

Cambridge Colleges—VIII.

The History of Queens'.

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QUITE apart from personal feelings of affection and pride, the buildings of Queens' College, Cambridge, possess, I think, a general interest for two special reasons. The first reason is that the original building is the most perfect type of its kind extant: nowhere can there be found a fifteenth century building applied to collegiate purposes that can be fairly called comparable with this block. The second reason is that the alterations and additions of later times are more clearly and easily traceable here than in any similar pile, and that, discernible as they are, they have been so made as not seriously to impair the quaint and picturesque harmony of the whole.

Queens' College is perhaps the easiest proof, it may almost be called the stock illustration, of the fact that colleges were modelled, not on monastic buildings, but on the great country-houses of the time. The plan in its broad outlines is the same in all buildings of the type. There is the towered gateway, with Chapel, Library, Hall, and dwelling-rooms built round the quadrangle, to which the gate gives access. If the ground-plans of Queens' College and Haddon Hall be laid side by side it will be seen that there is only one important difference between them, viz., that the gateway at Queens' is nearly in the centre of the east side, while at Haddon Hall it is placed in the south-east corner.

On the north side the drawing-room at Haddon Hall occupies the position of the Library at Queens' College, the College "drawing-room," i.e., the Combination Room, being thrust back into the angle made by the Library and the Hall. This is perfectly natural: in a country mansion the drawing-room, in a college the library, is the more important room, and occupies the more prominent position. On the other sides the two ground-plans are for all purposes identical. In particular, on the west side the Hall, with dais, oriel and louvre, the doors giving access to buttery, kitchen and cellar across the Screens, the position of the kitchen approached by a passage between buttery and pantry, the Minstrels' Gallery over the Screens—all these points are in the nicest correspondence in Queens' College and at Haddon Hall.

The true founder of Queens' College was Andrew Dokett, Rector of St. Botolph's, Cambridge. He obtained a charter from King Henry VI. in 1446 to found a College of St. Bernard on a site now occupied by the Lodge of St. Catharine's College. The site was inconvenient, and had access neither to Milne Street (Queens' Lane) nor to Trumpington Street. Accordingly, when Andrew Dokett was able to purchase the ground from Milne Street to the river, he returned the charter to the King and obtained a fresh charter, August 21st, 1447, refounding the College of St. Bernard on the new site.

At this point Dokett succeeded in obtaining the patronage of the Queen, Margaret of Anjou. Henry VI. was busy building King's College. Margaret, beautiful, brilliant and ambitious, was naturally willing to emulate the example of her Royal consort. As Thomas Fuller, a Queens' man, puts it: "As Miltiades' trophy in Athens would not suffer Themistocles to sleep, so this Queen, beholding her husband's bounty in building King's College, was restless in herself with holy emulation until she had produced something of the like nature, a strife wherein wives, without breach of duty, may contend with their husbands which should exceed in pious performances."

So Queen Margaret petitioned the King that the Queen's College of St. Margaret and St. Bernard should be built beside the King's College of Our Lady and St. Nicholas. St. Bernard's College disappeared, and a Royal charter was issued March 30th, 1448, empowering the Queen to erect a college according to her petition. On April 18th, 1448, the Queen's Chamberlain, Sir John Wenlock, laid in her name the first stone of the building at the south-east corner of the Chapel.

Two contracts for the earliest buildings are still extant. The first covers the timber for the north, the east, and the east half of the south side of the Front Court, i.e., the Library, the Chapel, the great gate, and

three staircases containing rooms for Fellows and students. The point on the south side of the court where this work ended is still easily seen in the brickwork both from the College and from the street. This portion of the work was completed within twelve months. The second contract deals with the timber for the Hall, the kitchen, pantry, buttery, and the western half of the south side to join the part already built. The Front Court was thus completed before the Wars of the Roses began. "It is of excellent architecture, in red brick, with a noble gateway flanked by octagonal turrets, and it has a square tower at each external angle of the court. The effect of these towers is greatly increased by the care with which they are diminished upwards. The employment of the towers is a peculiarity which offers presumptive evidence that the architect of the other two Royal colleges, King's and Eton, was employed to design the buildings of this smaller foundation" (Willis and Clark, II., p. 11).

The changes made in this court have been singularly small. The cusps have been scraped from the windows, and battlements have been substituted for the eaves. Besides these changes there is the dial, which belongs to the eighteenth century, and the wooden belfry, which was erected in the nineteenth. Otherwise we see the buildings in the Front Court as they were built in 1448-1449.

The Combination Room and the President's Chamber over it were additions made to the original design. With the building of these rooms and the finishing of the Chapel, which was dedicated in 1454, we may consider the first buildings to have been completed.

It is wonderful how little the Wars of the Roses hindered the extension of the College. Gifts from Queen Margaret's friends were received 1454, 1458, 1459. And the work of Queen Margaret was taken up by the Yorkist Queen, Elizabeth Widville. She had been lady-in-waiting to Margaret of Anjou; her husband had fallen in battle for the Lancastrian cause. Probably she had been fully acquainted with the history of her mistress's foundation, and not improbably she knew Andrew Dokett. At any rate, she readily undertook the patronage of the College, and enlisted the help of her friends in the work.

It is quite a mistake to regard Elizabeth as a rival who perfected what her professed enemy had begun. There is every indication of kindly feeling between the

Queens. Elizabeth had received a portion of £200 from the Queen on her marriage, and had continued to act as a lady-in-waiting. Her sympathies were all Lancastrian; she used her influence to mitigate the rigour of Margaret's imprisonment after her defeat, and should be regarded as completing the work of her mistress rather than as trying to supersede a rival.

The College was *Collegium Reginale*, and though Queen Margaret, and after her Queen Elizabeth, stood in a special relation to the new foundation, the Queen Consort for the time being was regarded as standing in the position of a patroness. This position was accepted by Anne, Queen of Richard III., and her interest probably explains his princely generosity to the College, of which the badge of a boar's head, granted by him, is now the only reminder, as the estates which he transferred to the College "were resumed by King Henry VII." This monarch's wife, Elizabeth of York, was the first of the four Queens since the foundation of the College who had not claimed the position of patroness, nor did she, so far as is known, promote the prosperity of "the Queens' College."

In 1468 Queen Elizabeth Widville visited Cambridge and saw for herself the progress which her college had made. An extension had already taken place, viz., the range of chambers along the river front, which now forms the west side of the Cloister Court. This side was built in or about 1460. The ground floor was partly occupied by a cloister walk six feet wide. The arches on the north or south sides are of later date, but they had been added by the year 1494, as after that date "the cloister" (*claustrum*) is frequently mentioned in the accounts. The cloisters were not continued on the east side, that side being on a considerably higher level. The building on the west side was originally some twenty-five feet longer than it is at present. The south end of it was pulled down in 1756 to make room for what is now called the Fellows' Building.

It is of interest to recall that the chambers in the north part of this west side, i.e., the portion which includes the servants' hall, the dining-room and the drawing-room of the Lodge, were originally a suite for the entertainment of distinguished visitors. The rooms were originally divided somewhat differently from what they are at present. Access was given by an external staircase through the "wig closet" in the drawing-room. In these chambers were housed all Royal guests until Henry VIII.



The Long Gallery and President's Lodge, from the Back Court.

founded Trinity College. Elizabeth Widville, the Lady Margaret, Henry VII. and his Queen, Henry VIII. and Catherine of Arragon, Cardinal Wolsey, and probably Queen Elizabeth occupied these rooms.

The President, a bachelor, had his chamber and his bedroom on the opposite side of the court over the Combination Room. There were trees planted in the court, so that the centre of it was originally a garden. If we stand in the Cloister Court and take away the gallery on the north side and the Fellows' Building in the south-west corner, we shall realise what it was like when Fisher was President and Erasmus had a spacious suite on the south-east of the court. The property of the College at that time extended no further to the north. The cloister on the north side was the boundary of the domain. Beyond the north side of the cloister was a lane leading to the river. This was Friars' Lane, and there was a doorway opening from the cloisters into this roadway. Such was Queens' College, the Front Court and the Cloister Court when Bishop Fisher, as President, received his enlightened patroness, the Lady Margaret, and when Erasmus came at Fisher's invitation and settled down to his famous edition of the Greek Testament, the *Novum Instrumentum*, 1510-1515. No place had a more important part in the history of the New Learning than Queens' College during those eventful years.

The President's Lodge at Queens' is a curious case of evolution to meet changing conditions. The original chamber and bedroom of the President, situated over the Combination Room, on the east side of the Cloister Court, had no connection with the guest-rooms on the west side. The Presidents were of necessity bachelors, who shared the common life, and were satisfied with the accommodation that a spacious chamber with a large bedroom over it afforded. But a gallery, or ambulatory, was built out for the President in 1510. This was the "old study," the room which now opens off the north-east end of the Long Gallery.

We may take it that the Gallery building was begun about 1533, and that the upper storey was converted into bedrooms in 1560. And the reason is not far to seek. With the Reformation, celibacy ceased to be incumbent upon the Heads of Houses. Dr. Heynes, who was President 1529-1538, was married; his successor, Dr. Mey, married his widow; William Chader-ton, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, who was elected in 1568, married soon after his election, so that provision for a married Head was not made until it was needed.

The Gallery, interesting and beautiful as it now is, was originally even more picturesque. From Loggan's print (c. 1688) it appears that the oriels facing the cloisters were originally carried up higher. The oriel in the centre and those at either end of the Gallery were carried above the roof in the form of turrets, surmounted by a receding storey, a conical roof and lofty vanes of ironwork. The two intermediate oriels were carried up only as far as the roof, and were finished with gables.

The building of the Gallery connected the President's chambers on the east of the Cloister Court with the guest-rooms on the west side. These guest-rooms were now incorporated into the Lodge. The name "Audit-room" applied to the Lodge dining-room preserves the memory of its old public or semi-public character.

Meanwhile the property held by the College was being extended. When Andrew Dokett acquired the ground upon which the Front Court and the Cloister Court were built, he became possessed of about one-third of the land upon which the College now stands. The whole of the northern portion of the ground upon which the Walnut Tree Court, the New Chapel and the Friars' Buildings stand, as well as the space occupied by the bowling green and the President's garden, was in the hands of the Carmelites or White Friars. This community had settled upon this site in 1292. Between the property of the Carmelites and the land occupied by the College was the lane, already referred to as Friars' Lane, running from Milne Street to the river, and beyond the lane a ditch and wall. In 1537 the ditch and wall were sold by the friars to the College.

At this date the lesser monasteries had been suppressed and the dissolution of the greater foundations was imminent. Accordingly the Carmelites, anxious to dispose of their property to the college rather than to wait for the action of the Crown, surrendered their land to the President and Fellows in 1538. But the surrender was disallowed by Henry VIII., who directed that Commissioners, amongst whom were the Provost of King's and the President of Queens', should accept the surrender of the friars' property and make a full inventory of their possessions. The President (Dr. Mey) purchased from the King's officers for £20 the stone, timber, iron and glass which had be-

longed to the Carmelites; the land he purchased for £30 from John Eyre, of Bury, to whom it was granted by the King.

Among the valuables purchased from the Carmelites' possessions was their "glass." In the five windows of the north side of the Library—which at that date was confined to the upper floor—is glass which must have come from the Carmelite convent. These windows "are each of two lights, and are glazed with quarries of various patterns, while in the upper part of each light is inserted the head of a Carmelite friar. A narrow border of red and blue glass runs round each light; and there are fragments of inscriptions inserted in the border." There cannot be much glass in Cambridge earlier than these windows are, and their history combines with their age to invest them with a singular interest.

Thus the College had become possessed of a site which rendered an extension of the buildings possible. And extension soon became necessary. The College was rapidly increasing in numbers and importance. Thus we find that when Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge in 1564 there were 1267 members of the University, of whom sixty-five belonged to Queens'. In 1573 Dr. Caius gives a list of residents which assigns to Queens' College a total of 122. In other words, the College had all but doubled in size in nine years. In 1621 the Society consisted of a President, nineteen Fellows, twenty-three scholars, eight Bible-clerks, who, with the pensioners, made up a total of 230—probably as large a number as the College has ever had.

This was under Bishop Davenant, when Queens' was in the highest degree prosperous and popular. We are not, then, surprised to find that the next important extension of the buildings took place in Bishop Davenant's time, more especially as that great divine had as his second in command John Preston, afterwards Master of Emmanuel, who was far the most famous college tutor of the time. As one of his pupils phrases it, "Preston was the greatest pupil-monger in England."

The block then erected is what is known as the Walnut Tree Court, and the date 1617 on the east front probably marks the year in which the building was commenced. The block was originally built in two storeys and a half storey with garrets above, as shown in Loggan's print. But having suffered from a fire, the block was partly rebuilt between 1778 and 1782, when the garrets were removed and the upper storey was added. In 1823 the building was re-roofed, the walls were repaired, and embattled parapets were raised on each side. Mr. J. W. Clark has shown that there were three studies in each of the sets of chambers in the original buildings. Thus the sixteen sets accommodated forty-eight men. Yet many of the most gallant Cavaliers whom Queens' gave to the Royalist cause, men of family and wealth, made no complaint, so far as our information goes, that their quarters were narrow and crowded.

Queens' was intensely Royalist. The President, Dr. Edward Martin, was most shamefully maltreated and imprisoned by the Parliamentarians, and every one of the eighteen Fellows and all the scholars were deprived. No college, except Peterhouse, suffered at the hands of Lord Manchester's Commission to anything like the same extent. It is true that some of the persons appointed to replace the deprived Royalists were men of character and ability. Such were Dr. Herbert Palmer, the "intruded" President, John Wallis, the famous mathematician, and John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist. But this does not lessen the wrong

done to the expelled, though some of them did live, like Dr. Martin, to be restored to their rightful places.

The Chapel was defaced by the infamous William Dowding, who recounts his own performances. "At Queens' College, December 26th (1643), we beat down about a 110 superstitious pictures, besides cherubims and ingravings, where none of the Fellows would put on their hatts in all the time they were in the Chapell, and we digged up the steps for three hours, and brake down ten or twelve Apostles and Saints within the Hall." The "ingravings" included some of the brasses which were torn from the floor.

Later changes and developments must be treated somewhat summarily. The Fellows' Building, formerly known from the name of the architect as the "Essex" Building, was erected in 1756-1760. It was originally intended to extend this building all along the river front, and the design, which was greatly admired at the time, will be found in the "Cambridge Guide" for 1796. The bridge, a beautiful piece of work, was thrown across the river in 1749. It replaced an earlier and plainer structure, and has been twice replaced, in 1867 and 1905. The dial and clock belong to 1733.

The changes of the last century were largely undoing the work of the eighteenth century in Chapel and Hall. The flat ceilings were removed and the original roofs uncovered and restored. The woodwork and decoration of the Hall were carried out under Mr. Bodley's design in 1875. The new buildings, or the Friars' Buildings as they should be called, were built by Mr. Fawcett in 1886. Finally the New Chapel, designed by Mr. Bodley, and not unworthy of that great architect, was commenced in 1888 and opened in 1891.

The erection of new buildings and a new chapel will suggest that the College has been growing in numbers. And this is the case. After a period of great prosperity in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, there was a time of comparative inactivity and stagnation. But a steady revival has followed, and the College has renewed its vigour, more especially under the rule of the two distinguished Presidents who have been, five years after one another, taken from it to adorn the Episcopal Bench.

The history of the College, thus summarily and incompletely told, has left little space to devote to the men distinguished in many lines of life who have guided its fortunes or have been trained within its walls. It is possible only to point to some of the brightest periods and a few of the bright particular stars that stand out most prominently in the long vista of 460 years. Bishop Fisher and Erasmus, with his two special friends among the Fellows, Bullock and Fawne, form one group on which it would be pleasant to linger.

Identified early with the New Learning, the College naturally nurtured Reformers, though it should be noted that Dr. Mey and Dr. Heynes on the one side and Bishop Glynn on the other were "moderates," men who must be ranked high among the worthies who guided the course of the Reformation and helped to establish the Church of England upon a firm *via media* between the two extremes. In the ensuing period five great men guided and watched over the fortunes of the University, Archbishop Parker, Lord Burghley, Sir Thomas Smith, Archbishop Whitgift, and Dr. Andrew Perne. The last three of these were members of Queens', and Sir Thomas Smith, scholar, lawyer, statesman, Churchman, a typically able Elizabethan, was the special pride and glory of the College.

There follows a period of great prosperity, when the College flourished under the rule of such able men as Dr. Stokes, Dr. Chaderton (Bishop of Lincoln), and Humphry Tindall, when Bishops Aylmer and Milbourne and Archbishop Mountaigne were Fellows, and among the students were Henry Earl of Huntingdon, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the poet, John Lord Lumley, Sir Christopher Yelverton, "silver-tongued" Henry Smith, Thomas Middleton, the dramatist, and James Lord Ley, Lord Treasurer.

The sufferings of the President and Fellows for the King's cause in the Civil War have already been mentioned: members of the College who fought and suffered on the Royalist side were Arthur Lord Capel, Spencer Compton, Earl of Northampton, John Towers, Bishop of Peterborough, Sir Hamon le Strange, Sir Herbert Slingsby, and Sir Orlando Bridgman. To the Restoration period belong Bishop Patrick and Bishop Sparrow. In the eighteenth century may be noted Dr. John Davies, Joseph Wasse, Daniel Wray, Archbishop Ryder, Sir George Saville; in the nineteenth Isaac Milner and Dr. William Wright. With good cause may members of this ancient and Royal foundation boast themselves "citizens of no mean city," and desire nothing better for their college than that its future may be not unworthy of its past.



The Erasmus Staircase (ivy-clad), Back Court.