

Finally you have social life. But it just doesn't go. You can't mix Oxford students and Rhodes scholars consistently at tea and continue to have tea. And why? Because five o'clock tea is a social event, a period of relaxation. The American wants to discuss the political situation in China, the recent progress in aviation, or "talk shop" about his university work. The Englishman yawns, does his best and decides it isn't worth while. He will discuss the most recent productions in literature and knows all the latest operas by heart. He can and will yarn for hours about wandering in the fen country, or talk about local English customs and traditions. But who the devil cares what is happening in China, or in aviation! As for his courses in college he knows he can get a pass—anyone can—so why worry? And the tea falls flat. Wisdom comes with experience and in future the host takes care that his guests are all of one frame of mind.

But the English really are wonderful hosts and I think the average outsider realizes his deficiencies. He does his best to appreciate the hospitality that is shown him and gives up with a feeling of regret, for he realizes that it is very genuine and that the failure is because of his own shortcomings.

And so you have the setting. A natural feeling of resentment on both sides. The Oxford man resents the driving, energetic, cocksure apostle of Americanism. The American is puzzled to find that he cannot swing his college as he did back home, and very naturally resents taking a secondary place. There is a little friction—it could not be otherwise—but the American generally finds his place in Oxford life and thoroughly enjoys it.

There are of necessity a few malcontents and irreconcilables. As in all such situations their voices are heard high above the average. But to the great majority Oxford is a place of happy memories and — unfortunately — of lost opportunities.