerks, were those who succeeded from Winchester to places on the foundation. And of these, though the number necessarily fluctuated, the average scarcely amounted to five annually. The rest of the rooms were occupied by

graduate Fellows, or were not tenanted at all. There were three tutors, who had but little trouble in looking after a mere handful of undergraduates, many of whom did not even attempt Honours; and they received correspondingly small salaries. The other College offices gave only nominal employment and equally nominal emoluments, except the Bursarship, which however then involved no very serious labours. It could not be denied that this was a small outcome from William of Wykeham's great foundation: and yet it was unfair to make that generation responsible for a system which it had inherited, and which it was powerless to alter fundamentally. The College had recently given proof of its desire to conform to modern conditions by voluntarily surrendering its ancient privilege of claiming degrees from the University on its own examinations: but the number of New College men who down to 1850 obtained distinctions in the Schools was extremely small.

The beginning of the transformation of New College dates from December 1852, nearly two years before the appointment of the first University Commission. Sensitive to the attacks made on them in the press, and desirous to do their duty if it could be made clear, the Warden and Fellows resolved to take counsel with their Visitor, the Bishop of Winchester, as the authorized interpreter of the statutes. At their request the Bishop came to Oxford, and held the last formal visitation of the College, besides informal conferences. After careful consideration, and taking legal advice, the Visitor informed the College that, while no power but Parliament could modify the statutes, two things might lawfully be done, which were in his

judgement desirable. The first was to arrange with the authorities of Winchester College for the opening to competition of the foundation there, which had hitherto been filled by nominations given, after a formal examination, by a board consisting of the Wardens and two other representatives of each of the Founder's Colleges.¹ This was done at once, taking effect in the annual election of July, 1854, and was the first step in the rise of the school, which had fallen far below two hundred, to a position higher in numbers, efficiency and reputation than it had ever held before, a position which it has maintained ever since. As New College all the time has been drawing the major part of its scholars from Winchester, it has reaped a rich harvest of advantage from the renunciation of the patronage which the Warden and individual Fellows in turn had enjoyed.

The second recommendation of the Visitor was to admit commoners to New College. This might certainly have been done at any time, and the fact that it had not been done was a fair ground of reproach. It took several years, however, before commoners began to come in any number : outsiders were naturally shy of entering a very small society, all the members of which came from a single

¹ The Visitor further suggested that some large exhibitions might be founded, to take the place of open scholarships : but a proposal to this effect was rejected by a College meeting. And seeing that the charge of maintaining one exhibition annually, equivalent in value to the average of open scholarships in Oxford, would have amounted to a tax of from sixpence to a shilling in the pound on the meagre Fellowships of that period, it is scarcely wonderful that such a self-denying ordinance did not prove acceptable to the majority.

school. Nor, though there were a few distinguished exceptions, did the reputation of the College for industry stand, or deserve to stand, high. The first commoner, a Winchester boy, entered in October, 1854, the second, the first real outsider, not till the beginning of 1856, after which every year brought a few. Their intellectual level, however, remained low. Not a single commoner obtained even a second class in any final School till the year 1867, though a few did fairly in Moderations; and only one made his mark in any other way. It was felt by the tutors to be unfair to the scholars, now increasing in number in consequence of the working of the Commissioners' new constitution to be hereafter described, and still forming a considerable majority of the undergraduate body, to give them companions who could bear no comparison to the average scholar either in ability or in industry. No formal step was taken: the tutors simply raised the standard of the entrance examination, and in the course of the year 1861 rejected every candidate for admission with one exception. After a short time the College assented to its being formally announced that no commoner would be admitted who did not undertake to read for Honours in some School, and who did not satisfy the College by examination that he could do so to some advantage. This rule has been observed ever since, the exceptions being few and under special circumstances. Under these conditions the numbers in the College rose steadily and rapidly, till in about twenty years it was determined not to exceed the total of about 200 which had then been reached, and which has been maintained for twenty years more.

It is possible to argue that a College, which thus declines

the task of educating passmen, is shirking a portion of its natural duty, and also, because Honour men tend to be much more absorbed in their reading than passmen, is likely to forfeit social consideration. Experience is decisive against the latter argument: New College has fully held its own, taking the last forty years as a whole, on the river, at the Union, and in other fields of distinction apart from the Schools. As to the former, one original motive, the desirability of having a body of commoners not markedly separate from the scholars, is of permanent force, though the other motive, the impossibility of raising the intellectual level without decided measures, was only temporary. And it is to be remembered also that a man who can pass without much trouble is certainly capable of taking some sort of Honours if he will only try; so that the action of New College was very largely putting pressure on men to do their best, instead of being content with a minimum. But when there are on the average two candidates for admission to every vacancy, selection must be made somehow; and the only fair and workable method is to fix the standard of examination high. Moreover, the cost of tuition for Honour men is considerably greater than for passmen. The pecuniary disadvantage of having a College full of Honour men could only be sustained by a foundation large, either absolutely or relatively to the number of undergraduates, without either underpaying the tutors or raising above the usual level the fees charged for tuition.

SECTION III

THE FIRST COMMISSION AND ITS WORK

THE College had so far begun for itself the work of renovation. For other reforms it was dependent upon the action of the Commission appointed by Parliament in 1854. The idea of an external authority having power to override the ancient statutes was a novel and startling one, and the attitude of the College towards it was at first very undecided. Some of the Fellows were hostile to all change; others considered themselves bound by their oath¹ to maintain the College statutes, to resist every alteration of them, whether they approved or not in the abstract: a few really welcomed innovation. And there seems to have been an impression, vague but wide-spread, that the Commissioners would not really overrule the ancient order if the College was resolute in defending it. All desired to maintain the essence of the Founder's constitution, which lay in the connexion with Winchester.

According to William of Wykeham's plan, the seventy

¹ Some Fellows of Colleges in Oxford, I believe, took up exactly the attitude of George III, who thought that by assenting to Catholic Emancipation he would break his coronation oath, and forfeit the throne. They held that if they assented to any alteration of the statutes, which they had sworn to maintain, they would forfeit their Fellowships.

places in his Oxford College were filled as vacancies arose by boys from his school at Winchester; and a Fellowship, once obtained, was tenable until vacated by marriage, or by obtaining a benefice or landed property. The Founder had further given special privileges to those of his own kin. An examination was held at Winchester every summer, after which a list was issued of the boys who during the next twelve months were to take any vacancies that might occur. It was fairly adequate as an examination in the school work of the year: but the school order was seldom much altered in the 'roll' for New College, and therefore there was a great temptation not to take it seriously. Moreover as the school order did not vary after a boy had reached a certain place in the school (an arrangement which may be fairly considered sound in itself, since the great schools still adhere to it), it often happened that a precocious boy had his Fellowship of New College practically safe at the age of thirteen or fourteen, a state of things by no means conducive to industry. Then the Fellowships were for the first two years probationary only, receiving emoluments far below those of an ordinary scholarship, a source of some temporary embarrassment to poor parents. After this period the probationer, unless rejected for serious misconduct, became a full Fellow in all respects. The government of many things in the College being in the hands of the Warden, or of the Warden and Thirteen (a body consisting of the officers, and certain elected Fellows), there was little practical inconvenience in men who were still undergraduates acquiring a vote in College meetings. But a system cannot be said to have been

theoretically wise which rendered it possible for young men under twenty-one to be called on to vote, as happened when I was myself in that category, on some of the gravest and most trying questions that could come before a College.

The connexion with Winchester made the case of New College an especially difficult one for the Commissioners to deal with. Their task was necessarily very complicated, and therefore they had every inducement to diminish the complications, by assuming that whatever seemed to be ideally the best principles should be applied universally. Indeed a great part of their work did in fact consist in removing analogous restrictions on the free use of endowments. Great as was the value to both Winchester and New College of the intimate connexion between them, assuming both to be doing well, the details of the system, however convenient when the Founder devised them in the fourteenth century, had become unsuitable to the changed social conditions of the nineteenth. It was therefore inevitable that the Commission should make sweeping alterations, and it was probable that they would incline to remove everything distinctive. Again, neither College at the moment enjoyed a high reputation, and therefore it might well have seemed that little good was likely to accrue to either from being tied to the other.

The first scheme of the Commission went very near to destroying the connexion altogether. They proposed not only to diminish the total number of the foundation in order to obtain funds for the object which they had most at heart, the full endowment of the professoriate in the

University, but also to open all the Fellowships and half the scholarships to general competition. There might have been much to say, on general principles, for severing the bond completely and leaving both school and College to stand independently. But New College very naturally objected as strongly as Winchester to this half measure, which would have rendered the connexion a mere hindrance to both parties. For the tie of sentiment must needs have disappeared if no Fellows of New College had come from Winchester except by accident, and the mere reservation of some scholarships might easily have caused more friction than amity. New College, however, declared itself quite willing to see candidates admitted from the whole school, and not merely from the foundation as heretofore. After various communications had been interchanged, the Commissioners were induced greatly to modify their original proposals. The College also realized that the Commissioners had power to do what they thought fit, and that therefore it was both wise and becoming to accept with a good grace the compromise that had been reached, which in truth was not far from the best arrangement possible at that date.

According to the Ordinance, as the new constitution framed by the Commissioners was technically called, the College, besides finding part of the endowment for the two Savilian Professorships, was to consist of forty Fellows and thirty scholars. The privileges reserved by the Founder to his own kin were abolished, as after nearly five centuries was reasonable: indeed there had never been any serious attempt to maintain them. The

Fellowships were to be filled up by examination of graduates, and half of them were limited to *alumni* of New College or Winchester. The scholarships were to be tenable for five years, six being allotted to each year, and were to be given on examination at Winchester, the restriction to boys on the foundation being removed. Some changes have since been made in detail. In 1873 the old mixed board for electing both to the foundation at Winchester and to scholarships at New College came to an end, each College assuming the entire control of its own elections. And the second University Commission, in making the scholarships of all Colleges equal in point of emoluments and duration, diminished in both respects the value of the Winchester scholarships at New College. But nothing has ever been suggested in the direction of diminishing the number available annually. The Fellowships were made tenable on the old conditions, slightly modified to meet the changed circumstances of modern life. That is to say, they were to be vacated by marriage, or by presentation to a benefice worth £300, or by succeeding to property of any kind worth £500 a year. A maximum limit was also set on their value, very far exceeding the income in fact received under the old conditions. It was left to the College, as was inevitable, to manage for itself the transition from the old to the new, as vacancies should occur. As a matter of fact, the transition never was completed: when the Commission of 1877 was appointed there were a good many Fellows left who had come in under the Founder's statutes, and indeed there are a few still.

This reconstitution of the whole foundation by the first

Commission was necessary, and experience has shown, as in the parallel case of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, that it was sound in its essential principle. Unless the connexion between a school and a College is on a large scale it may as well not exist. A few close scholarships tenable at a given College do not constitute a sufficiently large element in its life to be important: and they are rather apt to be regarded by the school as a resource for boys who fail to obtain open scholarships. The closeness of the tie between Winchester and New College depends on two things. First of all, the boys are led all through their school career to regard a New College scholarship as the natural goal of the most successful. The many fail, no doubt, and a few of those who might have succeeded are led by circumstances to go elsewhere: but the influence of the sentiment is none the less deep and wide-spread. Secondly, a considerable proportion of the Fellows of New College, having been at Winchester themselves, have an interest in its welfare, through this close connexion, far keener than what men on the average feel for their old school. And those Fellows who were educated elsewhere, besides feeling the influence of association, must acquire an interest in the school whence many of their best pupils come.

One condition is doubtless essential to the soundness and beneficial operation of any such connexion—the scholarships must not be gained too easily. The school must feel that the honour of a scholarship at the College with which it is linked is as great, and as hard to win, as the honour of a scholarship obtained in open competition. And the College must feel a reasonable security

that in limiting the area of its choice it does not lower the standard. This end, as between Winchester and New College, has on the whole been attained. Doubtless there have been exceptions of all kinds : the New College examination has once in a way rejected a boy whose subsequent performances showed that he was well worthy of election, or accepted one who did not fulfil his promise. But on the whole the school has felt that New College was never a 'soft option' for boys who would probably fail elsewhere, and the College has found its Winchester scholars quite as able and successful as any open scholars. Each has tended to keep the other up to the mark : both have steadily grown in reputation since the time of the first Commission, and each is well aware how much it owes to the connexion.

Vacancies in the original foundation of seventy made it possible to begin the new system of scholarships in 1859 with the full number of six contemplated by the Ordinance. And though this could not be done in 1860, with 1861 began an unbroken series. Since then six scholarships have been offered every year, though there have been many occasions when the full number was not elected.

The Ordinance provided for any vacancies not filled up from Winchester being offered to general competition, and this was the only way in which for ten years more New College came to have any open scholars. It was early felt, however, that in the interest of the Winchester scholars it would be good to have some open scholars alongside of them, to compete with them if necessary, at any rate to make them feel themselves on the same level

with the scholars all over Oxford in point of intellectual powers and ambition. There was, however, no power under the Ordinance to create any such scholarships, except when conditions had been realized, which at best could only be in the dim and distant future. The only available method was to amend the Ordinance, and suspend Fellowships for this purpose: and this after some hesitation and delay was agreed to, the amendment receiving the royal assent in 1866. It was three years, however, before the College felt itself justified in acting on the power thus obtained. The second University Commission prescribed the creation of more open scholarships, up to a total of forty. But as at the same time it limited the duration of scholarships to four years instead of five, except in cases where special extension was granted, it did not add very greatly to the total expenditure on scholarships, and the maximum was soon reached.

It is proverbially unprofitable to speculate on what might have been. How much benefit accrued to the Winchester scholars from the society and competition of open scholars cannot of course even be guessed. As a matter of fact, there has been little to choose between them. The two classes of scholars have obtained on the average much the same quantity, proportionately to their numbers, of University distinctions, first classes, prizes, Fellowships, &c., the Winchester men having perhaps rather the best of it. At any rate the dread which haunted some ardent reformers at the time of the first Commission, that the close scholarships from Winchester would fill New College with men below the intellectual level attained by scholars in other Colleges, has proved to be without foundation.

SECTION IV

REFORMS INITIATED BY THE COLLEGE

THE Commissioners solved fairly well the immediate problem of giving greater efficiency to the existing University system, but they contented themselves with present reforms. Either they did not foresee that in the near future other measures would become necessary which may be called revolutionary, or they considered that in view of the novelty and difficulty of their task it was better not to attempt too much. There were two important points as to which it soon became evident that the Commissioners' settlement could not be final. They had left untouched the ancient, quasi-monastic rule by which all Fellows must remain unmarried, and they had made competitive examination the sole avenue to a Fellowship. However, they in effect compensated for this lack of foresight, or of courage, by giving the Colleges the priceless boon of self-government. Not only could they freely make, and freely alter, their own by-laws on all matters not fixed by the Ordinance: they could further alter the Ordinance itself, subject to the consent of the Privy Council. This power it was which, carefully used during the sixties, transformed New College on its own initiative.

These new reforms were not accepted easily or quickly, but by gradual steps, and as the result of some diplomacy as to the form which new proposals assumed. The

Ordinance had very properly provided that no amendment to it should be considered except on notice given to one of the fixed College meetings which a majority of the Fellows must attend, and all might attend if they pleased. It further required that two-thirds of those present should approve. The number of Fellows was only slowly falling from the original seventy, so that the number to be persuaded of the desirability of any new measure was large. Moreover, the greater part of them were non-resident, so that they had probably not heard the talk which naturally preceded a new proposal being drafted. Some were not open to argument: their attitude was that of the traditional Irish voter whose politics were always 'agin the gov'nment'. And if they were in sufficient number on any occasion, the most trifling novelty was voted down. Another party, who became larger and larger as time went on, were inclined to opposition, but were open to conviction. Others came to the meetings favourably disposed to the new ideas, but by no means taking them for granted. On the whole everything was subjected to searching discussion, and the results amply justified the trouble taken.

The change which has most conspicuously modified Oxford life within the last thirty or forty years is permitting College tutors to marry. In the old days, when none but members of the Church of England could graduate in the University, when a very large proportion of Fellows were required by their College statutes to take Holy Orders, things worked easily enough, if not always very effectively, under the rule of celibacy. Fellows who did not contemplate taking orders naturally went away, in

order to earn their living in some lay profession. They vacated their Fellowships by marriage, or occasionally forfeited them through not fulfilling the statutable requirement that they should take Holy Orders within a certain time after their election. Of the clerical Fellows some became schoolmasters, or obtained clerical preferment from some private source, but many continued to reside in Oxford. Of these some held curacies in the vicinity, some devoted themselves to study, some led idle lives. The majority looked forward to obtaining sooner or later a College living: all knew that this resource was open to them if other chances failed. How long a man might have to wait depended of course very greatly on circumstances. Some Colleges had much patronage, some but little. The longevity of incumbents was a standing subject of jest among those who were in fact waiting for dead men's shoes, and it was but few of them who made vacancies by obtaining higher preferment. Some Fellows again, who had a little private fortune to help them out, could afford to accept a comparatively poor benefice, and certainly did so if they wished to marry; others had to wait till a living fell vacant which would afford a reasonable maintenance. One or two might wait, having no purpose of marrying, till they could succeed to some particular benefice on which they had set their hearts. With all these elements of uncertainty it would merely be misleading to state an average age at which clerical Fellows might be expected to vacate their Fellowships. It may be safely said that no one lived till fifty without having had one or two opportunities of obtaining a fairly good benefice,

and that no one could expect anything at all till after thirty. And as the average emoluments of a benefice were considerably higher half a century ago than at present, both absolutely and in proportion to the income obtainable in other walks of life, no clerical Fellow of a College felt any serious anxiety about his ultimate fortunes: his future was certain, the one doubt being how long he might have to wait.

Under these conditions there were plenty of men able and willing to discharge the duties of College tuition. The amount of work to be done was only a fraction of what it is now. The number of undergraduates in Oxford was about one half, the proportion of Honour men to passmen comparatively small, and there were no subjects of undergraduate study except the time-honoured¹ Classics and Mathematics. Moreover, the undergraduates were less taught and directed, more left to themselves, than at present. Whether the change of system is an unmixed gain may be doubted. Much spontaneity has been lost, while much idleness has been prevented, and much ill-directed effort saved. At any rate the older system tended towards requiring less of each individual tutor. Of course the quality of the teaching varied, as must always be the case. Some men were zealous and stimulating to their pupils, others discharged their routine duties and took no further interest. But all lived in College rooms among their pupils, and all were practically sure to exchange College teaching

¹ It was not till 1853 that the first examinations were held in the newly-established Schools of Natural Science and Modern History.

for some other sphere of clerical duty by the time that they reached middle life, if not sooner. This system was open to objection from the point of view of the Church, though it burdened fewer parishes with unsuitable incumbents than might theoretically have been expected, but it had merits from the point of view of the University. There are many still, and there were more before any other system had been tested, who consider the very essence of College life to consist in tutors and pupils living side by side. Hence there was determined opposition to every encroachment upon what was a very attractive ideal. But it is a wasteful policy to refuse to look facts in the face, and whether the reality corresponded to the ideal or not, it became practically impossible to maintain it.

It would be straying somewhat far from the fortunes of a single College to discuss the many and complicated influences which for two generations have been operating to destroy the former clerical preponderance in Oxford. As a matter of fact the teaching profession has grown less and less of a clerical monopoly throughout the country generally, and very decidedly so in the Universities. Hence the old machinery already described, by which in Oxford a succession was kept up of men who lived and taught in the Colleges for a certain number of years, and then went away, ceased to operate. Teaching became a profession for life, and not merely for the first part of it: and few men could be expected to follow it under conditions where so doing meant renouncing all thought of marriage. The motives which give the Roman Catholic Church a celibate priesthood did

not apply: a man who had the gifts and the inclination for teaching preferred a school where he could marry to a College where he could not. Oxford did not originate the new conditions, but began to suffer from them very soon after the work of the first Commission was completed. In one or two Colleges the entire teaching work passed into the hands of very young men. Elsewhere a few men were retained in their tutorships after they had ceased to be Fellows, an anomalous and unsatisfactory position in which they could not possess the requisite authority, since they had no place in a College meeting, which necessarily held the ultimate control. The rapidity with which one College after another followed the example set by New College, of devising means to meet this difficulty, was the best evidence that the old system of all tutors living in College rooms and therefore unmarried, had ceased to be feasible.

The form in which the question was first raised in New College was the general one, whether it was desirable that the ancient rule vacating Fellowships on marriage should be maintained. The objections to it were sufficiently obvious, as was the necessity for substituting some other principle by which Fellowships should terminate, if the celibate restrictions were removed. A specific proposal was made in March, 1867, that Fellows on election should choose between a fixed period with no prohibition of marriage and an indefinite tenure conditional on celibacy. This, however, did not touch existing Fellows, nor did it deal with the difficulty that a tutor must lose his Fellowship at an early date if he married. The whole question was accordingly

referred to a committee, who should draft a statute: but the problem of dealing with the interests of existing Fellows proved insoluble. No principle could be discovered which should at once be fair to a number of individuals of different ages, and also not involve a ruinous stagnation for the present; and the imperfect scheme proposed was ultimately rejected. Meanwhile the discussion had opened the eyes of the majority to the expediency of legislating without delay for the teaching staff. Thanks to the size of the foundation, no pressure such as was troubling some other Colleges was yet actually felt, and it was recognized that it was better to deal with the question before it became complicated by individual cases. Accordingly in March, 1868, an amendment to the Ordinance was agreed on, to the effect that the College should have power to retain in his Fellowship any one actually serving as Tutor Lecturer or Senior Bursar, who would otherwise have vacated either by marriage or by succeeding to property. This measure was not passed without strenuous opposition, both from the conservative point of view—it was indeed a startling innovation on the principles which had been dominant all over Oxford for centuries—and also from those who feared difficulties in administration. But the requisite majority assented, and the measure was sent up to the Privy Council, as the law required.

The College, it will be observed, gave no rights in the matter to individual Fellows, but kept full control in its own hands. It obtained the power to retain any one whose services it wanted, and by never retaining for longer than a term of five or seven years at a time, it

reserved the means of getting rid of any one in case of need. Naturally a tutor who did good service was retained again and again, and had every reason to rely on the good will of his colleagues, but he never acquired actual right. Naturally also the College, when the principle had once been established, inclined to grant the privilege to such tutors as asked for it, but by great good fortune was never placed in a position where the number of the staff resident within the walls would have been injuriously lowered by any further leave to marry being given.

The Commission of 1877, which put the whole matter on a permanent and formal footing, occurred before any difficulty had arisen under the tentative scheme adopted in 1868. Meanwhile the example then set by New College had been followed by other Colleges, though by no means always in the same form ; and in the decade which began in 1870 it had been amply proved by experience that the College system could be successfully worked with a fair proportion of the staff married, and therefore resident outside the walls.

The second great change in the constitution devised by the Commissioners was very easily made. It involved no breach with the past, no risk of difficulties in administration. No more was necessary than that the College should trust itself to select the best men available. In requiring that all places on Oxford foundations, scholarships and Fellowships alike, should be filled up by competitive examination, the Commissioners had obviously been swayed by the current opinion of the time. There was a strong feeling abroad that everything which went

wrong in the public service was due to the prevailing system of patronage, which opened the door to much favouritism and some corruption. And there was a belief also, not so well founded, that the one remedy was to open appointments to competition. *La carrière ouverte aux talents* is admirable as a general maxim: but when it is construed to mean that competitive examination is an infallible test of merit, it needs much qualification. It is the fashion nowadays to decry examinations, on the ground that they cramp the freedom of serious students, and thus rather check than encourage the advance of knowledge. There is doubtless truth in this objection, though it applies to a small fraction only of the youth of this or any other country. But none of those who pour lofty scorn on all examinations condescend to explain how they can be dispensed with, either generally as a means of testing acquirements and stimulating industry, or specifically for purposes of competition. Those who are most familiar with the working of examinations are best aware how often they fail to discriminate exactly; but at the worst they place one intellectually competent boy or man in front of another who is slightly more competent, and they do not fail to detect ignorance and stupidity. So long as scholarships and prizes of any kind exist, it is hard to imagine any other means of awarding them which would be fair, and be generally acknowledged as fair. Nor is there any other mode of filling many appointments in the public service which does not tend towards political corruption.

It does not however follow that the Commissioners of 1854 were right in insisting that all Fellowships should

be given by competition. So far as a Fellowship was to be regarded as the crowning prize of a successful undergraduate's career, a provision which should enable him to start in the profession of his choice without the immediate necessity of earning his bread, competitive examination was a reasonable means of selection. But this, though a legitimate use for surplus funds, is not the primary object of such endowments. A College is a place of learning and education, and the first business of its Fellows is to promote learning, either by teaching or by their own studies. The two can and do go hand in hand, but the former is the more important, if only because without adequate teaching now the next generation will be less capable even of research. It is of course obvious that the most brilliant scholar, the most acute student, may be an entirely incompetent teacher, through the lack of qualities which examination cannot test. Defects of temper or of morals, inability to take a resolution, or to understand any point of view but his own, may easily disqualify a man for a position in which he has, as most teachers practically have, the responsibility of governing and of example as well as of mere instruction.

To these considerations the first Commission was blind, or else it was taken for granted that such difficulties would solve themselves, that at any rate they were unimportant compared with the supposed necessity of stamping out every form of jobbery. Whether competitive examination was a panacea against that form of evil may be doubted, though it certainly tended to diminish it by making favouritism a more obvious breach of duty. The

true remedy was the prevalence of the spirit that had gradually been gaining ground in Oxford for a generation before 1854, by which the Colleges felt it to be alike their duty and their interest to recruit their ranks with the best men available. Given the existence of that spirit, competitive examination lost its importance. The Colleges were ready to try the teaching capacity of men selected for them in that manner, and they could also be trusted to make the best choice open to them without competition, in case circumstances rendered this more expedient.

So far as New College was concerned, no practical difficulty had arisen: but the theoretic expediency of having a free hand in the selection of the teaching staff was recognized as soon as it was suggested. At the first meeting at which the matter was considered, the next after that at which the principle of permitting marriage was accepted, the necessary amendment to the Ordinance was adopted without opposition. This gave the College power to elect without examination, and without restriction as to marriage or property, any person who was wanted to teach or to serve as Bursar. The two amendments were sent up to the Privy Council together, where no objection was made. Both became law together in the next year, and both, as it happened, were acted on for the first time in 1870.

This second reform was not so largely imitated by other Colleges, being rather a counsel of perfection than a matter of present need. But enough was done to make it perfectly clear, before the date of the second Commission, that Colleges could be trusted to elect, without the fetters of

competitive examination, Fellows of whose active services they had need.

The latter of these two changes may seem at first sight to have been the more important of the two, but in truth it was not so. The resident staff of sundry Colleges was strengthened by the addition of men who had proved elsewhere their capacity as teachers. A few men were transferred from a College which happened to have no work for them to another where there was a vacancy. But until recent times the large majority of those who became tutors obtained their Fellowships by competition, were given some teaching work as an experiment, both for themselves and for the College, and on proving satisfactory remained in their posts. The other change, allowing some at least of the permanent staff of a College to marry, while taking care that enough were left resident within the walls to administer College discipline, supplies the very foundation of the existing system of the University. It made teaching in Oxford a permanent profession, instead of the occupation of a few years, from which the majority at least were looking for the first opportunity to escape. No one doubts that there are drawbacks to this as to every other far-reaching innovation: but it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that without it the Universities as they are, with the Colleges as an essential and most important part of them, could not be carried on at all.

The same period saw other changes which involved no amendments to the Ordinance, though they were material steps in the transformation of Oxford. In the fifties each College was completely isolated for all purposes of study:

the only contact between them as such was on the river and the cricket-field. Now the co-operation between them in lectures is as complete as it can well be without actual fusion : and there is a large amount of co-operation also in examinations for scholarships and other College purposes. None of these changes however originated in New College, which merely was prompt to adopt them on the proposal of others.

By far the most important of them was the arrangement entered into with Balliol at the beginning of 1868, to combine all College lectures. This was not an absolute novelty in Oxford. Three or four lecturers for the School of Law and Modern History, as it then was, of whom the late Bishop Creighton was one, had for a year or two been opening their lectures to each other's pupils. They deserve the credit of having been the first to discern how greatly the lectures would gain in efficiency through each man being able to devote himself to those parts of a multifarious subject which he knew best, while it is as easy to lecture to many as to few, when once a very small number is exceeded. This, however, was a purely personal arrangement between individuals, their respective Colleges merely assenting. And as each contributed his share of lectures, and each retained full responsibility for the private instruction given to his pupils, the question of any money payments did not arise. A combination of two Colleges for the purpose of Honour lectures in all subjects was a much more complicated business. The proposal originated with Professor Jowett, who had then recently become Master of Balliol, and was welcomed by the New College tutors,

who obtained the formal consent of the College without difficulty. Such an alliance offered by the College which then stood very decidedly first in the class lists, and in University distinctions generally, was marked testimony to the rapidity with which New College had grown in repute and efficiency since the new departure taken in 1861.

A combination of two Colleges for all purposes necessarily involved money passing between them. The very theory of the thing was that each should supply the lectures which its staff were best capable of giving, and should be spared the burden of having to find instruction for its men in all subjects. Obviously therefore the benefit which each derived was pretty accurately measured by the number of men that it sent to lectures at the other College, since the instruction which they there received must otherwise have been provided, and paid for, at home. And the number thus sent out would naturally vary greatly according to circumstances, so that it would have been by no means permanently fair merely to let the liabilities each way cancel each other. A modest scale of payment was agreed on, 10s. for each lecture in a week, both Colleges thinking the pecuniary side of the arrangement very inferior in importance to the educational. And this has become the standard rate of payment all over Oxford, where any fees at all are charged for admission of outsiders to College lectures.

It did not, however, follow that because these payments were made to the College the lecturer on whose account they were made should receive the whole. For every Honour School there are subjects which every candidate

must offer, and will presumably want lectures on, and other optional subjects, some of which only a few study. It being as easy to lecture to many as to few, and the scheme not involving any responsibility of lecturers for setting and looking over papers for any but their own immediate pupils, the lecturer who had many from the other College attending his course had scarcely more trouble than one who had very few, and therefore, in strictness, earned little extra remuneration. Nor was it expedient to make it to a lecturer's direct pecuniary interest to select subjects which the largest number of men would need to learn. On the other hand, there was a presumption that the more outsiders came to a man's lectures, the more worth having they probably were, and therefore the more valuable. New College solved the problem by giving to the lecturers who *prima facie* earned the receipts from Balliol part of the earnings. The rest it treated as accruing to the tuition fund, which had to pay Balliol for instruction that New College did not supply.

The benefits of the arrangement, both in saving of expense and in improvement of instruction, were very quickly recognized. One College after another asked for admission to the combined system, making the pecuniary relations very complicated, and leading up to the conclusion that when combination was on a sufficiently large scale, payments might be allowed to drop, since each College would on the average get about as much as it gave. Other combinations were formed, chiefly however on the model of that begun by the Modern History School lecturers—that is between many teachers in a single class

of subjects. Thus when the second Commission was appointed, the way was fully prepared for their measures, which required the issue of a single lecture list for each School, under the control of the Board of Faculty which prescribed all subjects of examination ; and this virtually put an end to all payments, except for some pass lectures.

The co-operation of two or more Colleges in examining candidates for scholarships was another matter of administrative convenience involving no constitutional changes. New College early entered into an arrangement of this kind with University, and took an active part at a later date in attempting to organize a complete combination for the purpose throughout Oxford, a scheme which failed because of the persistent refusal of certain Colleges to concur. In the general interests of education it is obviously desirable that boys should not spend a large part of their last school year in running to Oxford or Cambridge to compete for one scholarship after another, if they are not successful at the first attempt. It is at the same time necessary that all should not be concentrated on a single leaving examination, or else boys who for any reason like illness are unable to enter for it, lose all chance of a scholarship, and therewith, many of them, all possibility of a University education. On the other hand, in the separate interest of the Colleges it is intelligible that none should like to come last, and have to choose their scholars from among the repeatedly rejected. Moreover, no one who has experience of examinations of the scholarship type is unaware that the larger the number of candidates, the more stereotyped the character of the examination is

likely to become, and the more difficult the task of discriminating between candidates who may have been very differently prepared, and show very different kinds of future promise. A thoroughly satisfactory solution of the problem is scarcely possible while the Colleges retain their independence, which on every other ground it is most desirable that they should do. Probably the existing makeshift method, whereby different Colleges combine as they find from time to time convenient, with by no means the same partnerships for all subjects of examination, is the only compromise feasible.

New College also during the same period co-operated with Balliol in another important movement, due like the joint lectures to the initiative of Professor Jowett. The two Colleges agreed to assist in the foundation of University College, Bristol, by granting a subsidy to it for a few years, and by nominating each a member of its council. Of the local Colleges supplying adult education in the great towns this was the first to bear the obvious title, University College, and the first to be set going by a general movement among prominent citizens giving and collecting subscriptions for the purpose. Its predecessors, notably Owens College, Manchester, had been founded by individuals, and very properly bore their names.

The first idea at Bristol had been merely to establish a school of science, in order that young men, destined for business or manufacture, or even already beginning such careers, might there obtain or improve the theoretic knowledge required for success in their avocations: and such knowledge would obviously be mainly scientific.

Professor Jowett saw that there was an opening for something greater. Science and literature, if these terms be used in the widest sense, can learn something from each other, and gain by being studied side by side: nor can any education be deemed complete which totally excludes either. It was largely through Jowett's influence that the Bristol College undertook from the first to furnish adult education of both kinds and for both sexes, and this was in fact made a condition of the subsidies being granted. Similar foundations in the wealthier cities of the north have since outstripped Bristol, and have some of them attained the rank of separate universities: but they have all been developed more or less on the same lines. Science has from the nature of the case found more votaries than literature, at any rate among the male students, but literature has nowhere been ignored. This of course might have happened in any case; but there was a real possibility that local effort might have expended itself in providing the scientific and technical instruction which was of direct pecuniary value, leaving culture to take care of itself. The action of Balliol and New College certainly contributed towards giving its proper character to an educational movement which has since assumed great importance, and the Colleges may reasonably look back on it with satisfaction. At the time they exposed themselves to the reproach levelled at them by some people in Oxford, that they were showing the world how to plunder the old Universities for the benefit of other localities. It might with at least equal reason be represented as being expenditure profitable to Oxford, as extending its influence in a new fashion. But it may be

safely said that unless agricultural prosperity had then been at its height, neither College would have seen its way to giving away at Bristol money which might be wanted at home. And it may be safely said also that the great fall in the revenues of Oxford and Cambridge, with the growth of their needs, has produced a state of things in which there is no surplus to plunder.

SECTION V

THE SECOND COMMISSION

Not many years elapsed after the first Commission before it became apparent that the changes affected by it could not be deemed final. For some purposes the power given to the Colleges to amend their own constitution might well have sufficed. Nearly all of them came to see the necessity of rendering marriage possible for the members of their teaching staff, and the inexpediency, to say the least, of being compelled to select them by competitive examination. And if the various bodies compassed these ends in slightly different ways, no harm could result. For other purposes it was obviously desirable that a single authority should consider the needs of the University as a whole, and hold the balance between the Colleges included in it.

The resources of the University were very far from sufficient to provide for all its needs, for the professoriate in particular. Most of the existing professors had accepted the new duties prescribed by the first Commission, which naturally carried increased pay: and their successors, as one or another dropped off, were of course appointed under the new conditions. New chairs were also wanted, if the University was to do its duty by learning, and by natural science in particular. For some of these needs the first Commission had provided by requiring various

Colleges to furnish endowments, wholly or partially, for sundry professorships. And possibly at that date the Colleges could not well have been asked to do more—the future was in many ways too uncertain. But it was now apparent that the move had been in the right direction, and also that further assistance in endowing the professoriate might reasonably and properly be asked from the Colleges.

The burden laid upon New College, of supplementing the inadequate endowment provided by the original foundation for the two Savilian chairs, was by no means a heavy one proportionally : and the College early perceived that whenever the time came for making further demands it must do much more. On one point in connexion with this the College felt very strongly, namely, that professors whom it was called on to pay ought to be *ex-officio* Fellows, having a real personal connexion with the College, not mere outsiders drawing a stipend. This opinion was by no means universal in Oxford : in some Colleges the idea of having Fellows not elected by the College itself was so distasteful that they preferred paying away money to outsiders rather than admit the recipients to their body. It is unprofitable to argue the question in the abstract. When the second Commission came to do its work it approved the principle advocated by New College ; and the great majority of professorships were in fact attached to specific Colleges, as a few had been by the action of the first Commission.

On another subject with which a new Commission would naturally deal, the tenure of Fellowships, New College had also decided views. That Fellows engaged

in the work of the College should be chosen freely, without the fetters of competitive examinations, and should vacate their Fellowships on ceasing to do the work for which they were elected, was obvious common sense. The question whether Fellows in general should be debarred from marriage, and if not what limitation of tenure should be substituted, was not quite so easily settled. As already mentioned, New College had early considered it, but had at that time only obtained power to allow members of the teaching staff to marry, an example which other Colleges had followed. The more general question had, however, not again been formally raised ; for though no reason could be assigned for retaining the celibate restriction, except so far as might be necessary to secure the residence of a few Fellows within the walls for purposes of discipline, it was very doubtful, on financial as well as on other grounds, what term of years could be allowed to non-resident Fellows. There was much to be said for uniformity throughout the University in this matter, as well as on such points as the value and duration of scholarships, and this could only be imposed by external authority.

When it became evident that there would soon be another Commission, New College resolved to prepare a draft set of new statutes ready to lay before it, embodying its own views. The essence of the new constitution was that there should be three classes of Fellowships—those attached to the professorships which the College should wholly or partially endow, those held on condition of residence and sharing in the teaching work, and those without any such duties, which were to be given by com-

petition and limited in duration. The tutorial Fellows were to be chosen on the responsibility of the College, not necessarily by examination, and the celibate restriction remained only in the shape of a veto on the marriage of tutorial Fellows. All these principles proved acceptable to the new Commission, even to the term of seven years proposed for the ordinary Fellows, though there were sundry points of detail, on which the Commissioners insisted for the sake of uniformity, that did not commend themselves to New College.

It was a great misfortune for Oxford that the Duke of Cleveland's Commission, appointed to inquire into the revenues of Oxford and Cambridge, which it was fully understood was the precursor of another executive Commission, should have done its work just at the time when agricultural rents were at their highest, and there was nothing to presage the rapid decline which set in soon afterwards. Their report, issued in 1873, consequently gave a most misleading estimate of the resources which were, or presently would be, available. And it was a further misfortune, indeed it was the greatest mistake made by the second Commission, that they took no heed of the agricultural depression which was already becoming serious. They seem to have taken for granted that rents would rise again soon, and therefore imposed on the Colleges, for University purposes, burdens to the full limit of what might have been demanded if the most sanguine figures of the Duke of Cleveland's Commission had still held good. Instead of this, as all the world knows, rents continued to fall heavily. The result is that New College, for instance, though not an exceptionally

severe sufferer, is still, after more than a quarter of a century, far from being able to contribute to the professoriate all that the second Commission required, and is equally far from completing its own foundation on the scale contemplated by the new statutes.

The constitution, framed by the second Commission in general accordance with the previously drafted views of the College, had two characteristics in which it differed greatly from the Ordinance, both originating in the Commission itself. The first, which was certainly convenient, was that the numbers of the foundation were no longer rigidly fixed. As to the Fellowships—(1) there were to be five attached to professorships, three existing ones and two to be newly founded, for one of which the University will apparently have to wait for some time longer. (2) There was to be a maximum of ten tutorial Fellowships tenable on condition of residence, with an additional one tenable by the Bursar, the College being left free to make the Bursar one of its governing body, or merely an executive officer. As a matter of fact the maximum of ten has never been reached, more or less of the teaching work having always been done by men holding Fellowships of the third class, for whom the time of electing them to tutorial Fellowships had not yet come. (3) The remainder, described as ordinary Fellowships, were mostly to be given on examination, alternately open and limited to Wykehamists on the same terms as in the Ordinance, the intention being that there should be a succession of two annually. The College was also empowered to elect to not more than four ordinary Fellowships, for purposes commonly de-

scribed as Research, though the words of the statute were made wide enough to cover every kind of literary and scientific work, teaching or otherwise. All ordinary Fellowships were to be tenable for seven years, though with a proviso granting an eighth year under certain conditions. And since the College had discretion as to the number of Fellows in each class, it was further enacted that the total number of Fellows should not exceed thirty-six. This number has not yet been reached, nor is it likely to be reached very soon unless agricultural rents should rise again beyond all present expectation, partly because there are still Fellows remaining, both under the original statutes and under the Ordinance, who are permanent provided that they do not marry, and are entitled to a larger income than the new statutes allow.

It will be observed that in the new statutes the celibate restriction on Fellowships as such disappears altogether, though they granted the College the necessary control over its teaching staff, by providing (1) that a tutorial Fellow who marries within seven years of his election shall *ipso facto* vacate his Fellowship, but be re-eligible, and (2) that there shall always be at least four unmarried Fellows residing in rooms in the College—a duty which the College naturally imposed by by-law on the four junior members of the staff.

The College has since amended the statute relating to the Fellows in several matters of important detail, wherein the enactments of the Commission proved inconvenient in practice. But the only alterations in principle have been an increase in the number of ordinary

Fellowships which the College is empowered, though not obliged, to give for 'Research', and the introduction of a proviso by which some of the seven years' Fellows may be required to reside and teach during a part of the period.

Of exactly opposite character was the other novelty introduced by the second Commission, the absolute fixing of the value of a Fellowship at £200. Under the original constitution the Fellows had divided annually the available revenue, which as a matter of fact seldom gave them £200 apiece. The same system had been continued under the Ordinance, though with a maximum limit which was never in fact reached. And there was much reason for leaving to the members of a corporation some pecuniary interest in the good management of its property, which in any case they had to administer. At any rate New College was strongly of that opinion, though by no means objecting to a maximum limit, and pressed its views on the Commissioners, who however were inexorably determined that all Fellowships throughout Oxford, other than official ones, should be alike in value as well as in tenure. Whether this was of sufficient importance to outweigh considerations on the other side is an arguable question. Practically the great fall in rents made careful administration a vital necessity. Indeed very few Colleges have been able to maintain their foundations on the scale laid down by the Commission, and in some the existing Fellows have received far less than what they were entitled to.

The number of scholars was only fixed incidentally, by establishing ten annually, six from Winchester and

four open, tenable for four years, but with power to the College to add a fifth in special cases. The latter provision necessarily introduces a little uncertainty as to the amount of revenue required in each year to be expended on scholarships, and would occasion a great deal had not the College been always somewhat chary of granting a fifth year.

The statutes framed by the second Commission empowered, without directing, the College to make annual payment out of its corporate revenue, within certain limits, to four different funds, all useful but of very diverse importance.

1. *Tuition Fund.* The College could supplement the Tuition fund, which mainly consists of the fees paid annually for tuition by the undergraduates. As the College provides the income of the tutorial Fellowships, to say nothing of its contribution to the Pension fund, it does in effect permanently subsidize the Tuition fund to the extent of £3,000 a year or more. It has therefore always been felt that direct contribution to the Tuition fund as such ought to be the exception, rather than the rule: and it has in fact only been made occasionally—for instance, when accidental circumstances led to an unusual proportion of the teaching work being done for a short time by persons who were not tutorial Fellows, a state of things which obviously involved increased demands on the Tuition fund, and a diminution of the corporate expenditure on Fellowships.

2. *Exhibition Fund.* The exhibitions formed a useful supplement to the scholarships, and also enabled assistance to be given to poor men towards meeting the cost

of University education. Thanks to the existence of several small trust funds, which were by the Commission made available for exhibitions, the purposes for which they were originally given being met in other ways, the College has always been able to keep up an adequate exhibition fund without drawing heavily on its direct income.

3. *Building Fund.* The Commission empowered the College to set aside a fixed sum annually towards a fund for the improvement and completion of the College buildings, and this has always been done to the full extent authorized. It would of course have been impossible to carry out the extensive building operations undertaken since the date of the Ordinance, unless there had been the power to borrow money for such purposes, the origin and scope of which is explained in a later page. But the existence of the Building fund has greatly facilitated these operations: for instance, it provided the large sum spent by the College on renovating the Warden's house after Dr. Sewell's death.

4. *Pension Fund.* The most important of all was the Pension fund. The average rate of stipend for Oxford tutors runs low, compared to what a man of equal abilities and equally expensive education may fairly expect to earn in other professions. The remuneration is doubtless not all in money, but partly in the amenities of life, according to a familiar economic principle. This, however, does not alter the fact that a man whose cash income is a modest one finds it difficult to save much out of it, at any rate if he marries. Hence the prospect of a pension makes a vast difference to a tutor's pecuniary

position, and secures it altogether if the pension can be guaranteed.

The Commissioners' statute merely empowered the College to form a fund out of which it might grant pensions on conditions to be determined by by-law. So far this was the wisest course, since the circumstances might easily vary in detail, and require some readjustment of the conditions. But the Commission further proceeded to tie the hands of the College in a most embarrassing way, by enacting first that no pensions should be payable except out of the income of the fund, and secondly that every shilling of surplus income should forthwith be invested as capital. In dealing with pensions for a very small body of men like the staff of a College, though the average amount likely to be wanted is easy to calculate, the sum that may be required in any given year is certain from time to time to deviate greatly from the average. Hence if all surplus, in years when the demand was small, was rendered permanently inalienable, the College would be compelled to refuse pensions, at times when the demand was above the average, to persons who had earned them as fully as the actual recipients, unless and until the income of the fund was raised to a total far exceeding the average requirements. This the Commissioners failed to see, and it was only by good fortune that the College was never obliged to deal cruelly with individuals.

The College contented itself at the outset with fixing a period of service, short of which no pension could be asked for. As it happened, the date was still far distant when the oldest members of the staff, as it was then

constituted, could possibly retire: indeed it was twenty years before the first payment of pension was in fact made. Thus there was time for the accumulation of a considerable sum to serve as a permanent endowment for the fund, above and beyond the annual grant from the general revenues. Hence when the question of defining the right of individuals to a pension was ultimately raised, the College was in a favourable position for dealing with the matter. The statute was recast, leaving the existing capital inalienable as the Commissioners had made it, but providing that in future all surplus income should form a reserve, to accumulate in times when the demand for pensions was small, to be drawn on at times when the demand exceeded the average. Then, and not till then, it was possible to guarantee pensions, instead of merely holding out expectations liable, though perhaps unlikely, to be defeated. A scheme based on principles like those adopted in the public service was embodied in a by-law, and now every member of the staff knows exactly what he may expect—the earliest date at which he can claim a pension, the amount which he will then be entitled to receive, and the rate of augmentation to his ultimate pension if he continues to serve beyond the minimum number of years.

SECTION VI

NEW BUILDINGS.

EARLY in the sixties the number of undergraduates began to threaten to outgrow the existing accommodation within the walls. The question was taken up by the College in 1866, when two houses in New College Lane were appropriated for undergraduates until new buildings could be erected: the Junior Common Room was at the same time doubled in size. On careful consideration only one scheme of extension commended itself, though two or three others were discussed: this was to build along Holywell Street, beginning from the back gate. As the property belonged to Merton College, and was most of it held on long leases, the negotiations for purchase extended over several years. Merton from the first declared its willingness to sell whatever ground another College wanted for its proper development, though naturally desirous not to part with valuable house property unless it was actually needed. But Merton had only the reversion to sell, and New College had to acquire separately the interests of the various lessees. Moreover Colleges had then only recently obtained power to sell landed property at all, under very strictly defined conditions. The consent of the Copyhold Commissioners, a body now represented by the Board of Agriculture, was requisite for every such transaction, their duty being to see that

the permanent interests of the corporation were not sacrificed by its existing members. In an ordinary way this was simple: they had only to see that when a College was selling the purchaser paid an adequate price. But when a College was also the purchaser the Commissioners had the interests of both parties to safeguard: and it was not easy to satisfy them that a purchase which was advantageous to one was also a sale advantageous to the other. All difficulties were however in time overcome, and a batch of houses extending up Holywell Street from the back gate passed into the ownership of New College. Merton also very handsomely intimated, though it had no power to give a formal undertaking, that it would be prepared to sell other houses whenever required by New College for further extension. As gradually the scheme for the new buildings took complete shape, this was done: and New College became owner of all the houses from opposite the bell tower to as far east of the back gate as was calculated to be necessary.

The first purchase was completed in March 1871, the plans of Sir Gilbert Scott for the first block of buildings were finally adopted in the same year, and the rooms were ready for occupation at Michaelmas 1873. This first instalment consisted of four staircases, and extended from the gate to opposite the great bastion in the city wall, through which a gateway had to be made for communication with the front quadrangle. Two lecture-rooms were provided, a matter of urgent need, since New College had already begun combining its lectures, first with Balliol, and then gradually with other Colleges. Two large sets of rooms were intended for tutors, but at

the last moment it was thought expedient to retain one of them ¹ as common rooms, available for small lectures, for occasional meetings, and for private parties. The rest of the new building was entirely devoted to undergraduates' rooms, and sufficed to accommodate thirty-six. Two faults have been found with the design, that the style is monotonous, and that the buildings are too lofty. The former is a question of taste, which proverbially does not admit of being argued: but it may be said incidentally that no one has seen these buildings at their best who has not viewed them from the roof of the Hall or Chapel. As to the second point, no one from the first doubted that the buildings would have looked better if a story lower: but the first consideration was the necessity of housing a large number of men on ground of limited extent. To this necessity something in the way of architectural effect was undoubtedly sacrificed; but no one has ever suggested a plan which would have placed an equal number of rooms on the site, and yet have improved on the general scheme adopted, namely, placing a long range of buildings parallel to the city wall, with nothing approaching so nearly to the wall as to interfere with the view of it.

Before this first instalment was completed, the numbers of the College had so grown that it was seen to be desirable to proceed without much delay to erect another portion. On this occasion the College seized the opportunity of bringing a married tutor to reside within the walls. The

¹ When the Robinson tower was built in 1898, the first floor immediately over the gateway was devoted to common rooms, and this set was divided up for occupation by undergraduates.

westernmost of the new staircases was temporarily converted into a private house—not a very convenient one, since from the exigencies of the site it could have no garden or back premises, but not worse in this respect than many London houses. About ten years later, when the number of undergraduates had reached the limit of 200, which the College determined should not be exceeded, a tutor's house, with a staircase of rooms contiguous, was built at the eastern end of the strip of ground that had been acquired. The house was so placed as to project inwards towards the city wall, and thus to form a termination at that end to the entire range of new buildings. Sir Gilbert Scott being dead, Mr. Champneys was called in as architect, and requested to furnish plans for the completion of the whole block. This was a difficult task, as the gateway tower must necessarily be erected of a height to correspond with Scott's work, whereas it was obviously undesirable both that a dwelling-house should be nearly as lofty, and that in any case the great height of the central portion should be continued along the whole front. Matters were further complicated by a difference of level in the ground, which fell two or three feet east of the gate. These difficulties were however overcome, and though only the part above mentioned was built in 1887, the whole was completed a few years later. As one by one the leases expired, the houses between the gate and the last erected block were converted into makeshift rooms, and made to open inwards into the College instead of into the street. On the death of Alfred Robinson in 1895, his friends offered the College a considerable sum of money, on condition that the gateway tower

should be erected speedily as a memorial of his great services. This offer made it feasible to undertake at once what would otherwise have been delayed for some years for financial reasons. The building of the two additional staircases, which completed the whole, might no doubt have been further postponed. But it was felt that the advantages in convenience, and in economy on the building operations, were great enough to justify the College in taking on itself at once the burden of the necessary loan. The staircases, supplying accommodation for undergraduates about equivalent to that furnished by the small houses demolished, were occupied at Michaelmas 1897. And the tower, the rooms in which were an addition to the resources of the College, was formally opened in the summer of 1898.

At the western end of the Holywell buildings things are still in a provisional state. A plan has been drawn up for their completion, but the time has not yet come for carrying it out, and no more than the general outline has been adopted by the College. Meanwhile the leases of all the houses have expired, and more than one of them has been converted into temporary rooms.

Of the two great structural works which were carried out, one before, the other soon after, the first block of the Holywell buildings, the re-roofing and general restoration of the Hall and Chapel, neither was forced on the College, like the buildings, by the growth of the numbers. The Hall roof had in fact been undertaken before any of the constitutional changes had begun to take effect. In the Chapel, since the fittings had been constructed to accommodate the Founder's original establishment of seventy

Fellows, the increase in the number of undergraduates compelled the gradual introduction of some temporary seats, which were both ugly and wasteful of space. The motive for undertaking a restoration thence derived was, however, entirely subordinate: the general desire was to render the interior of the Chapel worthy of the beautiful exterior.

The Hall roof had been under consideration for many years before anything was actually done. The original timber roof had long ago perished, and had been replaced by a plaster ceiling, with just enough of mouldings to give it the appearance of an inverted tea-tray. No doubt however was felt as to the proper sort of design for a new roof, whenever it should be possible to provide one. In 1857 the Junior Common Room, which in the course of many years had accumulated a considerable surplus that was felt to be morally the property of the College, offered a subscription of £1000 on condition that the College gave the same sum. This offer was at first accepted, but on subsequent consideration declined, it being very doubtful how the remainder of the cost could be met, even if the College was able to put down £1000.¹ At the end of 1858, however, the offer was renewed in a slightly different form, the College being asked to subscribe £250 a year for four years. This was agreed to, and Warden Williams, immediately on the decision being taken, requested to be allowed to pay the first £250. Several years elapsed before the actual work could be begun. The College was able to find the huge

¹ This was before the passing of the first College Estates Act, referred to on p. 69.

oak beams which constitute the main part of the roof in its own woods at Whaddon in Buckinghamshire, and time was of course necessary for seasoning the timber. It was obviously important that the College should not be deprived of its dining-hall for longer than was absolutely necessary. Full preparations were therefore made beforehand, with the result that the whole work was completed in less than seven months, between the beginning of the Easter vacation and the end of the Long Vacation 1865.

The work of restoration was by no means confined to re-roofing. The beautiful panelling put up by Archbishop Warham had been covered with many layers of paint, and it was with some hesitation that the College decided to remove the paint: for no one could tell how many of the original panels might not prove to have been broken and replaced by deal, which would involve additional expense in restoring with oak. Fortunately, however, very few of the original panels were found to be missing, and the College reaped the reward of its courage. The bottoms of the windows, which had for some mysterious reason been filled in with rubble and plaster, were restored to their original shape: and the windows themselves were filled with coloured glass, a legacy from Mr. Eastwick, long senior Fellow, being appropriated to this purpose.

While the roof was being constructed, a boy fell off one of the beams, and was so little hurt that he got up and walked away. Fortunately he had fallen on some plaster rubbish, not on the stone floor: but even with this mitigation of the fall, it was a marvel that he was

not killed on the spot. The narrowness of his escape was emphasized by the fact that about the same time a man who was cleaning a first floor window in the garden quadrangle lost his balance and fell out: he was dead before he could be conveyed to the Infirmary.

Shortly after the restoration of the Hall, similar work was done in the Senior Common Room. When the room was panelled some generations ago, it was presumably thought that it would be more comfortable if not so lofty. At any rate a flat ceiling was put on some distance below the ancient wooden roof, which being out of sight went also out of mind: I certainly had never heard of its existence. Ideas on the subject of fresh air had doubtless changed, for the Common Room was pronounced disagreeably stuffy when closed and lit up at night. And it was for the purpose of finding out what would be the most convenient way of improving the ventilation that a hole was made in the ceiling one Long Vacation. Of course the old roof was at once disclosed, and it was promptly resolved to remove the ceiling and restore the original proportions. Nothing was necessary for the roof except cleaning, the timbers being perfectly sound: but the opportunity was a good one for clearing off the paint which, as in the Hall, was many layers deep on the panelling. It cannot be pretended that the roof and the panels are exactly congruous to each other, or the marble chimney-piece to either, in point of style: but no one has yet been found to suggest the destruction of a very effective whole in the name of architectural purism.

The larger work of restoring the Chapel was undertaken some years later, in commemoration of the five

hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the College. The original scheme was merely to re-roof it: but as time went on, and subscriptions came in freely, it was seen to be possible to do more: and the advantages were obvious, both in convenience and in economy, of doing all structural work at one time. Accordingly it was resolved to put on a new timber roof, to replace the reredos, with the niches for credence table, &c., and to make good the woodwork of the choir, which of course included the organ case above the screen. The filling of the reredos with statues was left to future years, and no question was ever raised about touching the windows. Sir Gilbert Scott was employed as architect, and took immense pains to preserve every morsel of ancient work.

The original roof was of timber, which eventually decayed, and was replaced by plaster vaulting. The exact design is unknown, there being extant no drawing or full description of it, nothing beyond the remark of one writer, which of course is only the expression of a single opinion, that the roof was scarcely worthy of the Chapel. It is certain, however, that it was of the same general character as the Hall roof, that is, of very low pitch. This is shown conclusively by the design of the west front of the antechapel: the Founder would never have allowed any of the roof to show, as it now does, on each side of the central pinnacle, when it could easily have been hidden by a slight alteration of the pinnacle. In the absence, however, of any definite information about the original roof, the College felt itself at liberty to take into account every consideration, and it was not without much debate that a conclusion was reached. Three

designs were submitted by Sir Gilbert Scott, one for a tie-beam roof like that of the Hall, one for a hammer-beam roof which was ultimately adopted, and a third which had the merit of being very much less costly than either of the others, but which would certainly have proved unworthy of the Chapel. The last was set aside, it being generally felt that it would be better to postpone the whole scheme rather than to execute it meanly. The choice therefore lay between the other two designs. In favour of the tie-beam roof was the fact that it was of the same type as the original roof: and the Hall already possessed one which was universally approved. Against it was the information that no more oak beams of sufficient size could be obtained in England, the Whaddon oaks used for the Hall having been the last, and the grave doubt expressed by the architect whether Baltic oak would prove adequate, that is to say whether it would be feasible to construct a tie-beam roof at all of so great a span. The hammer-beam design was in itself of great beauty, more ecclesiastical in character than the other: and there was no difficulty about executing it. It was, however, a departure from what the Founder had done, and it was unfortunately true that a hammer-beam roof would show above the battlements, though only from some distance. The other structural drawback, that it would interfere slightly with the outline of the west front, was perhaps not realized: at any rate it was not dwelt on in the debates. The essential points on which the discussion turned were, on the one side natural conservative reluctance to alter anything which had been done by a man so eminent as the Founder, on the other the view that the

innovation was a less evil than risking the construction of such a roof with untrustworthy materials. Sir Gilbert Scott's unfavourable opinion of Baltic oak could obviously be put to a practical test only by overruling it, and this involved very serious danger in the future. The majority ultimately decided in favour of the hammer-beam roof, whereupon a Fellow who was zealously in favour of that course doubled his originally very large subscription to the work. No unfavourable judgement has ever been expressed as to the beauty of the roof as seen from inside: opinions will probably always continue divided on the question whether the admirable internal effect was worth purchasing at the cost of the external blemish.

The original stone reredos was much broken at the time of the Reformation, the statues disappearing entirely; and at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign the then Visitor, Bishop Horne, ordered the College to cover the east end of the Chapel with a coating of plaster. At the end of the eighteenth century (what had happened in the interval is irrelevant) plaster niche work was put up by Wyatt, of the same type as the original: and it was this which in 1879 was replaced by stone. When the plaster was removed¹ there was found, as had been expected, sufficient remains of the original structure to enable Sir Gilbert Scott to reproduce it, with full confidence that it was correct not only in general character but in

¹ An illustration of Sir Gilbert Scott's extraordinary care in dealing with ancient material was afforded in this work. He ordered every bit of stone found embedded in the plaster to be preserved and shown to him. Among them he discovered scores of tiny fragments which he pieced together so as to restore the original piscina.

detail. This applied however only to the architectural design : the colouring of the original had been so completely destroyed by the plaster that nothing more could be affirmed as certain than that the reredos had once been richly coloured and gilded, as was known from other sources of information. The College wisely determined only to replace the stone work, and to leave the question of adding colour for future consideration. *Adhuc sub iudice lis est*: the College has never been rash enough to commit itself to a scheme of colour. After some years the niches were gradually filled with statues, many of them the gifts of individuals, according to a scheme drawn up by Mr. Pearson, then architect of Westminster Abbey.

In the nineties it proved necessary to repair substantially the ante-chapel windows, the lead work of which was greatly decayed. These windows had been moved out of the Chapel proper at the Reformation, and had suffered somewhat from iconoclastic zeal, doubtless also in the process of transfer. One Long Vacation a single window was taken out, the lead renewed, and the glass carefully cleaned. The experiment was so successful that it was resolved to deal with another the next year, the case not being actually urgent: and this was continued until the whole series of windows had been restored. This had the incidental advantage of distributing the cost over several years, as well as of not interfering with the use of the Chapel: but it would have been difficult to obtain skilled labour for handling more than one at a time. The opportunity was also utilized to restore to their proper place some por-

tions of glass which had been wrongly fitted together at the time of the transfer. And now the College can show a series of fifteenth-century windows as good in design and colour, and as well-preserved, as any in England.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the famous Reynolds window was not included in this restoration. It is work of a totally different kind, and a remarkable specimen of its class, whatever may be thought of its intrinsic fitness for church windows; but from the nature of the case cleaning is out of the question.

Before the ante-chapel windows had been completed the College found itself face to face with a much more serious task. The stone of the pinnacles on the Chapel and Hall, which had been renewed about a century before, was found to be so much decayed that the architect reported it to be dangerous to let some of them stand any longer. It was one more instance of the misfortune which many Colleges in Oxford have suffered from in the last half-century—the former use of local stone which, whatever its other merits, proved to be wanting in proper durability. The decay was not confined to the actual pinnacles, though these were the most urgently in need of attention; and there was room for difference of opinion as to some portions. No one, except the Goths who have made havoc with many ancient buildings, would wish to replace stone mellowed by age with brand new material, if it were not necessary. The problem before the College was a narrower one, whether to replace at once, or to leave alone for the present, stone-work which expert opinion declared to be not yet actually dangerous, but sure to become so

before long. It was thought best on the whole, both safer and probably less expensive, to make one job of it: and aesthetically there was much to be said for letting the glaring whiteness of the new stone tone down together, instead of in patches, as would otherwise have been necessary. For practical reasons little could be done except in the Long Vacations: the dangerous pinnacles were taken down at once, and replaced gradually. Thus the twentieth century was well under way before the last portion of scaffolding disappeared. Now, however, the College may reasonably look forward to a long period during which nothing need be done to the great mass of the Founder's most distinctive building, unless indeed some sympathetic millionaire comes forward to fill the northern windows of the Chapel with glass worthy of the whole.

The Holywell buildings, even though not completed in their full length, and the restoration of the Hall and Chapel, are a considerable achievement for one generation; but they do not represent all that has been done. Electric lighting has been practically feasible for some fifteen years: but New College was in no hurry to adopt it, preferring to introduce it by degrees. Even after it had been installed in all the rooms, and the style of lighting employed in the Hall had proved a success architecturally, there was a year's delay before the College was thoroughly satisfied with the designs for the Chapel. There may be more than one opinion as to the ideal to be aimed at in any artificial lighting: but the result which was desired in the Hall, and still more in the Chapel, that the lamps, while sufficient at night,

should be as inconspicuous as possible by daylight, has certainly been attained. The telephone is another recent invention which has been fully utilized, to the special advantage of the Fellows residing outside the College but within reach. Warming apparatus has been introduced into the Chapel, and later into the Hall, the latter becoming urgent as inter-Collegiate lectures grew into a universal system, and entailed the use of the Hall as a lecture-room as well as at the dinner hour.

One other important building has recently been completed, a new choir school and boarding-house, but this lies outside the walls, though near at hand. Something must sooner or later be done for the Library, either by building a new one or rearranging rooms so as to give the Library more space in its present position, as has already been done to a certain extent: but this is not urgent. The only direction in which during the last half-century nothing has been done is in constructing scientific laboratories. Here, again, the need is not pressing. The University laboratories suffice for the bulk of the men who are reading for Honours in any science. And New College is fortunately able for the present to share the chemical laboratory belonging to Queen's, which is close at hand.

SECTION VII

PROPERTY

NONE of these building operations could have been even thought of unless the College had previously obtained power to deal with its property. Under the old law, though the University and the Colleges could acquire lands, subject to the limitations of the mortmain laws, they had no power to sell or to mortgage. Lands were habitually let on beneficial leases, under which only nominal rents were received, but a substantial sum was paid by way of fine on each renewal of a lease. This system involved little trouble, as the tenants were liable for all repairs, &c., but it was open to every other possible objection. The College received on the average little more than a third of the rack-rent value of its lands; and its income was also very fluctuating, since the leases came for renewal at intervals usually of seven years, and there was no machinery by which the dates could be altered, so as to bring about something like equality in the total of fines annually received. Nor could this fluctuation be remedied by the College itself holding back part of the fines received in an abundant year, in order to supplement the income of leaner years. According to practice, so ancient and invariable that it would have been treated as legally binding, the Fellows divided in each year the balance remaining after all

other charges had been paid. And since there were from year to year changes in the body of Fellows, any such averaging of the fluctuating income of the College would have been mulcting those positively entitled in the present for the benefit of their successors. In fact it was only a concession to practical convenience, but a derogation from the strict rights of individuals, that the balance was not divided annually down to the last shilling.

Nor were the smallness of the revenue proportionately to the real value of the lands, and the inconvenient fluctuations resulting from the mode of payment by fines, the only evils under which the Colleges suffered as landlords. They had no control over their tenants, no power to spend money in improvements, no means of developing the value of property. It was theoretically possible to refuse to renew a lease, but if this was done the Fellows in a given year lost a portion of their small income by forgoing the fine. Hence in New College, though a few leases here and there were being run out, where the sums thus forgone were insignificant, very little progress had been made towards the College becoming effectively master of its own property, and no steps at all could be taken towards remedying the other evils, until the passing of the Universities and Colleges Estates Act in 1858. For this great and far-reaching boon the Universities had greatly to thank the energy of Mr. Lawrence, then Steward of New College (of which he was an ex-Fellow) and also chapter-clerk of Christ Church. By this act, and subsequent statutes which have extended and modified its provisions, the Univer-

sities and Colleges were placed more or less in the position of a private person who is tenant of a settled estate. Subject to the control of the Board of Agriculture,¹ they were enabled to buy or sell land, and to mortgage property in order to obtain capital for improving it, with provisions for repayment by instalments. Money could also be borrowed under the same conditions for new College buildings, a matter which, as has already appeared, became of vital importance to New College within a few years.

The most immediate advantage resulting from the act was, however, the means afforded to the Colleges for escaping from the system of beneficial leases, and getting their property into hand. They were by the act empowered to borrow on mortgage the sums which they would have received by way of fines, with an arrangement that the mortgage should be paid off by instalments during the first years after the property came into hand. By this machinery the present generation was burdened only with the interest on the sums borrowed, and the future would see the property fully in hand and unincumbered. New College made full use of the powers thus given, and by the end of the century had cleared off most of the loans raised to compensate for fines, and had made good progress in paying for the new buildings and the restoration of the Chapel. When the Holywell buildings were begun, the College obtained power to suspend certain Fellowships for a time, and to devote

¹ In 1858 this control was entrusted to the Copyhold Commissioners, an official body whose functions are now merged in those of the Board of Agriculture.

the emoluments partly to open scholarships as mentioned on page 22, partly to meeting the heavy charges for interest : but this came to an end when the Commission of 1877 recast the constitution of the College.

The disappearance of the old simple system of beneficial leases, and the gradual assumption by the College of a position as an ordinary landowner, with considerable property rather widely scattered, made the office of Bursar a very different thing from what it had formerly been. It could no longer be held by any Fellow willing to take the necessary trouble with internal management, and it was obviously undesirable that the office should change hands frequently. In 1862 for the first time a Bursar was deliberately chosen, and was retained in his post until he quitted Oxford thirteen years later. His successor again remained Bursar for twenty years, till his death. Under these conditions it became possible to organize a thorough system of accounts, and of management generally. New College was perhaps especially fortunate in its Bursars ; but good management, if not universal, was at least common in both Oxford and Cambridge. The Duke of Cleveland's Commission reported that the property of the Universities and their Colleges was on the whole excellently managed, at a cost not exceeding one-third of the average cost of management incurred by individual landowners.

It is no disparagement to the Bursars to say that the College never trusted its affairs to their uncontrolled discretion. Rather it is a credit to them that their administration stood the test of continual criticism. Some at least of the Fellows, as well as the Warden,

kept themselves pretty fully acquainted with all the business ; and every measure dealing with property was decided in a full College meeting, at which the Bursar's opinion, though naturally of great weight, was not adopted blindly. There had always been an audit¹ of the year's accounts held by the Warden and two Fellows, and this became of increasing importance as the rack-rents grew, with their attendant complications of allowances for repairs, &c. Nor was the practice discontinued, when the second Commission somewhat superfluously required that each College should submit its accounts to a professional auditor, and publish them in a prescribed form. But it has become rather a means of calling the attention of the College to the financial conditions of the year, than a process for ensuring the accuracy of the figures.

In the days of beneficial leases, questions of importance affecting the management of property could rarely arise. The formal acts, such as renewals of leases, were necessarily done in a full College meeting, which, if occasion arose, would also decide on any matters that were not

¹ The original audit has given occasion for a curious instance of evolution. According to the original statute the year of office for the Bursar and all other College officers ended on St. Thomas's day. In the times of beneficial leases the audit of the College accounts was a very simple affair, and took place regularly on the last day. A custom grew up of the Bursar and auditors having oysters for supper after the work was done, and then of other Fellows joining them. From this was by gradual changes evolved the present practice of having a special dinner on or near St. Thomas's day, to which the Warden and Fellows invite guests. The only remnant of the primitive audit supper is that *Domus* pays for the oysters with which the dinner begins.

formal. Practically the most frequent questions bearing on finance were when subscriptions or donations were asked of the College by parishes where it possessed lands or the advowson. As there was no machinery for giving previous notice to the Fellows, grants were made a little at haphazard. They were not agreed to as a matter of course, and as they were usually made on the motion of the Warden or the Bursar, who had experience to guide them, something like system was maintained. But there was nothing to prevent a Fellow interested in the locality wanting help from proposing a disproportionately large grant, and if he was persuasive, inducing the meeting to assent. As more attention came to be paid to College finance, attempts were made to improve the system, and to make the subscriptions given for such purposes as schools proportionate to the pecuniary interest which the College had in the various parishes. More than one committee investigated the existing subscription list, and proposed modifications in it on this principle. Attempts were also made to lay down rules governing, from the same point of view, the donations to be made for occasional purposes, such as the restoration of a church or new school buildings.

Ultimately, as the property began to come gradually into hand, and important questions as to purchase or sale, as to re-letting, as to borrowing for improvements, might arise at any time, it was felt that a full College meeting was hardly the place where such matters could be properly discussed, if all the Fellows then heard of them for the first time. Accordingly it was resolved that all property questions, including applications for grants

of money, should be referred to a Committee, which should investigate them fully, and make recommendations to the general meeting. This was done for the first time in 1870 as an experiment, and proved so useful that the Estates Committee at once became a permanent institution. As its work is done on the eve of the general meetings there is no delay: the Fellows know that all financial matters have been carefully considered by a few of their body, who have undertaken this duty on behalf of the whole. Though any and every recommendation of the Committee may be discussed afresh in the full meeting, this rarely happens. And the College, besides saving much time, reaps steady advantage from its business being conducted as continuously as if all were entrusted entirely to one man.

In 1889 the College determined to take example by some of the great shipping companies, and become its own insurer against fire. Down to that date it had insured in the usual fashion both the College buildings, and also the farms, &c., on all its widely scattered property. No alteration was made in respect to the College buildings: it was felt that, however small the risk of a great fire in College might be, the amount of loss, if such a disaster occurred, could not possibly be met by any fund which the College could accumulate. But for the farm buildings the ordinary insurances were stopped, and a sum of money belonging to the College was ear-marked as an insurance fund. Against this fund were charged such losses from fire as were from time to time incurred on any of the farms, and an annual payment was made into it out of the general revenue.

There was of course a certain risk in making the transition, but save for one considerable fire at the beginning, which made the pessimists doubt whether the College had not taken an imprudent step, the losses have been less than were taken as probable. The insurance fund has consequently grown to respectable dimensions, and the prudence of having undertaken the responsibility is no longer questionable.

SECTION VIII

ADMINISTRATION

THE present internal administration of the College bears, as is natural, no resemblance to the system prevailing in 1856: but the changes, though they amount to a complete revolution, were not made wholesale. As the circumstances gradually altered, first with the undergraduates ceasing to be junior Fellows, and then with the steady growth of numbers, one reform after another was seen to be expedient, the general drift of them of course being to assimilate New College to other Colleges, from which under the conditions of the original statutes it had differed fundamentally. The organization of the tuition, and of the administration proper, can best be dealt with separately from each other, for they were not altogether determined by the same considerations.

As regards tuition, the contrast between 1856 and 1906 may well seem greater than it in fact was. Half a century ago the College made no pretence at providing instruction in law and history, or in any branch of natural science: but these schools were then in their infancy. It was a good many years before there were any men in New College reading science, and those who read history were few and far between. Practically the teaching that had to be provided in the fifties was nearly all classical, with one or two mathematicians at a time, and the necessary

amount of divinity. As the number of undergraduates grew, it was obvious that other subjects would have to be taught within the College, though in the first beginnings it was thought best to find instruction in them outside. It was partly to meet this need that the first step was taken in 1863. Down to that time salaries were voted by the College to the tutors, the College taking the tuition fees paid by the undergraduates. In 1863, on a tutor leaving Oxford, the sum set free by his resignation was placed at the Warden's disposal to pay for tuition; and this was repeated as one or two more vacancies occurred, after which the Tuition Fund was formed. Into it were paid all the tuition fees, with a grant if necessary from the corporate revenue: and the tutors provided for the work and divided the balance.

It was not until 1867 that it was deemed worth while to have a tutor in charge of the Law and Modern History, then and for five years longer united in one school. Before the severance into two schools the number of men reading for it had grown too large for one tutor to deal with; and outside assistance had again to be obtained, until it was time for a tutor to take separate charge of the Law school. It may serve as an illustration of the growth of numbers in New College generally, and of men reading History in particular, to say that whereas in 1867 the Law and History work was not enough fully to occupy one man, aided by the practice then just beginning of combined College lectures, the History alone is now considerably too much for two tutors.

Natural Science again stood on a different footing. It was only by slow degrees that the number of men reading

science in New College, or indeed in Oxford generally, grew respectably large. The number of different sciences being considerable, and much of the practical work for all of them being necessarily done at the Museum, it fortunately is not necessary, and indeed it is scarcely possible, that a single College should provide for everything. What New College has done for many years has been to take care that members of the staff can teach some sciences thoroughly, and know enough about them all to control the work of the men who take up the others.

Hitherto there has been no demand for instruction *in Litteris Orientalibus*, though, as a matter of fact, three out of the four Oxford professors of Oriental languages were in their day Winchester scholars of New College. Nor have the still more recent schools of English Literature and Modern Languages attracted more than a very small number, for whom teaching could easily be arranged outside the College. It is for the future to show what demand there will be from these quarters.

It is probable that the mere increase in the size of the College, involving a corresponding augmentation of the staff, would have brought about, sooner or later, a more elaborate organization. But the real determining cause was the amendment to the Ordinance agreed on in 1868, by which the College obtained power to let Fellows engaged in the work of the College retain their Fellowships after marriage. It was thought right, in trying so novel an expedient, that all tutors, i. e. all having personal charge of the undergraduates, should still be unmarried men residing in rooms. The married Fellows were placed in the same position as lecturers outside the foundation,

having a specific amount of work and corresponding pay assigned to them, it being understood that the tutors gave to the work of the College all the time that they could reasonably be expected to employ in teaching. The complications thus introduced made it obviously expedient to have an organized system of control. Accordingly in 1871 a standing Tuition Committee was established, consisting of the Warden, all Fellows on the teaching staff, and certain other Fellows elected for the purpose, to which functions were assigned partly executive and partly advisory.

After some years of experience it was seen that the existing tentative arrangement, whatever its theoretic merits, was open to serious practical objections. If a member of the staff got leave to marry, the College lost his services as tutor, besides putting him at some pecuniary disadvantage. The essential qualification for a tutor was after all that he should be fit for the duties, not that he should live in rooms, however convenient the latter might be. Moreover the administration of the tuition fund was growing more complicated. Accordingly the system was recast. The tutorships as such were to involve little more than personal relations with the undergraduates ; but every tutor was to be also a lecturer. The rule requiring that all tutors should be resident in College rooms was at the same time relaxed.

It has never been supposed to be a good thing *per se* that members of the teaching staff should reside outside the College, and be thus less accessible to their pupils. It was, as has been shown, becoming a necessity, and the question was how to secure the advantage without paying

a needlessly high price in inconvenience. One obvious remedy was to provide one or more tutors' houses within the walls. Steps were taken in this direction not long after the College had begun to admit married men to its staff, first in a makeshift way, then by the erection in 1887 of the house which forms the eastern end of the Holywell buildings. And it has always been intended that another such house should be added whenever the western end of the buildings is completed. This might in strictness suffice from the point of view of College discipline, though the fact that more than one tutor has, at one time or another, managed to find a house in close proximity to the College seems to show that the convenience of the tutors themselves is best consulted by their being near at hand.

A great piece of good fortune, however, provided the College with what will prove in time a complete solution of the problem. The land in Mansfield Road being no longer all needed for the choir school after the acquisition of the cricket-field, there was room on it for the erection of houses within easy reach of the back gate. On careful consideration it appeared that there was space for three houses, each with a fair amount of garden, after reserving enough for the choir school. It was not deemed expedient for the College to build on its own account: all that it did was to refuse to let the plots on building lease to any but its own Fellows. Two have in fact built houses for themselves, with arrangements for the College taking them over when the present tenants cease to occupy, and doubtless the third site will some day be similarly dealt with. Thus the College will be in time amply supplied

with houses for its tutors, and will take care that they are used. Experience shows that a tutor living so near at hand does not need a room in College, which again economizes space within the walls. The distance from his pupils is hardly greater than from one end of the College to the other, far less than it may be for inter-collegiate lectures. And the opportune introduction of the telephone has now made it easier to send messages from Mansfield Road than it was, without it, from rooms not on the same staircase with the pupil for whom the message is intended.

A complicated organization of the tuition was, it may be fairly said, a necessity under the new conditions: and the changes introduced by the second Commission, more or less on the initiative of the College, tended in the same direction. Hence the Tuition Committee became a more and more important part of the administration. All the teaching staff were now under its control, inasmuch as it fixed the duties and emoluments of all lecturers; and it was also empowered to arrange, according to varying circumstances, for all work supplementary to that of the permanent staff. Moreover, it was charged with the duty of making recommendations upon matters which from the nature of the case must be dealt with by the College as a whole, such as elections to Tutorial Fellowships, and renewals of those already existing.

The changes in the internal administration, apart from tuition, started from the fact that the undergraduates had ceased to be Fellows, as under the original statutes. Even had the numbers not been increasing, it would have been necessary to organize afresh. There was no

reason why commoners, who were altogether outside the foundation, even scholars with a tenure of a few years, should be left in possession of the privileges which, rightly or wrongly, had been enjoyed by the *veri et perpetui socii* of the old system, however junior. The first step was to have the Hall dinners at a fixed price, instead of leaving each table to order for itself: the next was to make the Junior Common Room bills pass through the hands of the Bursar. The purpose of both was obviously twofold, to diminish the cost of living, and to give some control over the men's expenditure. Then came the appointment of a Junior Bursar, whose duty should be to look after everything that concerned undergraduate life in College, to allot rooms, receive payment of battels, &c. This, of course, was a direct consequence of the growing numbers, to which was to be added the steadily increasing amount of the estate business. The new officer's ingenuity soon suggested other measures tending to economy. The cricketers were told that no more dinners could be sent to the grounds: they might have a cold supper in Hall after the regular dinner hour, and if they thought they owed anything to their opponents (it being the natural custom that the contending elevens should provide the dinner in alternate years) they might for once bring the rival eleven to share their supper. It only needed one touch for the whole extravagant system of cricket dinners to vanish. Then the College resolved to invest money yearly in the purchase of furniture, so that the men might be saved the necessity of buying their furniture on first entering, and pay rent for the use of it instead. The sum available annually was but small,

necessarily so, since the Fellows of the old system had the right to divide the surplus revenue amongst them, and every sovereign withdrawn to be spent on furniture meant about sixpence less of income for that year to each of them. Hence the change was very gradual, but in process of time was extended to most of the undergraduates' rooms, to the great relief of many poor parents. For the same reason men who were willing to pay their battels weekly were relieved from the obligation of depositing caution money beyond a small amount, a change which entailed considerable labour on the Junior Bursar and his clerk.

A more obvious reform was the appointment of a Dean who should be primarily responsible for all matters of discipline. It would be untrue to say that this was urgently needed: the traditions of the College were on the whole orderly. But it was certainly desirable that occasional leave of absence, or other dispensations from rule, should be given on some uniform system, as soon as the numbers were large enough to make such applications frequent. And it was good also that it should have been recognized from the first that the existence of a Dean did not exempt other resident Fellows from responsibility for checking any disorder that might come under their personal notice.

SECTION IX

THE CHOIR AND CHAPEL SERVICE

THE Choir, which was an integral part of William of Wykeham's foundation, was ignored by the first Commission. The Ordinance merely directed the College to make and vary regulations for the daily performance of Divine Service, such regulations to require the consent of the Visitor. Thus the College was left substantially free to reorganize the choir as it thought fit. Its very mediaeval constitution would doubtless have been altered long before had there been any power to amend the statutes. The boys were much what they are still, selected in the same way and from the same social grade, and taught in a school of the same type: but the men were entirely different. There were ten chaplains, whose duty was not merely to chant the service, but to take the men's parts in the choral music. For the latter they had the assistance of three or four bible-clerks, undergraduates who had no part whatever in the social life of the College.

It can be easily imagined that such a system was in various ways unsatisfactory. There was a strong feeling abroad that the ancient practice of drawing a sharp line of social demarcation between undergraduates of the same College, placing a few of them in a position of obvious inferiority, was utterly out of date; and it did

in fact rapidly disappear all Oxford over. There was an analogous difficulty about the chaplains, or such of them as had rooms in College: they could not come to the High Table, which belonged to the Fellows only, and had to dine at a table of their own. This was not, however, by any means all. The remuneration was too small for a livelihood, so that the chaplains could only subsist if they could get other employment, unless they had any private means: and this naturally tended to interference with their attendance in Chapel. Moreover, they might, and some of them did, retain their posts long after their voices had begun to fail: in fact it was the least valuable among them who were most likely to linger on.

There could be no doubt as to the form which reconstruction should take, though from the nature of the case it had to be carried out gradually. The number of the chaplains was reduced to three, and they were relieved of all duties except chanting the service, and a corresponding increase was made in the number of laymen who were to sing in the choir. The only question was whether these latter should be undergraduates, or lay-clerks pure and simple. The latter plan was surer to give good voices, because the range of choice was so much wider: but there was much that was attractive in the idea of men earning a University education in this way, and it was thought that sufficiently good voices could be found—at any rate it was decided, though not without much hesitation, to try the experiment. They were no longer to be called bible-clerks but choral scholars, and were to be socially at one with the other

undergraduates. The first start seemed to promise well, but it soon appeared that the plan would not work, except at the cost of having a choir far below its proper level. A young man of the average age for freshmen has rarely his voice at its best, and has probably not had full opportunity of cultivating it. Men coming at that age, and going away after three or four years, cost a maximum of trouble in training, and were lost to the choir just when they were beginning to be valuable. And if, as happened with two or three of the best of the choral scholars, they were elected rather later, after being a year or two at another College, they disappeared almost as soon as they were thoroughly familiar with the place. On more than one occasion no really satisfactory candidate offered himself. Nor was there more to be said for the intellectual success of the experiment. Men whose musical duties took up much of their time could not work very hard for the schools, and it is no disparagement of men who had been chosen for another quality to say that the average of their powers was not high. Moreover, the College was still small, and consisted largely of Winchester scholars. If the motives were sound which impelled the tutors to impose an Honour standard for commoners, there could be no doubt that the choral scholars were an unsatisfactory element intellectually. If they were also not a marked success musically, why retain them?¹ A period of six

¹ The famous epigrammatic quotation, which is said to have sealed the fate of the choral scholars,

'Nec cantare pares, nec respondere parati'

was, like most epigrams, unfair, but it had in it an element of truth.

years seems short for trying a new system, especially when it could only be tried piecemeal. But no one at the time doubted that the experience was conclusive. It so happened that the disappearance of the last choral scholar coincided with the election of a new organist, who during a long tenure of office was an excellent and indefatigable teacher; and the lay-clerks have been all that the College could reasonably expect. The good management of the choir was secured by one of the Fellows undertaking, with the title of precentor, the duty of looking after it, especially in such matters as behaviour at rehearsals and punctuality of attendance. At a later date a permanent committee was formed, with functions as to the choir closely resembling those of the Tuition Committee, executive for some purposes, advisory to the College for others, thus securing continuity of administration.

It was a great advantage to the school when it was arranged that the Queen's College choristers should form part of it. There has never been any attempt to build up a large school, such as Magdalen has, though of a different type: where much time is necessarily given to music, boys cannot be expected to come unless they definitely want a musical education, and such cases are few. But the New College choristers alone were too few for a school to be worked effectively: the approximate doubling of the number by the addition of the Queen's boys made all the difference. Quite recently a school and boarding-house have been built between Holywell and the Parks; and the school is now as well provided as one of its size can desire to be.

The purchase of the land for this purpose had been made a good many years before. The choir school was then on the north side of Holywell Street, in a house held on a long beneficial lease, the end of which was approaching. It was obvious that the school must sooner or later be moved. Even if it stayed in the existing premises, which were hardly adequate, a considerable rent would of course have to be paid after the expiration of the lease; and it was on general grounds preferable that the College should own the buildings of its school. Accordingly negotiations were opened with Merton College, which owned the north side of Holywell, and all the land between it and the Parks, east of Wadham. When the first demand arose for building sites in what became South Parks Road, Merton had framed a general scheme for the development of this property, which was being gradually carried out. An essential point in it was the opening of a road from north to south; and it was to the west of this road, between it and Wadham Gardens, that New College bought some two acres. The choristers had never had any proper playground, and it was with the idea of providing one adjacent to the school-house that so large a piece of ground was acquired. As things turned out it was a most fortunate purchase. Long before the school was actually built, the possession of the new cricket-ground set free a considerable portion of this land for dwelling-houses, the importance of which has already been shown.

In the fifties, besides the full evening service, which has never varied, there was full service, with an anthem except on Litany days, every morning in term time.

Undergraduates were supposed to go daily, either morning or evening; but the rule was administered by the Sub-warden, who changed annually, so that there was little system. In view of the fact that tests had recently been abolished (except for the M.A. degree, for which they lasted till 1870), compulsory attendance at Chapel could not properly be required of all; and the feeling began to gain ground that it was not a good thing in itself. It was also obvious that a long choral service, though attractive to some, was the reverse of attractive to those who knew and cared nothing about music. On the other hand, it was most desirable that undergraduates should be reasonably early and regular in their habits: if they attended morning chapel with fair regularity they could not form habits of lying in bed too long.

No attempt, however, was made to do anything for some years: the majority at a College meeting would certainly have rejected any proposal for touching the existing arrangement. The first step taken was when the tutors induced the College to allow, as an experiment for the summer term of 1863, a read service at 7.30 in addition to the ordinary one. This was repeated in the next year, after which a shortened service was introduced for all week-day mornings. This was some time before the authorization of the shortened form for the Church of England generally, which has now become familiar. The New College form, therefore, required the sanction of the Visitor, which was given: it was naturally modified afterwards in order to make it tally with the new general form, with which indeed it nearly coincided.

In the shortened morning service it was agreed that a hymn should be sung instead of the traditional anthem. The book adopted, after one unfortunate experiment, was the small one compiled for use in the University Church, which, with all its merits for its own place, was felt to be too short, and had to be supplemented. Ultimately the College resolved to have a hymn-book of its own ; and this, compiled with much labour by a committee of the Fellows, came into use in 1900.

Dealing with the problem of compulsory attendance was not long delayed. Whether New College actually took the lead in this, as in some other important matters about the same date, I am not sure ; certainly there was no mere adopting of the practice already set going by another College. The plan evolved in 1868 was that names should be called by a tutor in a lecture-room just before the hour of week-day morning service, and that attendances should be registered both at this roll call and in Chapel, so that every undergraduate was free each morning to go to either one or the other. A self-acting machinery was also devised for enforcing attendance. As this system has now worked for nearly forty years, without occasion to modify it in any detail, it may reasonably be inferred that it solved the problem adequately.

SECTION X

SOCIAL CHANGES

THE social transformation of Oxford since the era of the first Commission has been quite as complete as the constitutional, and was effected more rapidly. A man who had taken his degree in the fifties, and then lost touch with the University, would have found himself in a new world had he returned about 1880, whereas the last quarter of a century has merely seen fuller development. From the nature of the case the course of these changes does not admit of being traced in the same manner as the alterations in statutes. Some of them, no doubt, depended on specific acts of legislation, the most important being those by which married Fellows were rendered possible. But other Colleges followed at their own time and in their own fashion the example set by New College in this matter, and the new powers were employed very gradually. Equally gradual was the transformation of the teaching machinery. It is easy now to contrast the methods of 1856 and of 1906, but it is impossible to define the steps by which the latter superseded the former.

It may suffice to sketch the social conditions as I found them on first coming to Oxford: but it should be premised that the circumstances of New College were exceptional. Life in almost any other College would at that date have

been less completely alien to the ideas and methods of the present.

In 1856 then I found myself one of a society of barely twenty undergraduates, all but one or two of whom were Winchester men, holding Fellowships actual or probationary according to the Founder's original scheme. The line of demarcation between us and the senior Fellows was by no means strongly marked: I doubt whether it would have entered into the head of any undergraduate of 1856 to 'cap' any one except the Warden, or to put on his gown when going to a tutor for anything but a formal lecture. There were about a dozen seniors in residence, men, that is to say, who had reached M.A. standing. Most of them were merely making the College their home for the time being, and lived their own lives. They were friendly to the undergraduates when they encountered us, some of them very hospitable; but only the tutors concerned themselves at all with undergraduate life. The latter were not neglectful of their teaching duties as then understood, though these were naturally light when there were so few to deal with, by no means all Honour men: one of them was indeed a most vigorous and successful teacher in his own special line. But the lectures were mostly like the school lessons which we had outgrown — a classical book construed by the men in turn, with an occasional comment from the tutor. The modern form of lecture was barely beginning in Oxford, and the modern practice of tutors taking their pupils singly, and trying to ensure that they do read and understand the subjects at which they are professedly working, had also gained little ground. We were left very largely

to ourselves, and if, as was doubtless the case, the average performance in examinations was lower than what men of the same powers might be expected to accomplish now, it was very much more the result of our own independent exertions. It would be exaggeration to say that we were as a body idle: nearly all did something, and there was seldom a year in which one of our small number did not win high distinction in the class or prize lists. But the majority took life easily: and seeing that each of us already possessed the Fellowship which is now the final prize of a very successful undergraduate career, this was perhaps natural.

Possibly for the same reason, we were not boyish. Mischief done or noise made at night, out of mere school-boy exuberance, was unknown in New College, and was, I think, much less common in the University generally than it has been since. There were no sumptuary laws, and the ordinary scale of living was undoubtedly more expensive than it has become since, though there was no serious extravagance. In fact there were very few rules of any kind. The *status pupillaris* was to a great extent ignored in consideration of the fact that we were Fellows with a permanent position in the College: and from what I saw and heard elsewhere I believe that we were as well-behaved as other undergraduates who lived under stricter tutelage. We had the Junior Common Room, the only one¹ in Oxford at that date, and we used it much as our

¹ In some other Colleges there was something called by that name, but these were either merely stores or were voluntary associations of some among the undergraduates. Nowhere else was there a Junior Common Room which was a club to which all the junior members of the College necessarily belonged.

seniors did theirs on the other side of the quadrangle. The majority of men went there for half an hour or an hour after dinner, drank two or three glasses of wine, and then went off to their rooms, some to work in earnest, others not. The Junior Common Room saved us from any necessity for giving 'wines', which were then a somewhat serious burden upon Oxford undergraduates generally, and were supposed by a public which got its ideas from books like *Verdant Green* to be more frequent, and to lead to much more drinking, than was really the case, though undoubtedly the general standard in the matter of temperance has risen since then. In other ways our life reflected the restraint which the good sense of the community, in the absence of careful scrutiny from above, imposed on tendencies that exist among young men, and must be kept in order somehow if their society is to flourish. No cards were allowed in the Junior Common Room, and the card-playing that went on in men's rooms, while answerable for much waste of time that should have been better spent, did not amount to serious gambling. If there was worse vice, it was practised so secretly that I can neither affirm nor deny that there was any: in the Junior Common Room the steward, who presided, never failed to fine indecorous language of any kind.

Undergraduate society was in those days much more limited to the several Colleges than it has come to be since. All residence for the purpose of University terms had to be kept within the walls of the Colleges: and by no means all of them were so full as to compel sending out into lodgings even the men in their fourth year. Consequently the large majority of undergraduates lived

during their whole time within their College, in necessarily close contact with the men who were doing the same thing. There was not the possibility which now exists for men living in lodgings to organize their life according to their own tastes, in more or less complete social independence of the College to which they belong. Inter-Collegiate lectures had not yet been thought of: and there were but few professorial lectures at which men of different Colleges met and might make acquaintance. The Union was a very much smaller affair than it has since become; and very few, if any, of the social clubs which now exist had been founded. There was no University football: golf was unknown: lawn tennis had not been invented: the Volunteer movement was not started till some years later. The few men who played racquets or hand-fives probably knew one another; but for the majority there was only the river or the cricket-field. The latter was the place where one formed most acquaintances outside one's own College: for the custom prevailed, expensive and inconvenient, but naturally arising from the early dinner hour in College halls, that after every College match the two elevens should dine together on the ground.

New College was on the whole more self-contained than other Colleges, partly from the very smallness of our numbers, but chiefly no doubt because practically all came from one school. No one dreamed of belonging to the Union. I remember that when four years later I desired to join it there was not a single New College member to propose me. We were far too small to have an eight on the river. We maintained a game of Winchester

football, to which all Wykehamists were welcome : but this rather marked than diminished our isolation, for these were old school-fellows whom we knew already. Cricket matches were the only occasions on which we were brought into much contact with the rest of the undergraduate world. It was not in the least of set purpose that we lived so much to ourselves : the existing conditions favoured our doing so, and life under these conditions was comfortable. No doubt every one of us had friends, more or fewer, elsewhere, and saw more or less of them according to circumstances : but on the whole it was within the College, and not outside it, that New College men in those days found their associates.

The most marked social difference between 1856 and 1906 is that at the earlier date ladies' society did not exist for Oxford undergraduates. There were but very few ladies in Oxford—the time for married tutors was yet distant—and those few did not concern themselves with undergraduates as such, though they might take some notice of private friends and relations among them. Nor were there swarms of visitors to Oxford for the boat-races, or indeed at any time except Commemoration, while for the latter practically none came who were not closely connected with some resident, don or undergraduate. Probably in 1856 the large majority of Oxford men never spoke to a lady from one end of a term to the other.

The change was at first barely perceptible. It began in the first Commission making the professoriate more of a reality : one professor after another, in taking up the new duties and new emoluments, was compelled to reside, and there was no obstacle to their marrying. One or two

tutors, whom their Colleges could not spare, were continued in their work, though they had vacated their Fellowships by marriage. Then one College after another allowed a tutor or two to marry and still retain his Fellowship. From the first the ladies whose husbands' permanent work lay in Oxford teaching seem to have regarded it as their mission to cultivate acquaintance with their husbands' pupils. Thus gradually grew up the society which can no more be ignored, if we desire to picture Oxford as it is, than the examination system or the river. Like all human things, it has not been altogether without drawbacks, but the balance of advantage is enormously in its favour. It had of course no connexion, except that of being evolved simultaneously, with the other social changes above indicated, but it has probably been more potent than any of them. On the whole it is no exaggeration to say that University life has been more completely transformed since 1856, than in any previous period of double or treble the length since the College system was first established.

The position which New College has held during the last half-century in the social life of the University has fully corresponded to its growth in numbers. The high proportion of success attained in examinations, &c., has certainly not been accompanied by neglect of athletic pursuits. Indeed there have been not a few instances of men being distinguished in both fields, good oars or cricketers who also took high honours; and naturally the Union orators have rarely not been successful in the schools. The College has had its full share of Presidents of the Union, and leading members of the multifarious

societies, political, intellectual, purely social, which diversify undergraduate life. The ups and downs of the Volunteers in general favour have been pretty accurately reflected: there have been times when hardly a New College man would enroll himself, others when they did so zealously, or when individuals have been active officers or keen shots.

Much the same has held good of games generally: there is none which the College has neglected, none which it has tended to monopolize. In football it has not produced many University players, partly no doubt because so large a proportion of our men have come from Winchester and Eton, both of which schools have a distinctive game of their own, so that it is by an afterthought that they take up either of the fashionable forms of football. Nor has there ever been a strong Scotch element in the College, such as on the average might be expected to produce a percentage of good golf players. Winchester and Eton have on the other hand done much for New College in the two most conspicuous athletic spheres, cricket and rowing.

Its success on the river the College owes almost altogether to its Eton connexion, though fairly large numbers are an obviously essential condition of continued success being possible. In the old days a College with a maximum of about twenty-five undergraduates could not maintain an eight permanently, though spasmodic efforts were made from time to time when there happened to be one or two enthusiastic oars among them. As the numbers grew an eight naturally made its appearance. Its fortunes were at first very chequered,

but in the course of the seventies, while the total of undergraduates was growing from 100 to nearly double that number, the proportion of Eton men grew much faster, and with their help the eight made its way. In 1885 it reached for the first time the third place, and since then it has repeatedly been head of the river, and has never stood lower than third. Naturally there have been also a good many successes in the other boating competitions. Indeed in one year the joke was current that New College had annexed the river, having succeeded in winning all the various challenge cups.

There was a time back in the forties when New College, exclusively Wykehamical, usually contributed three or four men to the University eleven: but this was in days when cricket was not widely cultivated. Even in the fifties, when a full eleven could rarely be put into the field unless some graduates were available, New College had the most successful College team in Oxford. This was more or less accidental: there happened to be a couple of bowlers who in College matches were almost irresistible, and one of the tutors, who played as often as he could, was a fine bat and an admirable captain in the field, though something must also be credited to all coming from Winchester, which then had a high reputation for accurate fielding¹. When the good bowlers in their turn disappeared the College fell back, though

¹ As an illustration of this it is worth mentioning that, an excellent wicket-keeper having gone down, and there being no one really worthy to fill his place, it was agreed to have no wicket-keeper at all—every man was to throw at the wicket: and they did so with extraordinary success during at least two seasons.

not quite to the low level which its scanty numbers might have excused; and since then there has been nothing remarkable. New College has had its fair share of leading cricketers, and its eleven has often been among the strongest, as might reasonably be expected from its present size; but hitherto it has never had, as one or two other Colleges have had at one time or another, a markedly leading position in the cricket world of the University.

Fifty years ago Oxford cricket was concentrated on Cowley marsh. By no means all Colleges had grounds of their own, and New College, as the smallest of all, was naturally one of the exceptions. When the numbers began to grow rapidly, it was thought necessary to remedy this deficiency. The only space available on Cowley marsh was far from satisfactory: the plot of ground was too small, was not level, and was so near the boundary hedge that balls were very easily hit over it: but for the time being there was no choice but to make the best of it. After the University cricket club had been allowed to make a ground in the Parks, New College, like some of its neighbours, began to look for something nearer home than Cowley marsh. Two fields proved to be available, the present ground which had a high market value for building sites, and another inferior in every way as a cricket-ground, but very much less expensive. The question was anxiously debated in a College meeting. The inferior field was not very satisfactory, but there was no reason to expect that anything better could be found by waiting, and the price required for the better field was a heavy one for the College to find for

such a purpose. Suddenly the Bursar solved the problem by announcing that an anonymous friend had authorized him to offer the College a very large sum towards the purchase of the better field. Such an offer was naturally accepted with gratitude. The name of the donor was never published, though it became an open secret to those really interested.

Incidentally the acquisition of this field by New College, following on the laying out of the Merton and Balliol grounds on the other side of the road, has conferred a great aesthetic benefit on Oxford. A considerable area has thereby been permanently rescued from the builder, making Oxford more than ever of a garden city. Incidentally also it brought with it another advantage to New College. Since there was ample room in the new field for the choristers also to play cricket and football, much of the land which had been acquired elsewhere for a choristers' playground was set free for more important uses.

Anticipations are rather in fashion nowadays, when ideas move fast, and material inventions follow one another still faster: whether they are worth while is another question. Those who attempt to look forward usually foresee one or two things which they strongly desire or deprecate, but do not think of other possibilities which interest them less, and yet may be equally imminent and equally important; and sometimes their foresight fails them altogether. Before the first Commission there were men who hoped or feared that the University would be assimilated to the German type, and that the Colleges, if

they did not disappear entirely, would become comparatively unimportant. Instead of that the Colleges are stronger than ever, though it is through their system having been largely transformed. At the same date there were men anxious to give science its due place in Oxford, who would probably have said that they anticipated the present Museum with all its train. But would either set have expected other things that came equally soon, for instance, the admission of women to university examinations, and women's Colleges established in Oxford, or university influence carried into all corners of England by extension lectures and local examinations?

So doubtless it will be in the future: changes will come that none of us anticipate, brought about by influences on which we cannot calculate, as well as others already hoped for or feared. All that we can do is to prepare ourselves to make the best of whatever may betide. If New College can meet the changing conditions of the twentieth century as successfully as it met those arising in the second half of the nineteenth, it may keep the position that it has won. If not, it will deserve to fall again into the background.

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