

OXFORD LIFE IN 1770.

The London *Quarterly* in a review of the life of Martin Joseph Routh, the venerable President of Magdalen College, Oxford, gives the following picture of life at that University in 1770 :

"The University life of 1770 presented even a greater contrast. The undergraduates rose early, but spent their days in idleness. Practically, the Colleges were without discipline. Tutors gave no lectures. It is difficult to divine how a studiously-disposed youth was to learn anything. 'I should like to read some Greek,' said John Miller, of Worcester, to his tutor, some thirty years later. 'Well, and what do you want to read?' 'Some Sophocles.' 'Then come to-morrow morning at nine o'clock.' He went, and read a hundred lines; but could never again effect an entrance. This state of things was effectually remedied by the Examination Statute and by the publication of the class-list; but neither came into effect till the year 1801. The dinner-hour was 2; and for an hour previous, the impatient shout of 'Tonsor! tonsor!' was to be heard from every casement. The study, or inner room, was reserved for the 'powdering.' Blue coats studded with bright buttons, shorts and buckles, was the established costume. A passage from Scripture was read during dinner. At 8, all supped on broiled bones and beer. There was not to be seen till long after a carpet in a single Oxford common-room. What need to add that undergraduates were without carpets? The 'dons' frequented some adjoining tavern or coffee-house. Mr. Wyatt's premises in High Street (known at that time as 'Tom's Coffee House') were the favorite resort of seniors and juniors alike. The undergraduates drank and smoked in the front room below, as well as in the large room overhead which looks down on the street. The older men, the choice spirits of the University, formed themselves into a club which met in a small inner apartment on the ground-floor (remembered as 'the House of Lords'), where they also regaled themselves with pipes, beer and wine. The ballot boxes of the club are preserved, and the ancient Chippendale chairs (thanks to the taste of their present owner)

still stand against the walls. Drunkenness was, unquestionably, at that time, the prevailing vice of Oxford. Irreligion reigned; not unrebuked, indeed, yet not frowned down, either. It would be only too easy to produce anecdotes in illustration of both statements. Should it not be remembered, when such discreditable details are brought before our notice, that our Universities perforce at all times reflect the manners and spirit of the age; and that it is unreasonable to isolate the *Oxford* of 1770 from the *England* of the same period? The latter part of the eighteenth century was a coarse time everywhere; and the low standard which prevailed in Church matters outside the University is but too notorious. Only because her lofty traditions and rare opportunities set her on a pinnacle apart, does the Oxford of those days occasion astonishment and displeasure."

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CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MCGILL GAZETTE:—

DEAR SIR,—I believe that it is proposed by some to continue the Founder's Festival this year. In my opinion, and in that of many others, this Institution should be abandoned. It is costly and expensive; its arrangement is troublesome, and when it is gotten up, nobody enjoys it save a few fossilized old maids and sundry conceited graduates, proud to display their robes. The students, as a rule, do not patronize the show, although they subscribe as a matter of duty, and I hold that it is not right to ask a man to pay two dollars for the double privilege of enjoying ice-cream and coffee, combined with a little third-class music. If we want to have a festival in which the students will really join, let us celebrate the day with a ball, or better still, with a grand dinner, at which both graduates and undergraduates will attend. In conclusion, I will withdraw my proposition if any three *alumni* will come out over their signatures and declare that they ever really enjoyed a Founder's Festival. My recollections of those I was compelled to attend are of a very dismal character.

Yours truly,

GRADUATE.