

23 JUN 1925

THE MAY TERM AT
CAMBRIDGE.RESTORING THE SENATE'S
AUTHORITY.

(From our University Correspondent.)

Full term came to an end on Thursday, June 11, but the May term never really stops till ten days or a fortnight after its nominal close. The festivities of May Week start in the closing days of full term with the races, the A.D.C., and the footlights, but the river grows more exciting every night till the climax of Saturday, and the last nights of the two dramatic shows are on Saturday and Monday respectively. Concerts and balls begin only as term ends, and last till the small hours of the following Thursday. For three days after that we are still enlivened by the soberer interest of tripos results, culminating in the great shower of Saturday morning, which plunges college councils and University boards into the task of awarding scholarships and studentships. To-day sees the grand finale of the academic year, the general admission to degrees, after which Cambridge will slumber in peace till the long vacation term starts its quiet course in July.

Few May terms can have closed more sadly than this. By the Master of Magdalene's death Cambridge has sustained a blow which it is still difficult to realise. Enough has been written elsewhere of his many services to his College and to the University: great as these were, we lament, above all, the loss of a powerful and charming personality whose very presence was of inestimable value to Cambridge life.

A Transition Time.

When the past term is surveyed as a whole it does not present many features of outstanding interest. It is significant that nothing looms so large as the trivial motor controversy, now temporarily closed. This is a moment of transition. The Statutory Commission are nearing the close of their labours, and it is becoming possible to visualise the new Cambridge which will ultimately emerge; but it is still difficult to foresee how the new laws will work in practice, and the year closes in an atmosphere of rather uncomfortable expectancy. In particular, the finance of the new system of faculties, which transfers most of the payment for teaching from the colleges to the University, is a matter full of obscurities; and the enforcement of the eleemosynary principle in the awarding of scholarships is a reform whose effects are awaited with some uneasiness, especially in the smaller colleges.

The Statutory Commission have recently made a very important announcement concerning the government of the University. The Royal Commission recommended a system resembling that established on a larger stage by the Parliament Act: they proposed that in all matters of importance the last word should lie not (as hitherto) with the Senate as a whole, but with a new House of Residents, though the Senate could exert a temporary veto and could compel reconsideration. Thus, for example, the admission of women to full membership of the University could have been carried in the end by a bare majority of resident votes against a senatorial majority, however large. The Royal Commission's proposal met with great opposition, and the Statutory Commission have now gone far towards restoring the Senate's authority. A majority of two-thirds of the total membership of the House of Residents (now called, by a pleasant revival, the Regents' House) will still be decisive, for no appeal can be made to the Senate unless one-third of the members of the Regents' House sign a memorial within fourteen days. But where this necessary proportion demand an appeal the ultimate decision will be transferred to the Senate. To reverse the Regents' decision, however, it will be necessary that the proportion of *non-placets* to the total votes cast shall be greater in the Senate than was the proportion of *placets* to the total votes cast in the Regents' House. This ingenious compromise looks so fair that those unacquainted with the University may learn with surprise that reformers have greeted it with a sigh of despair.

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There have been few notable changes among the holders of prominent university or college posts since the welcome appointment of Sir Humphrey Rolleston as Regius Professor of Physic: but the resignation by Dr. Keynes of the office of Registrar of the University must not be passed in silence. Dr. Keynes has been faced with conditions of unusual novelty and complexity, especially in the period after the Armistice and during the activities of the Commissions. His unfailing skill, tact, and patience have greatly eased the difficulties of these times of transition, and he carries with him into retirement the affection and respect of the whole University. The Council have nominated as his successor Mr. E. Harrison, of Trinity; an admirable scholar and excellent administrator, whose services to his College resemble those of Dr. Keynes to the University.

The Girton Headship.

Except Magdalene, none of the men's colleges have lost their Heads during the past term, but Miss Phillpotts has resigned, for domestic reasons, her post as Mistress of Girton, and Miss Major has been appointed to succeed her. As a member of the Statutory Commission Miss Phillpotts has been associated to an unusual degree with the life of the University. Her brief headship of Girton has been conspicuously successful, and her departure will be universally regretted. We can only hope that, while Cambridge loses, Scandinavian scholarship will gain. A notable function of the term was the dinner in honour of Dr. Haddon, whose services to Anthropology need no comment here. A pleasant garden party at Christ's gave many guests the chance of an early view of Mr. Laszlo's vigorous portraits of Dr. Haddon.

The term closed with a spell of perfect May Week weather. The races were unusually interesting, and no contest so exciting as that between Jesus and First Trinity for the headship of the river has been seen for many years. At the theatres the extraordinary success of "Beaux' Stratagem" has again justified the A.D.C.'s policy of refusing to play down to the supposed tastes of a May Week audience. The Footlights' revue, "All the Vogue," reached the usual high level of technical excellence, and

was frequently very amusing: some notable talent had been borrowed from the A.D.C., especially the feminine brilliance of Mr. Beaton.

Lastly, a word must be said of a very successful luncheon given on June 11, in the Old Combination Room of Trinity College, to Mr. G. David by his friends and admirers. Mr. David's bookstall in the Market Square has for years been a unique intellectual centre, and the news of this act of recognition will be welcomed by many generations of Cambridge book-lovers.