

have been skilfully refitted to the new walls. But just as a flower, when placed in alien soil, may lose its natural characteristics and take to itself others, so the present value of the Master's library is not one of scholarship, but purely one of colour, and the grey and brown books, in their picturesque confusion, justify their existence by throwing into fine relief the ordered dining-table. To the artist-epicure the benefaction of Dr. John Browne is very precious.

A great misfortune which has overtaken some old libraries in Oxford is to have been refitted in the nineteenth century with varnished oak furniture, conforming generally to what was then considered Gothic style. These libraries, robbed of all their individuality, are depressing alike to antiquary and visitor. Their annals are not written here.

The history of the earliest University Library is closely connected with that of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. It should be remembered that the University of Oxford was originally an ecclesiastical body. The terminology of its early statutes and legal procedure is not of statute but of canon law. The University was from the beginning of the thirteenth century until the middle of the fourteenth, that is during the most important years of its development, immediately under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese it was, and its Chancellor was always a cleric. In these circumstances it is not surprising that a church should find an important place in the history of the University. Until the