Lotus Eating in England

There Study, Seeped in Romance and History, Is Delightful

By Agnes Berrigan, '13, English Professor, A. & M. College

HEN one has studied in three of the English universities one's loyalties are saucy, unwise. To write an account, then, of my experiences in these three places makes me feel much like the hero of Stephen Leacock's nonsense novel, who got on his horse and rode wildly about in all directions. While the University of London has not the traditions and associations, nor the charm of background and living which make Oxford and Cambridge like no other schools in the world, its advantages lie mainly in the city, London. The British Museum, the great galleries, music, theaters, and London streets all go to make up for the unique charm of each of the others.

Oxford is the most beautiful. I do not believe there has ever been a description written that has done justice to its beauty—to its quadrangles, quiet gardens with pools and swans and flowers, the grey stone buildings with their window boxes filled with pink geraniums and daisies, the glimpses one gets of towers and silver tipped trees over college walls as one comes down the winding little medieval streets on a cloudy night when every few moments the moon comes out and then goes under a cloud; the scent of the gardens in the summer, the moonlight, the sound of the waters of the river as if it were the river of years. There study, seeped in Romance and History, is delightful. If the great Victorians—Carlyle, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Morris—by contemporaries of those men. They were filled with many interesting personal reminiscences. Wyatt, the translator of Beowulf, who worked for several years with Morris, told us, among other things, of an evening party at Morris's home with Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and a number of others, when Morris came in from the kitchen waving an onion in his hand and shouting, "Thank God, for making anything so strong as an onion!" I was much more interested, however, in the way in which many of the brilliant younger men were going back to the Victorian thinking, saying that in many respects their thinking which we have thought rather out of date, is coming back into life with startling vitality. The finest lecturer I believe I have ever heard was one of these, Sir Michael Sadleir, in a series of lectures on Trollope and Victorian life.

The University of London misses much of the charm of living which in both Oxford and Cambridge makes one wonder at times why any one does any really hard work at all. Life, however, in a Bloomsbury boarding house with French, Russian, German, Polish, Austrian, English, Scotch Irish, and American students offers a variety of interest that partly makes up for this. But it is in the opportunities offered by the British Museum library, where every courtesy and every help is at the disposal of the students, the great galleries where if one is, for instance, an American student who wants, and this can be supplemented by work in the great galleries. I have

(Turn to page 142, please)
Lotus Eating in England  
(Continued from page 116)  
seen professors with a whole class spending an entire day in the National galleries making a careful study of some of the Turners mentioned by Ruskin in his Modern Painters. In working on William Morris myself, I have had opportunities to see his stained glass windows, his tapestries, and many copies of his fine printing and binding.

In addition to this the streets of London with their hundreds of literary memories were endlessly fascinating; the West End, and Mayfair with so much of the flavor of Thackeray still left, the embankment and dozens of little side streets where Dickens characters may be seen, and Islington and Clerkenwell, on the edge of London's terrible slums, where in walking evening after evening I have seen Gissing's novels come alive as they can in no other way. Then, too, it is surprisingly easy to get out of London into the country side. Tramping through the lanes around Horton last summer with the hedges covered with pink and white hawthorn and the first wild roses gave an added pleasure to L'Allegro and Tasso. And week ends in Bath or the Lake country or the legend-haunted coast of Cornwall at Tintagel or Tramping around Tintern Abbey all add to the delight of English study.

I should not like to end without some reference to the friendliness and genuine hospitality that we found everywhere. We had invitations to English homes in town and in the country, teas, and dinners, and dances through the English Speaking Union and the American University Union; opportunities to see pictures and books in private homes and libraries, chances to meet men like Shaw, for instance, even though as in this case I was too overwhelmed to do much more than bow. All of this was given us with a friendliness that I shall never forget.

England's climate has a bad reputation, but even at the risk of appearing to have come back with no powers of discrimination, I venture to say that the English climate is an advantage. Most of the winter it is so "disgusting," as I heard a French girl say, that the pleasantest thing in the world is to stay in doors and read, and if it weren't for the rain and fog, I do not believe an English tea table with candles and silver before a crackling open fire with rain beating against the windows would be such an ideal place for good talk, where afternoon after afternoon at the end of a day's work we could exchange opinions on every possible subject with every possible sort of person. An English boy who had part of his training in one of our big universities summed up much of the difference between the schools of the two countries, when he said, "The American university puts it all over us when it comes to the Science of Living, but I believe that we still beat them when it comes to the Art of Living."

Union Nearly Ready  
(Continued from page 115)  
steam cookers and immense ranges complete the kitchen. That the kitchen is prepared to care for large numbers is shown in its roasters which will cook seventeen hams at one time. All vegetables are steam cooked and all salads are prepared by special cooks in their own division of the kitchen.

On the first floor in the north wing are the offices of the University of Oklahoma Association and The Sooner Magazine and of the manager, Mr. Graham. The game room, or card room, is being completed with temporary fixtures. It is to have besides the couches and chairs, eighteen all-metal card tables. The walls will remain unfinished but the room will be open for use because of the need for a men's lounge. In the south wing, which will eventually be the women's lounge and reading room, the walls will be paneled in wood. These rooms will remain unfinished and unopened since the women students have parlors in the women's building.

The second floor is occupied by a check room and offices for the presidents of the student council and union. There is one main office which contains eight desks, and opening off of it are two conference rooms. Across the hall, two rooms, which can be made into four sections, are for student organization meetings. Another larger room, known as the assembly room, seats about 150 and will care for larger group meetings such as those of the pep clubs, Indian club and honorary organizations.

The entire north wing of the second and third floors is devoted to the impressive new ballroom. The room is doubly attractive because of its many tall windows and high vaulted roof. Twelve elaborate chandeliers hang from the ceiling representing an expenditure of $30,000, and a large crystal ball is suspended in the center. The stage which will serve the orchestra has at each side balconies which will be nicely furnished with lounges and bridge tables for the chaperones. Under these balconies are two rooms, one a girls' sitting room, and the other a serving room with a dumb waiter in connection with the kitchen. The latter will make it possible to use the ballroom for banquets. The walls are ivory with the decorations sky-lighted in gold. Much of the trimming is of imitation Caen stones.