

trivance of a small pole or rod for the shifting of the volumes some distance to the right or left along a slope for its reception when open, while in front of the slope a rude bench is fixed for the accommodation of readers.

The ponderous balustrades of the staircase leading up to the Library, the amount of timber, or lumber as we should say, in the heavy tables and stools placed here and there, the floor, the roof, the plank employed in the carpentry of the cases and closets, all indicate a period when wood was plentiful in the land.

I expected to read in Antony à Wood an enthusiastic account of Merton Library, but I was disappointed to find that he spoke of it with no especial warmth. It may be that in his day, the libraries of the other Colleges of the University all wore an aspect so like that of Merton that, in his view, it possessed no peculiarity. He chiefly bemoans certain plunderings that had taken place therein at the period of the Reformation, and previously.

However, after all, the internal arrangements of Merton Library are late as compared with the date of the foundation of the College. Notwithstanding the very quaint and antique look of everything about it, most of the fittings, we are told, are of the time of James the First. One would scarcely have imagined this, at first sight: although, as we remember, two high, thinnish, wooden arches, somewhat of a triumphal character, near the head of the staircase, forming an entrance, one of them to the north wing, the other to the east wing of the Library, exhibited a style which was post-mediaeval.

But this nevertheless is certain, that the two spacious rooms which now shelter the collection of books at Merton are the apartments designed and built in 1376, by Bishop Rede, of Chichester, one hundred and twelve years after the foundation of the College; and that many of the volumes still to be seen here, in manuscript, of course, are portions of the library presented to the College by the same bishop, who had been a fellow there; and it may be perhaps portions of the library of Walter de Merton himself. For it is implied in the Statutes given to the College by Walter De Merton, in 1270, that books were to be had within the walls of the building. He orders, for example, that the *Grammaticus* of the house, the Master of Grammar resident in the College, should have *librorum copia*, a plentiful supply of books for his purposes, as well as *alia sibi necessaria*. And for the reader at meal-time, he directs that