

or curtains, is the principal office, where the herd of writers are diffusing useful knowledge or accounts in massive records. "Peons," or native messengers, glide about; and in the far-off chamber is to be heard the clink of rupees, and ever and anon sable attendants sally forth, armed with heavy canvas bags full of the recognised coin of the realm; while, in remote seclusion up-stairs, but uncomfortably warm, and possibly uncomfortably dubious as to the success of some grand speculation, sit in their respective rooms, fanned by the lordly punkah, the partners in the firm.

The business hours are not oppressive in number; and, taking into consideration that every festival or fast in the Oriental almanack is equivalent to a holiday, and that they number legion; and remembering that the *bāboos*, on the heaviest days of their labour, muster at ten o'clock, and gather up their loins to depart as the gong strikes five, the general reader will not look upon the race as over-afflicted with weight of labour. No legislative interference is needed to limit the duration of their overwrought energies, or to save their well-covered ribs from emaciation and premature decay. No society for the relief of faithful *bāboos*, who have worn their fingers to the bone in the British cause, is needed. Oh no! the wily, the mild Hindoo, the soporific, the sudorific, the fat, is too cannie for that: his wants are indeed but few; and, though he may have a hundred vultures in his family who prey upon him, he can well afford to provide provender for all, so simple are their requirements. If the laws of Brahma allow of it, he partakes of food before he comes to office, and then, unlike the famished British clerk, who, with wolfish appetite, commits havoc among the buns at a pastrycook's, or falls foul of a sandwich or basin of soup where more substantial edibles are devoured, the *bāboo* invigorates himself with a gulp of tepid water, which ever and anon he sallies forth to draw for himself from an adjoining tank or well. Thus he resuscitates his fainting energies until the hour for departure has come; when, if his purse allows of it, or his position in the office involves the abstract dignity, or distance to be travelled induces him to spare his legs, he squats himself, cross-legged, in his palankeen, which his servants have brought for him; and thus, with his brass lota swung behind, he jaunts away to the purlieus of the Black Town, to be enfolded in the arms of his family, to take his bath, his evening meal, and perform (orthodox Hindoo as he is) the rites and ceremonies which constitute what he calls his religion.

OXFORD REVISITED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CURIOSITIES OF NATURAL HISTORY."

HERE I am once more in High Street; the bird in full plumage, again returned to the place where its feathers first began to sprout. But will the old birds now in the nest know me? We will see. I walk down to the college gates—those massive oak and iron-bound gates, with a little wicket door cut in one of them (like the hole for the owl in the barn-door), just big enough to admit a

slim under-graduate who "knocks in" after closing hour.

On his bench, just as he sat twelve years ago, sunning himself, sits my worthy old friend the porter. He was sitting there, in the very same place, when I left Oxford; it seems ages ago, and I can scarcely believe that he has never moved since. He looks a shade older than he did, (query, was he *ever* a young man?) a few more wrinkles in his face, his body a little more bent, his face a little more fallen in, his bunch of bright keys a little more bright from use; but there he still sits, "the porter."

He half touches his hat as he rises: he is not quite certain. We smile; his hand completes the circle, and he makes the academical salutation, and gives us a hearty greeting.

Many things of every-day occurrence in our undergraduate career now appear strange, and savouring decidedly of local custom. Amongst the foremost of these may be noticed the perpetual "capping," or touching of hats to superiors: it is not the military salute, nor the Parisian bow, but something between the two, and no one but an Oxford man can "cap" properly. The good old custom still reigns supreme, but time has wrought many changes in other ways.

I can well recollect the fierce opposition that was made by the Dons (as the senior members of the university are called) to the Great Western Railway coming to or near Oxford, so they kept the iron road of progress as far away as possible; but, after a time, a prize poem was read in the theatre, at commemoration, upon "*Vivæ per Angliam ferro strata*," or "Railways;" and now the "Iron Duke" and "Lord of the Isles" puff out and in, right under the walls of one of the colleges. Weary was the journey in those days to Stevenon, or "Oxford Road" station, some ten or twelve miles away, in a miserable fly; now, Hansom cabs rattle down "the High," and whisk round the corners at "Carfax," with a velocity significant of the progress of the age.

Had the author of "The Art of Pluck" written on the present time, he would certainly have included among his various idlenesses "The Idleness of Hansoms." Oxford men now ride from college to college, from wine-party to wine-party, in these luxurious conveyances, and even go out hunting in them; for, in the centre of a field near the top of Bagley Hill, I suddenly came across a Hansom, with two lazy creatures in it, come out to see a fox killed by the old Berkshire hounds.

Sedan chairs are still extant in the university—hideous wooden boxes, carried on long poles by two men, like those used in China. These are the means of locomotion used by the Oxford Don-esses, when they go out to tea and chat together.

Another innovation is, the display of photographs in the windows. Beautiful views of colleges, chapels, walks, the Martyrs' Memorial, etc. fill the shop-windows; and the visitor may carry away in his portmanteau, for a few shillings, stereoscopic views of most of the remarkable places.

There is, I believe, no town in the world so well supplied with shops for the sale of gentlemen's attire as Oxford. There are so many growing

young men in search of apparel—coats, gloves, boating and hunting costume, academical and non-academical garments, etc., that all the best specimens of wearing attire readily find a sale here. One window of one of the principal shops is devoted to caps, surplices, stoles, and bands and gowns of various kinds; the other window displays hunting caps, shooting coats, driving gloves, railway wrappers, etc., portmanteaus, and tandem-whips.

The book shops, too, are peculiar, and range from *the shop* where are sold heavy classical productions from the university press, to the little shop where second-hand books (principally the ordinary classics) can be bought, and where auctions of the small libraries, prints, etc., of students leaving Oxford are frequently held. The principal book warehouse—Parkers'—by custom, has become a sort of club for the senior members of the university, and here they spend their afternoons, looking at the "Times," and discussing the title-page, style, etc., of the latest publications. For excellence in book-binding, let the scholar go to Oxford: it is made a science in this place of learning, and some great readers are as particular about the binding and covers of their books as the fox-hunter is about the condition of his horses.

The quiet, undisturbed monotony of Oxford life is very favourable to longevity, and many hoary and venerable heads and bent forms may be seen under the pulpit of the preacher of the university sermon at St. Mary's, the patriarch of Oxford. Dr. Routh died but a short time ago, and as the mourners looked on the coffin when deposited in its last resting-place in Magdalen College Chapel, they read on the brass plate, "Ob. Æt. C." There is still living in St. Ebbe's parish an aged man (not a member of the University), older even than Dr. Routh; he is now in his hundred and fourth year. Can we produce a similar long term of years for the present generation? If sumptuous repasts, and those too frequently repeated, will give longevity, they will surely attain to it: it is a physiological fact, that great brain work requires frequent supplies in the shape of nutritious food, and this may possibly account for the numerous eatings in the shape of breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, suppers, that are perpetually going on in Oxford.

I went, as in duty bound, to the college buttery, at the entrance to the hall, between one and two P.M. for lunch. Fenced off from his serving-men, we found the portly college butler busy with his books and recording "battles," *i. e.* bread, cheese, and butter, as they were sent out to the various rooms. We took our seat in front of a hecatomb of loaves, a mountain of small pats of butter on our right, and huge jugs full of college ale on our left, brought up from the quarter-of-a-mile of cellars below. While munching our lunch, we observe that the bread man has no easy time of it; with a weapon more like a Waterloo sword than a bread-knife, he quarters the loaves, spears the pats of butter, and slices the cheese; he is working against time, for the buttery will close at two; numbers of plate-bearing "scouts" (college servants) peer above the half door; for, the moment great Tom strikes

two, there will be no more luncheon for anybody, be he never so hungry. Ale, too, the receipt for the brew of which must have been handed down from the monks when they were driven away by King Henry VIII, is distributed in rivers. The last coming scout deposits an enormous pitcher on the bench, and coolly asks for "two gallons of best ale for Dr. —." "What!" said I, "is Dr. — going to drink two gallons of ale?" "No, sir," was the scout's reply. "*He* aint, but 'is servants is, sir; it's servants' supper to-night, sir." The two gallons of ale will nevertheless appear opposite the doctor's name, when the buttery books are overhauled by some diligent and wondering antiquarian some two hundred years hence.

What is that moving under the table? Why, it's old "Tip," the buttery cat. Well, Tip, you don't get fat. She mews out, "I don't eat bread and cheese, and I have caught the last buttery mouse, I am so clever; and now I am obliged to take to eating black-beetles, which makes me look thin." Never mind, Tip, you have done your duty, and although you are very old, woe be to the buttery mouse that dare show himself on your grounds.

No meat is issued from the buttery, so we descend into the kitchen—an enormous barn-like edifice, ornamented with long oak dressers, two foot thick. A tall screen prevents us seeing the fire; we pop round it and see six spits going round, on which no less than thirty chickens and eight joints are toasted at the same time, "for cold meat," and when these are done, the "dinner will go down." The other side of the kitchen is a regular plateau of little square charcoal fires, on which are placed bright stew-pans innumerable, each containing, as the savoury smell issuing therefrom tells us, something exceedingly palatable. The head cook lives in a little house, whence he issues his orders to his army of white-capped under-cooks and "kitchen boys." He is gone just now into the market to see if he can find a good boar's head, to put on the high table in hall, "bedecked with bays and rosemary."

The Oxford market is one of the best county markets in the kingdom. There are no butchers' shops allowed anywhere in the streets of Oxford, and they are therefore all collected together in this well-regulated establishment, which occupies the space of ground between the High Street and the back of Jesus College. There was a myth, when we were an under-graduate, that a gowmsman entering the market would immediately be mobbed. Myth or no myth, but few undergraduates ever entered it. Now, however, we walk in without fear and trembling. Bargaining here and there, with the butchers, poulterers, etc., we see the "manciples," or purveyors of the various colleges, each with honest rivalry anxious to obtain the best that is to be had for money, for *their college tables*; we walk up and down the rows of this offset of the London Newgate Market, wondering where all the meat can come from; whole sides of oxen, regiments of sheep, droves of pigs, from the huge black straw-burnt bacon pig, to the delicate white-skinned

sucking pig, are placed out for sale. One butcher, with a sense of the ludicrous, had marshalled a row of these creatures, beginning with a little fellow not much bigger than a rabbit, and ending with an overgrown thing that might well be passed for a porker. Each pig had a bit of holly jauntily stuck in its mouth, and a bow of the "Oxford blue" ribbon round its neck, presenting a most ludicrous appearance. The poulterer's shop is close by the fountain in the centre of the market; and the fountain itself is worth looking at, as it is a tasty erection, ornamented at the four corners with bronze heads of oxen. N.B.—An ox crossing over a running stream is the arm of the city of Oxford. The poulterer himself is not visible; he is behind a thick curtain of poultry. Here are seen chickens from Devonshire, wild ducks from Holland, and the decoy at Brill, twelve miles away; tame ducks from Bicester and Aylesbury, larks from the Ilsley Downs, pheasants and common hares from Wytham and Blenheim parks, blue hares from Ireland, and white hares from Scotland, together with a goodly array of teal, widgeon, turkeys, pigeons etc.; and as if to make the show of game as picturesque as possible, over the door is suspended, with its long drooping wings and outstretched neck, a great "moll heron," as the common heron is called by the "Otmoor" gamekeeper, who has brought his prize into the market. "This, then, is the place whence came the thirty chickens we saw roasting just now," we exclaim, as a porter with a brass ticket on his arm comes out of the shop, carrying a large basketful of deceased birds, all ready plucked and covered with flour. His little son follows behind him, with a big goose slung on to his neck in front, and a turkey behind; and under the heavy weight of these two birds, almost as big as himself, the little urchin can hardly stagger along through the assembled crowd. The destination of these birds, one may be sure, is the college kitchen for to-day's dinner, and to-morrow's breakfast and luncheon.

Though meat is forbidden to be sold in the streets, fish is not so prohibited, and "Tester's" shop in the High Street displays quite as good a show on the white marble slab as we can see in Charles's shop in London. Again, here numerous messengers are waiting round the door, to carry off the turbot, salmon, soles, etc. to the omnivorous colleges. Vegetables cannot be bought in the streets; there is a goodly supply of them in the market, and we see a long row of farmers' market carts, drawn up in a line in the centre of the wide street opposite Balliol; some of these carts are sacrilegious enough often to rest over the neat granite cross which is sunk into the ground to mark the place where the martyrs Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley were burnt. Doubtless, the farmers' wives often see this cross, but do not know why it was placed there; however, the cross is too solid to be hurt by the cart-wheels.

As we re-enter our college, we again mark the work of progress. A fountain plays merrily, where there was no fountain before, in the pond in the centre of the quadrangle; the canons' doors are all repainted, the hideous old wood-work has been all removed from the cathedral, and new placed in its

stead; there is more accommodation, more light (for a new and beautiful glass window has been put up in the east end), a better choir, a better organ; and all this, besides many other improvements, due to the great master mind who now holds the reins of power within these ancient walls.

But listen: "Great Tom" bell is beginning to "go down." As the cathedral clock strikes the hour of nine, Great Tom proclaims every night, with his deep-toned iron tongue, the number of 101—one call for each of the students on the foundation; this night, a greater number than usual answer to his call; they are assembled from far and near, from remote rectories, vicarages, curacies, and from the various busy professions of public life, for twelve short hours, in order to present to their senior member, now about to leave the college, a token of their long esteem and regard. To-morrow's sun will again disperse them, each to his distant home, to meditate upon the various scenes of their youth, which once again have passed like a dream before their eyes.

But Great Tom has "gone down," and all is silence and peace. In the stillness of night, dark forms are seen, slowly wending their way towards the chapel; the Latin prayers echo softly amid the massive Norman pillars, the dim vaulting of the side aisles, and over the graves of many great and good men, who were once amongst us. The fervent "amen," and the solemn response from the kneeling forms, proclaim the deep inward feelings of the human souls, who are once more met together to bow the knee under the same sacred roof, to be thankful for the past, and to pray for blessings on the future.

THE BIBLE IN INDIA.

WHEN it was proposed, in 1847, to introduce a Bible class into a school at Madras, the measure was forbidden by the Court of Directors, though the attendance was to be purely voluntary, and though the proposition emanated from the Council of Education, comprising the governor, with nine other distinguished government officers and two native gentlemen, one a Hindu and the other a Mussulman. The anxiety of the Court to avoid "the slightest suspicion of proselytizing" would appear to be little shared by the natives themselves, who not only send their children to the mission schools, where the Bible is the most prominent element in the instruction, but introduce it into their own schools, and freely discourse of its contents. The rajahs of Mysore and Travancore, both Hindu princes, have personally desired the *Christian Scriptures* to be read and taught in schools founded and supported by themselves. It is common also to hear educated natives boast of their acquaintance with the sacred volume, and express their admiration of its contents. Nor is it apparent why its presence in a school should incur the "suspicion of proselytizing," any more than the Vedas or the Koran. These works are freely studied by Christians, without awakening any alarm for their faith in themselves or others. At all events, it is not the part of a Christian government to anticipate an objection which does