

and then out across Christ Church meadows, and down the great long avenues of the tree-lined "Broad Walk," with its elms and limes yellowing in the late autumn air, and its level floor carpeted with a thick golden covering of fallen leaves, you will find that you have come to the southern edge of the town. Across the low meadows to the south you get a glimpse of Iffley village, with its beautiful old Norman church, and the tumble-down mill, with its water-wheel beside Iffley Lock. Beyond the river, and grey in the distance, you see Bagley Woods and the purple-tinted Oxfordshire Hills. As you look back towards the north you will see the scarlet creepers and the gloomily green ivy covering the softer colored grey walls of Corpus Christi and Merton and the Cathedral. In the old days, along this wide avenue, don and undergraduate used to promenade in all their academic splendor on the afternoon of the Sunday before Commencement, which was fittingly called "Show Sunday." If you continue westward along Broad Walk, you will probably meet the rowing-men coming up from their college barges, which line that side of the Isis bordering on Christ Church meadows, and tall, sturdy, ruddy-checked specimens of collegians, these same bare-legged rowing men will seem to you, as they go flocking college-ward arm-in arm, Oxford-fashion, or loiter along the way, with their gaudily-colored blazers and their attenuated costumes giving an element of unique picturesqueness to the scene. Then, as you wander about the narrow streets of the old town, you will hear the bugle notes from some merry coach-load of football players coming home from a match. And you will notice the more sedate athletes straggling in town-ward from the golf links beyond Cowley, and bicycle riders flocking back from the outlying hills by way of Iffley Road, Headington Hill, Banbury Road, Cumnor Hill, and many devious and untraceable by-paths and lanes.

While you have been looking about you, it has grown quite dark. The lights in the colleges come out one by one, and twinkle cheerfully and home-like through the dusk; and there before you know it, walls and ivy and spire and street have faded away in the deepening twilight, and the short November afternoon is gone. So you join the passing streams of students, who seem to do anything but study, and turn homeward with some merry little group of men you may know, and cross the silent echoing quad, and be once more in your own comfortable old college rooms. But before you close out the quiet twilight and the fog that steals down that whole lowland valley of the Thames, there will creep into your heart, I doubt not, a sense of the tranquil repose, a touch of the fugitive, palpable enchantment brooding over this ancient university town, and unconsciously transforming you into a sort of intellectual lotos-eater. Even the restless life and motion of three thousand men in the pride and the prime of their youth cannot startle the old place out of its Circean lethargy. There is an occasional outburst, but it is only the solitary stray note that makes the long silence seem the deeper. For, indeed, here life, like the grey walls themselves, seems slumberous and dispassionate and creeper-covered; and the hand of time seems to fall so tenderly and softly on the old towers and the ivy-shrouded walls, that the very pulse of the great world itself grows slow and quiet to him who loiters and dreams in their shadows; and in the cool and quiet of that strange Lethan atmosphere of scholasticism, he soon forgets the fever and the fret which rages not so many miles away, where his own Oxford Isis widens and deepens and darkens to the London Thames.

In one happy sentence, Matthew Arnold has given utterance to this indefinable spirit of modern Oxford better, it seems to me, than any writer has yet expressed it: "Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce, intellectual life of our century, so serene! And yet, steeped in sentiment as

*she now lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, or whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us near to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side?"*

If one lingers half-lovingly over these already well-known lines, it is not only because they have a tenderness and a beauty of their own, one may plead, but equally because their own author was a scholar and a poet on whom, above all others, this sweet city, with her dreaming spires, had fastened her ineradicable stamp. No reader of "Thyrsis" can fail to remember Arnold's wistful regret as he looks back longingly to the days when he and his fellow-poet Clough, as undergraduates together, wandered through those well-remembered Oxfordshire meadows in the footsteps of the Scholar Gipsy, and over the surrounding hills, whence the eye can travel down to Oxford towers, and where the Isis winds down, like a silver ribbon, towards the quaint little villages of Nuneham and Sandford, or where the shady Cherwell flows slumberously down from Banbury, by the willow-lined walks of Mesopotamia, past the grey, overhanging walls of Magdalen College and out through the wide, green meadows of Christ Church.

Yet, while Arnold drew in this sensuously intoxicating atmosphere of the material Oxford, he could not escape absorbing its less tangible, yet no less irresistible, intellectual spirit. We might call him Oxford incarnate, so steeped is he in Oxford sentiment, with all his Greek love of self-culture and repose, his classic calm and self-restraint, together with that gentle, regretful melancholy, and saddening pessimism, which, if Teutonic, is doubly Oxonian. It is something akin to that Hamlet-like sorrow, which comes to all them who think too much of the event. Perhaps, too, the feeling comes because one may here still see something like a lingering twilight of an age which our outer world, with its change and its restless movement, seems to have forgotten. Here the mysterious, haunting shadows of centuries seem to lurk about the old walls, and the old ways, and in some strange manner to darken the heart by a vague suggestion that, after all, our own little lives and our own fleeting generations are like the leaves that come and go on the elms and limes of Broad Walk, and the evening bells still ring out from the same old impassive Oxford towers, and the ivy merely grows a little denser, century by century, on the familiar old walls, while year after year the rooks come and build their nests in the elms of New College gardens. And so the great, irrevocable wheels of life grind on, and so we feel they shall still go when we are long forgotten. We learn at last what is meant by the melancholy of the Greek.

Apart from these subtler influences, the languid lowland air of the city itself is not without its physically depressing effects. No matter how pure and attic the academic atmosphere may prove, that more mundane air which hangs over the valley of the Thames and the Cherwell is certainly heavy and Bæotian; yet which contributes the more towards making Oxford a city of dreams, as it has been called, I shall not venture to say.

Still, to the stranger within her gates, it often seems puzzling why Oxford has called forth such expressions of passionate love from so many scholars who have had the happy fortune to spend their early years in one of her many colleges. Addison and Macaulay, in their own way, were both devoted lovers of hers. Even the unfortunate child, Shelley, could not resist the charm of his stern foster-mother. Symonds fell a victim to her, Walter Pater, Ruskin, Arnold, Newman, Froude, Clough—how the list might be carried on and on!—all came under her subtle influence, and were held by her delicate charm. Yet every May and June an overwhelming army of visitors comes swarming up to the old town, and frightens it out of its very austerity. Oxford be-