FREDERIC EDWARD WEATHERLY

OXFORD DAYS

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Weatherly F.

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Содержание

Frederic Edward Weatherly
Oxford Days or How Ross Got His Degree

PREFACE

"Oxford Days" is not shaped on the lines of either *Verdant Green* or *Tom Brown at Oxford*. Its purpose, rather, is to furnish a practical guide to all the features of University life; but it has been thought that, by adopting the narrative form, the dry bones of a handbook may be made to live.

Oxford, 1879.

CHAPTER I
GONE TO OXFORD

There was a long discussion between the Vicar of Porchester and Mr. Ross, the lawyer, as they walked together after evening service to the vicarage. Frank Ross was just eighteen, the eldest of six brothers. He was still at school, but it was time for him to go to the University. Oxford had been chosen—not from any notion of superiority to Cambridge, but simply because of school and home associations. The difficulty was the choice of a college. The vicar—a well-to-do bachelor—an old Eton and Christ-Church man, advised his own college. But Mr. Ross was frightened. "Christ-Church" to him had ever been a terror, and meant waste of time and money, in the shape of cards, drink, and horse-flesh; and all the vicar's eloquence could not shake his unfounded prejudice. The result of the discussion was that Mr. Ross decided to write to a friend at Oxford, settled there as a "coach;" and also to Mr. Rickards, a country doctor, with a family larger even than his own. The doctor's answer was as follows:—

> "Dear Ross,—My boy is going to Brasenose: at least, he goes up in May to try for a close scholarship. I can give you no advice, as I know nothing about the place. I sent him to the Hereford Cathedral School by a fluke some years ago; and as there are scholarships and exhibitions from the school to Brasenose, I am saved the difficulty of choosing a college.
> *"Yours truly,*
> *"W. Rickards."*

The vicar explained that a "close" scholarship was, like other scholarships, a sum of money paid annually for four or five years as a prize, but differed from them in being confined to competition among boys from certain schools; and that the value of them varied from 45*l.* to 80*l.* per annum, part being paid in money, and part made up in allowances in the way of diminished fees. The letter from the "coach" was more valuable:—

> "Dear Mr. Ross,—So much depends on your son's abilities, your own means and wishes, that I cannot answer your question as to the best college, off-hand. I think I may assume that you do not want him to spend more money than is absolutely necessary; and possibly that you would wish him to 'go in for honours' instead of taking a Pass Degree, that is, offering the smallest possible number of subjects for examination. I need hardly say that a high degree in honours opens the way to a Fellowship, or at any rate to good masterships in schools; and is, in fact, a distinct help, directly and indirectly, not only in educational, but in all professions.
>
> "It is far better for a lad to go to a good college, even though he is unable to obtain a scholarship or any other college endowment, than to go to an inferior college, where he may succeed in getting pecuniary assistance. To illustrate what I mean: I believe, in the long run, it would be wiser to send your son as a commoner to Balliol than as a scholar to Wadham. If, from a pecuniary point of view, you do not care for him to get a scholarship, nor want him to read for honours, and are not particular as to whether he spends 300*l.* or 500*l.* a year (or even more), I should send him to Christ-Church, Brasenose, Exeter, or University. The first two especially were in my day emphatically popular colleges, and I believe are so still. But I would not send him to either unless you are fully prepared for the amount of expenditure which I have named. Possibly you might like our only denominational college—Keble. He would be most carefully looked after in every way, and his expenses kept

within a fixed limit. The Warden and Tutors devote their whole energies to their men, and the men themselves speak in the most affectionate terms of them—a most exceptional fact, I assure you. But I must warn you that the religious tone of the college is distinctly pronounced, and inclines to ritualistic rather than to evangelical doctrines.

"If your son's college life will be a pinch to you (you will allow me to speak thus plainly on such a question), send him as an Unattached Student. But here, again, you and he should clearly understand that the life of an unattached student is isolated, and quite unlike the life of the college undergraduate. The only exception to this statement is when an undergraduate migrates, as for various reasons sometimes he is obliged, from his college to the body of the Unattached. His society, being already formed, remains unbroken. I should fancy your choice will lie between New College, Corpus, Paul's, and Balliol. A scholarship at either means that the scholar is capable, with industry, of gaining the highest honours in his future University examinations. On the whole, I think, I incline to Paul's. Unfortunately, you have just missed the examination for scholarships. There is, however, an ordinary matriculation examination for commoners in about three weeks' time. If your son holds a good position in his school, he ought to have no difficulty in passing even at this short notice, for the subjects are those which are read in forms lower than the highest at all schools. I shall be happy to do anything further in the matter for you that I can. He should come prepared for residence, in the event of his passing. The examination begins on the Wednesday after Easter, and will be over in time for successful candidates to 'come into residence' with the other men on the following Saturday. You should send an application to the Master of Paul's at once. I enclose a list of subjects and fees, and am

"Yours truly,

"Philip Wodehouse."

"Subjects for Matriculation at Paul's.[1]

"1. Translation from English into Latin prose.

"2. Translation into English of an unprepared passage of Attic Greek.

"3. Translation of some portion of a Greek and Latin author (to be selected by the candidate), with parsing and general grammar questions.

"4. Arithmetic, including Vulgar and Decimal Fractions and Interest.

"5. Euclid, Books I. and II.; *or* Algebra, to Simple Equations.

"Fees

"(*a*) To the University at Matriculation 2*l.* 10*s.*

"(*b*) To the College, as caution-money 30*l.*[2]

"Room-rent varies from 10*l.* to 16*l.* per annum. This does not include furniture, which must be taken at a valuation from the previous tenant; 25*l.* is an average valuation-price. China, glass, linen, plate, and household necessaries must

[1] The subjects at other colleges are much the same, but the standard of excellence required varies. No. 2 is usually omitted.

[2] At most colleges a reduction is made for scholars and exhibitioners.

> all be procured. It is wiser to bring plate and linen. The rest may be purchased from the 'scout' (servant) apportioned to the rooms. For this, say 10*l.* The immediate payments, therefore, amount to 2*l.* 10*s.* + 30*l.* + 10*l.* = 42*l.* 10*s.* The payment for the furniture must be made early in term; and the establishment charges, tuition fees, expenses of board and rent, are paid terminally."[3]

So Paul's was chosen, and a letter of application forwarded to the Master;[4] and Frank, who was then at home for the Easter vacation, commenced polishing up his work in view of the approaching examination. On Easter Tuesday he left home by an early train, with a note to Mr. Wodehouse in his pocket. That gentleman entertained him at dinner with a long list of examination stories, and about nine o'clock marched him off to the Clarendon Hotel, where, with a word to the landlady, he left him, nervous at the thought of the morrow, but conscious of his own dignity and the near approach of the manhood which is supposed to date from matriculation.

It was with some difficulty that Frank preserved his self-composure in the presence of the waiters, as he sat at breakfast in the "Clarendon" coffee-room. He did not particularly enjoy his meal, and, in obedience to Mr. Wodehouse's injunctions, left at half-past nine to make his way to Paul's. After one or two mistakes, he succeeded in finding the college gates. His anxiety as to his next step was set at rest by the sight that met him. About a dozen boys (to be called men after matriculation) were hanging about the Lodge, in various typical conditions of mind and body—some completely at their ease, chatting unconcernedly; others standing nervously alone. Most wore black coats and chimney-pot hats—the costume that only a few years ago was rigorously insisted on. A few through ignorance, or in obedience to the spirit of the day, wore defiantly light suits and bowler hats. Frank, to his great delight, found a school-fellow whose coming up had, like his own, been hurriedly decided in the vacation. The two friends had not much time for conversation, for in a few minutes a respectable middle-aged man, whom they knew afterwards to be the Porter, said, "You are to walk this way, gentlemen, please," and conducted them to the College-Hall. It is a fine old place, with dark oak panels, coloured windows, portraits, and coats-of-arms; and to the boy up in Oxford for his first visit, and that visit so solemn a one as matriculation, there is an unspeakable charm, and a novelty sobered into grandeur, about everything. How the grave faces of the college founders and celebrities looked down upon the wondering eyes! Bishop and knight, king and duchess—there they stared! How the light streamed through the coloured windows! Who could tell? Perhaps one day, Frank thought, when he was a rich man, he might have that one vacant window filled, or some of his descendants might present to the college a portrait of Sir Francis Ross, attired in wig and gown, one of Her Majesty's—or rather, perhaps, His Majesty's—judges, if not Lord Chancellor.

He started abruptly from his dreams, and came back to the first rung on the ladder that was leading to such prospective fame. There before him stretched three lines of tables and benches down the length of the hall. Across the end, on a slightly-raised daïs, ran another table, where the handsome chairs indicated beings superior to undergraduates. It was, in fact, the High table, where the Master and Fellows dined, and any resident Masters of Arts who cared to do so.

This morning it was devoted to the more serious purposes of examination. Ten ink-bottles, fifteen blotting-pads, fifteen sheets of white paper printed, with a few sheets of blue paper and two or three quill pens lying by each: that was the fare this morning—"the feast of reason" that was in such strong contrast to the "flow of soul" that would grace the table at six o'clock that evening.

One of the junior Fellows was in charge of the examination. He was reading the *Times* as Frank and his companions entered, sitting on the table, with his legs dangling in a graceful attitude of studied

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[3] At some colleges quarterly.

[4] The titles given to the different Heads of Colleges vary. There is the Warden of New College, the Provost of Oriel, the President of Trinity, the Master of Balliol, the Principal of Brasenose, and the Rector of Exeter.

negligence. He took no notice of the victims, till the Porter had conducted them to the table and motioned them to take seats. Then he looked up from his newspaper and said,—

"You will have till half-past twelve. Write your names clearly; and please bear in mind that we expect answers from both books of Euclid."

Then he resumed his newspaper and adopted a more dignified attitude.

Frank looked at his questions. Eleven in all; some definitions, six propositions from the first book, and four from the second. He wrote his name at the head of his paper, and made a great blot in doing so. His hand grew hot. He dashed at the first definition,—

"*A circle is a plane figure contained in one straight line.*"

His pen spluttered warningly at the word *straight*. A blot fell, and fell luckily on the fatal word. He tore up the paper and commenced again.

Making a good start, his hands grew cool, his head calm; and with the old portraits beaming upon him, away he wrote. He completed the six propositions of the first book; then, pausing for breath, saw that almost everybody else had his watch on the table. Frank pulled out his. *A quarter to twelve!* He had blundered, he knew. He ought to have timed himself, and left more time for the second book. However, his success had put him at his ease, for he knew all the propositions well so far; and he buckled-to vigorously. By hard writing he managed to do three propositions. The last was the thirteenth. He knew he could not do it in five minutes, and he must allow himself time to read over his work. He had barely done even this when the papers were collected, and they were dismissed, with instructions to appear again at two.

Frank went out with his friend, discussing the Euclid paper.

They lunched together at the "Clarendon," wisely confining themselves to a little cold meat and sherry, and at two o'clock were again hard at work at Latin prose. It was a piece from "Pilgrim's Progress"—something about Giant Despair, his wife, and her bed. And judging from the various unhappy faces, an observer might have thought that the choice of the giant was somewhat prophetical. Frank, however, had done, not the identical piece, but several pieces in the same style before, and accordingly did not find so much difficulty.

Out at four o'clock, they strolled down Oriel Street, past Corpus, by Merton Church, and into Christ-Church Broad Walk; and meeting three friends, also up for matriculation at some other college, took a boat from Salter's and rowed to Iffley, Frank steering.

Luckily the river was not crowded, as in full term, or the erratic course which Frank steered would have brought down upon him the shrill abuse of some eight-oar's coxswain, even if not a quiet spill into the water.

Thursday passed much in the same way: Frank, on the whole, satisfied with his work; Monkton, his friend, somewhat desponding. The hours after work would have been dull had there not been so much to see. The friends mooned about till half-past six, and then had meat-tea at Monkton's lodgings in Ship Street; and with "Verdant Green" and the "Mysteries of the Isis" beguiled the evening till they turned into bed. What a relief it was when Friday morning came, and with it the last paper! At two that afternoon they were met in the Lodge by the Porter, who had an important-looking paper in his hands.

"Please to wait a moment, gentlemen," he said, as all the candidates were hurrying off across the quadrangle to the hall; "these are the gentlemen that are to go for *vivâ voce*." And he proceeded to read out six names, among which Frank and Monkton, to their great delight, heard their own. They hardly thought of the disconsolate nine who, hearing the last name on the list, hopelessly oozed one by one out at the Lodge-gates.

Reaching the hall, the chosen six found the Master and six of the Fellows, all attired in cap, gown, and dignity, seated at the High table. They were told to sit down at one side of the hall, and then, one by one, were summoned to that awful table and examined. Monkton's ordeal came first, and it was a trying one. He was first questioned (very sharply, as it seemed to Frank) on some of his

papers, and then given some written questions and sent to a side table. Frank was not aware, then, that this process—familiarly known as "second paper"—meant that Monkton's success hung by a thread on the result of his work this afternoon. His own turn came next. The Fellow who examined him saw he was nervous, and, as usual with almost every examiner, spoke pleasantly and reassuringly to him.

"Take your Greek Testament, Mr. Ross," he said, "and turn to the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and translate the first six verses."

Frank turned to the passage indicated. He knew it at a glance, and that reassured him; and when he was next told to open a "Cicero" that was lying on the table he felt comparatively at his ease. He got through about six lines of the Second Philippic, and was then asked a few disconnected questions.

"Do you know what circumstances led to the delivery of this speech?"

He did know, but words failed him, and he bungled.

"Never mind," answered the examiner. "Who was Hannibal? and what battles did he fight?"

Frank answered, naming them.

"What is the construction after verbs of commanding in Latin?"

"Can you mention any of our Lord's parables which teach the duty of watchfulness?" and so forth.

Then came the pleasant dismissal,—

"That will do, thank you. You need not wait."

Frank departed, and, making friends with the Porter, told him all that had passed.

"Ah! you're all right, sir," said George; and George's statement proved true.

In about three-quarters of an hour the Master and Fellows came out of the hall and dispersed to their respective rooms, and presently George appeared with a piece of blue paper, which he nailed on the gate. Five names—Frank's second, and Monkton's absent.

"Those gentlemen that mean to reside this term," said George, "are to call on the Dean between five and six this evening, and bring their fees. Those that don't are to leave Oxford at once, and notice will be sent to them in the Long Vacation before next term begins."

Frank meant to reside, and was one of the first to call on the Dean. That gentleman received him courteously; told him he had done very fairly in the examination; hoped he would read hard and be steady; asked him his name, age, father's name, residence, and profession, and various other particulars, all of which he entered in a book; received his caution-money (30*l.*), and told him to ask the Porter the staircase and number of the rooms allotted to him.

"Be here," he added, as Frank was leaving, "at a quarter to ten to-morrow morning, that I may take you before the Vice-Chancellor."

At the Porter's advice, Frank took a cab and drove to the "Clarendon," paid his bill, got his luggage together, and drove back to college. By this time the Porter had the list of the newly-allotted rooms.

"Yours are No. 5, sir, three-pair right."

Frank stared.

"No. 5 over the doorway, sir," he then explained, pointing across the quadrangle to a doorway, over which Frank discerned the wished-for number; "three flights o' stairs; the rooms on the right hand. No. 5, three-pair right—that's how we call it. You'll find your scout there. You're too late for dinner. The hall-bell went twenty minutes ago."

Frank crossed the quadrangle, climbed the stairs, and found his rooms. They were neither large, nor particularly clean, as regarded paper and paint; and the carpets and coverings were decidedly dingy. But they were *his* rooms, and he was an Oxford man! and that was *his* scout bustling in from the rooms opposite to welcome him. After a little conversation, the fact of his ownership became still more apparent, for the scout proceeded to show him a collection of glass and china and household implements, on the merits and absolute necessity of which he enlarged. The mere transfer of glass and china supplies a nice little addition to the scout's perquisites. The articles are, in the first instance,

purchased by some undergraduate who prefers his own choice to what his scout has ready to offer him. He, on leaving his rooms, bequeaths them to his scout. Custom is so tyrannical in Oxford. The scout sells the articles to the next tenant, who, in his turn, bequeaths them to the same willing legatee, when again they are sold to the new-comer. How long this goes on it is hard to say. Sometimes the smooth course is interrupted by some strong-minded undergraduate, who, ignoring custom, takes his effects with him when he leaves. The little bill was as follows:—

Frank Ross, Esq., *to* William Green

	£	*s.*	*d.*
ıt-glass Decanters	2	0	0
et Jug	1	0	0
zen Wine-glasses (mixed)	1	10	0
mblers	0	9	6
essert Set	0	18	0
)inner Plates	0	13	6
ieese Plates	0	5	6
Set, consisting of Milk Jug, Sugar Basin, Bowl, 8 Breakfast Cups, 6 Tea Cups, 9 Plates (all mixed)	2	2	0
al Tea-pot	0	7	6
)m	0	8	0
pan and Brush	0	3	6
isters	0	6	0
a-cloths	0	6	0
	9	19	6

Shortly afterwards, as Frank was unpacking, a youth of most obsequious manners arrived, carrying a cap and gown for the Freshman, who received them with a murmur of gratified pleasure, making no inquiries about the cost or who had given the order; considering that, of course, what was thus sent must be *en règle*. The bill arrived within a week, with a polite intimation that payment was not requested, and an invitation to inspect the stock of the obliging tailors.

Frank Ross, Esq., *to* Cutter and Co

		s.	*d.*
ollege Cap		7	6
ommoner's Gown		15	0
	£1	2	6

Three years later, when pressed by duns and threatened with proceedings in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, Frank remembered these gentle disclaimers of any wish for payment.

What with talking to his scout and unpacking, nine o'clock soon arrived: the hour when the kitchen and buttery were opened for supper. William suggested that his master would like some supper, and in a short time supper was brought.

"I shan't eat all that," expostulated Frank, when he saw the plateful of meat and lumps of bread and butter.

"Only one 'commons,' sir," replied William.

Frank said nothing, but saw distinctly that the standard called "one commons," for which his father would have to pay daily through his three or four years, was based on the principle that "what is ordered for one should be enough for two." However, he enjoyed his supper; and so did the scout,

who carried home his share, with similar portions from the other six rooms on the staircase to which it was his duty to attend.

The following morning, duly attired in cap and gown, with white tie and black coat at William's suggestion, Frank betook himself to the Dean's rooms. There he met the four other Freshmen who had "passed" with him, was asked if he had his fee ready, and then conducted in a sheepish, silent procession, headed by the Dean, to the Vice-Chancellor. There were several groups of Freshmen standing with their respective Deans, Vice-Principals, or other college officials. Then they were all told to write their names in a book in Latin—a novel though not difficult feat, which Frank, with the assistance of his Dean, accomplished.

"Ross, Franciscus, filius Armigeri, è collegio S. Pauli."

He then handed in his fee, 2*l.* 10*s.*, and received in return a little piece of blue paper, the certificate of matriculation, together with a copy of the University statutes. The Vice-Chancellor addressed them all in a short Latin formula; and when this was over, Frank had time to read the document, which ran thus:—

> *"Term. Pasch.*
> *"Oxoniæ, die Ap. 27mo, Anno Domini 187—.*
>
> "Quo die comparuit coram me Franciscus Ross, è Coll. S. Pauli, Arm. Fil. et admonitus est de observandis statutis hujus Universitatis et in matriculam Universitatis relatus est.
> *"–, Vice-Can."*

He was now fully matriculated, and amenable to all the details of University discipline. At six o'clock he dined in Hall—his first dinner—not without the usual blunder of seating himself at a table appropriated to undergraduates at least two years his seniors; and at eight went to chapel—the hour being changed on first nights in term from half-past five to eight, to enable men from distant homes to put in an appearance. The chapel was very much crowded, Paul's having considerably outgrown its accommodation; but it was only on first nights that the inconvenience was felt, for as it was not necessary to attend service more than four times in the week, all the men were never there together.

Coming out, he met several old school-fellows, and the senior of them carried them all off to his lodgings in Holywell Street, where over wine and pipes they sat chatting till past ten o'clock; Frank, for the most part, listening without saying much, for he was but a Freshman, and this his first pipe.

When he got back to Paul's he found the gates locked; but as he had read "Verdant Green" very carefully, he did not think it necessary to apologize to George for giving him the trouble of opening. He knew that "knocking in" before eleven o'clock only meant twopence in his weekly "battels."[5]

That night, when he got into bed, though he did not feel quite a "man," he felt conscious of having undergone some considerable change since he left home on Tuesday morning.

[5] College bills.

CHAPTER II
AN OXFORD SUNDAY

On Sunday morning he woke to the words that, without the slightest variation in time or tone of delivery, called him daily for the three years that he resided in college—"Half-past seven, sir! Do you breakfast in?"

This was the scout's gentle hint that chapel service was within half an hour, and his form of inquiry whether his young master intended breakfasting in his own rooms or was going elsewhere for the meal.

Frank, when he fully realized the meaning, answered "Yes," and with a freshman's energy jumped out of bed, and was dressed before the chapel bell began to ring. Hurrying down-stairs, in fear of being late, he was stopped by William, with the suggestion that there was "no call to go yet, till the bell began to swear!"

This elegant expression, Frank learnt, is applied to the quickened and louder ringing of the bell for the five minutes immediately preceding service. He found, not many days after, that it was quite possible, by the aid of an Ulster, and postponement of ablutions, to get to chapel in time if he slept till the "swearing" began.

There were not so many men present as on the previous evening. The Master and Fellows wore surplices and hoods; the Scholars, being undergraduates, surplices and no hoods; the commoners, black gowns. The few—apparently senior men—who wore black gowns of longer and ampler make than the commoners, were the Bachelors and Masters of Arts, still "in residence," but not on the foundation—*i.e.*, neither Fellows nor Scholars, and therefore not entitled to wear surplices. This was the strict order for Sundays, and other high days; on other days every one wore the black gown of his respective degree, with the single exception of the Fellow who did chaplain's duty for the week; for at Paul's there was no permanent chaplain. The first lesson was read by one of the Scholars, the second by one of the Fellows, the prayers by the chaplain, the Communion Service by the Master. There was no sermon; the intention being that each undergraduate should attend "prayers" in his own particular college-chapel, and afterwards hear a sermon preached in the University-church to the members of the University in common. The list of those who attend chapel is kept at Paul's by the Bible-clerk, at some colleges by the chapel-porter. The Bible-clerk's further duties are to find the lessons, to read them in the possible absence of the proper person, and to say grace in Hall.

A man may lose caste by becoming a Bible-clerk, but it is by no means necessary that he should. A cad (and there are many at Oxford) distinctly degrades the post, and makes it shunned. A man wavering between good sets and bad sets may possibly lose what little footing he has in the former. But a thorough gentleman (it seems hardly necessary to say so, except to disabuse many of their prejudices) need not, and does not in the slightest degree, lower himself by holding such a position. The emoluments amount (in money and allowances) often to 80*l.* per annum; at Paul's, 75*l.*; but what makes the post so especially valuable, from a pecuniary point of view, is that it can be held with a Scholarship and an Exhibition. The Bible-clerk at Paul's during Frank's first two years was holding a Scholarship of the value of 60*l.*, an Exhibition from his school of the value of 50*l.*; so that, with his clerkship of 75*l.*, his income amounted to 185*l.*, for the academical year of six months. And he was one of the most popular men in the college.

From him Frank learnt that he would have to read the first lesson in chapel for six consecutive days in his turn; but that, being a freshman, his turn would not come for some time yet.

On returning to his rooms he found his breakfast laid, the kettle simmering, and letters lying on the table; one from home; the rest, the circulars that flatter the freshman's dignity, and coax him into becoming a customer.

The foundation breakfast consists of bread, butter, and milk, and in some colleges two eggs. These articles are brought by the scouts from the buttery, and entered by the buttery-clerk to the respective undergraduates. The bread, butter, and milk are distributed in "commons," the rate charged being above that of tradesmen outside college, and the quantity being, in the case of most men, certainly too much for one meal. The remains belong to the scout.

Fish, poultry, meat (and for luncheon, pastry), are supplied from the kitchen. For some items the charges are reasonable, for others exorbitant. Naturally, therefore, it is in "kitchen-orders" that the careful student can economize, if only he can stand against the Oxford custom, fostered by the scouts, of ordering too much. For at least three days in the week the two customary eggs, with bread and butter, are surely enough for breakfast, a kitchen-order being thereby avoided. The too common habit, however, is to discard the eggs (paid for, it must be remembered, whether eaten or not), and eat meat. It is quite conceivable that, after one breakfast on one staircase where eight men live, the scout may put into his basket sixteen eggs.

Tea, coffee, chocolate, cocoa, sugar, and so on, are in some colleges procurable from the Common-room-stores, an establishment resembling an Italian warehouse and wine-and-spirit-vault combined. Custom, if not college regulations, will compel the undergraduate to deal with the Common-room-man.

At Paul's there is no such establishment, but William very kindly supplied the deficiency by ordering in, from one of the nearest—and dearest—grocers, a good stock of tea (at 4*s.* 6*d.* per pound, of course), coffee, candles, matches, scented soap, biscuits, jam, marmalade, till Frank was quite bewildered at the thought of the room necessary for storing these delicacies. However, they did not last long.

One of the most iniquitous and yet plausible practices is that pursued at some colleges—Paul's among the number—of compelling undergraduates to deal at certain shops.

Anything in the way of paper, paint, or furniture, has to be procured at one of the shops attached to the college. These are invariably the dearest, charging for their goods 25 and 30 per cent. more than the many other establishments which struggle against these monopolies.

The reason given by the college authorities for this system is that they are obliged to exercise some principle of selection of the workmen allowed within the college walls, indiscriminate admission being open to risk. The reason is plausible enough, but it is based entirely on the supposition that the workmen employed by expensive firms alone are honest. Further, what risk could there be in the conveyance of a piece of furniture to the college gates, when its removal to the rooms of the purchaser would be the work of the college servants?

The only method of avoiding the tyranny of the system is to employ one of the railway carriers. The college porter, on the presumption that the article has come by rail from the undergraduate's home, is obliged to admit it.

Anything like opposition to the regulation appears at present to be useless. One daring undergraduate at Paul's, who ventured to remonstrate with his college dean (the authority in such matters), was met with this characteristic answer:—"It is our system. If you don't like it, the college gates are open. You can remove your name from the college books. We won't detain you."—an answer perfectly admissible from the proprietor of any establishment, but insolent and unwarrantable from one who, after all, is but an administrator in a corporate institution.

And so it would be possible to go on and enumerate many instances in which not only custom among his companions, but college regulations compel the undergraduate to be extravagant and wasteful. Homes are crippled, younger brothers and sisters deprived of the education which is their due, and the much-vaunted University extension limited by the very administration of the bodies that ought, and do profess, to foster it. Questions of domestic economy are ignored by the various commissions, though they lie at the very root of University extension. Let additional Scholarships be founded to enable more students to come to the University; let additional teaching power be endowed

with professorships, lectureships, and readerships, by all means; but let perquisites be pruned down; let the enormous profits of catering cooks and butlers be decreased; let room-rent be lowered; let "servants' dues" pay the servants, and not need to be supplemented by charges which never appear in the college accounts; let trade be free in the town; let every man buy where he pleases; that is the way to extend the benefits of University education—that is the way to enable those to profit by it who are at present debarred—that is the way to enable families, which now struggle to send one son to the University, to send two for an equivalent outlay. There can be no doubt of the unnecessary waste and extravagance in the domestic economy of the colleges when it is remembered that though collegiate life, based as it is on communistic principles, ought to be cheaper than any other form of student life, as a matter of fact it is considerably more expensive.

To return to Frank's breakfast. He found some difficulty in boiling his eggs and making his tea. But he concealed his ignorance and ate the eggs, and drank his tea like dish-water.

About a quarter to ten some one banged at his door, and entered with the bang. The visitor was Crawford, of Brasenose, an old school-fellow of Frank's, who had gone up about three years previously.

"Hullo, young man! not finished breakfast yet!"

His cheery greeting was delightful to Frank, who felt he had in him a true friend.

A man about three years senior to a freshman—what a power, for good or evil, he has! His seniority inspires reverence and commands imitation. Luckily, Crawford was a thoroughly sterling fellow. He had come to Oxford in earnest. When he worked he worked; when he played he played. There was the same vigour in his work as in his "stroke" on the river or "rush" at football. He kept chapels regularly; he said, because morning-chapel gave him a long day. There was a more earnest reason concealed behind this; but he had a horror of the dangers of cant. He knew what lectures were worth attending, and attended them. He ridiculed and cut the worthless. He knew who were the best "coaches," and said so. He abused the charlatans. In all matters of social etiquette he was an old-fashioned Conservative; for example, he always wore a black coat and tall hat on Sundays, and roundly abused those who loafed in light suits; and he never carried an umbrella or wore gloves when attired in cap and gown—a rather silly custom, perhaps; but its observance in the face of innovations marks the man.

After a little chat on school matters, Crawford told Frank he was going to the University sermon; and without any compunction told him—not asked him—to accompany him.

Frank, nothing loth, took his cap and gown, and they went together.

St. Mary's does double duty: as a parish church and as the University church; and here the University sermons are preached at 10.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. on each Sunday in full term, except those of the Dean of Christ-Church, or the Fellows of New College, Magdalen, and Merton, which are or may be preached in the cathedral and in the chapels of those colleges respectively.

The nave—the part appropriated to the University—was crowded when Frank and his companion entered, for the preacher was a popular one. In the gallery, facing that by the west window assigned to undergraduates, the University organist, Mr. Taylor, was already seated at the organ, with six or eight chorister boys round him. One of these hung a board, with the number of the selected hymn, over the gallery, and then the voluntary commenced.

At 10.30 precisely the procession entered at the north door: the vice-chancellor, preceded by his mace-bearers, the esquire bedels and marshals, and followed by the heads of houses, the preacher, and the proctors. Then the whole congregation rose and, led by the choristers, sang the hymn appointed. Afterwards came the quaint "bidding prayer," still used in most cathedrals, but made especially quaint in a University city by the long lists of founders and benefactors; and then the sermon. At a quarter to twelve all was over, and Frank was sitting in the window of Crawford's rooms in Brasenose; and as he looked out on the sunny Radcliffe Square, with St. Mary's graceful spire, the black frowning "schools," and the pepper-box towers of All Souls, he heard with reverent admiration (for he was, in

his way, somewhat of a poet) that these were Bishop Heber's rooms, that here he must have sat, and here he must have written that famous Newdigate prize-poem, "Palestine," by which he will always be remembered.

Over the chimney looking-glass hung a gilded face, with an enormous nose, the emblem of the college. The pictures on the panelled walls Frank soon became more intimately acquainted with, for he found copies in most of his friends' rooms. There were "The Huguenots," "The Black Brunswicker," Landseer's "Challenge," "Retreat," and "Monarch of the Glen," of course, and many others of a more recent date. Three or four pairs of boxing-gloves lay in one corner, dumb-bells in another. Against the wall, in racks, pipes of various descriptions, from the short briar-root to the china bowl of the German student (for Crawford had spent six months once upon a time in Heidelberg), racket-bats, and an oar, fondly cherished, that had helped to bring victory to the Brasenose "four" a few years back at Henley.

At one o'clock Crawford's scout appeared, and almost at the same moment three invited friends, strangers to Frank. At Oxford luncheon or breakfast parties, etiquette does not require that the guests should arrive late. The lunch was as follows:—

Leg of lamb.
Couple of chicken.
Ham cut in huge slices.
Salad.
Lumps of bread.
Lumps of butter.
Lumps of cheese.
Celery.
Three pots of jam.
"French pastry" (in reality, English tarts).
Cyder cup.
Sherry and claret.

Fish, meat, and marmalade at nine that morning, and a prospective dinner in Hall at six that evening, did not prevent Frank's four companions from doing ample justice to the fare. He himself was as yet unused to these meals, by which circumstance Crawford's scout profited.

After lunch, pipes. At three the guests dropped off; and the two school-fellows walked to Cumnor—as a result of which Frank wasted three hours on Monday evening, writing a poem about Amy Robsart's tomb.

At five they got back to Oxford, and the freshman was introduced to the reading and writing rooms of the Union Society, Crawford entering his name as a probationary member, and telling him to call on Monday to pay the fee—25*s.* There was hardly time to do more than glance at the telegrams in the hall, and just look in at the numerous readers and writers in the different rooms; but the view was quite enough to enchant Frank. And then the friends parted for their respective chapels.

At dinner that evening he made friends with some freshmen, with one of whom he proposed to go to St. Philip's and St. James' Church, for evening service. Dinner being prolonged rather beyond the usual time, they had to run pretty sharp, and even then were too late to get a seat. They accordingly began to retrace their steps, determining on future occasions, when they meant to go to either of the parish churches, to make their dinner at lunch-time, and "take their names off Hall"—*i.e.* remove their names from the list of those for whom dinner in Hall was provided—and have supper in their rooms on their return from service.

As they were walking on, they were suddenly stopped by a man having the appearance of a policeman in plain clothes, who said,—

"The Proctor wants to speak to you, gentlemen."

The next moment they saw a gentleman in black gown and large velvet sleeves, who with formal politeness raised his cap and said,—

"Are you members of this University?"

Frank and his friend murmured that they were.

"Your names and colleges, if you please."

"Ross, of Paul's."

"Mordaunt, of Paul's."

"Call on me to-morrow morning at nine, if you please."

And the Proctor walked on, leaving Frank and Mordaunt rather bewildered, and totally ignorant where they were to call in the morning—for though they knew they had been "proctorized," they did not know either the Proctor's name or his college.

The marshal (the Proctor's head attendant; the rest being called "bull-dogs"), seeing them standing in the road in evident uncertainty, said to them,—

"You'd best go back to college, gentlemen;" and then, instinctively gathering that they were freshmen, added,—

"Where's your caps and gowns? You'll find the Proctor at Christ-Church, gentlemen," and vanished with his bull-dogs after other unwary undergraduates.

The interview somewhat damped their spirits: not that any fearful punishment was hanging over their heads. Even the statutable fine of five shillings for being without cap and gown would, they believed, be remitted in consideration of their being freshmen. But Frank had hoped to keep out of the way of the Proctors; and this was indeed an early beginning.

CHAPTER III
THE FRESHMAN'S TERM

Strolling towards the Lodge on Monday morning—because everybody seemed to be strolling in that direction—Frank had his attention called to various notices posted in the gates. One was to the effect that "the Master would see the gentlemen that morning between 10 a.m. and noon, the freshmen on Tuesday, between the same hours." Another that "the Dean would be glad to see the freshmen at ten, the other gentlemen after." There was also a list of places in Hall; announcements of the meetings of the College Debating Society, Boat Club, Cricket Club; Greek Testament Lecture, *sine ulla solemnitate* (*i.e.* without cap and gown), at Mr. Wood's house every Sunday evening at nine. He was one of the married Fellows—a hard-working, energetic man.

Without quite knowing what "seeing the freshmen" meant, Frank got his gown, and as it was five minutes to ten, made his way to the Dean's rooms. In the passage outside he found about twenty freshmen cooling their heels, and engaged, some more and some less, in questions or chaff with George, the Dean's scout. George usually had the best of it. In fact, the freshman who dared to argue with him on matters of custom or local politics, and especially local politics, found himself considerably "shut up."

A door opened, and a sort of snort from within indicated to George that the Dean was ready to see the freshmen. One by one they filed in, and were greeted by the Dean with a smile that was naturally faint but tried to be sweet, and a grasp of the hand that was meant to be cordial but was unmistakably flabby. There were seats for all, but it took some minutes to get into them. The interview did not last long: just long enough, in fact, to enable the Dean to make one remark to each of the freshmen. To one, without waiting for an answer, "How is your father?" To another, "Does Mr. St. Leger intend coming forward for Slowcombe?" To another, "Have you been in Devonshire this vacation, Mr. Jones?"—Jones being, of course, a Yorkshireman who has never travelled further south than Oxford, when he matriculated in February last. To one or two a faint question as to their intentions. "Were they going to read for Honours, or for a Pass?" On the whole, Frank left the room depressed and disheartened as to his work. He had expected to be questioned as to what he had done at school: what form he was in: what books he had read; to be advised as to the turn his reading should now take; whether he should read for Honours in one examination or in more than one; or whether, in short, reading for Honours would be beyond him, and therefore waste of time. The only piece of practical information he gained was that Mr. Wood was his tutor, and to him he must apply for all particulars as to Lectures and Examinations.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.