

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

28 OCTOBER, 1896, TO 26 MAY, 1897,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXIX.

BEING No. 3 OF THE NINTH VOLUME.

(THIRD VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)



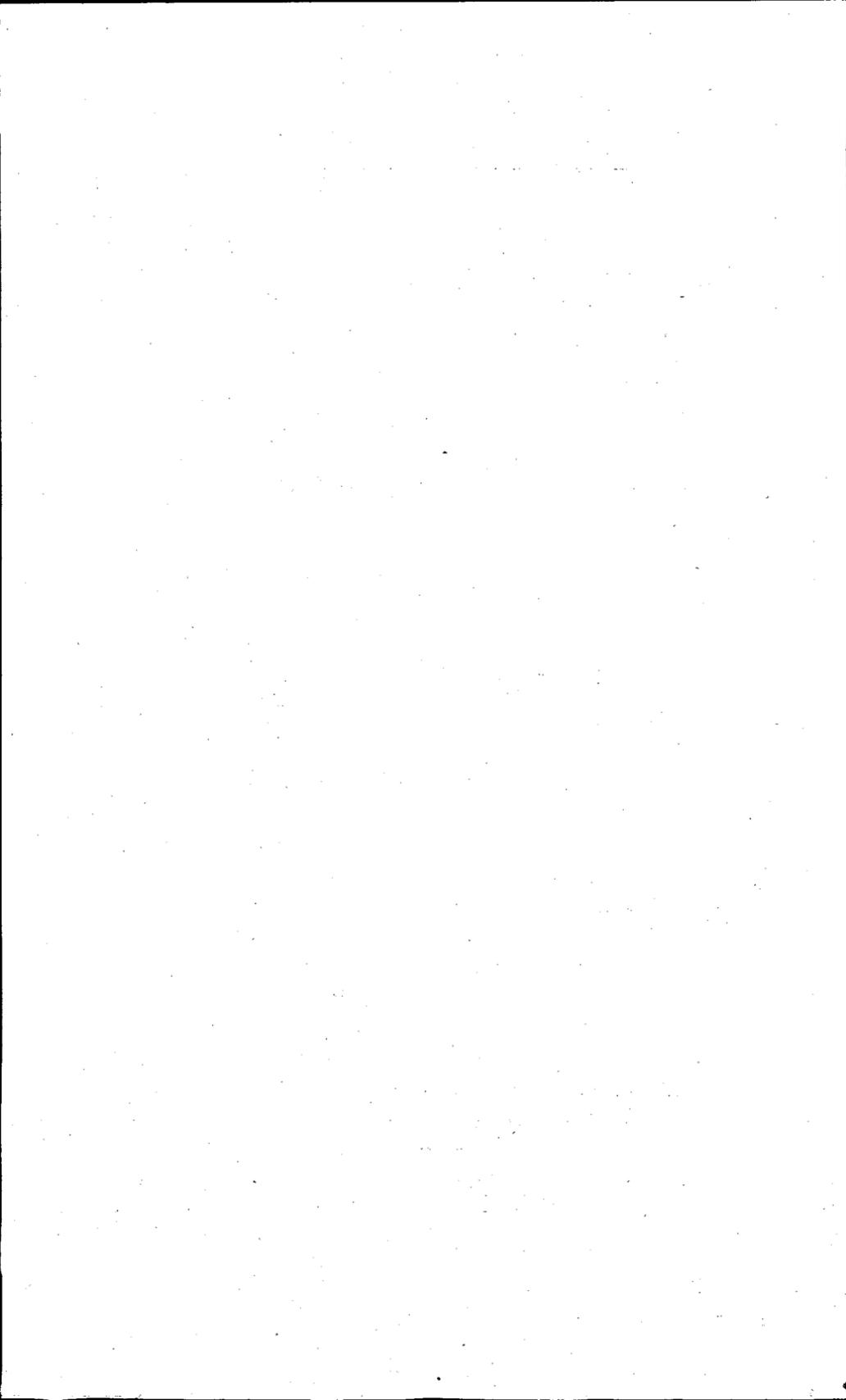
Cambridge:

DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; MACMILLAN & BOWES

LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS.

1898.

Price 5s.



Dr JAMES then made the following communication :

GLEANINGS FROM THE LIBRARY OF PETERHOUSE.

The kindness of the Master and Fellows of Peterhouse has enabled me to complete a Catalogue of the MSS. in the Library of their College; and as during my investigations a good number of small points of interest have turned up, I thought I would take this opportunity of selecting a few of them and calling the attention of the Society to them.

I intend to be brief and so I will only spend a very few words upon the general character of the Library before coming to details about the books in it.

Its great point of interest is this, that it is the best, I might say the only, specimen of a mediæval College Library in Cambridge. At Oxford they are perhaps better off in this respect. Both at Merton and at Balliol the bulk of the MSS. have been in possession of those Colleges since pre-Reformation times. But here at Cambridge, Peterhouse is the only College which has kept together to any considerable extent the collection of books which its students used in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A second noteworthy feature of the collection is that we have an old Catalogue of it. In the oldest Register of the College is a catalogue of its books made at Christmas, 1418. It is a very full list, giving the first words of the second leaf and also of the last leaf but one for each volume: ample means for identifying the books are thus in our possession.

The total number of books in this old Catalogue is 439. Of these I find still in the possession of the College 199; roughly 200 out of 440.

The classification of the Catalogue requires a little notice. It is mainly by subjects: Theology, Natural Philosophy, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, Alchemy, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, Rhetoric, Logic, Grammar, Poetry, Chronicles, Medicine, Civil Law, Canon Law, are the classes. And in each class are two categories of books: firstly, those that were chained in the Library; secondly, those that were assigned to the

Fellows. With the existence and conditions of such a division in mediæval Libraries the researches of Mr J. W. Clark have made us familiar, so that upon that matter I need say no more.

But I will tell you that of the books which are found in the old Catalogue and are still in the Library, only ten belong to the number that were divided among the Fellows. This fact may be interpreted either to the advantage of the Fellows (as having worn out the books by excessive study), or to their disadvantage (as having been not unwilling to part with them for a consideration): but a fact it is.

The entries made by the original hand in the Catalogue have been interrupted by records of miscellaneous donations later than 1418. Such donations belonged to the class of chained books, and many of them remain. And there is an appendix in the shape of a list of 54 books given by one man (John Warkeworth, the well-known Master of the College) in the year 1481. Of these 54 volumes it is gratifying to be able to say that 46—all but 8—remain.

The only printed Catalogue of this Collection of MSS. is that made by Thomas James in the year 1600 and published in his *Ecloga Oxonio-Cantabrigiensis*. It was reprinted in Bernard's *Catalogi MStorum Angliae* in 1697—just 200 years ago. That list—for it is a little one—enumerates 267 volumes. In my Catalogue there are 276. Ten or eleven of Thomas James's have disappeared, and certain donations subsequent to his time have made up the number.

I am afraid that among those which were in the Library in 1600 and have since disappeared were some of the volumes which one would most gladly have seen—e.g. two copies of Quintilian, and a volume containing works by Hyginus, Marbod and others. One mathematical book was acquired by Samuel Pepys and is now among his MSS. at Magdalene.

What I have to say about the collection will be best distributed under a few heads:

1. External characteristics.
2. Sources whence they come.
3. Contents.

Under the first head I would notice that old bindings are in a very small minority among these MSS. At some period in the last century almost all of them were rebound, and the covers consist of a number of old deeds—none I think earlier than Charles II.—belonging to the College. I do not regret the deeds but the loss of the old bindings is a serious one. A good deal of the history of the books has disappeared along with them. One group of books—a set of works of SS. Augustine, Ambrose and Jerome, given by a certain William Dyngeby in the fifteenth century—has in great part escaped this general rebinding, and on the flyleaves of most of these volumes, which are the work of one and the same scribe, we find notices of the money spent in producing the book. These notices are uniform and the items have some interest.

The parchment cost 3*d.* a quire of 8 leaves.

The writing of each quire 16*d.*

The binding (in white skin over wooden boards) 2*s.*, and the illumination (blue and red initials) varies from 6*d.* to 1*s.*

Very little illuminated work has been allowed to survive in these MSS. One Bible has some good initials, and a volume of French romances given by Warkeworth retains two or three pictures much damaged. On the other hand the bulk of the books being designed for College use are not of elaborate execution and never had much ornament, and a good many other volumes, notably an Albertus Magnus *de Animalibus*, and some Law books, which were very finely decorated, have had every vestige of a picture ruthlessly removed. I cannot guess at the date of these mutilations, but I incline to believe that they are in some cases anterior to the time of Thomas James (1600).

Lastly, I do not find any specimen of writing earlier than the eleventh century at earliest.

A few words now as to the sources whence these books came. The earliest donor of a surviving book seems to be Thomas de Insula, Bishop of Ely, who gave a large Bible in the year 1300.

Of the books recorded by the original catalogues in 1418 many (probably most) were given by individuals, but their

names are not entered in the list. Only those of later date than 1418 are given. Among these the most eminent are Thomas de Beaufort, duke of Exeter, who bequeathed in 1427 a volume of sermons by Ralph Acton, Dr John Somerset, physician and tutor to Henry VI., Dr Roger Marchall, formerly fellow, Michael Causton, Chancellor of the University, and John Newton, Treasurer of York. Books given by all these remain. Donations later than the date of John Warkeworth (1482) are not very frequent. Dr Thomas Dey, who lived in Henry VIII.'s time, gives a good many medical books, some written in Italy. Osbaldeston gave some interesting books in 1716. But perhaps the most remarkable gift is that of a volume of Homilies, a huge book written in Germany about 1100, which was presented in the Commonwealth period by John Rothwell, a stationer of London. The noticeable point about this volume, besides its writing and contents, which are both interesting, is that it has the arms of Archbishop Laud on the covers. It is a Laudian MS. gone astray in the troublous Civil War period. There are other MSS. which belonged to Laud now at Eton.

Among the gifts made to the Library in the fifteenth century are one or two which raise curious questions. One book comes from Bury, and has the Bury mark. Another belonged to the Canons of Hereford; another to Worcester; another to Durham (it is still identifiable in the Durham Catalogue of 1391); and there are other instances of the kind. Such phenomena make one very anxious to know how freely and under what conditions collegiate and monastic bodies were in the habit of parting with their books during the time before the Dissolution. Was there not very probably an extensive system of sale of duplicates? I prefer this notion to the idea that they got rid of their books indiscriminately, because a study of Monastic Catalogues shows quite plainly that the number of duplicates in any considerable library was very large. On the other hand it is clear that books often got out of the old libraries into the hands of quite unauthorized persons: so that there was probably both fair and foul play in this matter. We do know from Richard de Bury's *Philo-*

biblion that some monasteries parted with their books freely: the monks of St Alban's sold him fifty volumes, which he afterwards gave back to them.

Under my last heading, that of Contents of the MSS., I do not mean to say much about the texts contained in these volumes, but mainly of the casual fragments used as flyleaves, or of the scribbled entries which occur on margins and the like. The peroration of a Lecture on the Second Part of the Digest is the first item that comes to my hand. It runs thus:

Or signori (Now gentlemen) We ought to give hearty thanks to God and the Blessed Virgin His Mother that we have finished this book; tho' we began it late and finished it late owing to the interdict under which the city lay by reason of the siege under the Lord Castellan of Andolo, so that we began on the Eve of All Saints: I have never known this happen save in the year when Azo died when the lectures were put off out of respect to him until the Feast of All Saints. And I have heard him say that he never fell ill except in the vacation; and it was in vacation that he died. But he said that when he was lecturing he was always in excellent health.

An extract from Lathbury's fourteenth century commentary on Lamentations will be interesting to those who study folklore. It may possibly be known. Among a number of portents connected with the Nativity and with Christmas, he gives us the following:

In the year 1343 at the provincial (Dominican) chapter held at London, and also several times at Oxford, brother Hermann of Cologne told brother John de Lathbury *in voce* that in his native country there is a village called Enger—whence the name England is derived—and about a mile from it a great old oak which he used often to go and visit according to the local custom when he was a boy. For every Christmas Eve at midnight the oak suddenly produces large and ripe acorns. All the country side assemble with lights and lanterns and await the accustomed time, spending the night in eating, drinking and sports. They bring with them stones, sticks and

bags to knock down the fruit and carry it off. And he added that this oak bore no fruit at any other time, and that it is commonly more fruitful on one side than on the other, and that on whatever side the tree bears most acorns the better will be the crops of the district towards which it points.

A very interesting fragment now comes before us. It consists of the leaves of the household accounts of some great noble of whom we can learn that he had houses at Hertford, London, a place called 'le Neit,' Calais, and Kelyngworth. Also that he travelled to Scotland, went on embassies to France and entertained Cardinals, and that the date is somewhere about 1383. There are indications that he was an ecclesiastic, and I incline on the whole to identify him with Henry le Despenser, the famous 'warlike Bishop of Norwich.'

One or two items are of special interest to us.

Item for the expenses of Thomas Assheburne scholar of the charity of my Lord in the University of Cambridge in the College of St Benedict, for his teaching there for a year, by the hand of Dr John Kyme, Warden of the same College, by letter from Lord de Ware £11. 4s. 1d.

The Bishop (if I am right in calling him so) supported a scholar at Corpus Christ in the Mastership of John Kyme or Kynne, who was Master from 1379 to 1389.

The other picturesque item in these accounts is this:

"For the writing and illumination and other expenses for a Primer new made and written for my Lord and given to the Lady Queen of Castile 63s. and 6d." This Queen of Castile must be Constance of Castile, second wife of John of Gaunt: she died in 1394.

In the same book, among other scribbled inscriptions, I note this verse:

Desine · deflete · dic · corrige · fac · et habete,

with an accompanying rendering into English: Desine, Let thy sin. Deflete, Weep for thy sin. Dic, Say thy sin. Corrige, Amend thy sin. Fac, Do penance for thy sins. Et habete, And have heaven bliss.

In another volume is a fragment of an early thirteenth century cartulary of Little Maplestead in Essex, famous now for its round church. The name is not given; but the charters are of gifts to a hospital of St John of Jerusalem; and the lands mentioned are in Essex and near Maplestead; and Maplestead is one of only two preceptories of the order in Essex. So to Maplestead provisionally I assign the fragment.

A thirteenth century book next comes under notice which seems to have belonged to the Canons of Hereford. At any rate on one of the margins is the pencilled draft of a letter from a Precentor of Hereford to an Abbot of Dore. It runs as follows:

To the Reverend the Abbot of Dore the Precentor of Hereford. Greeting in the Lord. In order that my friend Stephen late Abbot of Dore and now confined in the monastery be no longer exposed to reproach from you, and that no further abuse may be levelled at him, I send you by the bearer the palfrey you have long wanted. Had I had one more suitable to the purpose I would have sent it. Hoping that this may not turn to the prejudice of my very good friend Stephen or of his relatives, and returning you many thanks for the valuable present you have sent me, I bid you farewell in the Lord.

I make out that there was a Stephen of Worcester elected to the Abbey of Dore in 1263. But what the circumstances were that led to this deposition, or what lies at the back of the odd little document I have read you, we shall probably never know exactly.

Some verses on the Seven Ages, which to me at least are unfamiliar, are worth a passing notice. They occur in a thirteenth century book.

The infant says: I lie and weep in my swaddling clothes.

The boy: I roll my hoop and hope no one will meddle with me.

The lad: I look in the glass and comb my hair.

The youth: I ride with a flower in my hand and make love.

The man, advises any ill-wisher to get out of his way.

The old man thinks all pleasure is gone.

While the decrepit old man hobbles to the grave on his stick with bent head.

One oddity occurs among the many names of scribes which are given. There is a copy of the commentary of Johannes Canonicus on the Physics of Aristotle, written by Tydeman, a Swede, 'de regno suecie ortus in Nericia,' at Cambridge in the year 1450. And here is a couplet which occurs in many forms, but I think not often just in this one :

Sunt mea si qua dedi, fuerunt mea si qua comedi,
Si qua remanserunt nescio cuius erunt.

All that I gave I possess, I possessed once all I have eaten,
If there is anything left, I don't know whose it will be.

Another volume contains a fifteenth century list of books, with the values attached to most, which seemingly belonged to Master John Savage. The prices given range from 2s. for a Liber Scintillarum to ten marks for Augustine on John.

Two or three of the MSS. seem to have been written in Spain. This is a curious phenomenon, but the evidence in at least one case is clear. A Spanish deed is stuck in the binding, and the particular book in which it is found has been in the Library since 1418. The other two are earlier, a Galen and a Pincian, both of the twelfth century, and both recurring in the old Catalogue.

In an early volume of sermons I detected a quotation which has attracted some little notice. It is, says Mr Gollancz, the only known quotation from the lost old English tale of the mythical hero Wade. It would take more knowledge than I possess, and more time than I want to occupy, to show the importance of the fragment. The authorship of the sermon has also not been properly investigated as yet. In the same discourse that contains the lines from Wade is an anecdote about Hugh de Gournay, which may sometime help us to a date and an identification. Another interesting fragment is one of two pages in the cover of a book, which has a rhyming Latin version (thirteenth century) of the Story of Noah. The

rhymes are very intricate. Take as a specimen three lines at the end.

Archa parata Noe mandata domini peregit
Et bene nota quod unum iota iustus non infregit
Omnia dicta fide non ficta complere sat egit.

The last book to be noticed is a set of *Astronomical Tables* by Dr Holbrook, Master of the College from 1418 to 1431. They are finely written, and at the end he gives us the longitude and latitude of Cambridge, the long. being 15.45, and the lat. 52.19. For all I know they may be quite correct.

Such then are a few, and only quite a few, of the various matters which have served to carry me through a somewhat dreary waste of volumes of Aquinas, Scotus, Bonaventure, Augustine and the like. A good deal more of the same kind will appear in my catalogue.

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