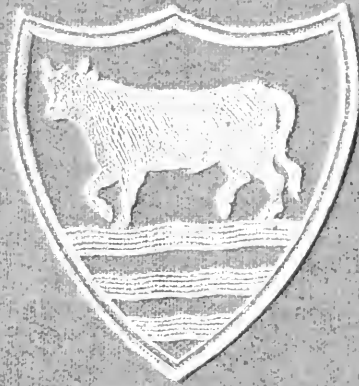


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THE
MAKING OF OXFORD

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RHODA MURRAY.



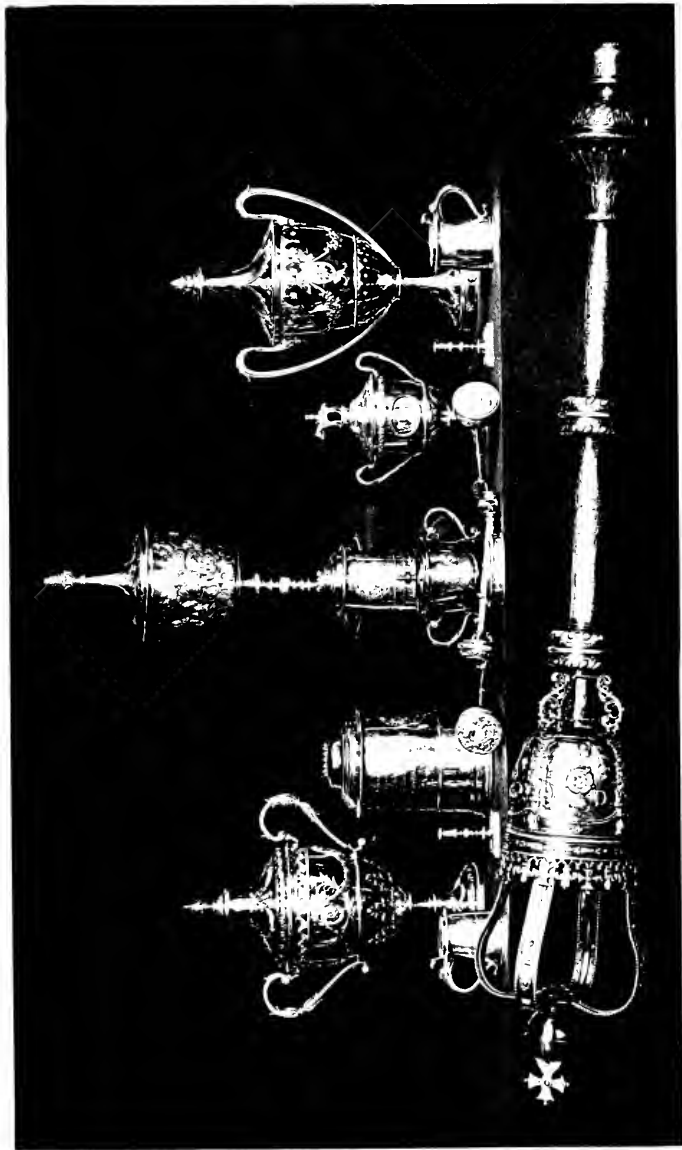


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THE MAKING OF OXFORD

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THE MAKING OF OXFORD

A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE
GROWTH OF THE CITY

BY

RHODA MURRAY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



Fortis est veritas

Oxford

B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

London

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., LIMITED

1912

PREFACE.

THE claim of this little volume to favour must rest on the fact that it treats—though not with the fullness merited by the subject—of the life story of the City as distinct from that of the University. Save where the two are closely connected, I have touched on the latter but lightly, well knowing that no detail of its existence will ever be forgotten.

The data have been gathered from many sources, and to writers such as Hearne, Boase, John Richard Green, Mr. Herbert Hurst, and Mr. James Parker I am much indebted. Like every student of Oxford history, I must also record the name of Anthony à Wood, faithful chronicler of all that concerned his native city. Though his notes have been justly criticised as dry, unconnected, verbose, and even occasionally untrustworthy, it is from them that the annals of the city have been gleaned and rescued from oblivion. Be it the publishing of the 'Mercurius Aulicus,' earliest of Oxford newspapers, or the opening 'by Jacob the Jew' of

the first coffee house ; the holding of a great annual feast for natives of Oxford in imitation of a Berkshire custom, or the marvel of the 'Flying Coach' making the journey to London in one day ; no event is too common, or detail too insignificant to be mentioned.

My thanks are also due to the City Librarian, Mr. J. L. Dougan, B.A., for aid given in the choice of books of reference and kindly interest in the successful issue of my reading. Above all I owe most grateful thanks to the Rev. H. E. Salter, M.A, for his great kindness in revising the MS. and eliminating errors which would otherwise have seriously diminished the value of the work.

RHODA MURRAY.

OXFORD, 1912.

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THE MAKING OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

A mythical City—St. Frideswide—The coming of the Danes—The City churches.

LOVING Oxford as they did, it is not surprising that her early historians should have endeavoured to prove that she existed at a much earlier date than that recorded in surviving documents. Thus, with naive simplicity, they speak of a city—Caer Mempric by name—which was built by Mempric, King of the Britons, B.C. 1009. Thither they say, there came, many centuries later, certain Greek philosophers from Cricklade, who re-christened their new home Bellositum, 'fair or beautiful place.' But these do not seem to have been the only inhabitants, for Bellositum—according to the story—had yet another name, which points to the presence there of British settlers. From the green meadows beyond the Thames there were at least three fords where cattle could be brought safely through the guardian river into the city, and so these pastoral folk called it Rhydychen, 'ford of the oxen.' Yet two more

names are given—one in honour of 'Vortiger,' a British King who rebuilt the city after it had been ruined by tribal wars; the other in honour of 'Boso,' who was its Consul in the days of King Arthur, of Round Table fame. With the coming of the Saxons, *Caer-Vortiger* and *Caer-Boso* pass, and *Oxenaforde* or *Oxnaforde* takes their place, to be handed down through the years, and at last to become the Oxford of more modern times.

In the shadow picture of these forgotten days only the figure of Saint Frideswide stands out at all clearly. Early in the eighth century, while Mercia was still the most powerful of the Saxon kingdoms, there lived in Oxford a Mercian prince, or under-king, named Didan. As the city was on the borders of Mercia, Didan probably ruled it on behalf of his royal master, King Ethelbald. Frideswide was the only daughter of this prince and his wife Safrid, and was born in Oxford. Well educated and of a deeply religious nature, she neither desired to marry nor to take the veil, but wished to live with her parents, and do good as she found opportunity, making only this one request to her father, that he would build her a church within the city, where she might retire for prayer and meditation when she pleased. Didan, however, fearing that after his death she might be forced to marry, and thus 'the cost of his church building be lost and himself forgotten,' persuaded her to take the veil. Very soon

twelve maidens of good birth followed her example, and, gathering these round her, she founded a tiny nunnery with herself as its abbess. Her father helped the movement by gifts of lands and tenements lying near the church, and also gave her Thornbury—now called Binsey—and when the good old Mercian died he was buried within the church he had built, where already lay the body of his beloved wife Safrid.

Now, the young abbess was not only good and learned, but beautiful; and, despite her vows, 'Algar, King of Leycester,' craved her for his wife. His offer she 'despised utterly,' and treated his royal person with such indifference that his pride was roused, and he determined to win her, with or without her will. Wearied by his persecutions, she decided on flight, and, guided by a vision, left the city by night secretly with two of her favourite nuns, Cicely and Katharine. The three fugitives proceeded to the bank of the Thames, where they entered a boat whose angelic oarsmen rowed them to Bampton, ten miles or more up the river. Here they landed and found shelter in an empty cattle shed, remaining many days in fasting and prayer, 'none guessing their hiding-place.'

Meanwhile, Algar, determined to win his bride, had again moved on Oxford, insisting, in spite of the assertions of the citizens, that Frideswide was concealed therein. Planting his archers before the

North Gate, he prepared to assault the city, but ere a blow had been dealt on either side he was struck with sudden blindness. His attendants dragged him into a place of safety, while his men, wild with fear, fled in every direction.

From this incident arose a tradition that Oxford was fatal to kings, since St. Frideswide, in her wrath against Algar, had laid a perpetual curse on royal visitors. Thus, that Harold Harefoot should die in Oxford, and that the misfortunes of Henry III should begin after he had visited Oxford with Prince Edward, are adduced as evidences of the truth of the saying. But if there ever were a spell, Prince Edward broke it when, in 1280, as King Edward I, he attended a chapter of Dominicans in the city, and escaped without disaster.

For three years Frideswide and her two nuns lived at Bampton; then, moved by the entreaties of their companions in Oxford, they ventured to take boat and row down the river towards the city. At Binsey the young abbess' courage failed, and landing, she commanded the others to proceed on their journey and bring her nuns across to her there, refusing to enter Oxford herself till she was assured that she could do so in safety. Thither came her faithful daughters to embrace their reverend mother and lead her home in triumph amid the shouts of the citizens, but—in gratitude it may be for her safe return—she had a nunnery and oratory built at

Binsey, whither in times of danger or pestilence she and her flock might retire. Here also by her prayers she caused a spring to break forth wherewith 'to satisfy their thirst and necessities.' The little oratory became afterwards the parish church of Binsey, and close by—down a few steps—one sees still, rising clear and sweet, her prayer-granted spring known as St. Margaret's Well.

In 735, the much-loved abbess died, and was buried in the south aisle of her own church, beside the graves of her father and mother. The nuns were soon scattered; many returned to their homes and married, and the nunnery, if it ever existed, came to an end; but the parish church of St. Frideswide remained, and some three centuries later was made a collegiate church served by secular canons. Frideswide was canonized by the Pope, and churches here and there in England and on the Continent were dedicated to her, while her day (October 19th) was observed as a feast.

With 912 A.D. myth and legend cease, and we learn how in that year, on the death of Aethelred ealdorman of the Mercians, King Eadward took to himself London and Oxford, with the valley of the Thames.

Eadward was King of Wessex, and son of Aelfred the Great, while Aethelred the ealdorman was his brother-in-law. After Aethelred's death, his widow, 'The Lady of the Mercians,' ruled over

that powerful kingdom,¹ co-operating with her brother in the fierce struggle which raged all over England between the Saxons and the invading Danes.

From a frontier city of Mercia, Oxford now became an outpost of Wessex, and by some writers the great Castle mound is considered to be a memento of those wild days of struggle and bloodshed, although by others it is supposed to be of Norman origin. Crowned at first by a wooden palisade, and later by a stone breastwork, it stood in the centre of an open space, which was in its turn probably protected by a mound, or rather wall, of earth, palisaded and surrounded by a trench. If there were any buildings, they must have been of wood or clay.

Doubtless even then Oxford was walled, for it was a thriving and wealthy town, in spite of its narrow streets, its wooden houses, and low-roofed traders' booths.

Marching along their straight road on the hill top from Dorchester to Bicester, the Roman conquerors passed all unheeding the British settlement by the river, but there came a day when the river was to guide the wild vikings almost to the very walls of Oxford. Five times it was harried by the Danes between 979 and 1032. Five times the unhappy

¹ Mercia at this time might be called roughly the northern half of England, and Wessex the southern half, with the Thames as the dividing line.

citizens—seeking refuge where they could—saw the red glare of their burning houses light up the sky; but after each attack they returned—with true English doggedness—and reared fresh homes on the ashes of the old.

Nor were there lacking cruel reprisals on the part of the Saxons. History tells of a massacre of Danes on St. Brice's day, November 11th, 1002, when, by the orders of Ethelred the Unready, all the Danes in England were to be slain. In Oxford they fled to the church of St. Frideswide, which they held in spite of all attempts to dislodge them. At last, furious at their non-success, the citizens surrounded and set fire to the building, and the Danes, driven back into the flames, perished miserably. It may be that Ethelred saw the smoke of their burning from his palace on Headington Hill.¹ If so, his joy would be brief. The 'crime,' which was 'also a blunder,' only led to fresh invasions of his enemies, marked by such an energy of raid and ravaging that 'next was there no headman that force would gather, and each fled as swift as he might, and soon was there no shire that would help another.' Peace came with the crowning of Cnut the Dane as King of England, and during his reign at least two friendly Councils were held between the two nations.

At Oxford, Harold, son of Cnut, was crowned, and there in 1040 he died, and when in 1042, with

¹ Cf. 'Little Guide to Oxfordshire—Headington.'

the death of his brother Hardicanute, the Danish dynasty ended, the country chose as his successor a true Oxfordshire man, born at Islip—Edward, son of Ethelred the Unready and his Norman Queen Emma.

‘Of ‘schools of learning’ there were as yet few or none in Oxford, though a legend has been handed down of a School founded by Alfred the Great, of which mention is made in a petition addressed to King Richard II by his ‘poor petitioners, the Masters and Scholars of your College called “Universite Hall, in Oxenford,” which College was first founded by your noble progenitor King Alfred (whom God absolve) for the maintenance of twenty-four “Divinis Perpetuae.”’ By the fifteenth century ‘Universite Hall’ had become ‘Universite Colledge,’ although the beautiful building as we know it was not erected until the seventeenth century.

Of churches, there was St. Frideswide’s Minster, where now Christ Church Cathedral stands. In the Lady Chapel, beside the restored remains of St. Frideswide’s shrine, may be seen in the wall a Saxon arch—probably once the arch of a small apse—the only remnant left of this ancient church. St. Ebbe’s, of unknown foundation, dedicated to Ebba, a Northumbrian saint, who died A.D. 683, with St. Aldate’s—sacred (according to tradition) to the memory of Aldate, Bishop of Gloucester, *circa* A.D. 450, by whose orders the British slew and cut in

pieces the Danish invader Hengist—which survived until the thirteenth century, were possibly both pre-Conquest churches; and at Carfax, even then, stood the City church of St. Martin, of which we are told in a charter of Cnut dated 1032 that he gave ‘a little minster’ consecrated in honour of St. Martin in the City of Oxford to the monks of Abingdon. In its churchyard at least one meeting of the ‘Portmannimot’ was held. From its tower overlooking the four highways which led into their city, the burghers could hurl their missiles on the heads of their enemies or speed the grey goose shaft, while the iron clangour of its bell was the summons that called them together in Council or for conflict.

CHAPTER II.

The Rebel Mob—Domesday Survey—Robert D'Oyley's Tower—St. George's Chapel—Norman Churches of Oxford.

IN the autumn of 1065, while yet Edward the Confessor was king, the Northumbrians revolted against Tostig, whom he had placed over them, and, gathering at York, held a Gemot, at which they deposed and banished him, and elected as their Earl Morkere, son of Aelfgar, Earl of Mercia. Having slain any of the chief men who remained faithful to Tostig, and seized all the arms and treasure they could find, the rebels marched southward—gathering reinforcements by the way—to Northampton, where a second Gemot was held, and messengers sent to Edward praying him to give them Morkere for their Earl. Here also 'they slew men and burned houses and corn and took all the cattle which they could come at, that was many thousands.' By October 28th they had reached Oxford, where a third Gemot was held, with the result that the king granted their request, and 'they took to them Morkere for Earl, and Tostig went over the sea.' At Oxford, as at York and Northampton, there is but little doubt that the wild Northmen robbed, slew and pillaged to their hearts' content, for it is a ruined city that is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1085-6 as having 'in the

town, as well within the wall as without . . . 243
houses paying geld, and besides these . . . 478 so
waste and destroyed that they cannot pay the geld.'

The twenty troubled years between 1065 and 1085 had given the citizens but little encouragement to rebuild their houses or resume their various trades, and when William of Normandy demanded their allegiance they gave it without demur. Yet in their hearts they doubtless deeply resented the passing of the old order and the coming of the new. New men—new manners—new language; already Saxon Oxford had practically ceased to be. Out of 297 mansions in the City only 62 were owned by citizens, and one notes how the Normans come first on the list of owners—not always because they possess more property, but because they feel themselves the master-spirits in shire and town.

One of these Norman proprietors, Robert de Oyley or D'oyley, was the first Norman Governor of Oxford. To him we owe the grand old tower erected to guard the western approach to the Castle. The Chronicles of Oseney Abbey briefly record the event. 'MLXXI. The same year was built the Castle, by Robert d'Oili the First.' This 'Castle' is now thought to have consisted of various out-buildings, long since destroyed, and the great square tower which—after fully eight hundred years—survives, a perfect example of early Norman architecture. The tower has three storeys and a basement.

The entrance to the latter was by an archway in its eastern wall, but admittance to the first floor and all above it was gained through a door some twelve feet above the ground and opening off the Castle ramparts. Each floor was one large room, and so carefully was the varying thickness of the outer walls manipulated that, though the tower tapers as it rises, all the chambers were the same size. The top of the tower was shielded by a high wall, pierced by arrow-slits—cross-shaped—to enable the bow-men to shoot in four directions. Between these slits on two sides of the tower were arches—now built up—for access to the wooden galleries, called ‘hourdes,’ which in time of war were often erected round the outside of such towers for purposes of defence.

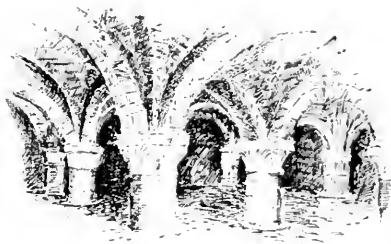
Three years later (1074) D’oyley founded the Chapel of St. George within the Castle precincts, making provision at the same time for attendant-priests or canons. In this work there was associated with him another owner of property in the City—Roger of Ivry. These two men, it is said, were ‘sworne brethren and iconfedereyd or ibownde everich to other by feythe and sacrament,’ and came together ‘to the conquest of Inglonde with Kyng William bastarde.’ Up till 1805 the crypt with some portions of the chapel walls remained. Unfortunately, at that date the chapel was demolished to make room for additional prison accommodation,

but the crypt still exists to delight the eye with its artistic merit.

Besides building St. George's Chapel, D'oyley is said to have 'repaired at his own cost other Parish Churches which were in a ruinous state . . . both within the walls of Oxford and without.' That such work should have been undertaken by a Norman soldier was strange enough to have been commented upon in the Chronicles of Abingdon Abbey, thus: ' . . . de Oili, the

Constabularius of Oxford . . . was very wealthy, and spared neither rich nor poor in exacting money from them to increase his own treasure . . . Everywhere he molested the churches in his desire for gaining money, chiefly the Abbey of Abingdon . . . Amongst other wicked things,

he took away from the monastery, by the King's consent, a certain meadow situated outside the walls of Oxford, and appropriated it for the use of the soldiers of the Castle. At which loss the Abingdon brotherhood were very sad, more than for any other ills.' In their grief they gathered together at St. Mary's altar in their church and prayed heaven to punish their enemy unless he repented. As if in answer to their prayers, D'oyley fell ill, and 'being impenitent, suffered for many days.' During



THE CASTLE CRYPT.

this illness he saw a vision of a lady on a throne, who accused him of his theft from the Abbey, and led him out to the stolen meadow, where he was met and tormented by a crowd of naughty boys till at last, in his terror, he called out, 'Sancta Maria! have mercy on me, or I shall die.' His wife, hearing his cry, woke him, and on his telling her the dream she begged him to go to Abingdon and make restitution. To Abingdon, then, his men rowed him, and he made restitution before the altar, giving besides, one hundred pounds towards the rebuilding of the Abbey, 'and,' concludes the Chronicler, 'whereas before his dream he was the plunderer of churches and of the poor, so afterwards he became the restorer of churches and a benefactor to the poor and the doer of many good deeds.' Among these good deeds, one which is specially mentioned is the building of 'the Great Bridge'—Grandpont—known to us as Folly Bridge.

No part of the Norman Church of St. Mary Magdalen now exists, if we except the faint traces of a crypt found under the south aisle. As in all walled towns, so in Oxford, houses would gradually rise in the suburbs just outside the gates, and it was for the benefit of such extra-mural householders that the church was provided. The sturdy square tower of St. Michael's at the North Gate carries us back at a bound to the days when the Conquest of England was still incomplete. Though the approach to Ox-

ford across the river had been safeguarded by the erection of the Castle Tower, yet at the northern entrance a broad road led up to the gate itself. At this spot, therefore, was reared a second watch tower. As we pass along the pavement we can see the built-up doorway which led to its lower storey; higher up in its south wall were formerly to be seen distinct traces of another door by which defenders could enter from the ramparts, and on its north side, some thirty feet above the level of the ground, is a third door, through which they would gain the 'hourdes' that projected from the wall. Not content with the carnal defence of their city, the Heavenly Powers were also enlisted on the side of its defenders by means of a church built beside the tower, and dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels. It is not considered that this church stood in the same position as the present building, but of its site or the date at which it was destroyed there is no record, and were it not that 'the priests of St. Michael's' are mentioned in Domesday Survey, one might wonder whether it had ever existed.

The crypt of St. Peter's-in-the-East, though now regarded as, in part at least, the work of D'oyley, still bears the name of the legendary founder of the church. Tradition makes Grimbald to have been a teacher in the University in the time of King Alfred. Below the church—which he erected for the benefit of students—he built a crypt wherein he

placed his tomb. But in 886, owing to a quarrel between himself and certain old scholars, 'he carried himself and his tomb to Winchester, where he died and was buried.'

That there may have been a Saxon crypt is not improbable, since antiquaries find it difficult to fix a date for the construction of the present one. The eastern end also is thought to have been altered in the reign of Henry I., but the western end, with its three arches, remains as much a memento of its Norman founder as the crypt below his Church of St. George in the Castle. As no names are mentioned in connection with the parish churches which D'oyley restored, it is difficult to classify them, though a list of existing churches is interesting. Besides St. George, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Michael and St. Peter, there are St. Mary-the-Virgin, St. Martin (at Carfax), St. Ebbe, and St. Frideswide. St. Aldate, St. Mildred, and St. Peter-le-Bailey were also probably in existence, though not mentioned in the list quoted from.

For some inexplicable reason the fortunes of St. Frideswide's Church had fallen very low. Strange to say, the lands round Oxford were held for the most part by Abingdon Abbey, and not until the next century, under the able rule of Guismond, its first prior, does the ancient nunnery of St. Frideswide awake to life and activity as the Priory of that name.

CHAPTER III.

Prior Guismond—St. Frideswide's Shrines—The founding of Osney Abbey—St. Thomas-the-Martyr—Stephen and Maud—'Bartlemas' Hospital.

At the time when he was made Prior of St. Frideswide's monastery, Guismond was Chaplain to Henry I. Seeing others preferred while he remained a humble chaplain, he put his fortunes to the test one day in rather an amusing manner. During Mass, while reading the 'Epistle' before his royal master, he came to the words, 'It did not rain upon the earth for *iii* years and six months,' which he read as, 'It did not rain upon the earth for one-one-one years and six months.'

As he expected, the King asked him why he had done so. 'I read them thus,' said he, 'because you, my liege, are used to bestow your bishopricks and other Church benefices to them that read soe.' Struck by the justice of the rebuke, Henry in 1120 chose Guismond for the first Prior of St. Frideswide's, and by various gifts and kindnesses assisted him greatly in the work of restoration and rebuilding which the preferment entailed.

In 1179 or 1180, when the new church was completed, there was set up in the choir a shrine, under which the stone coffin containing the remains of

Saint Frideswide was placed, and among those who came to kneel before it were several of the Kings of England—even John Sansterre remembering to seek her blessing at times! Where pilgrims abound, votive offerings are never lacking, and in 1289, in spite of the disastrous fire of 1190, which destroyed a great part of the Priory, a second and more costly shrine was erected, to be replaced in 1480 by one even more beautiful. Poor Queen Katharine, when in Oxford in 1518, spent much of her time praying before this shrine, which a few years later was to be taken down by her royal husband and all the offerings conveyed into his own 'treasure.' It may be that the finely carved 'watching chamber' in the Latin Chapel of Christ Church Cathedral is part of this latest shrine, and recently some fragments of the thirteenth century shrine were discovered, partially restored, and placed in the Lady Chapel near their original site. Prior Guismond's church of the twelfth century forms the main fabric of the Cathedral, and his massive Norman pillars and arches present a wonderful contrast to the light and ornate work of the later period in architecture.

While St. Frideswide's was awaking to renewed activity within the walls of Oxford, a new priory—that of Osney—had been founded without the City, whose fortunes, after the lapse of many years, were to be strangely linked with those of the older foundation.

Robert D'oyley I. had been laid to rest in the Abbey Church of Abingdon; and his nephew, Robert D'oyley II. was now custodian of the Castle. It chanced that Robert's wife Editha loved to cross the river below the Castle, and wander on summer afternoons in the meadows of Osney. While strolling thus she had observed several times in succession, on the same tree, a number of magpies that chattered vigorously as she drew near, and being a simple and rather superstitious woman, she wondered if they had a message for her. At last she told her confessor, Radulphus, of the matter and asked his opinion. To gain time, the priest offered to accompany her next afternoon, when he would be able to judge for himself. On their arrival at the tree the birds set up their customary clamour, and after listening to them for a while, Radulphus informed the lady that the seeming pies were really poor souls in purgatory, who thus implored her to aid them by some deed of charity, which would not only relieve them, but be for the welfare of her own soul; such a work as— he added shrewdly—'your husband's uncle did in founding the College and Church of St. George.' 'And is it so indeed,' she answered, 'now *de paradis*! if old Robin, my husband, will agree, I shall do my best to bring these poor souls to rest.' Yielding to her prayers, Robert founded in 1129 the Priory of Osney for Regular Canons of the Order of St. Augustine. Radulphus was its first Prior.

One can hardly realize what an influence Osney must have had on the growth of the City in this direction. Founded as a Priory, ere long it was raised to the rank of an Abbey. Its lands towards the Castle were bounded by the brook that flows under 'Morrell's' Bridge, as it is called, and within these limits soon rose the homes of the various artizans and clerks employed by the Abbot. Millers, bakers, butchers, tanners, brewers were there. Chandlers made the candles for the Church and luminours (illuminators) beautified the Abbey Chronicles. Outside the gates was the 'Domus Dei,' built for poor clerks, pilgrims and servants of the Abbey who were fed from the Abbot's table and received money also occasionally from other benefactors.

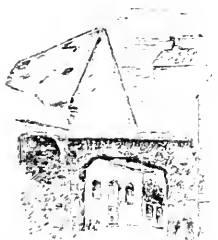
In 1142 the Canons built the chapel of St. Nicholas hard by the great gate of the Abbey for the use of the parishioners of St. George's, who at that time were unable to reach their parish church, as the Castle was invested by King Stephen. England was then in the midst of the wars of Stephen and Maud, and D'oyley, a strong partizan of the latter, had surrendered to her the Castle of Oxford in 1141. The following year she had to seek refuge within the great square tower, which Stephen vainly attempted to take by storm. For three months the siege continued till December brought a bitter frost and heavy snow. Maud, sitting in her square chamber, looked forth on the snowy landscape and

bethought her of a plan of escape. Clad in white she stole out by the door that opened on to the ramparts, and, aided by four trusted knights, crossed frozen moat and river and reached Abingdon—six weary miles off—in safety.

With the escape of Maud the siege ended. Stephen, having burned much of the City for its loyalty to his rival, gave the Castle to William de Chesney, one of his followers, and departed. Once more the parishioners were able to worship in St. George's Church, but the chapel of St. Nicholas continued for some centuries to be used by the servants of the Abbey; and about 1190 the Canons, finding that it was inconvenient that a parish church should be situated within a castle, built a new church for the parishioners, placing it on the boundary of the Manors of North Osney and South Osney, under the patronage of St. Thomas the Martyr; and as the Church of St. Thomas the Martyr it has since been known, with the exception of a short interval when Henry VIII issued an order that no churches were to bear that title. The simple external dedication cross of the Osney Canons—one long, horizontal stone between two shorter perpendicular stones—inset in the masonry of the North-east buttress, is the only example in Oxford. Above the doorway of its 17th century porch is the coat of arms of a former vicar, Dr. Burton, author of the 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' whose favourite method of curing

the attacks of that painful disease was by walking along to Folly Bridge to hear the bargees swear!

One 15th century archway, a few carved stones—many of them dug out of the river-bed, where they had been used to support the banks—and a building with a high pitched roof, said to be part of what were called the Canons' Buildings, are all that remain of Osney Abbey. In the modern Osney Cemetery a row of old graves has been made out which marks the position of the Abbey cloisters. In what was the nave of the Abbey Church, at about one-third distant from its West end, is the Cemetery Chapel. Formerly a heap of stones and mortar marked the site of the tower, but these are gradually disappearing. The western tower and the tower in the transepts are depicted in a



OLD GATEWAY,
OSNEY MILL.

small stained glass window in the choir of the Cathedral. In the same window is portrayed Bishop King, last Abbot of Osney and first Bishop of Oxford.

For three years after the dissolution of the monasteries Henry VIII. spared Osney with the idea of making it the Cathedral. At the end of that time, however, he finally decided to confer the honour on St. Frideswide's Church, which was connected with his new College of Christ Church. The Abbey fell

into disuse and decay; seven of its eight bells were carried to the new Cathedral—of which ‘Thomas,’ re-cast in 1680, is now known as ‘Great Tom of Christ Church’—and probably many loads of its finely-faced stones were used in the buildings of the ‘King’s’ College and other houses in the City. In 1718 Hearne the antiquarian notes that he saw some foundations being dug up for building a house, and later he again notes that the meadow on which the Abbey had stood was ploughed for the first time. In Castle Street is a tiny relic of the Abbey. Beside an old inn, now partly modernized, upon the spandrils of a doorway are the arms of the D’Oyleys. In former days the inn belonged to Osney, and was one of the halls of residence for students which abounded in Oxford in the early days of the University. By this time Henry’s Palace of Beaumont was completed, and no doubt the frequent presence of royalty did much to foster learning in Oxford, but was not—as far as one may judge—an unmixed blessing to the City itself. The University gained many a victory over the City in their frequent disagreements, not because its cause was just, but because of the skill with which its members defended themselves and the pleasure which their superior grace and courtliness of manner gave to their various liege lords.

The last relic of Beaumont Palace was destroyed in 1830, and this royal residence and birthplace of

Richard Lion-Heart is now only recalled in the name of a street.

On the Cowley Road, however, a few yards beyond the tramway terminus, may be seen a memento of the bounty of Henry I.—Bartlemas Chapel, lately restored after years of neglect—and the outbuildings of quaint old Bartlemas Farm formed at one time a lepers' home, founded in 1126 and called St. Bartholomew's hospital, 'by our lord old King



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

Henry . . . for the receiving and sustayning of infirme leprose folke, and appointed a convent of twelve brethren and one Chapleine,' the whole to be kept up by a yearly sum of £28 os. 5d. to be paid in weekly instalments 'out of the fee-farme rent' of the City.¹ How long it remained a lepers' home

is uncertain, but about 1421, over the whole of Europe, these unfortunates were accused of poisoning streams and wells at the bidding of Saracens and other foes to Christianity. A crusade was soon started against them, and they were driven forth to shelter as best they could in forests and uninhabited parts of the country, and their hospitals allowed to

¹ Oxford City was held as a 'farm' by the English sovereigns, and paid to them a yearly tax 'for toll and gable and all other customes.'—*Domesday Survey*.

fall into ruins. Thus also Bartlemas might have fared, but fortunately Edward III. gave it to Oriel for ever as a rest house for scholars in times of pestilence, on condition that the College should support one chaplain and eight brothers in the hospital, of whom two were to be healthy and the rest infirm.

Having now no share in the benefits of the hospital, the City naturally objected to pay the tax ordained by the founder, and a continual strife was waged between the Mayors of Oxford and the College. The matter was arranged in 1536, when Henry VIII. granted the City fathers the right to elect one of the eight brethren.

Little Bartlemas has passed through many changes. For a time the Fellows of New College used to walk thither on Ascension Day. To them the Chaplain read a Psalm and the Lesson for the Day, after which the Fellows sang an anthem. This was followed by the second Lesson, another anthem and the Collect. Then one by one the Fellows went up to the altar and placed in a vessel set there for the purpose a silver coin, to be divided later on among the brethren. Service over they walked to a well called 'Strowell' at the upper end of the grove near which the Chapel stood, and enjoyed themselves for a time singing anthems and part songs. This custom continued until the reign of Elizabeth, when the Fellows are replaced by 'youths of the City,' and Ascension Day with its serious note passes into the merry First of

May, when all that were young and bright came 'with their lords and ladyes, garlands, fifes, flutes and drumms' to enjoy themselves with music and dancing.

In 1643, Bartlemas was used as a 'plague house' for Oxford, and during the siege of the City by the Parliamentary troops it was almost destroyed, while the lead was torn from the Chapel roof for bullets. The restoration which followed in 1649 amounted practically to re-building. In 1833 it was fitted up as a hospital when England was threatened with an epidemic of Asiatic cholera. It has now retired into a restful old age, remembered by few save the eight old 'Almsmen of St. Barty' who receive a yearly bounty from Oriel College.

CHAPTER IV.

Churches and Churchyards—St. Giles' Church and its Builder—
St. Giles' Fair—St. Frideswide's Fair—St. George's College—
The Jews in Oxford—The early Guilds.

BESIDES founding the Abbey of Osney, Robert D'oyley seems to have had a beneficent influence on Oxford during his custody of the Castle. Old St. Clement's Church, beyond Petty Pont (Magdalen Bridge) belonged to this period. Its site is marked by the tiny triangular graveyard in the Plain—one of three God's acres showing where City Churches formerly stood. The second is the churchyard of St. Peter-le-Bailey in Queen Street—now made into a public garden—and the third, that of the 'little minster' at Carfax, built round by houses and guarded by Carfax tower. On the pillar at the northern corner of St. Clement's graveyard is the following inscription, a relic of the Napoleonic wars: 'Peace was proclaimed in the City of Oxford, June 27th, 1814.' It marks the date of Napoleon's abdication and banishment to Elba, and not the victorious year of Waterloo.¹ Besides St. Clement's, in the eastern suburbs, there was built circa 1120, in what were then 'the pleasant fields of Beaumont without the North Gate of the City,' the Parish Church of St.

¹ Since this was written a new stone and inscription have replaced the old, adding to the legibility, but taking from the interest.

Giles Erected by an Englishman, Edwyn Godgoose, an Oxford citizen, it was finally given by him to the nunnery of Godstow. Since the Norman rule replaced the Mercian, Oxford had received most of her benefits from the hands of her conquerors, but the building of St. Giles by Godgoose was the beginning of a new era when once more her own citizens were to be among her chief benefactors. From the wealthy lady, Dionysia Burewald, who left some property towards the maintenance of the Mass of St. Mary, celebrated in the chapel of St. Mary in St. Michael's Church at the North Gate; to the prosperous fishmonger, Doclinton, or Ducklinton, who founded a perpetual Chantry in St. Aldate's Church; one finds all grades of civic life represented by gifts of money, land, or tenements.

Though the 'pleasant fields' have resolved themselves into an open space at the junction of the Woodstock and Banbury roads, and St. Giles' Church is within the present City boundaries, there is much in the interior of the building to recall to the mind its ancient origin. The chancel and nave belong to the close of the twelfth century, and the north aisle to the beginning of the thirteenth. The tower is partly of Norman work, and in the wall of the north aisle is some beautiful arcading, completed, as is thought, before the giving of the church in 1138 to the nuns of Godstow.

Between the church and the Martyrs' Memorial is held annually at the beginning of September a pleasure fair, when the quiet street lays aside its dignity for the nonce, and becomes the haunt of merry-makers from city and country. The fair is a survival of a very old fair, or rather wake, held yearly on the Monday after St. Giles' Day. In olden times the greatest yearly fair held in Oxford was that of St. Frideswide. It was owned by the King previous to 1122, when it was given to the Prior by Henry I, who ordered it to be kept by both city and suburbs for seven days each July. During these days the Canons had custody of the City, the keys of its gates being given into their keeping. They had also the trial of weights and measures, wine, bread, and ale, with 'the amercements thereto belonging,' and they collected stallage or pitching-pence from all selling in the fair. The Steward of the Priory had, too, a little court of his own to try misdemeanours committed in the fair. This was called the 'pie-powders' court, from the French '*pie-pouldré*'—dusty foot. The nickname, according to some writers, was a skit at the dusty feet of the country lads who frequented the fair, though it is also claimed to refer to the haste with which the merchants concluded their bargains.



THE 'LAMB AND FLAG.'

Once only for a brief interval during Stephen's reign did the fair pass from the Priory to the City. No determined opposition seems to have been made to the rights of the Canons until in the reign of Henry III the date of the fair was altered from July to October, when it opened on the Eve of St. Frideswide's Day. The new date does not seem to have been auspicious, disturbances became 'the fashion of the fair,' and the annual merrymaking had to be held first in the Castle and finally in one of the Priory meadows.

In 1149 the small convent of priests who ministered to the parishioners of St. George was removed to Osney Abbey. Long after, in the fifteenth century, its place was taken by a college of secular scholars, under the charge of one of the Osney Canons, while the Church of St. George became their chapel. Above its altar was a statue of the Saint, before which lights were kept always burning. On his day (April 23rd) a feast was held and sermons preached in his honour, when all who gave offerings at the altar were rewarded by ten years and seventy-six days of indulgence. Probably such gifts would go to the fund for keeping the Church in repair. To this fund Henry III added a yearly sum of £5, but Osney was responsible for ordinary expenses. The Abbey gave to the Church 'four gallons of oil four times a year; incense twice a year; wine twice a week; bread when needed; a torch on the

Nativity of Christ and forty-two pounds of wax towards the end of Christ-tide.' The warden of the College did not reside in the Castle, but went thither occasionally to see if his deputy were ruling wisely and his scholars behaving dutifully. When these visits chanced to be between the Nativity and Epiphany, the scholars, being told beforehand, went after supper as far as the Abbey courtyard, where they awaited his coming. Thence they followed him to the Castle preceded by the Osney sexton carrying a burning torch. At the Hamel, where stood an ancient cross, the procession halted and began 'by the Warden's appointment' to sing a hymn altogether, continuing the strain until they reached their College. Here they conducted their Superior with all due reverence to his room, and left him with a prayer that he might have 'good rest for that night.'

This tiny College lasted till the dissolution of monasteries, after which, having become very poor and its buildings ruinous, its few remaining scholars were ejected and their 'habitation' became a part of the Castle gaol.

If the advent of the unruly young clerks were a cause of vexation to the Prior and Canons of St. Frideswide, much more grievous to them must have been the coming into Oxford of the Jews. Permitted to settle in England by William I., they gradually formed little communities in the provincial towns. Secure under the protection of their royal

masters, they cared little for the people, whose ill-will could only be shown by opprobrious epithets. The Jewry of Oxford extended along St. Aldate's (then called Fish Street) to the present great gate of Christ Church, and was bounded by the North side of the Great Quadrangle and the South side of Peckwater. Still further to the East among their houses stood the now vanished Church of St. Edward. The Jews' Synagogue was in St. Aldate's, just opposite to Pembroke Street, for, even as the City bailiffs had no power over them, so the Church could not prevent their building a synagogue in the city where they resided. And so, when on her Day a great procession of priests and people wended their way from the City to St. Frideswide's Church to pray at her shrine, we are told that as they passed his door, Gedaliah, son of Mossey, the Jew of Wallingford, mocked the Saint's reputed miracles of healing. Halting, and then walking firmly on his feet; showing his hands clenched as if with palsy and then flinging open his fingers, he claimed offerings from the crowd on the ground that such recoveries of strength were as real as any St. Frideswide had wrought. One can well imagine the wrath of the Priory Canons at such insolence! Once only, a century later, was punishment meted out to the Oxford Jews. On Ascension Day, 1268, as the usual procession returned from St. Frideswide's, a Jew, watching it from the steps of the synagogue,

rushed forward in a sudden burst of fury and, snatching the Crucifix from its bearer, trod it under foot. The impious act was for the time unpunished, but a complaint was made to the King, who condemned the community to make a heavy silver cross for the University to carry in procession, and to erect a marble cross where the crime was committed. The latter part of the sentence was remitted, however, and the cross, it is said, was set up in an open space near Merton College.

Though the period of their settlement in England only lasted for a little over two centuries, the Jews left a definite impression on the country. In Oxford the building of stone instead of wooden dwelling-houses was begun by them, and their memory remained for centuries in the names of various Halls—their deserted homes—Moysey's, Lombard's, Jewry, Jacob's and others. Even the site of the ancient Guildhall of the City was owned in the reign of Henry III. by a Jew—'Moses, the son of Isaac.' Their cemetery, which lay just outside the East Gate, was taken over by St. John's Hospital, but when that institution became Magdalen College the burying-ground was no longer needed and was let as meadow land. In 1662 this land was rented by the Earl of Danby as a 'nursery for physicall simples for the University'—the first beginnings of the Botanic Garden.

The occurrence of English names in the records

of the various City benefactions may be mentioned as one of the signs of progress in Oxford in the twelfth century. Another sign may be noted in the fact that in this century the City craftsmen first began to band themselves together in guilds. In a roll of Henry II (1155) two guilds are mentioned: weavers and cordwainers, *i.e.*, bootmakers, and as it is stated that the latter renewed the charter of their guild, they must already have received one charter, perhaps from Henry I.

The cordwainers, then, we may safely call the first trade guild in Oxford. Their station in the market, as we shall see, lay between the drapers and tanners in Cornmarket (the old Northgate Street), almost opposite Market Street. Whether the custom was common to all the guilds or not is doubtful, but the membership of this guild was open to both sexes, for we are told that a certain 'Widow Carter for her admittance to use the trade of a cordwayner' paid 3s. 4d. That in 1348 the barbers should form a guild, and that in 1480 the cooks should follow their example is the natural sequence of the influx of students to Oxford about those dates. By the sixteenth century nearly all the trades had their guilds, and woe betide the luckless outsider who ventured to divert any work or custom from a member of one of these corporations.

CHAPTER V.

Rewley Abbey—The Halls—The Home of Antony à Wood—St. Edmund Hall—'Skimmery'—Names of various Halls—The Preaching Friars—St. John's Hospital—Politics in Oxford.

WHEN Osney Abbey had reigned supreme for more than a century on the island from which it took its name, another abbey was built to the north of it by Edmund, Duke of Cornwall, son of Richard, King of the Romans, brother of Henry III. In 1132 the Cistercian monks had first crossed from the Continent to England, and for their accommodation had been built the Abbeys of Rivaulx in Yorks, Waverley in Surrey, Warden in Bedford, and Thame in Oxon. From the last, in 1281, Edmund brought a little colony of fifteen brethren and an abbot, and planted it on the northern end of Osney island. The abbey was called Rewley (Rois-leie= King's Place) in honour of its founder's father, who was once lord of North Osney. A quiet little colony, with but a short list of supporters, it had grown before it was dissolved into twenty-one brethren. The number, it is said, was marked by twenty-one elm trees—with one apart from the rest for the abbot—forming an avenue between the outer and inner gates of the Abbey. This outer

gate was to the south-west of Hythe Bridge, but a small Gothic gateway still remains, set in a portion of the Abbey boundary wall, on the river bank, a few yards to the north of the bridge.

In one of the rooms of the Ashmolean Museum is an inscribed stone belonging to Rewley Abbey, and rescued from oblivion by Hearne, who bought it for half-a-crown. On it are these words: 'Ela Countess of Warwick made this Chapel: to whom may Jesus be a reward in heaven.' At the dissolution, when Rewley Abbey was given to Christ

Church, Mr. Parret, organist of Magdalen College, bought Ela's Chapel—of the building of which Hearne chanced to find the record—and sold much of its stone and timber to the Proctors of Our Lady's Chapel in St. Mary Magdalen Church. The memorial stone of Countess Ela Longepie and the little gateway peeping

forth amid the rubbish of a riverside yard, are the solitary fragments left of Rewley Abbey.

During the period between the founding of Osney and Rewley, Oxford passed through almost as great, if more gradual, a change as after the Conquest. As early as 1170 there is a foreshadowing of the University in the number of scholars resident in the City, and in 1245, in a charter of Henry III,



REWLEY ABBEY.

the University is mentioned as then existing, while in an old adage of 1300, Oxford is noted for 'schools' and Cambridge for 'eels.' While still few in number, the scholars lodged in the houses of the citizens, but increasing rapidly beyond the limits of such accommodation, special houses—the Halls or Inns so often mentioned in connection with the early days of the University—were set apart for their use. Few of these exist now. Many were merged in the Colleges that took their place. On the site of others, inns were built, and a good example of this is the Mitre in High Street, which stands on the site of Amsterdam Hall. One or two are to be found as private houses. Of these, Portionists' Hall, opposite the gate of Merton College, should be dear to every lover of Oxford, for it was the home for many years of Anthony à Wood, *the* historian of our City. Circa 1349

John Wylliot, Fellow of Merton and Chancellor of the University, gave to his College an exhibition for the maintenance of nine poor scholars, and this house was allotted to them. These scholars were the 'portionists,' and from them the title passed naturally enough to their dwelling-place. In the reign of Elizabeth, Merton removed its 'Por-



PORTIONISTS' HALL.

tionists' into the college building, and their Hall was leased out as a private residence. In 1608 Thomas Wood, Anthony's father, obtained a lease of it, and in it Anthony was born on 17th December, 1632. In Portionists' Hall he spent the greater part of his life, died there November 28th, 1695, and was buried in the ante-chapel of Merton College (St. John Baptist Church).

Abutting on the graveyard of St. Peter-in-the-East is St. Edmund Hall, erected in the seventh century on the site of an older building—a private house—of 1226. Hearne, the Antiquary, was a member of this house, and was buried in St. Peter's churchyard. St. Edmund Hall still enjoys a separate existence, and is the solitary example left; St. Mary Hall, the 'Skimmery' of the undergraduate, having been, after a separate existence of five centuries, lately incorporated with Oriel, to which college it originally belonged.



ST. MARY HALL
'SKIMMERY.'

The names of some of these ancient hostels are interesting. St. Mary's was so called because it occupied the site of a former rectory of St. Mary-the-Virgin. Godknaves—Moyses—Nun—Bodyn—point to founders' names, or names of those from whom the property was bought. Mutton—Veale—Beefe—Pie—Halls, to modern ears, savour of some

old-world jest. Elephant—Lion—Tabard—Saracen's Head derived their titles from the swinging sign above their doors, and we may catch a glimpse of change in the fashion of the city buildings from Thatched Hall to Slatted—Quarrystone—Glacen, or Glassen, and Leaden Porch Halls.

Between 1264 and 1386 the first group of Colleges was founded. Merton—remarkable among the others as being the only secular college in Oxford—was followed by University, Balliol, Exeter, Oriel, Queen's, and New Colleges. Gradually the scholars deserted the Halls for the Colleges, the newer fashion prevailing readily with the more serious students, 'because,' as Wood puts it, 'of rascals calling themselves scholars, though none, bringing disgrace on learning by their conduct.' Such men would prefer the freedom of an ex-collegiate life.

Besides the great increase in the number of scholars during the thirteenth century, Oxford shared in the wonderful influx of foreign Orders of preaching, or mendicant Friars, into England. The first of the four great Orders to reach Oxford was the Dominican, or 'Black Friars,' who settled in the Jewry in 1221. After several years work in the Jewry they established themselves outside the City walls. At the corner of Commercial Road and Littlegate Street a quaint old house next to a Baptist Chapel is connected by tradition with a still older

house known to have been built on the site of their habitation. Their cemetery must have been in part at least below the chapel itself, as when the foundations of the latter were being dug, several coffins were unearthed. Within the Black Friars' Church the body of Piers Gaveston, favourite of Edward II, was laid in 1312. Two years later it was removed to King's Langley, Herts, and buried there in the Church of the Preaching Friars. One notes as an ill omen that, though the King and clergy were present, no nobles attended the ceremony.

The second of the Orders to settle in Oxford was the Franciscan. Grey Friars these, not missionaries as were the Black Friars, but students. No trace is left of friary, church or cemetery, though we know that all three existed somewhere in the neighbourhood of Littlegate Street and Penson's Gardens. Paradise Street and Square were part of the Friars' gardens — 'Agnes, sometime wife of Guy . . . gave them most of that part of ground afterwards called Paradise.'



THE 'JOLLY FARMERS' ARMS,
PARADISE STREET.

In their unknown cemetery rests that famous friar, Roger Bacon, the 'Doctor mirabilis' of his day; astronomer and, in the eye of the common people, necromancer also. He wrote many treatises on theology, physics, and mathematics, of

theology, physics, and mathematics, of

which few survive; the greater part being lost through the ignorance of the later friars. On Folly Bridge there stood, until 1779, an old watch-tower called Friar Bacon's Study, from whose summit he is said to have observed 'the stars in their courses.' As Folly Bridge is outside the City walls, tradition adds that he was banished Oxon for practising the black art. More interesting it is to note that for writing a treatise called '*De victoria Christi contra anti Christum,*' he was condemned as a heretic by Pope Nicholas IV, and kept by him a close prisoner for several years.

Some twenty years after the advent of the Black and Grey Friars, there came to Oxford the Carmelite, or White Friars, and the Augustine, or Austin Friars. The former lived for a time close by, but not on the actual site of, Gloucester Hall. This building became later on a College for Benedictine monks from Gloucester. From them it passed into the hands of St. John's College, and after many years of neglect was refounded in the eighteenth century as Worcester College.

After Bannockburn, as a thank-offering for his escape, and in fulfilment of a promise made to one of their number, Edward II gave Beaumont Palace to the White Friars. One wonders how much of alteration the royal palace needed to make it a fit residence for a body of mendicant friars, and a delightfully human touch is felt in the fact that they

kept unchanged the room wherein Richard of the Lion Heart was born, and took great delight in showing it to visitors. Truth to tell, the palace was not a lucky gift. The air was so fresh and pure at Beaumont, we are told, that many invalids used to come and reside with the Friars, and at death leave gifts of money to their hosts. Also, though the Archbishop of Canterbury had forbidden both the White and the Austin Friars to hear confessions, they did so. Thus they gained the confidence and affections of the citizens, and became a powerful factor in the life of Oxford. Then came the inevitable end. At the dissolution Henry VIII granted them no allowance whatsoever, and they were turned adrift, to exist on charity.

The Austin Friars took up their abode on the north side of the City, without Smithgate, where Wadham College now stands, and besides help given them by Henry III, found a kind friend and liberal benefactor in the person of Sir John Handlow, of Boarstall Castle, Bucks. They seem to have entered more into the life of the University than any of the other orders, and though at their first coming we find them stigmatised as rather ignorant, they soon gained the title, 'mickle sophisters,' and by their 'subtile' disputations attracted many to their school. At last their fame became so great that a statute was made by the Chancellor of the University, by which no B.A. might take his M.A. unless he could

answer the Austin Friars. These arguments were named Augustin Disputations, or more commonly disputations in Austins, and took place in the Natural Philosophy School twice a week.

Among his other benefactions, Henry III is said to have founded, about 1232-36, the Hospital of St. John Baptist, without the Eastgate, which by and by was to be bought by William Patten, of Waynfleete, for his new College of Magdalen. Whether or not he founded the Hospital, Henry proved a generous benefactor. He gave to it the running of a hundred and fifty hogs, whose feeding was free—fifty in the royal forest of Shotover, fifty in Bernwood, and fifty in Wychwood; and the 'King's Mill,' a royal mill which stood on the Cherwell where the footbridge crosses into Mesopotamia, also became the property of the Hospital. Llewellyn ap Iorwerth, of Wales, is said to have declared that he dreaded the liberality and almsdeeds of the King more than all the warriors he had and the whole clergy put together. Yet in spite of these gifts, Henry did not secure the affections of the Oxford citizens. In 1258 the 'Mad' Parliament, which had already met in London, re-assembled in Oxford. Here also were drawn up the 'Provisions' which ordained that the King was to be assisted in governing by a



ON THE CHER.
THE KING'S MILL.

standing Council of fifteen, and here in 1265 met the Parliament of Simon de Montfort when, for the first time, shires, cities and boroughs were represented. When hostilities actually commenced between the King and the barons, the citizens embraced the popular side, and Prince Edward, arriving at Oxford with his men, found its gates closed against him. The University, as a whole, remained loyal to Henry, though some of the scholars joined themselves to the City; while the Friars, strange to say, not only espoused de Montfort's cause, but became the poets of the movement, their songs about the politics of the period being well known throughout the country.

CHAPTER VI.

The Ancient Markets—The City Gates and Walls—The 'Bocardo' Prison—The Castle Walls—The Well-room.

THE formation of Trade Guilds in Oxford has already been touched upon, but as early as, if not earlier than, the first of these, there probably existed the daily and weekly markets of the City. The stands of the sellers were set up in the four principal streets, and stretched forth like the arms of a cross, with Carfax—where was the 'Bull Ring'—as its centre. The more ancient of the stalls were fixtures arranged along the footway, and sheltered by the overhanging first storeys of the vendors' homes. Others of a rather later date were set up for the bi-weekly (Wednesday and Saturday) market in the thoroughfare itself, but for each 'standing' there was an allotted place so that the 'marchandizing of strangers' should not encroach upon that of the Guilds. Were it possible for us to visit the Oxford of the middle ages on a market day we should find it a *terra incognita*. St. Aldate's would be Fish Street and Cornmarket the Great Street, because there the 'chiefest of the market was held.' Gathered round Carfax would be sellers of white bread, and farmers' wives with their dairy produce. For these buxom dames shelters were erected,

called butter benches. One of these—still remembered by the older generation of citizens—stood at the corner of Carfax, now occupied by Boffin's Tea Rooms; the other, on the opposite side of the square, disappeared many years ago.

In Fish Street we should find the city fishmongers, with temporary and permanent stalls. Here also city ladies would buy their scullery ware, firewood, meal and greengrocery, while their husbands were busy inspecting the cutlery, fourbry (scouring of armour), fletcherly (bow-making), and vintrey stalls. All the country folks would have set up their stalls in the Great Street; tanners, fishmongers, poulterers, horse-bread sellers, hay, grass and corn sellers, fagot and broom sellers, and sellers of rushes for the floors. The drapers, cordwainers, tanners and mercers had large permanent standings here, and sury or sutory (shoe-making) and lorinery (horse-harness making) stood together near St. Michael's tower. High Street would be the market for the upper classes, with glovery, parmentry (parchment), butchery, poultry, mercery, aurifabry (gold and silver work), apothecary and spicery on the permanent stalls. But on market days the roadway also would be used for loads of coal (charcoal), earthenware, timber, wood and straw, ale and pigs. The last were arranged in front of the spicery stall!

We should find Butcher's Row wholly given up

to the sale of meat, and alas! a shambles as well. Not until the reign of Edward II, at the instance of the University, was the killing of animals within the walls forbidden.

The streets would be filled with motley crowds. 'Pied pouldré' lads from the country would be there; farmers and their good wives; city dames and county ladies; men in armour, in leather jerkins, in robes of office; pursy abbots and dreamy monks, friars in coats of black, grey or white; 'Penitent' friars clad in sack cloth; 'Crutched' friars in blue gowns with red crosses sewn on the front of them; 'Trinitarian' friars in white, with crosses of red and blue. Bands of wild young clerks might be seen mingling with all these, and at war with most of them; now fighting with each other—north against south—now raiding the market-stalls and sending the poor vendors to beg protection from the king against these 'rude varlets.' In the reign of Henry III. Robert of Gloucester records some of their pranks in his rhymes thus: 'Hii breke the viniterie . . . and suth the spicerie. Hii breke from end to other, and dude all to robberie.'

From such a kaleidoscope of colour and movement must one fit together the picture of those by-gone days. With nightfall the country-folks would make their way homeward through the four great gates of the City, hurrying lest their exit might chance to be barred.

These gates were very carefully guarded, and of the four the North or 'Bocardo' Gate was the strongest, since it was not protected, as were the others, by river or moat. On either side of it stood a heavy tower, and over it was erected an engine, by which pitch or stones could be hurled on the heads of the enemy. Instead of one, it had two gates strengthened by iron bars and protected by two portcullises. In times of peace the portcullises were drawn up and a thick chain passed across the outer gate.

The East Gate, according to à Wood, had two round towers on each side, two gates crossed by a chain, and lacking portcullises. The West Gate was but slightly guarded, perhaps because of its proximity to the Castle. The South Gate had strong fortifications on either side and battlements along the top. On this gate, Wood observes, were 'the armes of England and France quartered, engraven on a square stone having England in the upper and France in the neither (nether) part thereof, contrary to all that I have heretofore seen'; but as the gate had fallen down before à Wood's time the description may not be very trustworthy. It is difficult to know for what reason, unless it were lack of funds, the City allowed its walls to remain for years in the ruinous state in which they were left by Stephen. By the thirteenth century their condition had become so menacing to the City's safety that Henry III, for

their repair, granted to the mayor and burgesses the revenues of a toll to be taken at each gate, once a week for three years, on all goods or animals brought into Oxford for sale.

It is possible even now to trace these old walls of Henry III, although we may no longer follow the lane which beyond their shelter encircled the City. Holywell Street and Longwall Street run along the outer edge of the City moat from the North to the East Gates. In Broad Street, once part of the City moat, were held at a later date horse fairs, whence came its old name of Horsemonger Street; and leading from it into the Turl was a gate with a 'trill' or turnstile to prevent the animals from entering the City. From this gate the name of the street may have come, or possibly—as there is no mention of such a gate before 1550—from the Toralds, an old Oxford family now extinct, who had property in this quarter of the town.

The City fishponds lay in or beside the moat, between the Turl and Catherine Street; as also along one side of Holywell Street. At Catherine Street was Smith Gate, memorable as the scene of a fierce fight between Town and Gown in Henry III's time. Through Smith Gate Roger Mortimer, fighting against Edward II, hoped to take Oxford by surprise, but the king, having learnt of the plan, ordered the Chancellor of the University, custodian of this gate, to defend it with a body of scholars.

Beside the gate stood Our Lady's Chapel, known to us as 'The Octagon House.' This chapel was always open so that passers-by might enter and pray, and it seems to have been a habit of candidates for degrees to pray here 'for the regents.'

In a beautifully carved niche on the east side of the chapel there stood until 1678-9 a statue of the Virgin; and over the door are the remains of what must have been once a very fine carving of the Annunciation, in which each figure occupies a separate panel under a richly carved canopy.



AT THE OCTAGON HOUSE.

Almost hidden by the buildings of Holywell Street and Longwall Street is the only perfect portion of the old walls. It encloses the gardens of New College, and has been preserved by the college authorities from the ruin into which less favoured parts have fallen. Another fragment bounds the garden of the Fellows of Merton College; in this one old bastion and a built-up postern occur. Between Merton and Corpus Christi, where they are divided by the 'Grove,' was another postern where-by the citizens might escape—if the town were taken—from the foe within the gates. During the siege of Oxford in the Civil War one of the City defences was a 'demy-culverin' planted on the bastion below Merton College. From the postern at the

Grove the wall turned southwards at a right angle to include St. Frideswide's Priory, and reached the South Gate in St. Aldate's almost opposite Brewer Street. To Brewer Street the butchers and their shambles were banished by Edward II, and this advent gave it for a time the suggestive title of Slaying Lane. Fragments of the walls may be seen built into the boundary wall of Pembroke College as one goes along Brewer Street from the South to the Little Gate, and at the far end of the street, just above the ground, the arch of Slaying Lane Well 'under the wall' appears. The well was stopped in 1672 and the water led to an adjoining brewery, but long ere this the shambles had been removed further afield to Lumbard's Land or Lay near Folly Bridge. The Little Gate, though lacking the adjoining fortifications of the South Gate, somewhat resembled it in style. It had a large room over the gate, and on either side a smaller chamber on the ground floor. The upper room was used more than once as a lodging for scholars, in those early days of the University when, for lack of accommodation, the students were actually compelled to live in the bastions of the City walls.

From Little Gate to West Gate the walls are untraceable. West Gate stood near the junction of Church and Castle Streets, and 'Paradise' was without the walls. Somewhere between the two last-mentioned gates was the House of the Grey Friars.

Living just inside the City wall, on which their buildings abutted, the friars were disturbed by the noises incident to the presence of the lane on the outer side, and petitioned Henry III to permit them to divert the wall so as to break the circuit of the lane. To this the king agreed, provided they made the new part as strong a defence as the old, and gave him permission to pass along it when he wished. This diversion of the wall was the cause of its destruction, for when, at the Reformation, the House of the Grey Friars was destroyed, that part of the wall shared the same fate, both being used for building-stone.

Beyond West Gate comes another break in the encircling walls, once filled by the presence of the Castle moat and eastern bulwarks, and this connecting link between the defences on the southern and northern sides of the City has now been permanently severed by the alterations made in the boundaries of the Castle by the making of the 'New Road.'

In Bulwarks Alley we come upon the walls once more. Just past the Wesleyan Schools, on the right are some steps and a path leading to Elm Cottages. The first of the cottages is built on a bastion of the wall, which here forms part of the boundary of the playground of the High School for Boys. Like Broad Street and Holywell Street, George Street marks roughly the position of the City ditch, and between George and

St. Michael's Streets ran the walls, their course marked by two posterns and three bastions between the Castle moat and the towers of the North Gate. By the North Gate—where now stands Mr. Grubb's shop—was one painfully well-known bastion used in the time of Edward I as a prison for women, and nick-named 'The Maiden Chamber.' Grim as such a confinement must have been, the ideal was higher than that which herded men and women offenders together in the prison over the North Gate—'Bocardo' as it was called. Here languished 'debtors and malefactors' belonging to the City, and—at least in the reign of Edward II—scholars were also imprisoned within its dreary walls, and doubtless took their turn in letting down the old hat in front of the passers-by and crying, 'Pity the poor Bocardo birds!' Mr. Boase in his book on Oxford offers an explanation of this strange title. Bocardo, he suggests, was applied in sarcasm from the form of syllogism called Bocardo. Out of this syllogism the reasoner was unable to 'bring himself back into his first figure' without the help of special processes.

In the time of Henry III not only were the City walls re-built, but the Castle was surrounded by an embattled wall on which were erected five towers. The chief entrance to the Castle was by a bridge crossing the moat just within the West Gate. The bridge led first into a long and wide entry, over

which several passages ran from one side to the other. Between the passages were spaces through which the garrison might throw stones or boiling pitch on the enemy—a more elaborate example of the defences of the North Gate. Beyond the entry was the main gate, fortified on either side by high battlements. To the left as one entered the Castle court the line of the wall was broken by a tower, and still further in the same direction was the square tower of D'oyley's Castle. Beyond this a gate existed, afterwards built up, by which the Osney scholars had egress and ingress to St. George's College. The present entrance to the Castle did not exist at that time, and the curve of Bulwarks Alley repeats the curve of that portion of the Castle walls and moat.

The walls and towers of Henry III being built on the crumbling foundations of the old earthen vallum of pre-Norman times soon became ruined, and, though repaired from time to time, ultimately perished. Yet there still exists a most curious structure belonging to the same period—'The Well-room'—dug out of the heart of the great Castle mound.

The entrance to the Well-room is on the eastern side, and very near the summit of the mound. From the entrance a flight of steps leads down to the chamber itself, some twenty feet below the surface of the mound. The room is hexagonal, with a dome-shaped

roof, and in the centre of the floor, carefully walled round, is the well, dry now and empty throughout its depth of sixty feet. The story of the Well-room is unknown, but it is supposed to have been either the centre of a series of rooms used as dungeons, and now shut off, or a dungeon in itself, and may have been used by the University authorities as a place of confinement for unruly students. Several years ago—early in the last century—when the City authorities cleared the well of rubbish, among other items there were brought to the surface one or two human skeletons.



THE WELL-ROOM,
CASTLE MOUND.

CHAPTER VII.

Durham College—Dr. Kettel—Canterbury College—John Wycliffe—St. Mary-the-Virgin Church—Amy Robsart—The Plague in Oxford.

JUST as, through the generosity of John Giffard, Baron of Brimpsfield in the Cotswolds, Gloucester Hall had become in 1283 a college for monks from St. Peter's Abbey, Gloucester; so, seven years later, the monks of Durham Abbey, aided by the bounty of Bishop Hatfield, erected Durham College in Cauditch (Broad Street) as a 'nursery' for their young monks.

The good bishop granted them '£10 apiece per annum to keep eight Durham monks, and five marks apiece per annum to keep seven children or youths as secular scholars.' These last were to study grammar and philosophy, while the monks were to take the latter subject with Divinity. The bishop also gave 4,000 marks for the use of the college, in trust to four reputable men, and 'appointed a chest with four locks, each party to have a key.' This money was to be laid out on a purchase when a suitable chance occurred. After the dissolution—regarding which à Wood quaintly remarks that the certified revenues of the college were less than they ought to have been—Durham reappeared as Trinity Col-

lege, endowed by Sir Thomas Pope for the study of philosophy and divinity. In the second quadrangle is the ancient library of Durham College, founded by Bishop Bury, who died in 1348.

Early in the seventeenth century the President of Trinity was a certain Dr. Kettel, who built for his own use the fine old mansion still known as Kettel Hall.

The doctor had a strong objection to long hair, and if he noticed a student with love locks straying over his shoulders would slip behind him and remove them with a pair of scissors which he always carried secreted in a muff. Lacking one day his usual implement, he seized a bread knife, and with it docked the hair of a luckless youth, adding insult to injury by singing as he turned away, 'And was not Grimm the Collier finely trimmed.'¹

Gloucester and Durham Colleges were followed in 1361 by Canterbury College, whose name still lingers in the 'Canterbury' quadrangle of Christ Church. Its founder was Simon of Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, and from the monastery of Christ Church in Canterbury came its scholars. Four regular and eight secular scholars journeyed hither, and one may feel sure they were all promising men, for their monastery had suffered from such a terrible visitation of the plague that there was a dearth of learned priests to supply the various City

¹ From 'Gammer Gurton's Needle.'

churches. Later on the secular scholars were ejected from the college, and their places filled by regulars. Among those ejected was a certain John Wycliffe, the Warden, who, not being a monk, was banished with the other seculars. It is doubtful whether this deposed warden was Wycliffe the Reformer, though at least one early writer gives the incident as the true reason for Wycliffe's attacks on the Church. It is certain, however, that the Reformer was for a time Master of Balliol College, which may partly account for the favour with which his doctrines were received in Oxford. In Merton, noted for free speech and outlook, were several Lollards, and doubtless many converts were made by Wycliffe's sermons from the pulpit of St. Mary the Virgin.

Two centuries later, on April 14th, 1554, in the chancel of St. Mary, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer defended the Reformed Faith against the attacks of the doctors of Oxford and Cambridge. In the same church they were tried for heresy by the members of Cardinal Pole's Commission, and there, Cranmer, being brought for the purpose of publicly recanting his Protestant opinions, declared instead his abiding faith in their truth. Having thus 'flung down the burden of his shame,' as Foxe puts it, the brave old man went forth without a tremor to the horrors of the stake.

Although St. Mary the Virgin is mentioned in the Domesday list of Oxford churches, no portion of

the existing building is earlier than the thirteenth century, the oldest portion being the Congregation House, adjoining the north wall of the church. In the upper room of the 'Semlyhows,' as it was called, were placed the books of the University Library until Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester and son of Henry VI, built a room for them over the Divinity School, thus founding what is now the most ancient part of the Bodleian Library. 'In a vault of brick, at the upper end of the quire of this church,' lies the body of Amy Robsart, the heroine of Sir Walter Scott's 'Kenilworth.' Married to Lord Robert Dudley in 1549, the dame, at the time of her death in 1560, was residing some four miles out of Oxford at Cumnor Place, an old mansion formerly used as a rest house by the Abbot and monks of Abingdon Abbey. Her mysterious death was followed by a hurried and unceremonious burial in Cumnor church. Thence later her body was removed to Oxford, where it lay in state in Gloucester Hall, and was finally interred with much ceremony in the church of St. Mary the Virgin. Although tradition has handed down the suspicion of foul play, no proof of it has ever been found, and within the altar rails of Cumnor church is a most imposing monument to the memory of her alleged murderer, Anthony Foster, bearing a long Latin inscription, which shows him to have been a highly respected and apparently worthy man. In this church are also

preserved some letters of Foster, Dame Dudley and her husband, with a small portrait of the last-named. Close by is a finely carved figure of Queen Elizabeth, rescued from Cumnor Place and carefully restored.

The concluding lines of a sixteenth century epitaph, copied by Wood from a long-vanished tomb in St. Mary's Church, reveal the presence of an often-forgotten factor in the history of a mediaeval city. The words run thus:—

'... by pestilence I had my passage.
All reasonable creatueres that walke by thys waye
For my sowle, I praye, a charytabell suffrage praye.'

It has already been noted that Canterbury College was founded because of the ravages of plague in Canterbury city and monastery. In 1349 Oxford suffered from an equally severe epidemic, which attacked both the town and the surrounding villages. Owing to this visitation, or to one of those retrograde movements that at intervals affect the Church, rumour has it that about this time arose a dearth of educated priests, so that sermon lovers bemoaned the lack of discourses worth listening to! Later on, the sermon seems to have dropped out of the Church services in Oxford. One observes as a feature of the Reformation that in St. Martin's Church a pulpit was *provided*, a sermon preached every Sunday, and an order issued that 'the City officers shall at the time of the ringing of the bell for the sermon come together to the Penny-

less Bench, or thereabouts, and stay there until the coming of the Mayor'—the punishment being a fine.

As late as the time of Henry VIII. the risk of plague was so great in Oxford, and so many students had deserted her courts of learning for some healthier spot, that the City is specially mentioned in an Act of Parliament of that reign which ordered the reparation throughout the country of once beautiful homes allowed to fall into decay. Again in 1603 the plague was brought from London. It was the beginning of Michaelmas Term, but no classes were held, teachers and scholars alike fled. The gates of Colleges and Halls were shut day and night, and all entrance forbidden by the few servants remaining in charge. The City shops were closed, no one moved in the streets save the keepers of the sick and the collectors of relief for them. Not even a dog or cat was to be seen abroad, and in the market-place 'the grass grew green.' Two years later, just after the Court returned to London, plague appeared again, to be met this time by the first systematic effort to overcome it. Two isolation camps were formed, of which one was along 'Cheney Lane,' near Headington, and the other on the Port Meadow.

But if the plague were such a scourge in free Oxford, what must it have been in Oxford besieged? During the three years when Charles I. made Oxford

his headquarters, plague was the one enemy whom walls and fortifications were unable to keep out. The Roundhead prisoners, crowded into the Castle tower, loaded with fetters, and only allowed for food one pennyworth of bread per day and one farthingsworth of beer—which was half beer and half water—fell easy victims; while the Royalists, who had but one dish of meat a day, writes Lady Fanshawe, ‘and that not the best ordered,’ fared little better. ‘At the window,’ she adds, ‘was seen the sad spectacle of war, sometimes plague, sometimes sicknesses of other kind by reason of so many people being packed together and always in want.’

The Jews’ Mount, where now stand the coal wharves of the canal, became a temporary burying-ground, and so heavy was the mortality that at short intervals the bodies had to be dug up and pitched together into one ever-increasing heap to make room for fresh interments. Yet in spite of such unspeakable horrors, Lady Fanshawe remarks that people bore all with a ‘martyr-like cheerfulness.’

CHAPTER VIII.

St. Scholastica's Day—Holywell Manor—The ' Cockpit ' Inn—The Holy Well—Holywell Gallows.

IN the annals of Oxford City there is perhaps no more unlucky date than St. Scholastica's Day, February 10th, 1354. On that day began a terrible fight between town and gown, the evil effects of which on the fortunes of the City lasted long after the cause itself had been forgotten. Briefly told, the story is as follows:—A dispute having arisen between some scholars and John de Croyden, vintner, of the Swindlestock Tavern, as to the quality of the wine served to them, the scholars threw wine and vessel at John's head. On this, some of his friends caused the bell of St. Martin's to be rung, and forthwith the townsmen gathered by the Church, armed and ready for the fray. Then the Chancellor of the University tried to appease, and was shot at for his pains, so, in turn, he ordered the bell of St. Mary-the-Virgin to be rung, whereupon the scholars armed themselves and fought with the townsmen till nightfall, but without much harm being done on either side.

Next morning the Chancellor read a proclamation at St. Mary's and Carfax that no scholar or citizen was to arm, or assault any man. Meanwhile, how-

ever, the bailiffs had sent messengers through the City ordering every man to arm and be ready to come forth when St. Martin's bell should ring, and had also sent for help to some of the villages near by. Preliminaries began at noon, when some townsmen attacked a band of students in St. Giles, and drove them into the Augustine Priory. After this the bells of both St. Mary and St. Martin pealed forth, and the fight began in earnest, a new set of combatants appearing in a body of countrymen carrying a black flag and shouting, 'Slay! Slay! Havoc! Havoc! Smite fast—Give good knocks!' On the third day the City carried the fight into the enemy's camp, invaded the scholars' houses, wounded or killed many of their occupants, and plundered inns and halls. Forty scholars were killed and many injured before peace was enforced by the strong hand of the Church. The Bishop of Lincoln placed the City under an interdict. The Sheriff of Oxford was removed from office for his negligence. The Mayor and Bailiffs were sent to the Tower and others appointed in their place, and City and University surrendered their rights and privileges into the king's hands. The latter received these again, and in addition several fresh ones, such as the assize of bread, ale, wine, and the supervision of all weights and measures, taken from the former as a punishment for their evil conduct. The forgiveness of the Church was finally obtained

by a penitential procession of the City—in the persons of the Mayor, two Bailiffs, and sixty of the principal burghers—to St. Mary's Church, where each of the sixty-three made an offering on the altar to procure masses to be said for the slain scholars.

Such a peace could only be of short duration. Soon the usual bickerings between City and University recommenced, with the result that one or other was continually setting forth some grievance before the reigning sovereign or his ministers. The City's chief opponent seems to have been Merton College, and the bone of contention a piece of ground on the north of the City wall, near the Canditch, which Merton claimed to be part of the Manor of Holywell, whereas it was really in the parish of St. Peter-in-the-East. For years a daily market of necessaries—Jaudewyn Fair—had been held on the ground. When the latter was appropriated by Merton, naturally the fair came to an end, and we have, as the result, in the reign of Richard II, City and College appearing at Westminster; the first claiming the land as part of their 'fee-farm,' the second as part of their property. Needless to say, the City lost, yet the case shows a wonderful advance on the methods of brute force employed in the 'Swyndlestock Tavern Row' some twenty years earlier.

Holywell Manor is perhaps one of the most interesting districts of Oxford 'without the gates.'

Originally in the possession of the D'Oyley family, the manor had passed from them to an Oxford burgess, a certain Henry of Oxon. Henry's son John, Bishop of Norwich, next owned it, after which it came into the hands of Henry III, who, for love of Walter de Merton, his Lord Chancellor and founder of Merton College, gave it to that College along with the advowson of St. Peter-in-the-East. The quaint ivy-clad sixteenth century



HOLYWELL MANOR HOUSE.

manor-house, now forming part of a modern penitentiary, adjoins the well whence it derived its title. Unlike St. Frideswide's well at Binsey, this holy well was not a resort of pilgrims, its waters being used chiefly in the sacred offices of the little church of the Holy Rood or Cross erected beside the spring.

In the seventeenth century the manor-house became an inn, bearing the suggestive name of 'The Cockpit,' and hither on ' . . . holy-days ' the citizens brought their spurred favourites and fought their mains. The well, too, from being a sacred spot, degenerated into a 'place wherein to keepe bottle ale coole in the summertime.' Many years later it was covered over and turned into a swimming bath, its clear cool waters having, it was said, a wonderfully invigorating effect. In it daily throughout term bathed the late Cardinal

Newman, then a delicate youth studying at Oriol College. Recently, when laying the foundations of a new chapel for the penitentiary, the workmen came upon traces of the ancient well, long disused and quite forgotten.

Close by Magdalen grove, on a branch of the Cherwell, stood Holywell mill—purchased lately by Magdalen College and turned into a dwelling-house. It was one of the dozen or more mills once standing on the outskirts of the City, of which only two, Osney and the Castle mills, remain. Nor was the casual offender forgotten in the regulation of the manor's affairs. Where St. Cross Road enters Longwall Street there used to stand a stone cross, and beside it were reared a pillory, stocks, and a gallows—the last-named known as 'Merton' or 'Gownsmen's' Gallows. Of this gallows, Archdeacon Hare in his 'Story of My Life' tells the following tale: 'Talking one day with Dr. Routh, President of Magdalen College from 1791—1854, Hare remarked that he had never heard of Gownsmen's Gallows. "What, sir!" exclaimed the Doctor, "do you tell me, sir, that you never heard of Gownsmen's Gallows? Why, I tell you, sir, I have seen two undergraduates hanged on Gownsmen's Gallows in Holywell; hanged, sir, for highway robbery!"'

CHAPTER IX.

St. Mary's College—St. Bernard's College—The 'Poor Preachers'
—Two Conspiracies—The Fate of Lord Lovel—Meeting the Mayor
—A Gift to Royalty.

AMID the modern buildings of New Inn Hall Street one sees at one of the entrances to Frewin Hall an ancient stone gateway, solitary relic of St. Mary's College, founded in 1435 by Thomas Holden and his wife Elizabeth as a college for Augustine Canons, under the rule of a Prior, who was subject to the Abbot of Osney.



GATEWAY OF ST. MARY'S
COLLEGE.

The college had but a short existence, being dissolved by Henry VIII, but is worthy of remembrance as the dwelling-place of Erasmus while he resided in Oxford. The Augustine Canons received the foreign scholar very kindly, and under their roof he prepared his edition of the Greek Testament, with other treatises, one of which, 'De taedio et pavore Christi,' he dedicated to his good friend Dean Colet. Here also lived one Robert Ferrar, a Regular canon, who, having embraced the Reformed Faith, was appointed by Edward VI. to the bishopric of St. David's, Pembroke-shire. Ejected thence by Mary for his Pro-

testantism, he was burnt at the stake in Caermarthen in 1555.

Save that the students were Regular canons of some order, the rules of these monastic schools were very much like those of the other colleges. Latin was spoken always in hall and within the confines of the college grounds. A quaint little rule, too, promoted good fellowship and loyalty by forbidding any man to dine in his own room unless by special leave from the Prior. The last of the orders to find a home in Oxford was the Bernardine, a branch of the Cistercians. In 1436 they handed over their buildings to Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury and founder of All Souls' College, who converted them into the College of St. Bernard. When, following the rupture of Henry VIII. with Rome, England was flooded with the homeless 'Religious,' many of these came to Oxford in the hope that there the Houses and colleges might escape destruction, and one notes that for four years after the dissolution, St. Bernard's College was filled with Bernardine and Cistercian refugees. Unlike many of its neighbours, St. Bernard's was not destroyed, but presented by the king to Christ Church, whose authorities conveyed it to Sir Thomas White, a clothier of London City, and in the reign of Mary it was re-opened as a college dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

The citizens seem to have taken the expulsion

of monks and canons from Oxford very quietly. It may have been that unconsciously their minds were prepared already, by the teaching of Wycliffe's disciples, for a notable change in the Articles of Belief. These disciples, the 'poor preachers' or 'priests' of history, were mostly University graduates, well-read, intelligent men. It is thought that with Wycliffe as Master they lived together in one of the many halls in Oxford. Thence they travelled throughout the country, on foot and clad in long russet gowns of one pattern, explaining their master's doctrines alike to rich and poor, protesting against the abuses of the Church, and declaring the Bible to be the one final authority in spiritual matters. No Latin was used in these addresses, but good, terse English, for, as if the times were ripe for change, in the fourteenth century French began to go out of fashion, and the good old mother tongue of the country was used alike in 'court, camp and cottage.'

Though Oxford had but little share in the tragic Wars of the Roses, yet, strangely enough, the City was chosen by a band of conspirators as a suitable spot for the murder of Henry IV, the first Lancastrian sovereign. The leaders of the rebellion were John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon, half brother of the deposed king, Richard II; Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent; the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Despenser. These nobles, who had gathered

a following of several thousand men, proclaimed a tournament to be held at Oxford, where they trusted to take Henry prisoner by force of numbers. The plot was, however, discovered, and the leaders put to death. Many were captured at Oxford and confined in the Guildhall while awaiting their trial. Of these, twenty were hanged and quartered at Green-ditch, beyond St. Giles' Church, and some little way along the Banbury Road, where then stood the City gallows. The heads of the Earls of Kent and Salisbury, with the heads and poor divided trunks of the conspirators of lower rank, were despatched to London, there to be set up as a warning of the doom meted out to traitors.

Nearly ninety years later, a plot to dethrone Henry VII, the first Tudor sovereign, had as its leader an Oxford man, Lambert Simnel, who impersonated the imprisoned Edward Plantagenet, chief male representative of the fallen House of York. The impostor was enthusiastically received by the Yorkists in Ireland, where he was crowned king, after which he invaded England at the head of a mixed army of Irish and Germans, and accompanied by the Earl of Lincoln and Lord Lovel, of Minster Lovel, Oxon. At Stoke, near Newark, Henry met and defeated the rebels, capturing Simnel, who was made a scullion in the royal kitchen for a time, but afterwards promoted to be one of the king's falconers. Lincoln was slain in

the battle, but Lovel escaped and made his way to Minster Lovel, after which his fate is shrouded in mystery. The tradition handed down is that he hid in a vault below the mansion, where he was starved to death in consequence of the sudden death of the one servant who knew of his presence there. This tradition is said to have been confirmed by the discovery in 1708 of a vault containing the skeleton of a man seated at a table, with writing materials before him. All fell to dust when the vault was opened.¹

It is not surprising to learn that the troubled state of the kingdom during the fifteenth century found its counterpart in the life of both City and University. The clerks and scholars of the latter, we are told, began to get 'quite out of hand,' and even the Fellows are said to have become the leaders of lawless bands of highway robbers. In the City, as an example of the same spirit of unrest, we find William Taylour, innkeeper of Oxford, 'informs against a certain George Avery'—probably a neighbour—that he hath 'joined in every trouble or insurrection that hath been in Oxford,' which seems rather a heavy indictment!

But in spite of turbulence and unrest, the City neglected no point concerned with its civic dignity. Each new Mayor in turn had to brave the perils of a journey to London, where he was presented 'to

¹ Cf. 'Little Guide to Oxfordshire.'

the Barons of the Exchequer and sworn in.' On his return he was welcomed by Oxford *en fête*, and entered the City accompanied by a procession of municipal dignitaries. From the Red Book of 1421 are culled the subjoined rules for the ordering of such a procession. 'First the Crier of the Court must go before all the Company. After him the Commons in their liveries as they be assigned to wear.' Then 'the Constables of the South-West and North-West Wards.' After them the Common Council and then the Constables of the North-East and South-East Wards. Then 'such Chamberlains as be in Bailiffs' liveries,' followed by all the Bailiffs—'the younger first.' Next come the minstrels, after them the Bailiffs' Sergeants, then the Town Clerk and the Mayor's Sergeant, then the newly-chosen Bailiffs, with two long white rods in their hands, and after these the newly-elected Mayor and his two followers. The Aldermen bring up the rear of the procession, and behind them walk the Commonalty, described as all such 'as followeth or ought to do so.'

Though the Mayor's welcome was a purely municipal function, yet, on occasion, City and University forgot their feuds and united to do honour to some distinguished guest. Thus, when in 1566 Queen Elizabeth came to Oxford by way of the Woodstock Road, the University went to the furthest point of their liberties at Wolvercote to meet

her, while the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses awaited her coming at the City's bounds in Summer-town. Here the Mayor delivered up his mace to the Queen, who returned it to him, after which he made a speech in English, and presented 'a cup of silver double gilt worth £10 and in it about £40 in old gold.' This marks the first instance in which money was offered by the City to a sovereign. Hitherto the gift had been five oxen and as many sheep, lambs, calves, and sugar-loaves! Her visit ended. Elizabeth departed by the East Gate, accompanied by the Mayor and Corporation as far as the Plain, where the City liberties ended. The members of the University went on, however, to the foot of Shotover Hill, where the Queen bade them farewell in a Latin oration.

CHAPTER X.

The Three Martyrs—The Bishop's Hole—The New Teaching in the City and Colleges—Sir Richard Taverner of Wood Eaton—The Black Assize—The Founding of the Bodleian Library—The First City Schools.

FROM the City accounts of 1555-6 may be gathered records, tragic in their terseness, of the actual cost of burning the three Protestant Bishops—Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer. When the deed was done and duly chronicled, it appears the Bailiffs found re-imbusement difficult. 'The authorities in those days,' we are told, 'were more zealous to send these three good men to Oxford and there to serve their ends upon them and afterwards to burn them than they were careful to pay the charges thereof.' The prisoners were confined in the Bocardo, and tradition also connects their names with an old tower called 'The Bishop's Hole,' which still exists as part of a furniture warehouse, and is visible from a court in Broad Street, nearly opposite the main entrance of Balliol College. From a window of the tower, Cranmer is said to have witnessed the deaths of his fellow-sufferers, for it was in Broad Street—then an open space just with-



THE BISHOP'S HOLE.

out the north wall of the City—that the stakes were set up. The burning of Ridley and Latimer cost £1 5s. 2d., while that of Cranmer in the following year cost only 12/-, 'the same staples and chains serving for both.' In 1841, when the Martyrs' Memorial was erected in St. Giles, the north aisle of St. Mary Magdalene was rebuilt and dedicated to their memory. In it is preserved the heavy door of their prison cell, with the great rusty key attached.

The Reformed Faith had already gained many adherents in Oxford, in spite of the penalties resulting from the working of the Six Articles of Henry VIII, and after the death of the three Bishops a wave of religious enthusiasm passed over the City. The scholars also proved willing followers of the 'New Teaching.' The authorities of 'Wolsey's' College imprisoned a number of them in a vault below the College where salt fish was stored, the stench of the fish proving fatal to several of the unhappy captives. John Taverner, the organist, was accused of hiding heretical books, but for him the Cardinal pleaded, excusing him on the score that he was only a musician. From the other colleges men were sent to the Bocardo and Castle prisons, and so fearful were the authorities that they employed men in the different fairs and markets to search among the goods displayed for heretical books. An effort was made at this time

to raise the tone of city life. The Mayor's election dinner was abolished, the Bailiffs' annual banquet ceased, and holy days were ordered to be strictly observed. The way of enforcing obedience to the new order of things was, of course, by punishment. Among the Chamberlain's expenses for 1555-6 are— 'One plank for the pillary'; lock and staple for the 'cage'; 'mending stocks'; making a 'cucking stole' (ducking stool) on wheels so that it might be drawn about from place to place! The last item was used for the benefit of scolding women, and it may be not altogether without cause, since, when the divorce between Henry VIII and Katharine of Arragon was the topic of the day, the women of Oxford espoused the Queen's cause so hotly that over thirty were imprisoned in the Bocardo for brawling. One little item in the Chamberlain's list is of interest, though not concerned with Oxford. It refers to a fee paid to a 'pursuivant for bringing a Proclamation whereby the land was first called Great Britaine.'

It is to be regretted that one effect of the growth of Protestantism in Oxford should have been a feeling of bitterness on the part of the Reformers against those who remained true to the older Faith. The Six Articles, the fires of Smithfield, the stakes set up in Broad Street, had roused in the City a hatred of all that pertained to Romanism. 'Small wonder,' says one writer, 'that the Fellows of Lincoln rang

a merry peal on their gaudy day—the day of St. Hugh—though the Queen (Mary) had just died.’ There is a note of sarcasm in this that does not appear on the surface, for Lincoln had been founded by Richard Flemyng, Bishop of Lincoln, as ‘a little college’ where no heresy should be taught.

Soon—under the freedom of Elizabeth’s rule—reprisals began; informers plied their horrid trade; suspect Catholics were flung into prison, and in 1589, Richard Yoxley, priest; Thomas Billson, gent; and Humphrey ap Richard, a servant in the house where they lodged, were hanged, drawn and quartered at Oxford as traitors. A note made by à Wood, concerning a birth given in the register of St. Thomas-the-Martyr, shows one out of the many difficulties which beset sixteenth century Catholics. ‘Mem,’ he writes, ‘that Sir Wm. Catesbie lying at Gloucester hall with the lady Catesbie his wife, in the lodgings that Sir Georg Peckham repaired and the said lady being delivered of a woman child, *did pay her Chryson and all other duties to the vicar and Clark of S. Thomas parish,*¹ acknowledging the same parish to be their owne parish during all the time of their abode there. Paid 21 July in the yeare of our Lord aforesaid unto William Chalfont then vicar. *The said child was not christened by the said vicar but by a popish priest.*’¹

¹ The italics are the author’s.

It seems strange that though there was so real a revival of spiritual life in Oxford, the decadence in its intellectual life during the same period should be so marked. Even in the golden age of Elizabeth learning did not flourish, and Oxford became so illiterate that she could not provide a University preacher. 'Then it was that Sir Richard Taverner, of Wood Eaton, wandered into St. Mary's, and preached to the academicians a sermon beginning thus: 'Arriving at the mount of St. Mary's, I have brought you some fine bisketts baked in the oven of Charitie, carefully conserved for the chickens of the Church, the sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet swallows of Salvation . . .' Poor Sir Richard! Though one of his sons, John Taverner, M.A., became, I believe, the respected incumbent of the tiny church at Wood Eaton, a younger son, Harcourt, half brother to John, grew up to be 'a wild young man, and being found guilty of robbery on the highway, was, with one of the Woods, of Woodend, in Cumnor parish, executed in the Castle yard.'

The Castle was at this time used as a gaol, and in 1577 the City paid a heavy price for the insanitary condition in which it was kept. In the July Assizes of that year a plague, caused by the terrible stench of the prisoners, broke out in the Court House, among those present at the trial of Rowland Jenkes, 'a saucy, foul-mouthed bookseller.' He was

accused of having in his house, bulls, libels, and such-like things against the Queen and religion, and condemned to lose his ears. Naturally, the Court was crowded with onlookers; some of these sickened at once, many more before nightfall or the next day, and the country folks carried the infection to their homes. For five weeks the pestilence continued, three hundred dying in the City, and over two hundred in other places before it had run its course. The catastrophe is recorded in the City annals as the 'Black Assize,' but many years passed before any steps were taken to prevent the recurrence of such visitations by a more humane treatment of prisoners.

The close of Elizabeth's reign witnessed the founding of the great Bodleian Library. In 1598, Sir Thomas Bodley—wearied of the gaities of the Court—returned to Oxford, and began the restoration of Duke Humphrey's Library, which, built over the Divinity School to hold the small beginnings of the University Library, had been robbed of its books by the King's Commissioners in 1550, and of its furniture two years later by the University. Merton (Bodley's College) offered timber, and in two years the beautiful roof was complete, and in 1602 the building was ready for use. The founder's money chest is preserved in the Picture Gallery, and the bell which he gave is still rung at closing time. As a tribute to his generosity to

Oxford, the quaint monument to his memory in Merton Chapel has its pillars carved to represent piles of books.

Even before they robbed Duke Humphrey's Library, the King's Commissioners had been very busy reforming Oxford. Among other injunctions, they ordained that no citizen's son should be permitted to attend any grammar school or remain after as a chorister at the charges of any College. This injunction affected more than fifty city lads, pupils in Magdalen Grammar School, and called forth a petition from the citizens to the King (Edward VI) that he would call back the injunction. In their petition they own that 'Maudlin School' is 'the only school of all the shire,' Lord Williams' Grammar School at Thame not being founded until Mary's reign.

The feeling of uneasiness caused by the injunction was not without good effects. Some years later the City fathers are mentioned as consulting together as to a suitable site for a school of their own. This they must have procured, since in 1582 it is ordered that 'the schoolhouse is to be viewed and seen what reparations are needful.' As some excuse for this apparent disregard for the education of its youth on the part of the City, it must not be forgotten that in 1495, and possibly later, there is known to have been a school at Osney Abbey. The place of this school when closed would be taken by

Magdalen School, founded in 1480, in which, as we have seen, many city boys were educated.

Nearly a century after, in 1658, when England was a Commonwealth, a good old Puritan Alderman, John Nixon, founded a grammar school for the education of forty boys, sons of Oxford Freemen. 'Nixon's' School occupied part of the site of the new Municipal Buildings. To make room for these, the remaining portions of the school and other old buildings were removed.

CHAPTER XI.

Ancient City Mansions—Old Inns—Fonts in St. Martin's and St. Aldate's—Glimpses of City Life—Baptists and Quakers—The Conduit—Charles I in Oxford—Fire in the City—The Siege—Cromwell Castle.

THERE remains to-day but little of the domestic architecture of mediæval Oxford. Occasionally one may find in an apparently modern building a fine old staircase or oak-panelled room, and here and there old houses with overhanging gables meet the eye. Among the latter the most perfect is 'Bishop King's Palace' in St. Aldate's. Here, in the reign of Henry VIII, lived for a short time Robert King, last Abbot of Osney and first Bishop of Oxford. The house is said to be much smaller now than it was originally, a part being taken from it and made into separate dwellings. Both portions show traces of Tudor work which has survived changes and restorations. Hard by, at No. 3 Brewer Street, was another city mansion, once the home of Oliver Smith, brewer, Mayor of Oxford in 1619 and 1624. Neglected and forlorn, the old house is rapidly falling into decay. Its ground floor an office, its upper rooms a store, its garden a rough business yard, one thinks sadly of the time when the proud owner 'decorated his dining hall with a beautiful oak panelling,' and set up his coat of arms. The

little old 'Jolly Farmers' Arms' at the corner of Paradise Street and Square, the still older 'Blue Pig' near Gloucester Green, and the 'Plough' in the Cornmarket, have been but little altered, but of the better known hostleries all have been modernised except the 'Mitre' in High Street.

In the Crown Inn Shakespeare used to lodge on his way to Stratford from London, and on March 3rd, 1600, he became godfather to the innkeeper's son. The boy was educated at Lincoln College, and became the well-known poet and playwright, Sir William Davenant. The christening was held in St. Martin's, Carfax, and the beautifully carved old font, carefully preserved when the church was pulled down, is now in All Saints'. St. Aldate's Church has also a beautiful old font, out of which, Hearne tells us, the parishioners used to eat sugar sops at



ST. MARTIN'S FONT.

Easter! Indeed, in spite of the halo of learning that surrounds Oxford, there is something delightfully human in the few glimpses we have of life in the city. It may be the successful visits of charlatans to the place—John Baptista de Lucca, who set up his stage in All Saints' Churchyard in 1626, or Dr. John Pundun, who began 'in St. Marie's Churchyard by the dial,' but afterwards went to the 'Sarasins' Head,' near St. Peter-in-the-East. A great favourite was Dr. John, coming in 1634, 1640,

and 1652, to be followed by Dr. Vincent Lancelles, of Venice. Of them all, however, Professor James Themut was the biggest rogue. He advertised his ability to cure all sorts of diseases by God's mercy, and 'to him the people flocked,' but within a month he had run away, taking with him much money that he had persuaded his patients to pay him beforehand.

Or, it may chance that the Court has been in Oxford. No love is lost between courtiers and scholars, for the latter have had to give up their rooms to the former, and are treated by their frivolous guests with contempt; but the City makes money out of the Court, and à Wood laments how the burghers are puffed up and insolent to the students, but after the Court has gone are glad enough to curry favour again with the University. à Wood's pen is always dipped in gall when he mentions any real or fancied slight to his Alma Mater, and, above all, he never forgets that the City at heart was Puritan. How deeply Puritan we may realise if we remember that, as early as 1618, a Baptist Society was founded in Oxford under the leadership of Vavasour Powell, a Welshman, of Jesus College. The present Baptist Church in New Road owes its origin to Powell's little community of disciples. In 1657, when Nonconformity 'had no harm in't,' John Bunyan paid a visit to the newly-formed Church, accompanied by Powell, who seems

to have been an itinerant preacher, as he is said to have made many converts in Wales. Some fifty years later the first members of the Society of Friends—'the people called Quakers'—settled in Oxford. They worshipped in an 'old stone house' in New Inn Hall Street, then called for some reason the lane of the 'Seven Deadly Sins.' They witnessed in season and out of it against a paid ministry and various other points on which they differed from the State Church, and had as reward an exceedingly rough time with both scholars and proctors.

Up till 1624, the only means of direct communication between London and Oxford had been by road—a two days' journey—the Thames being open for traffic no further than Abingdon. In that year a Bill was passed, opening the river all the way to Oxford, and on August 31st, 1635, the first barge reached the City. But a greater event in the eyes of the citizens must have been the erection in 1616 by Otho Nicholson, of the Conduit at Carfax. Nicholson, one of the examiners of the Court of Chancery, wishing to bring a supply of water from the hill above North Hincksey to the several Halls and Colleges in Oxford, purchased from the City a plot of ground in the middle of Carfax, whereon the conduit was erected, and opened the following year. It was hoped that not only the Colleges, but the City itself, might be supplied 'with good and wholesome water' from the spring above Hincksey.

Apparently the hope was not fulfilled, since it was found that 'if private men shall have their severall cockes there will be noe water to serve some colledges.' But the City had doubtless its full share in the contents of the cistern upon 'extraordinary days of rejoicing' when the pipes ran wine of which all might partake. In 1787 the Conduit was taken down and removed to Nuneham Park, where it still stands, a picturesque erection, the 'O' and 'N' of its decorations perpetuating the memory of its builder.

In 1636, Charles I, the Queen, Prince Rupert, and the Court visited Oxford. à Wood—then but a very little boy—tells how, 'conveyed by his nurse,' he accompanied his parents to Canon Iles' lodgings in Christ Church. From a mound in the Canon's garden he looked over the wall into Fish Street (now St. Aldate's), along which the Royal procession was moving, and saw it enter within the great gateway of the College. He adds that he never again witnessed so splendid a spectacle, 'and often spoke of it when he was a man.' Even then, however, the shadow of the approaching conflict between King and Commons must have somewhat dimmed the splendour of the Court.

In Bucks John Hampden had refused to pay the 'Ship Money.' In Oxon William Fiennes, first Viscount Saye and Sele, nicknamed 'Old Subtilty,' had also rebelled against the tax, and in a short

time his castle of Broughton was to become the secret rendezvous of the Puritan leaders. When war at last broke out, he is said to have gathered together all the Puritan element in North Oxon and drilled soldiers secretly, giving them lodgings the while in his castle.

In 1642 the Royalists occupied Oxford for a few months, but were soon replaced by Roundheads under Lord Saye and Sele, who warned the colleges that he should need their plate for the Parliament. For some reason he did not then requisition it, and when, after Edgehill, Charles made Oxford his headquarters, it found its way, with some of the City plate to the royal mint which had been brought from Shrewsbury and set up in New Inn Hall. Much money, too, was borrowed from colleges and City, and from the latter was demanded all its brass—kettles, candlesticks, &c., for 'the casting of guns.'

A martial spirit entered into the University. Arms and powder were stored in New College, corn in the Law and Logic Schools, cloth and soldiers' coats in the Music and Astronomy Schools, while the Guildhall became a provision store, and the Abbot's Mill at Osney ground powder. College discipline ceased, students became soldiers, and worked hard at the earthen ramparts with which the City was surrounded, but the citizens were half-hearted in the cause. Note that 'only 12 instead of 122' turned out to the bulwarks on the north of St.

Giles' Church and by St. John's College walks, and when the king demanded from them the first crop of hay from the Port Meadow—the property of the City freemen—there was a decided unwillingness to oblige, and a counter-demand for payment. One perceives that to the gay young clerk the war was only an experience, but the staid burgher with wife and children had 'given hostages to fortune' which are 'impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief.'



OSNEY MILL.

Besides the outer circle of earthen ramparts—of which there still remain a few traces by the river beyond Holywell church—several houses were pulled down in St. Clement's so that a bulwark might be reared across the street, and the 'pleasant grove' of Bartlemas Hospital was cut down lest the enemy might find shelter there. The elms of Magdalen College grove were nearly all cut down 'lest they should hinder the firing from the City wall by New College.' One noble tree, said to be the last of the few which escaped destruction, fell during the early part of the year (1911).

In 1644, to add to the trials of its inhabitants, the City suffered from a fire which 'began in a little poore house on the south side of Thames Street (now George Street) . . . occasioned by a foot

soldier's roasting a pigg he had stolen.' The wind, blowing from the north, carried the flames across the City, and soon all the quarter of the town west of the Cornmarket was blazing. The fire reached Butchers' Row, destroyed it, and, crossing, burnt some houses on the opposite side before it could be extinguished.

With varying fortunes the war continued, the talk of the City being 'a perpetual discourse of losing and gaining towns and men.' Part of the Parliament was in Oxford with the king, the Puritan members in London or on the war-path. The Royalist Commons, as one may term them, sat in the Convocation House; the Lords sat in one of the Upper Schools. Between these and the London members a treaty was held in 1645 at Uxbridge, on the *higher* road to London—evidently the floods were out. The treaty failed, and Cromwell and Fairfax decided to besiege Oxford. In an Elizabethan mansion in Old Marston they met on May 22, 1645, to discuss the conduct of the siege, and here, in the May of the following year, the terms of capitulation were signed. Cromwell Castle, as it is called, has been rebuilt since that time, but there are still to be seen at the back a built-up door and two small gable windows belonging to the original house.

The joy with which the Royalist garrison marched over Shotover to Thame with colours flying, drums beating, and arms retained, according to the terms

of surrender, was probably shared, though in more sober fashion, by the citizens from whose homes the horrors of war, plague and famine had at last been removed. Charles, it may be remembered, had escaped from Oxford in the guise of a servant shortly before the capitulation was signed, and taken refuge with the Scots at Newark.

CHAPTER XII.

Oxford after the Siege—St. Helen's Passage—The 'Oxford Blues'—A Cavalier Plot—Charles II. Proclaimed—Black Bartholomew's Day—Decadent Oxford—Oxford Jacobites—The Wesleys and their Work.

THANKS to the peaceful ending of the Siege of Oxford, her buildings suffered but little, in spite of the strife that was carried on with ever-increasing bitterness beyond her walls. The sixteenth century shelter erected in the Cornmarket by Dr. Claymond, President of Corpus Christi, to protect the carts of corn on market days, was pulled down by the Royal Garrison. The leaden roof they used for bullets, and the timber for 'militarie engines.' They are also blamed for cutting the chains from several valuable books and annexing the latter. On the other hand, Fairfax,—owing, perhaps, to the sterner discipline prevailing among his followers,—was able to a great extent to prevent such thefts, and it was due to his influence that the Bodleian Library was practically uninjured.

In 1646, when Oxford exchanged a Royalist for a Roundhead garrison, Parliament sent down seven of the most popular of the Puritan divines in a fruitless attempt to reconcile the University to the new order of things. Though the colleges would have none of their teaching, the City received them gladly, being able now to show its mind more freely on matters of religion.

From 1651 to 1657 Cromwell was Chancellor, and proved a just and careful guardian of the interests of the University and City, though he never received from the colleges the homage which was Archbishop Laud's while he held the office. From this it naturally follows that the City preferred him to the Archbishop, with whose ideas of compulsory conformity they had as little sympathy as with his ideas on city reform. For Laud had not only considerably reduced the number of alehouses in the city, but had annoyed the citizens sadly by demolishing the cottages they had built on the disused 'town ditch,—by the back way to the Castle,—along Horsemonger Street, by the Smith gate,' and even in parts, on the site of the city wall. It appears that the Corporation was allowed to have the rents from two strips of land, one inside, the other outside the walls. When the wild fighting years passed away, the trenches were filled up, the city grew, and houses were built on the two strips of land. For these no doubt stones were taken from some decayed part of the adjacent walls, then gradually the buildings would replace the walls which were thus destroyed.



ST. HELEN'S PASSAGE.

One does not always remember, in going by way of St. Helen's Passage to Holywell, that the downward slope of the path is due to the fact that it

leads through the city ditch. The old cottages on the left may possibly be the descendants of those which roused the ire of Archbishop Laud.

A quaint epitaph of this period, from Holywell churchyard, with à Wood's comments on it, show very plainly the strange mixture of elements in the city. The inscription runs thus—

'Here lyeth the body of Elizabeth Hampton who deceased the
30 of March Anno 1661.

Heaven's Hampton-court: heer's but a cell
Where putrid bones, ashes and wormes do dwell.
This sacred maid, deaf to the taking charmes
Of all ignoble love, imortall armes
Are now embracing: and have made, since death,
Another virgin queen, Elizabeth.
Shee needs not us, but dearly miss shall wee
Our Shee-professor of Divinity.'

'Shee was,' says Wood, 'a little, old, crooked maid, and had conventicles in her house in this parish, once or twice a week, wherin sometimes shee spake, but mostly her customers of Magdalen and Wadham College.'

It is interesting to note that the Second Regiment of Horse Guards, known as the 'Oxford Blues' was raised in Oxon in 1648 as a bodyguard for Cromwell. That year was marked by a conspiracy among the Oxford Cavaliers to seize the garrison, Parliamentary 'Visitors,' and all the arms they could find, join themselves to Royalists in other towns, and march to the relief of Colchester, where a Royal garrison was being besieged by the Roundheads. The plot

was betrayed by one of their number 'when in his cups,' but the leader, Francis Croft, of Merton, escaped. Of a different mind were the scholars of New College, who formed part of the garrison of Colonel Draper, the Puritan Governor of the Castle, and bore on their ensign the motto, '*Non arte, sed Marte.*' The example does not seem to have been generally followed, and when, on Cromwell's death in 1658, his son Richard was proclaimed before St. Mary's Church, the students present pelted the civic dignitaries with carrot and turnip tops. 'Truth to tell,' as one writer observes, 'the common people sighed for a king, as children run wild who have been too long pent up in school.' And when Charles II was proclaimed king in 1660, Oxford feasted and made merry the whole night through. The tokens of monarchy were again restored, a may-pole was set up before the Mitre Inn, and Common Prayer was read in St. Mary Magdalen Church for the first time since 1647. Yet undoubtedly many in the city must have looked on with curious minds. To these came all too soon the 'Black Bartholomew Day' of 1662, when two thousand clergy resigned their livings rather than subscribe to the Act of Uniformity. All the Puritan Heads and Fellows of colleges in Oxford were ejected, and seven plucky Puritan scholars from New Inn Hall shared their fate.

Three years later Parliament met in Oxford—be-

cause of the Plague—and passed the Five Mile Act, forbidding dissenting ministers from coming within five miles of any ‘city, town corporate, borough, or place where they had held livings, under a penalty of £40.’ The effect of such sweeping measures was disastrous to University and City, and it is a sadly decadent Oxford we see when, in 1673, Anthony Hall, vintner, was elected Mayor. ‘I can neither speak French nor Spanish,’ said he, when thanking the city for choosing him, ‘but if you will walk with me to the “Bear,” you will find I can speak good English.’ The scholars present hissed the remarks vigorously; the townsmen turned them out of the Hall, whereupon Gown flipped Town on the cheek, and in the evening a free fight began, which lasted nearly a week, including Sunday, when they attacked each other in St. Peter-le-Bailey church after service. At last the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors stepped in and stopped the rioting, of which broken heads and arms were the most serious effects.

In 1681 there met at Oxford the third Short Parliament of Charles II. At the end of a week the king entered the hall of Christ Church, where the Lords were sitting, and dissolved the Parliament with the well-known words, ‘Now I am King of England and was not before.’ Strangely enough, one of his first acts as absolute monarch was to accuse a London joiner, nephew of Edmund College,

of St. Peter-le-Bailey parish, of a treasonable attempt to seize his person. At his trial, Colledge made so good a defence that the grand jury rejected the bill against him, but Charles, with the aid of the Sheriff, Lord Norris, empanelled a Royalist jury at Oxford. On their verdict Colledge was condemned, hanged and quartered in the Castle yard.

Although almost daily might be seen 'a duke, earl, or lord with their companys passing through Oxford' to join the Duke of Monmouth's forces, or aid the king's troops, the city took but little share in the rebellion. As usual, Town and Gown whacked each other, the one crying 'A Monmouth! A Monmouth! No York!' and the other drinking York's health, or 'destruction to Monmouth,' but only a few of the citizens permitted their valour to outrun their discretion.

In 1687, when James II came to Oxford to force the University to accept a Roman Catholic—Dr. Parker—as Bishop of Oxford, the City and Colleges laid all the highway from New College to Carfax, and thence to Christ Church, with gravel. All the rails and posts on the west sides of St. Giles and Magdalen Street were removed; ditches were filled up and the way made smooth. Within the North Gate some poor women, clad in white, awaited the King's arrival, to strew his path with camomile and other herbs. At Carfax the waits and musicians stood by the Penniless Bench to sing and play, and

all the time the conduit flowed with claret for the people. The City Guilds, some mounted, others on foot, were there, the Masters wearing their gowns, and each company having with them their flag, on which was displayed their arms. The Guilds marched in order of age, 'the Mercers being the youngest guild went first.' The Cordwainers' Company is specially mentioned as having spent over £5 on beer and other expenses.

James, however, did not desire warmth of welcome, but obedience, and his first act on reaching Christ Church hall was to send for the refractory Fellows of Magdalen College, to whom he stated his views very clearly. 'Get you gone,' he concluded, 'know that I, your king, will be obeyed. Go and admit the Bishop of Oxford.' The chidden ones departed, but refused to obey the king's command; for this, twenty-five were expelled with most of the scholars. It is a significant comment on the strongly Romanizing tendency of James' policy that a new toast drunk that year in Protestant circles in Oxford should be 'A health to the Church *dowager*.'

Though it took two generations of Hanoverian Sovereigns to cure Oxford of its hankering after the Stewart dynasty, yet its Jacobites seem to have found sufficient outlet for their discontent in words. Even Hearne, a faithful adherent of 'the king over the water,' confessed that 'in a meeting lately of

some great persons a question arose on passive obedience and it was asked how many Jacobites would suffer death if a Persecution arose. Only two were reckoned firm enough, and they were leaders, though they hoped well of the rest.'

Where the disaffection was on religious, rather than political grounds there was probably good cause for discontent as, for example, when certain Jacobites who met in a house in St. Mary's parish, near Oriel College, for the sake of devotion, were brought before the Bishop's Court; but one cannot help thinking that the comfortable old rebels who met daily in a tavern called 'Antiquity Hall'—then the 'third house on the left after you pass over Hythe Bridge'—to drink healths and whisper treason, were enjoying themselves thoroughly, and had no intention of risking either their persons or goods for the cause they held so dear.

To turn from such a period in the history of the City to the strenuous work of the Wesleys and their followers among the prisoners of the Castle and Bocardo, is like the effect of a cool sea-breeze on a sultry day. John Howard, in his remarks upon the prisons of England, had a dreadful tale to tell of the Castle gaol. The tower was the debtors' prison, and these poor creatures were charged for its use one shilling and sixpence weekly, besides having to find their own beds. The felons' day-room for men and women, was five steps below the level of the ground,

and measured 23 ft. by 11 ft. Another five steps lower was the men's dungeon, measuring $18\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by $16\frac{1}{2}$ ft., with only small apertures for air and light, and swarming with vermin. The women's sleeping room was $6\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in area, and the court, shared by both sexes, measured 29 ft. by 23 ft. There was no infirmary, no bath, no straw; the prisoners lay in their clothes on mats or on the floor. In this pest house—for it can have been little else—certain of the little band of scholars read prayers 'on most Wednesdays and Fridays, preached every Sunday, and administered the Sacrament once a month,' and these were by no means the most arduous of their labours.

'The Castle is, I thank God, in much better condition,' writes one of them to Wesley. 'All the felons were acquitted except Salmon, who is referred to be tried at Warwick, and the sheep-stealer who is burned in the hand, and who, I verily believe, is a great penitent. Jempro is discharged, and I have appointed Harris to read to the prisoners in his stead. Two of the felons likewise have paid their fees and are gone out, both of them able to read mighty well. There are only two in the gaol who want this accomplishment, John Clanville, who reads but moderately, and the horse stealer who cannot read at all. . . . I hear them both read three times a week. . . . I am to go down to hear the determination of a meeting of St. Thomas' parish respect-

ing separating Bossum and his wife. When I had promised to give a crown toward clothing the woman, and the overseer had determined to take her in upon that condition, the Churchwarden would needs have him try to put the man upon me too . . . but . . . I am apprehensive that I must be forced to contribute to Salmon's relief, who will want near twenty shillings to subpoena proper witnesses to Warwick at his trial. . . . I have obtained leave to go to St. Thomases workhouse twice a week,' &c. The writer is John Clayton, a scholar of Brazenose College. None of these youths were wealthy; of the six who were expelled from St. Edmund Hall for their Methodism, several were stigmatized as illiterate, or as having been bred to a trade before entering the University. That such men were able to give so much practical assistance to the unfortunates whose cause they had espoused shows the high ideals for which the little brotherhood stood.

'I know a man,' said Wesley, speaking of himself, 'who had £30 per annum. He lived on £28 and gave away £2. The next year he had £60, and still living on £28, gave away £32. In the third year he received £90 and gave away £62, and the fourth year he received £120, and living still on £28, gave away all the rest.'

CHAPTER XIII.

The Passing of Ancient Oxford—The Freemen—The City Plate—The Mayor as Royal Butler—The City Charters—The Oath of Allegiance to the University—Rebellious Mayors—The Long Dispute settled.

MEDIEVAL Oxford may be said to have lasted with but little change until 1771. In that year, by an Act of Parliament, a body of Commissioners chosen from the University, City and County, was vested with full authority to improve the city, and, as by the touch of a magic wand, old, quaintly beautiful, and decidedly insanitary Oxford vanished. Paving, lighting and cleansing were undertaken systematically. 'Trade signs, showboards, butchers' gallows, and chopping blocks' were removed, where they projected into the street, and the shambles taken from the Butchers' Row. Northgate, with the Bocardo prison, became a thing of the past; a new gaol was built on Gloucester Green, while, at least in the principal streets, when altering any old building, the workmen were forbidden to encroach on the roadway with the new foundation beyond the limits of the old. Such were the beginnings of the Oxford of to-day. Yet, houses may be pulled down, streets widened, and ancient landmarks removed without much visible change in the life of a city.

So we find that as late as the thirties of last century Oxford had no gas, her streets being illuminated by oil lamps, and her houses by candles. She had no night police, save one old watchman, who wandered about 'calling the hours thus, "Half-past one o'clock, cloudy morning."' Poor old man! he would be of little use to enforce order on the bands of jovial toppers issuing from the city public-houses, which were open all night long, during which time his allies, the day constables, of whom there were a few, would be wrapt in slumber. To assist these last in their labours there stood at Carfax the city stocks.

Of course, there was no penny postage; each letter costing eightpence to send, invoices were enclosed with the goods to save expense. In commerce, old rules were retained, thus, 'Within the city bounds no one could commence business unless he were a Freeman,' but was able to overcome this difficulty at the cost of about £30. Her Freeman bulk largely in the history of Oxford. Domesday Survey mentions that 'all the burgesses of Oxeneford hold in common a pasture outside the wall (the Port meadow) that brings in six shillings and eightpence.' In 1568 the Town Council ordered that no Freeman should give his vote to any person 'to be Burgess of the Parliament hereafter except the said person has been dwelling within the city for three years next before and by no less time *free of the*

city and not under the degree of a Bailiff.' This rule was kept so strictly that the son of Sir Francis Knollys, the High Steward of Oxon, was admitted as a Freeman before being elected a Burgess.

One might be a Freeman, as has been already noted, by purchase, by apprenticeship to a Freeman, or by birth. The Mayor had the privilege of making his son a Freeman on payment of a gilt penny, and if he had no son could, in the same manner, nominate someone else for the honour. Sometimes the freedom of the city was a gift, as when in 1579 Nicolas Gosson was admitted free of the city, 'He, providing six sheaves of good arrows with feathered heads and cased with red leather,' and repairing such as were in the town house.

Among other privileges, the Mayor had charge of the city plate, and the right of using it at his feasts. In spite of Royal demands during the siege, and the fact that great part was sold in 1350 in order to purchase extra land, what remains of the city plate is very fine. The great mace of silver gilt, said to be almost a replica of that of the House of Commons, is the largest civic mace in the kingdom, and was made during the mayoralty of John Lamb, in the reign of Charles II. Of the three small maces, two belong to the same period, and the third and oldest bears traces of the Royal arms of James I, encircled by a coronet. Among the other pieces, the finest is a two-handled porringer, with a cover of

wrought gold, presented in 1680-81 by George, the second Duke of Buckingham, High Steward of the City. Then there are: a large cup of silver gilt, in honour of the Coronation of Charles II, another given by the Earl of Abingdon when High Steward of the City in 1775, and one given by the Hon. Peregrine Bertie, Member for the City in 1781, besides many smaller pieces.

An 'Inspeximus' of Elizabeth quotes the following lines from a Charter of Henry II:—'Know that I have granted and confirmed to my citizens in Oxeneford all liberties and customs and laws and quittances which they had in the time of King Henry, my grandfather, and specially their guild merchant with all liberties and customs . . . so that anyone who is not of the guild shall not trafic in City or suburbs except as he was wont to do in the time of King Henry my grandfather, and they are to have all other customs and liberties and laws of their own which they have in common with my City of London, and that they serve wine at my feasts with those of my Buttery . . . and if they doubt or dispute about any legal judgment let them send their messengers to London on the point and hold to the decision of the Londoners . . . for they and the City of London have one and the same custom and law and liberty.'

The honour of serving wine with the royal butlers became a special privilege in the reign of Richard I,

when it was decreed that the Mayor of Oxford should be butler at the Coronation. At the crowning of Elizabeth, Richard Whittington, Mayor, was butler, and 'made sute for the office in the buttery xi daye of January 1558 for our liveryes and suche things as belonge to that office. Item. iij gownes and iiij cotes, one gowne for the Mayre and two for ij Bayllies and iiij cotes for foure men that be appointed of the towne besydes his servaunt and others that were with him at the tyme.' The office of Butler was held by a Mayor of Oxford at the Coronation of Charles II and each succeeding Sovereign until the accession of William IV, when the custom was discontinued.

Much of the story of Oxford may be gleaned from her Charters. Of these there are some eighteen in existence, and there is little doubt that the list is incomplete, some of the earlier ones having been lost or destroyed. The oldest is one of King John, 1199, paid for, one feels sure, by good coin of the realm, or some equivalent favour, as was the custom with John and his brother Richard I. Then there is the restored Charter of Edward III, granted in 1355, and docked of certain privileges as a penalty for the rioting on St. Scholastica's Day in the previous year.

Plantagenet, Lancastrian, Yorkist and Tudor in turn hindered or aided the growth of the city. From Henry VIII are letters patent constituting the

Bishopric of Oxford, and making Oxford a city. These are confirmed by Philip and Mary. To increase the schools of learning at Oxford, to add to its fame by placing the new Bishopric there, were among the dearest schemes of Wolsey and his Royal Master, but for the city itself they cared not at all, and Wolsey, having taken the University under his protection, influenced Henry to give it a fresh Charter, which practically placed the greater part of the city under its control.

On the death of Wolsey in 1530, Michael Hethe, Mayor for that year, refused to appear at St. Mary's Church to take the oath of allegiance to the University. When asked by the Vice-Chancellor to give reasons why he should not be perjured and excommunicated, 'Recommend me unto your master,' he replied to the messenger, 'and shew him I am here in this town, the King's Grace's lieutenant for lack of a better, and I know no cause why I should appear before him. I know him not for my ordinary. If there be any cause concerning between the University and the town, I will be glad to meet him at a place convenient which was assigned by my Lord of Suffolk's Grace.' Hethe was excommunicated, though afterwards he received absolution, without, however, taking the oath. He left Oxford for a time, but returned, and ultimately died there, being buried in St. Ebbe's Church.

Failure attended the Mayoral rebellions of 1577

and 1688 against the oath of allegiance. In 1800, Mayor Richard Cox, on refusing to take it, was fined by the University, and a similar fate befell Mr. Robinson, of the Old Bank, Mayor in 1817, who had to pay one hundred marks for his contumacy. But in 1857, Alderman Grubb, a man of strong character and great determination, was chosen Mayor by the City on the understanding that he should refuse to take the oath, 'they knowing well that, having once refused, nothing would make him give way.' The usual oath was required of the newly-elected Mayor, refused, and a fine exacted, but this time the City took its grievance to the Law Courts, spending several hundred pounds on defence. After much correspondence on the subject, the University finally yielded, and in 1859 an Act of Parliament was passed by which the obligation to make any oath or declaration was abrogated.

Traces of this long struggle of some six hundred years may be found in the City Charters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The finest of these belongs to the Stewart period (ii. James I). It occupies three large parchments with the margins beautifully illustrated. There are none of Charles I., two of Charles II., and one of James II.—the last on four large skins with the great Seal attached. The City Fathers had been on such bad terms with their King that he had kept possession of this particular Charter for some time. At length, on Sep-

tember 15th, 1688, they received it from his hand, and possibly it marks one of his last dealings with Oxford. Three months later he fled from the country and taken refuge in France.

Thus, in simple guise, I have tried to tell the story of Oxford City, and if there has been too much of warfare in the tale, let me plead that a time of growth is always one of storm and stress. This—true of all cities to a certain extent—is specially so of Oxford, which throughout the centuries has been connected more or less closely with the chief events of English History.



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