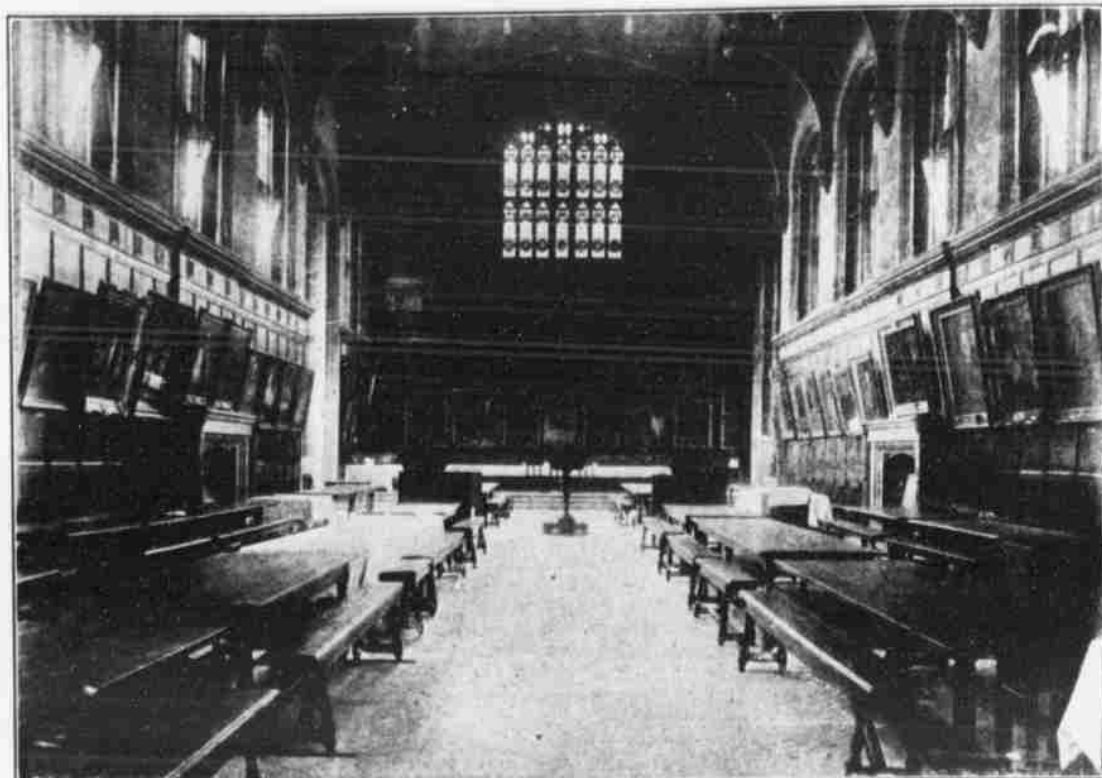


# Queer Things About the Great Oxford University



AN OXFORD COLLEGE LUNCHEON PARTY



BANQUET HALL, CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE.

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 OXFORD, England, June 26.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—In the Athens of the British empire, surrounded by the time-eaten colleges of England's oldest university, under the shadows of the mighty trees where for centuries the greatest scholars of our literature have walked, I write for my American readers. By the bequest of Cecil Rhodes, Oxford university has become to us the most interesting seat of learning outside the United States. From now on a hundred picked American boys, two from each state and territory, are to be kept here at school. Mr. Rhodes' will provides that each student is to be allowed £200, or \$1,500, a year for expenses, and that the number shall be kept full by new appointments made through competitive examinations from year to year. For this reason examinations for Oxford will henceforth be as common in our country as examinations for West Point and Annapolis, and a stream of Oxford graduates will slowly permeate every part of the union.

But first let me give you some idea of the university and its surroundings. I despair of transmitting more than an impression. Nathaniel Hawthorne has truly said that "The world has no place like it, and it would take a lifetime and more than one to comprehend and enjoy it satisfactorily."

I have visited most of the classic spots on the globe, but none like this. Oxford is more impressive than Athens and the spirit of learned antiquity seems to hover more closely over it than over the older ruins of India, China and Japan. For more than 1,000 years men have gathered here for study. Tradition ascribes Oxford's foundation to King Alfred in 972. When it began it was connected with the monasteries, but for more than seven centuries it was a university pure and simple. During the middle ages it had as many as 3,000 students at one time, and on through the centuries new colleges have grown up about it, and it has held its own as one of the chief educational institutions of the world.

## Twenty-Three Different Colleges.

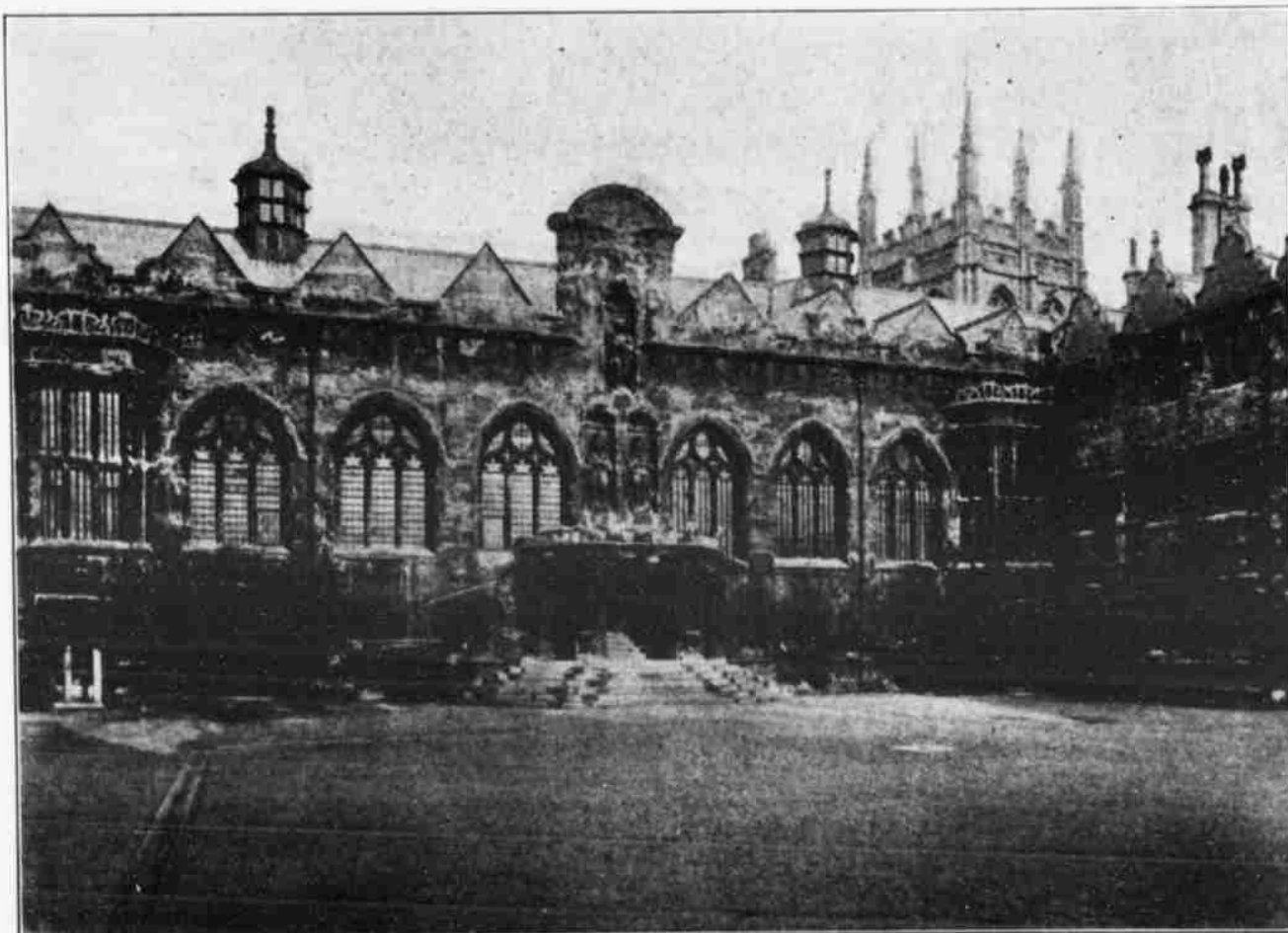
The town of Oxford has now 50,000 people. It is situated about sixty miles from London in the heart of rural England. It is embraced by the Isis or Upper Thames and the Cherwell, which here join and flow on to London, as the Thames to the sea. The colleges are scattered all over the city. They are not like our great schools and you can get no idea of them by such comparisons.

Oxford university is not one college, but twenty-three colleges. Each college has its own buildings, massive stone structures of two and three stories, surrounding green courts or quadrangles, with mighty trees lining the streets in front of them, and parks are scattered here and there about them. By some the Isis and the Cherwell flow and in other stand trees centuries old.

The colleges are indescribable in their time-worn and venerable grandeur. Many of them are more like monasteries than colleges. They have their cloisters looking out upon the quadrangles, and through their carved doorways you may expect to see a monk in gown and cowl come forth. The walls are fairly chewed by the teeth of time. The pillars have holes in them like those in the bark of a mighty tree long since dead, and on the roofs of some the slate is as worn as the wooden shingles of a house 100 years old. Each college has its chapel and dining hall, with its windows of stained glass, many of them painted by the old masters. Some have walls beautifully carved, some are paneled in oak and wondrous architecture meets you at every step.

## How Colleges Are Constituted.

Each college is independent of the others. Each has its own students, its own professors and its own lecturers, although the students of the various colleges may attend lectures where they please. The students of a college live in it, and the



ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD, WHICH CECIL RHODES ATTENDED.

number varies according to the room and popularity of the institution. At present there are 3,500 undergraduates going to school here. There are fifty professors and a large number of tutors.

The system of instruction is different from anything we have at home, and it seems to me that the American boys will have an easy time and will be able to take honors without working as hard as in the United States. The system seems to be merely one of lectures, without recitations. No questions are asked in class room and the sole test of a man's scholarship is in examinations at the end of the term. Each student is supposed to have a tutor, who looks over his work and revises it from time to time, but the average man does not work half as hard as the American student and the education given is undoubtedly far below that of our chief universities.

It is commonly said that more study is required in preparation for Oxford than in the carrying out of the college course. The requirements are about the same as for the classical course of Yale, Harvard or Princeton. Examinations, for instance, may be taken at home, and if a boy has a good foundation in Latin and Greek he gets in without trouble. After admission he attends lectures as closely or as loosely as he pleases, the only requirement being that he pass the examination.

## Only Half as Much Study.

The university course of study is practically only half as long as that of our colleges. It nominally runs for three years, but each year is divided in half, and one-half of it the student spends at home, or away from Oxford. During this time he is supposed to be studying by himself, but this is more supposition than anything else. This leaves three years of six months each, or eighteen months for the college course. Our colleges require four years of at least nine months, or thirty-six months in all, and it is fair to say that the American student gets in more hard study in one month of this time than the Oxford man does in two. I have before me a book recommended by the head of the Bodleian library, the

chief library of Oxford, and one of the great libraries of the world, giving reliable information about the university. According to this the average man here spends his day as follows. He gives his mornings to work, his afternoons to play and his evenings to such social recreations as please him most. He entertains his friends at breakfasts, luncheons and wines, and often goes in for rowing, cricket and foot ball, which are the chief sports of the institution. I have talked with both professors and students, and as far as I can learn the men here have much more leisure than in our American colleges, and to many of them a university course is more play than work.

## Walk Through Christ Church.

I can give you a better idea of college life by taking you through one of these institutions. Let us visit Christ Church college. It has 300 students and is the richest and most aristocratic of the twenty-three colleges which make up the university. The others are much the same, only smaller, although every one covers several acres and would be considered large outside of Oxford. The buildings of Christ Church, with their quadrangles, must have an area of ten acres. The chief structure fronts on Cornmarket street, not far from the Thames. Its front is longer than a big American city block, and with its great tower at the end it looks more like a fort than a college. There is a gate in the center with a statue of Cardinal Wolsey above it and a stone tower rising over it. At the gate there is a doorkeeper always on guard. He closes the gate at night with massive doors and scrutinizes carefully all who go into the college during the daytime.

In the tower over the gate is the great bell of the university. It is known as Big Tom, and it nightly rings the curfew of the university. The bell weighs eight tons, and its ding-dong can be heard for miles about Oxford. The curfew bell is rung at five minutes past 9. At this time the sound of 101 strokes is heard, warning the students that they must be in their rooms in

the college, and that if they are not they will be fined and punished.

As soon as the bell stops ringing the two proctors of the university start out with their assistants to look up recreant students. The proctors might be called the chief of the college police. They are university men, and each has four assistants taken from the town people to help him, so that in all the posse of college police which makes its nightly round numbers ten. The assistants are called bulldogs—they might be called bloodhounds, for it is their business to track down the feeble undergraduates. The proctors first make their regular round of the billiard saloons and beer houses and warn the students that they must go in. If they find a man on the streets without a college cap or gown they accost him with a question. "Do you belong to the university?"

If the man answers "yes" his name and college are brusquely inquired. He is asked why he is out without his gown and cap, and is ordered to go in at once and report without delay before the vice chancellors' court at 10 the next morning for fine and punishment. If he creates a disturbance in the streets or gets into trouble of any kind he is called before this court, and the man who is out after 12 has a serious time with the authorities.

## Fines and Punishments.

There is a regular scheme of fines for being out late. Each college has its own penalties, but in general the charge for absence between 9 and 10 is 1 penny; between 10 and 11, 2 pence, and between 11 and 12, 1 shilling. The man who is out after 12 may be fined £1, or \$5, or even more, according to the offense. He is also liable to be gated—that is, to be kept in the college after 8 o'clock every night for a week, a month or perhaps a whole term. The fines for misdemeanors run as high as \$25, and in serious cases the students are sometimes represented by counsel in college court.

The university has complete control over the students, and in many respects over

the town of Oxford as well. The vice chancellor can order objectionable persons to leave the city and can enforce the going away of young women whose characters tend to injure the morality of the students. The officials can imprison such characters and fine them, and they do their best to keep them out of Oxford.

## Inside an Oxford College.

But let us enter the gate under which Big Tom hangs. It is now noon and the heavy doors are thrown back. You can see a wicket in one of them through which the doorkeeper looks at night and takes the name of the student who calls after hours and collects his fine. We pass on into the quadrangle. This is an immense hollow court of about four acres, covered with grass, shaved as closely as though it were carpeted. There is a fountain in the center and wide, well-kept walks radiate from this to the main entrances of the buildings. This is only one quadrangle of the institution. Christ Church has five, but this is the largest and finest. The great stone structure about it is of only two stories, but the ceilings are so high that it has the effect of a four-story building of the United States.

The walls are entered by arched doors much like those of a great vault. A wide stone pavement runs clear around the building, corresponding to the cloisters of some of the other colleges, and on this you may see students in black caps and gowns walking.

The many windows which look out upon the court have long boxes of flowers in them. These windows belong to the students' rooms. Every man at Oxford has a suite of two or three rooms of his own. He has a bedroom, a sitting room and a bath room, and the colleges are so large that there is no crowding. The rooms are well lighted, but the heating of them is by grates.

## Student Life and Expenses.

I made a number of inquiries about the expenses of living at Oxford. I find that the American boys with their \$1,500 a year will be better provided for than the average English undergraduates. The best authorities state that a man who is careful can live at Oxford on \$800 a year, if he has a home at which to spend his vacations. He is at Oxford only six months, and this means an average of a little more than \$133 a month. Some men cut down their college life to about \$500 a year, but a great many spend more. The entrance fee at most of the colleges is \$25. In addition a deposit of \$150 is required to cover kitchen and other fees. The matriculation fee is \$12.50, and it costs from \$100 to \$300 to furnish one's rooms. I have in this statement reduced the pounds sterling to American money.

Each student has his rooms in the college free of rent, but he must have his own furniture. The custom is to buy the furniture of the last occupant. The college has a professional valuator, who fixes the amount to be paid, and the incoming student adds such things as he pleases, and takes away such furniture as he wishes upon his departure. Many of the rooms are magnificently fitted up. They have easy chairs and luxuriant couches. On their walls are fine pictures and on the floors Turkish rugs.

The students live in the colleges much as in a hotel. Each man has a servant, whom he shares with seven or eight others. The servant is known as a "scout." He runs errands, takes care of the rooms and serves such of the meals as are taken in the rooms.

Each college has a common kitchen, where all the cooking is done, and each has a common dining room or banquet hall, where all the students meet in the evening for dinner. In the hall there is a reading desk, at which one of the professors stands

(Continued on Eighth Page.)