

Jesus College, Oxford, and its Place in Welsh Education.

JESUS COLLEGE, Oxford, from its foundation in 1571 by Dr. Hugh Ap Rees (otherwise Price) with the aid of Queen Elizabeth, until after the Restoration, had no legal connection with Wales. But the connection—*de facto* rather than *de iure*—was no less real. The College from its earliest days was regarded in the Principality as “the national college.” As a consequence the majority of its Benefactors have been Welshmen. Further, although none of the Letters Patent before the Principality of Sir Leoline Jenkins (1661-1673) contained any clause giving or implying a preference to Wales or Welsh students, and although few of the original Foundation were Welshmen, yet most of the Commoners were, from the first, drawn from the Principality, as also in time were the Fellow and Scholars. For the earlier half of the history of the College students from South Wales were in a considerable majority over those from North Wales—a majority which, for the first fifty years, was more than two to one and included the Founder and all the Principals. Later—in the eighteenth century—the position was reversed.

For long the College remained very poor. For the first fifteen years it was entirely without external revenue. But, during the seventeenth century, benefactions steadily came in; by the middle of the century the net receipts had amounted to about £300 a year, a sum which had risen by 1687 to £600. The Welsh gentry came to the College in considerable numbers, and amongst its members at different times appear the names of Sir James Perrot, Sir William Vaughan, the Earl of Montgomery, Sir Philip Herbert, Sir John Lloyd and various members of the Stradling family of St. Donats Castle, Glamorgan. Amongst the *alumni* of the College during this century were Dr. Morgan Owen, Bishop of Llandaff; Rees Pritchard, poet and preacher; William Thomas, Bishop of St. David's, and later of Worcester (“the one bishop who during the

whole of that period seems to have thoroughly identified himself with the interests of his diocese"); Thomas Vaughan and his brother Henry, the Silurist, and Dr. William Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph (one of the "Seven Bishops").

A landmark in the history of the College is the Principalship of Sir Leoline Jenkins, who for a time was Secretary of State to Charles II. Sir Leoline may well be termed the second Founder of the College: he consummated the work begun by his predecessors and raised the College to the position contemplated by its Founder and its Benefactors. Of all that Sir Leoline did, perhaps nothing was more important, or had effects of greater permanence, than the step which he took when he gave definite legal sanction to the already predominant Welsh character of the College. The new Letters Patent overrode (in many instances) the wider provisions of the early Benefactors by permanently dividing the Fellowships and Scholarships between North Wales and South Wales, with the exception of two reserved for Englishmen. The effect of this arrangement, and of Edmund Meyricke's endowment of a considerable number of Exhibitions for North Wales, was to make the connection between the College and the Principality far closer and more exclusive than it had hitherto been. This result, though no doubt good in some ways, was by no means an unmixed blessing: it was narrowing, and scholarship declined. Increasing prosperity brought no corresponding increase in prestige or intellectual activity. Competition for the Scholarships and Exhibitions became comparatively small, and students of very mediocre ability were able to secure them. The College kept aloof from the other Colleges, its members mingling but little with other men. Nor did the gentry any longer come to the College. Thus a change ensued in social complexion, partly as the result of the many poor students who benefited by the Meyricke Exhibition Fund. Vaughans and Stradlings no longer appear on its rolls. The Fellows, though many of them attained ecclesiastical preferments of importance in Wales, were seldom known or distinguished outside the Princi-

pality. Nevertheless the exclusively national character of the College fulfilled a useful function ; it kept the College in touch with Wales, and higher education was spread amongst classes in the Principality which would otherwise have been excluded from it. The new type of students, coming mainly from the small farmer class, did in many instances exercise a very considerable influence upon their countrymen. Moreover, until 1871 only Anglicans were admitted, so that latterly the College had mainly drawn its members from a sectarian minority in the less populous half of the Principality. As a result its history during the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries was not distinguished. But if the College in any way rendered possible such careers as those of Thomas Charles of Bala, Goronwy Owen, David Richards, Thomas Coke (Wesleyan Bishop and missionary), Lewis Morris, John Richard Green, the present Archbishop of Wales, and many other outstanding figures in Welsh life, it cannot be said that, even at this time of restricted usefulness, it altogether failed to give to Wales and Welshmen some of the benefits which its Benefactors intended.

The revival of the College came with the abolition of University Tests in 1871 and the second Royal Commission in 1882, which converted half of the Fellowships and Scholarships into open ones, and removed all local restrictions within Wales itself. The College became no longer exclusively Welsh, but was enabled to draw strength from beyond the borders of Wales. This revival coincided with, and was no doubt partly the result of, the renaissance of Welsh education generally. Under the leadership of such men as Sir John Rhys and the Rev. Hawker Hughes the College, during the last fifty years, has enjoyed a largely increased prosperity—not material merely, but markedly intellectual. At the present time its reputation is high in almost every branch of University life, and, assured of a continuous supply of good men, athletes as well as students, it can be relied upon to hold its own with any of its sister Colleges in Oxford.

A. M. D.



JESUS COLLEGE OXFORD

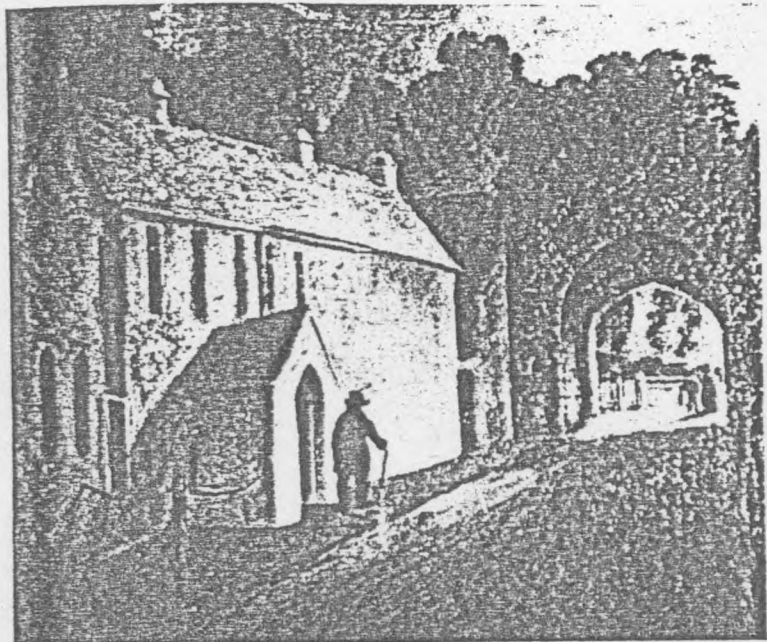




Sir Leoline Jenkins (1624?-1685).
(from a contemporary painting)



Rev. Daniel Durel, Master, 1721-1763
(copy at the School of a contemporary miniature)



Part of the original School buildings, 1609-1847, with Cowbridge South Gate (detail of anonymous nineteenth century painting at the School)

Print, c. 1860, showing the present School House, erected 1847-1852, on the site of the earlier buildings



JESUS COLLEGE

JESUS COLLEGE stands in the very heart of Oxford. Its buildings reflect the gradual growth of the College from its foundation to the present day. The College has had valued links with Wales since it was founded in 1571 by Queen Elizabeth I at the request of Dr. Hugh Price, Treasurer of St. David's. The Queen made the College a grant of land to which Price added a further area, and here were erected the original buildings of the College which survive as the east and part of the south sides of its first quadrangle. Building proceeded intermittently throughout the seventeenth century to complete the two main quadrangles. There followed a long lull in major building, although the appearance of the College was much altered by the addition of battlements in the Old Quadrangle, and again, about the middle of the nineteenth century, by the re-styling of the frontage and the building of the tower. In the first decade of the present century, a third quadrangle was created by the erection of a new building incorporating an undergraduate library and the Leoline Jenkins Laboratory which, when it was closed in 1947, had survived longer than any other college laboratory in Oxford. Since World War II, recognizing both the overall growth and changing composition of the student population, the College has built a block of flats for married graduates on a site adjoining the College playing fields, and, more recently, with the aid of generous support from its Old Members, has increased undergraduate accommodation within the curtilage of the College by the erection of a new building to complete and enhance the appearance of the third quadrangle. The latest undertaking has been the building of Stevens Close, a substantial block of flats in north Oxford no more than a mile from the College. With interior design of sufficient flexibility to accommodate single students, married students with children, or Fellows and their families, this notable building makes it possible for the College to house more than two-thirds of its undergraduate and graduate members, giving every undergraduate who so wishes the opportunity to reside in a college building for at least two years of his or her time at Oxford.

Jesus is a relatively small college, and is bound to remain so, hemmed in as it is on three sides by streets and on the fourth by commercial properties. But what its buildings lack in size they more than make up for in harmony of style; and indeed its inner quadrangle is outstanding for its fine proportions and almost perfect symmetry.



Jesus College
Oxford

Vouvray 1980

Vieux Chateau
Pelletan 1970

Quinta do Noval 1963

SIR LEOLINE JENKINS MEMORIAL DINNER

Thursday, 27th June 1985

Salmon Mousse with Prawns

Cream Pondicherry

Roast Duck with Plum Sauce
New Potatoes
Cauliflower with Almonds
Fine Beans

Strawberries and Cream

Dessert

Coffee
