

more immediate friends that it was simply because his little sister used to send *Puck* and *Judge* and *Life* over to him. He would memorize the worst of these in bed, of a cold and rainy morning; and in that way he won his title of the Second Mark Twain.

So, naturally enough, the first thought that will come to the stranger as he looks about this puzzling old place will be the question: "Is Oxford a university, or merely a great big play-ground?" It would be better for him not to answer this until he has seen more of the unobtrusive inner life, hidden behind those huge, shadowy, old stone walls. As he gradually becomes better acquainted with the colleges, and comes more in touch with the scholastic life thereof, he will discover that the men who take a first in "Mods" and an equally high standing in "Greats," strange to say, are quite often those very men who are the best all-round sportsmen in the university. Because you row in your college crew, or are on the Varsity eleven, or the Varsity fifteen at Oxford, or because you have your "Blue," it does not follow that you are a blockhead. In fact blockheads, after they have failed twice or three times, are promptly sent down from the university. The Oxford tutorial system necessitates the continual accomplishment of a certain amount of work, continual personal association with your tutor, your regularly occurring discussions, and submission of an essay to him demand no meagre amount of reading, however ingenious and indolent you may be.

I could find neither solution nor explanation for this paradox of undergraduate Oxford, appearing to be a great army of careless pleasure-seekers, and yet accomplishing so much real work, until it was pointed out to me, and I saw, also, for myself, that a large number of Oxford men do their "grinding" during their six months of their vacation. By thus breaking the back of their work out of hours, they come up to Oxford prepared to enter into all those congenial pastimes and companionable exercises and social functions for which the congregation of several thousand young men provides such excellent opportunities. Since merely to breakfast with a college friend means two hours precious time, it is no wonder the undergraduate of social disposition sacrifices his vacation at the tutorial altar, "while the evil days come not." One happy method of carrying on these vacation studies is by what is known at Oxford as a Reading Party. It is simply a club of congenial undergraduates, who, accompanied by a Fellow or a Junior Tutor, seek out some pleasant country spot or secluded village in any part of England, Wales or Scotland, take possession of a farmstead or an inn, and give their mornings over to books, and their afternoons over to hill climbing or wheeling, rowing, tennis cricket, anything, in fact, the season and the disposition of the society renders possible. I had the pleasure once of being a member of one of these Oxford Reading Parties. We spent our entire Easter vacation, of six weeks, in the charming old "Bear and Ragged Staff Inn," at the little old village of Cumnor, up among the beautiful green-muffled Berkshire hills,

"Where the old plain men have rosy faces,  
And the young fair maidens  
Quiet eyes."—

"I was happy once," Stevenson has written wistfully, "that was at Hyères." And I know positively two men, perhaps six, who can say the same thing—that was at Cumnor.

When the Oxford initiate becomes better acquainted with undergraduate ways, and ventures beyond his college portals after dusk without cap and gown, or attempts a quiet smoke while going down the High in academics, he is likely to have forced on his attention the existence in Oxford of the Proctorial System for the maintenance of discipline. And he will find the discipline of Oxford a

very rigid circumclusion. To what may be his free and easy way of looking at things collegiate, it will seem ridiculous to be prohibited from leaving his rooms before six in the morning, or after nine or ten in the evening, and forbidden even to go down for a day from Oxford without permission from the head of his college, and ordered not to enter a public-house, and commanded to attend chapel, and ordained to dine in hall, and bound down by an hundred and one different disciplinary obligations. Still, he will grow to like it; in time he will come to have a strange affection for the gentle monotony of it all. There is not a great deal of hardship in being ordered to listen every morning to the music, the incomparably beautiful music of the Magdalen College Chapel service, or in having to gaze out at one's forbidden freedom through the exquisite window of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the Chapel of New College. It is hardly a cruelty to be shut up in those cosey-looking, fire-lit college rooms during the dark, crisp nights of winter when the wind is from the north-east, or confined to those wide, high-walled college gardens in summer, odorous with myriads of flowers, and quietly eloquent with evening bells. Nor is he altogether an unhappy mortal who is commanded to partake of the Welsh mutton and roast beef and home-brewed ale of his college, in the great, dark-panelled, high-ceilinged dining-hall.

There is infinite charm about it all. It is the influence of such things, the aroma of subtle memories, that the Oxford man will carry away with him. It will sweeten his after-world. Even a drone, in such a place, need not be a worthless fellow. I do not insinuate that coming and rubbing elbows with culture will do him one particle of good. But if they are entire strangers there is a chance of his asking for an introduction. And there is much that is intrinsically beautiful about Oxford, and *the mind becomes that which it contemplates*, as Shelley and certain ones have said.

And happy and undisturbed and ideal, perhaps, the life of an Oxford undergraduate will seem of an autumn afternoon as you catch some sudden glimmer of the crimson sun low over the blue line of Bagley Wood, lighting up the Isis, for a moment, into glimmering, molten silver, dotted here and there with scarlet coats and college colors and the flash of dipping oars. And across the quiet, level meadows, the cool evening wind blows to you stray sounds of laughter, and cheering, and broken voices. But do not stop to envy that sun-tinted army of pleasure seekers, busy and shifting and careless, in the waning November sunlight. However happy, for the time being, they may seem to you in their surroundings, in their fortunes, in their life, there will steal, and there *does* steal, into the supremest moments of their pleasure an undertone of poignant melancholy, a shadow of pensiveness. For they are taught to see wide: and *who sees the wider but to sigh the more?*

It is a costly luxury, this true, this ideal university life. Walter Pater has made his Marius teach us the truth of this; and we are tempted, tempted time and again, to ask, with the young scholar in *The Youth of Parnassus*, "whether there is not something dangerous in the venerable and Gothic beauty of Oxford, *a chill in the old shadows, an iron sound in the bells?*"

ARTHUR J. STRINGER.

Quite a large number of Toronto University men are attending the Normal School in this city this fall. A. D. McIntyre, F. W. O. Werry, L. H. Tasker and Chapman Brown, four graduates of '97, are among the number. Miss Allin and Miss Hanahoe, '98, W. F. Kerney, '98, Pythagoras H. Thibaudeau, ex-'98, A. J. Poynter, '99, and J. J. Morgan, '99, are also learning how to instruct the infant mind. The list is completed with the names of F. McTavish, '99, medicine, E. C. Forster, and the mighty 'Kit' Forester, once so famous in Varsity football circles.