

fourteenth century the University had no buildings of its own, and all its public business had to be transacted in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which, although a parish church, was lent to the University for such purposes.

The books belonging to the scholars in their corporate capacity were preserved there in chests, and among those books must have been the earliest recorded gift of books to the University, that of Roger de Insula, who, early in the thirteenth century, gave a copy of the Bible in four parts; not for church purposes, however, but with the express design that scholars might borrow it on sufficient security, and correct their texts by it. Even after the reorganization of Cobham's Library in 1412 a copy of Nicholas de Lyra's *Commentary on the Bible* was chained in the chancel of the church, and the Chancellor and Proctors were deputed to inspect it yearly. The Church of St. Mary was in fact a kind of University Hall, and its sacred character did not prevent a Chancellor from summoning the taverners there, and compelling them to swear, with their hands on the Holy Gospels, that they would, in so far as their ability and human frailty allowed them, brew for the scholars good and wholesome beer.

It is difficult for us to realize the value that attached to books in early times. In inventories they are classed with plate and jewels: so costly were they that very few students could have possessed them. In the catalogue of the books of William of Wykeham at New College a text-book like Walter Burley's *Commentary on the Physics* of