

Preface.

THOSE who have ever been engaged in historical or biographical research; those who have endeavoured to trace their descent, and to rescue their ancestry from oblivion; those who have laboriously established their claims to titles or estates: all have had occasion to lament the fact that although there exist in scattered quarters masses of record information, absolutely priceless for their purpose, they have remained buried in manuscript, difficult of access, troublesome to consult, and, in short, practically useless. First in importance among these records are the registers of our two great Universities, of the Inns of Court, and of our Public Schools. From them proceeded the scholars, the divines, the lawyers, and the statesmen of England. It is not, therefore, too much to assert that these records are of national interest. They possess, moreover, the special value which attaches to contemporary and original evidence, based as they are on the actual attestations made at each admission. In this respect they are distinctly superior to the Heralds' Visitations themselves; for in them the pedigree for several descents rests upon a single attestation, whereas in these each step is attested at first hand. They are thus, with the single exception of Wills, the most trustworthy sources of information of this character in existence.

These being the facts, it would be passing strange that little or nothing has been done to give these records to the world, were it not that the printing and publication of such vast masses of material involve immense labour, and an almost prohibitory outlay. The purchasers of such works of reference being obviously limited in number, it cannot be wondered that no individual has as yet approached the task, though it might fairly have been hoped that the learned bodies to whom these records belong, would not have rested content with mere ownership, but would have taken corporate action themselves ere now in the matter.

The pressing need for printing this valuable class of Register attracted my attention with renewed force shortly after the issue of the official return of Members of Parliament ('Parliaments of England,' 1213-1874), in consequence of an error it contained. Wishing to identify a knight who figures in that return, I had recourse, at length, in despair, to the wills at Somerset House, where fortunately I found his 'admon.,' from which I learned that he was not a knight, but that he was a member of Lincoln's Inn. To Lincoln's Inn I straightway went, and there I was shown the admission entry of the man of whom I was in search. I was thus forcibly reminded that these registers, imperfectly indexed and indeed illegible to all but the trained student, were a mine as yet unworked, though rich with the choicest genealogical ore, and contained material of a character to revolutionize the study of family history. From that moment I did not rest until, by the courtesy of the Masters of the Bench of the Four Inns of Court, I had made a transcript of each of their registers, to which I added a complete list of barristers, ancients, benchers, readers, and treasurers. No one, I discovered, had gone through these records since the great Sir William Dugdale, more than two centuries ago, made use of them for his well-known work, 'Origines Juridicales' (1666). I have since had copies of these transcripts arranged in alphabetical order, so that these hitherto sealed records are now at my own disposal in the most convenient form for reference, and are among the most valued contents of my private genealogical collections.

To a similar accident, so to speak, was due the inception of Colonel Chester's transcript of the Oxford Matriculation Register. That distinguished genealogist had visited Oxford with the intention of obtaining the entries relating to the name of Lloyd for his friend Mr.

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Cokayne, but on searching the register for the purpose he was impressed so forcibly by its value that he resolved, then and there, to make a transcript of the earlier portion.* It was while engaged on this herculean task that he thus wrote to the editor of *The New England Historic Genealogical Register*.

'I have been very hard at work here day and night. I am making a complete copy of the Matriculation Registers of the University from 1564 to 1750, permission having been kindly afforded me. There will be more than one hundred thousand entries, names, parentage, residence, age, etc. It will be invaluable, as such a list will never be printed.† I have already identified members of our early New England families, and among other things settled the ancestry of the famous Anne Hutchinson, as well as completed my chain of evidence, disproving the Washington pedigree.'

By an ungrudging expenditure of time and labour, and with the pecuniary aid—it is only fair to add—of his friend and executor, G. E. Cokayne, Esq., of Exeter College, M.A., now Norroy King of Arms, his transcript was eventually completed to the end of 1869, each entry being duly verified by the 'subscription' of each student and then arranged in alphabetical order. It is this monument of patient labour that forms the basis of the present work. Of the value of this splendid transcript as a perfect working text, it is scarcely needful to speak. It proceeds from the unerring hand of the prince of modern genealogists, of whom it has been observed with truth that

'The accuracy of his researches was beyond question. . . . A flaw in the correctness of his statements made him wear sackcloth for days!'

One of the only two copies of this priceless MS. was acquired by me not long after Colonel Chester's death, with the hope that I might be able some day to render it accessible to the student. In the meanwhile, by the courtesy of Dr. Jowett, at that time Vice-Chancellor, I was allowed to complete Colonel Chester's work by continuing his transcript down to the end of the year 1886.

Having further been allowed by the Keeper of the Archives to extract all the names and particulars relative to Incorporators, as well as honorary and nominal members, since Antony à Wood made his useful transcripts (1666) down to 1850, I then proceeded to transcribe à Wood's list of degrees conferred 1505 to 1660; and lastly, to compile from the University calendars a list of degrees conferred since 1850. Having acquired this information, and arranged it in alphabetical order, I then proceeded to assign the degrees to the relative matriculation entry, including those published by the University in their 'Catalogue of all Graduates,' 1659-1850, a very pitfall—even for the wary—quite irrespective of the Welsh names, in which even the Principal of Jesus College has been unable to assist.

It was in consequence of these additions to the Matriculation Register that I adopted for my work, at the suggestion of the Provost of Queen's College, the more comprehensive title—'Alumni Oxonienses.'

Having thus completed the Matriculation Register down to the present time, and incorporated with it my list of Graduates, I proceeded to the work of annotation. But annotation is a notorious snare for the editors of such records as these, and unless it is kept within a very narrow compass, and its limits rigorously defined, the publication of a register on so vast a scale might be deferred till the Greek Kalends. Many a biographical enterprise has come to an untimely end from having been originally begun upon too ambitious a plan. Warned by the fate of these attempts, I resolved that I would not be led astray in pursuit of a vague ideal at the risk of indefinitely postponing the completion of my work. *Bis dat qui cito dat* is a maxim which specially applies to an undertaking of this character, and it forms an essential feature of my work, that I am enabled to place it in the hands of the public with a rapidity which is, perhaps, without parallel, and with which no rival scheme can attempt to compete.

I decided, therefore, to restrict to living persons only my notes of identification; but as I got my material for this purpose well in hand the charm of the work increased, and I was led on gradually to widen the radius of annotation, with the result that in the later pages of this volume the deaths of clergymen during the present century, together with the livings they held, have, it will be found, been worked in from the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In like

* See his biography in 'London Marriage Licences, 1529-1869.' Memorial edition by J. Foster (1887).

† Colonel Chester declined to print this transcript, even at the solicitation of his friend the late Dr. Griffiths, Keeper of the Archives.

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manner I have further added from my own MS. collection (see page v.) all the calls to the Bar of Oxford men from 1715 to 1886, as well as the Parliamentary services, during the same period, of the members of the University. As I have found it difficult with these additions to keep pace with the printer, my friend, Thomas J. Hercy, Esq., late of Cruchfield, Berks, has most kindly offered to undertake for me the Parliamentary department, with which no one is more qualified to deal, and to render me in other respects all the assistance in his power.

Although the enumeration of these sources of information may not appear formidable on paper, it represents no ordinary amount of the very closest work. Nay, more, it really represents the actual compilation of several distinct and carefully-arranged collections all rolled into one—for the lists of Barristers, of Members of Parliament, of Degrees, and of extracts from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, have all been independently compiled, and are each of them works complete in themselves, none of which have as yet been published.

I do not, however, it should be clearly understood, profess to offer exhaustive annotation. I have but touched the fringe of the subject, or laid, as it were, the foundation on which others can now build. With these lists placed in their hands, it is in the power of all to do something, to add—'if only a stone'—to the structure which many hands will raise. It will be, I believe, a labour of love with many a son of 'Alma Mater' to help in the gradual perfection of Oxford's roll of fame.

To the clergy I specially and confidently appeal for their assistance in this matter. They can render most valuable help by supplying the full names of their predecessors in their respective livings, the dates of their induction and of their death, any available particulars of their University and subsequent careers, and copies of the inscriptions, where such exist, erected to their memory.

To facilitate and encourage this work, I am issuing a special edition, interleaved for annotation, and have further numbered the names for convenience of reference. Annotations or corrections may also be sent direct to myself, by whom they will be gladly welcomed. Nor do I limit this invitation to notes on Oxford men, for I am anxious to secure at the same time notes on members of the sister University, especially on those in Holy Orders. The time may come when the united College Registers of Cambridge will similarly see the light, and these notes will then be of the greatest use.

I have, as yet, devoted myself to perfecting my collections in their manuscript form; but it was not with the selfish object of keeping them on my own shelves that I began these laborious compilations. It has been throughout my hope to see them eventually in print, and to feel that I have conferred on my fellow genealogists, and, indeed, on students in general, a benefit for all time. The publication of this work is my first step towards the accomplishment of that end. I have striven to render this book worthy of the subject with which it deals—to make it an indispensable work of reference, second to nothing of the kind. A golden opportunity presents itself; it may not occur again. If it is welcomed by those for whom it is written—the scholar, the genealogist, and the man of letters—if they show their interest in the work by giving me their cordial support, rather than, as is too often the case, by an envious holding aloof, I shall be encouraged to place at their disposal the choicest treasures of my collection. If, on the other hand, my efforts meet with a feeble response, they will have themselves alone to thank, and the stores of information which might at length be made available to the public, will remain in private hands.

I cannot, however, but believe that my offer will be accepted in the spirit it is made, and that I shall be thus enabled to publish, not only my existing collections, but even others in addition. There are symptoms of awakening interest in work of this character. Of the well-intentioned but unfortunate attempt of the Inner Temple to issue a volume of its admission entries, the less said the better, for the first edition was called in almost as soon as it was issued, and though a larger and corrected edition subsequently appeared, it ought to have shared the same fate, so grievous are the errors it contains. The praiseworthy enterprise of the benchers deserved a better success. It is pleasant to turn from this ill-fated effort to two Oxford College registers, that of Magdalen, edited by that veteran Dr. Bloxam, and that of Exeter, by the Rev. Charles William Boase, M.A. To these will shortly be added that of Wadham, which is now being prepared for press by the Rev. R. B. Gardiner. My thanks are due to each of these three editors for solving points of difficulty which have occurred in

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connection with their respective colleges. Cambridge also is doing something to redeem the apathy of the past,* Dr. Mayor having edited a small portion of the interesting admission register of St. John's (1882); while the present year has witnessed the appearance of the valuable register of Gonville & Caius, admirably edited by the Messrs. Venn. It is much to be wished that the former work may not be allowed to remain in its present unfinished state. Even where a college has no one willing to edit its register much might be done if it would publish a complete list of its fellows and earlier members, with the salient facts of their career. Such works as *The Worthies of All Souls*, by M. Burrows, editor of *The Visitors' Register*, 1647-58, are most valuable for the purpose.

A beginning has also been made with the registers of our public schools. In addition to Stapylton's *Eton School Lists*, the Rugby School Register 1675-1874, and Welch's *Alumni Westmonasteriensis*, the registers of the St. Paul's School have been edited by the Rev. R. B. Gardiner, and that of Merchant Taylors' School from 1562 to 1874, with the help of that Civic Company, by the Rev. J. C. Robinson. The special feature of this last work is the invaluable series of entries under the mastership of Mr. Dugard. That painstaking pedagogue had previously been Master of Colchester School, of which the admission register is about to be edited by my friend Mr. J. H. Round. The Manchester School Register (1734-1837) was published by the Chetham Society a few years ago, and there are others which ought some day to find their way into print.

I may now briefly recapitulate the most important features of this work. In the foremost rank I would place its value to the biographical student, supplying, as it does, the parentage, birthplace, and age of admission of every Oxford man, and placing the searcher on the road to obtain yet further information.†

As a striking instance in point, I may refer to the matriculation entry of John Butler, Bishop of Oxford, 1777-88, which occurs on page 203. Even in that scholarly work, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the bishop's parentage is wholly ignored, and it is actually stated that 'he was not a member of either university.' Yet, in addition to his matriculation entry in which his parentage is given, my pages show that he graduated B.C.L. in 1746, and proceeded to D.C.L. in 1752.

Again, for genealogical purposes, it would be difficult to over-estimate its value. Volumes of pedigrees similar to those contained in the Heralds' Visitations (excluding, of course, the ladies) might with ease be compiled from its pages; indeed, the alphabetical arrangement which specially distinguishes my work, itself suggests such pedigrees, and provides them almost ready-made. Nor should it be forgotten that, as already shown, these admissions, while containing in their original entries the essential element of visitation-pedigrees, surpass these famous records in the actual authenticity of their evidence. More especially, however, is their evidence of value as a help to tracing the cadets of 'Our Noble and Gentle Families.' It is only from such records as these that this notoriously difficult task can ever be satisfactorily accomplished, and many a missing link discovered which has long been sought in vain.

Further, to the student of our social history, the description in the admission-entries of the father's social status will prove of peculiar interest. From this he will learn to what extent the mixture of classes prevailed, and what were the principal *couches sociales* from which the University was recruited. For, in the words of the late Mr. Green, that most picturesque historian, 'The son of the noble stood on precisely the same footing with the poorest mendicant among Oxford scholars.' Light is also here thrown on a problem that has yet to be solved: What were the classes from which the clergy mostly sprang at various periods of our history?

To many, no doubt, it will be interesting to trace, as from this register they can with ease, which were the chief districts of England from which Oxford drew her students, and which college, or colleges, maintained a local character.

Other similar points will easily suggest themselves; but I would lay stress, before I close,

* The 'Athenæ Cantabrigienses' of Cooper, for instance, was allowed to succumb on the completion of the 2nd volume.

† It is desirable to explain that the residence of the father given in the matriculation entry in this work is that at which he resided at the time of the child's birth. It is, therefore, of special value as a clue to the parish register, though it may not represent the parent's normal abode.

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on the distinctive character of my enterprise. In its special annotation, its alphabetical arrangement, and, above all, in its rapid progress, it stands wholly apart on a footing exclusively its own. It may be asserted without fear of contradiction that mine is the only scheme by which it is possible to deal with so gigantic a register, and to place it complete in the hands of the public within a reasonable time, at a moderate cost, and in a handy form for use. From this point of view my plan 'holds the field.'

The most pleasing duty of all remains, that is, to thank those friends to the work who have so kindly helped me in this great undertaking: The Master of University, the Master of Balliol, the Rector of Exeter, the Provost of Oriel, the Provost of Queen's, the Warden of New College, the Warden of All Souls', the President of Magdalen, the Principal of Brasenose, the President of Corpus, the Dean of Christ Church, the President of Trinity, the President of St. John's, the Warden of Wadham, the Master of Pembroke, the Principal of St. Mary's Hall, and the Principal of New Inn Hall, have all alike rendered me valuable assistance; but above all, I am bound to thank, inadequately though it must of necessity be, my friend the Rev. John R. Magrath, D.D., Provost of Queen's College, for his unbounded help and untiring zeal in enabling me to clear up doubtful points. Nor can I forget my obligations to the Rev. Thomas Vere Bayne, Keeper of the Archives, for his courteous aid on all occasions; as well as to the Rev. Edward Tindal Turner, Registrar of the University, for affording me every facility to complete the transcript of the *Matriculation Register*.

To other friends—Sir Albert Woods, C.B., Garter-King of Arms; G. E. Cokayne, Esq., Norroy-King of Arms; E. Bellasis, Esq., Lancaster Herald; the Rev. Andrew Clark, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln; and J. H. Round, Esq., M.A., Balliol—my thanks are due for assistance at all times; most especially, however, to Mr. Round, for the great interest he has ever taken in every stage of this work, and for his sound and judicious advice on delicate and difficult matters.

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