

## PREFACE

This little book lays no claim to original research, and is mainly intended for those who wish to learn rather more about the older Oxford Libraries than may be gathered from books of reference and guide-books. Nor does it profess to describe all the Libraries in Oxford, but only those which are most worthy of a visit—the Bodleian, the first Public Library in Europe, and to-day one of the largest in the world; Merton, the oldest in England, and the pattern for all the earlier College Libraries; Corpus, closely connected with the English Renaissance, and one of the most beautiful; St. John's, associated with the greatest of Oxford's Chancellors, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury; the Library of Jesus College, untouched and unchanged, and therefore one of the most precious; Queen's, an ornate and elaborate example on the mediaeval plan; All Souls, an admirable specimen in the Italian style; and the Radcliffe Camera, a noble building of the Georgian age. Other Libraries which appear to promise much have but little to offer. Wadham, beautifully situated in a College grove, has no interior charm; the most interesting fact in its history is that, by the wish of the