

OXFORD UNIVERSITY



An Oxford Postman.

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THE prince of Wales recently opened the splendid new \$200,000 extension of the Taylorian Institution at Oxford university, thus adding another unit to the already pretentious group of buildings that make up one of England's famous institutions of learning.

Oxford is, perhaps, the best known in America of all foreign universities, owing to the Rhodes scholarships, granted since 1904 under the will of the late Cecil J. Rhodes, South African magnate. Each year 32 American college students, usually graduates, are selected on the basis of their records in American colleges and a personal interview, and are awarded a three years' scholarship at an Oxford college. An equal number are selected from the British commonwealth and the colonies of the empire. In all, about 290 Rhodes scholars are in residence at Oxford each year.

Rhodes, who believed that eventually all the English-speaking peoples of the world would make common cause, hoped through these scholarships to produce leaders for his dream.

One hears unsympathetic observers at Oxford refer to the American Rhodes scholars at the university as "the last of the aristocrats," implying that they, too, often band together and keep themselves aloof from their fellow undergraduates. A difference in age and different heritage of interests, hobbies, and traditions do make fusion, even orientation, difficult.

Most of the Rhodes scholars with whom one becomes acquainted at Oxford are of a fine type—friendly, helpful, a bit reserved, as perhaps might become a national of another country, and studiously inclined. Some of the American Rhodes scholars have been elected to Oxford's most exclusive social and literary clubs and societies, and most of them have enviable scholastic and athletic standings during their residence at the university. The Rhodes idea may be said to be fulfilled to the extent that mutual understanding has been fostered by the contact and conflict of youthful ideas of representative members of the English-speaking nations.

Why Americans Like Oxford.

Twenty-five years have elapsed since the first Rhodes scholars arrived at Oxford. On the evening of July 5, 1929, a considerable number of that first group attended the trustees' dinner in the Hall of Rhodes house, on South Parks road. Nearly all the 220 guests were old Rhodes scholars. The largest number were from the United States, but there were some who had come, for this event, all the way from such distant lands as South Africa and Australia. Stanley Baldwin presided and the prince of Wales, as principal speaker, proposed the health of the Rhodes scholars.

In addition to Rhodes scholars, many other Americans are attracted to Oxford by the unrivaled resources for research afforded by the Bodleian library, and also because the atmosphere of the city is conducive to literary and academic work. Oxford is a mecca for American college professors and instructors on sabbatical leave.

In contrast to American schools, Oxford's lectures have relatively little importance. No attendance records are kept and an undergraduate might possibly go through his entire course without attending a single one. The real check is the tutor, to whom the undergraduate is immediately assigned upon his arrival and to whom he must report at least once a week for assignments, recitations and informal discussions. The tutorial system allows for much greater development of a student's natural bent and individuality, but it is practical only where the number of students is not large. The average number of students at an Oxford college is about 200. In the regular course of events, examinations do not come until near the end of the second year of residence, and everything depends upon the showing made in them.

The teaching staff at Oxford consists of university professors, readers, lecturers and demonstrators, numbering more than 100, and about 300 college fellows, tutors and lecturers.

As is the case in American universities, there are faculties leading to specific degrees, the principal ones at Oxford being theology, law, medicine, literae humaniores, modern history, medieval and modern languages, oriental languages, and natural science. Both the colleges and the university give lectures, and each co-operates to

promote academic harmony and efficiency. Members of any college are at liberty to attend any lectures, university or collegiate, which their tutors recommend and without the payment of special fees.

But the academic, vital and fundamental as it is, is really the reverse side of the medal. Oxford is more than classrooms, and degrees, and rules and regulations, and their exceptions. F. D. How no doubt exaggerates when he says: "For beauty and for romance the first place among all the cities of the United Kingdom must be given to Oxford." But one must search far to find an equal of the mellow beauty of its winding streets and its classic buildings, or of the pastoral charm of the meadows and walks along the Cherwell and the Isis, or of the romantic associations of the place, from Alfred the Great's day to the World War.

Beauty Along High Street.

Walking down High street, affectionately known in Oxford as "the High," one catches some of this feeling of beauty and romance in the long curved fronts of the colleges and churches and other stately buildings which border it; for High street is Oxford and, incidentally, one of the most beautiful streets in the world.

Beginning at Carfax, the center of town, it curves gently for half a mile or more to the Magdalen bridge, unfolding vistas of spires, and stout stone walls, and moss-covered cornices, and towers, and courtyards, and a thousand and one things, each more lovely than the last, until one begins to regret that such delight cannot last and must dwindle at the end to some mediocrity.

But at the end of the High is reserved the most charming view of all. Rising gracefully from the buildings of Magdalen college is an exquisite Gothic bell tower, from which each year a Seventeenth century eucharistic hymn is sung at sunrise on the first of May.

Directly opposite are the verdant, spacious grounds of the Botanic garden, the oldest in England, and, to close the picture, beyond is the River Cherwell, with its screen of bordering elms and willows and the stately arched bridge which carries the High toward London town.

Some prefer to reverse the picture just drawn, and it is charming the other way. But Carfax, with its noisy bustle and confusion, brings one just a bit too suddenly to earth. It is better to linger on Magdalen bridge, where one may drink deep of scenes that belong to another world—truly a world of romance and beauty.

There is yet another spot in Oxford where one may feel this age-old unreality. Not far from the High is a round-domed building (the dome is the entire building) known as the Radcliffe Camera, the reading room of the Bodleian library. A small fee will admit one to a stairway which winds up and up to a circular out-door gallery far above the street.

View From Radcliffe Camera.

Below and all around is spread a veritable forest of stone turrets, towers, arches, battlements, spires, and delicate tracery. Massive pieces of masonry they undoubtedly are, but from this height they seem light and airy, exquisitely delicate and graceful. Refinement of detail is lost in the splendid upward sweep of whole buildings, although one is conscious of embellishments which carry the eye and delight the spirit.

Haphazard as was Oxford's growth, there is a symmetry in her architecture which many another city of less spontaneous origin might envy.

Beyond the colleges, to the east, is the green-forested slope of Headington hill; to the south, perhaps a bit dim in the mist which rises from the meadows along the Isis, is Boars hill, nearest of the gently rolling Berkshire Downs; to the west are the railroads and the commercial districts; and to the north are the principal college gardens and the university parks.

A short cut from the Radcliffe camera through the old Divinity school leads to the Bodleian library, the granddaddy of all the English libraries in the world. Over the entrance doorway is a Latin inscription and the worn wooden stairs that lead to the library itself creak as if their last days had come. But these stairs have creaked to the footsteps of countless thousands for centuries.

The Bodleian still clings to the ancient system of listing its volumes in huge parchment index books, pasting in a slip of paper when new books arrive.

Federal Judge Faris at St. Louis, Mo., has ordered a reduction of 50 per cent in the salary of President Baldwin of the Missouri Pacific lines, and a reduction in the salaries of others by 40 to 45 per cent.

Memphis, Tenn., breweries which have been producing all the near-beer consumed in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee points, have quit that manufacture and turned to real beer.

William N. Doak, of Fairfax, Va., secretary of labor in the Hoover cabinet, will resume his post as national legislative representative and editor of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen about May 5.

Berlin police last Monday raided the offices of the German-Russian Oil company in Berlin, and arrested 20 employes charging them with communism and promulgating communistic doctrines.

Governor Futrell, of Arkansas, has told the people of that state that he might convene the legislature in extra session to legalize the sale of beer "if the people demand it strong enough."

The Bulkley bill, to speed up payments to depositors in closed banks by broadening the law for borrowing from national banks has been passed by the senate.

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