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As an early student at Newnham College and subsequently as the wife of John Neville Keynes, Florence Ada Keynes (née Brown, (1861–1958) spent her entire adult life living in Cambridge. A prominent public figure, active in charity work and public service, she became the first female councillor of the city and served as its Mayor in 1932. This charming little book was published when she was 86 years old. It displays her wide knowledge and love of the city of Cambridge, with engaging essays on Barnwell Priory, the history of the old Market Cross and Conduit and of town planning and social housing in Cambridge. Keynes tells of famous personalities from the city's past, such as the seventeenth-century philosopher Damaris Cudworth and the composer Orlando Gibbons, and recounts more personal memories of the changes her generation lived through, making this a valuable record of her own life.

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Remnants of history which have casually
escaped the shipwreck of Time.

FRANCIS BACON: *The Advancement of Learning*

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Plate I. Petty Cury, by J. M. Ince, 1838
Published in *Cambridge Portfolio*, 1840

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BY-WAYS OF CAMBRIDGE HISTORY

By

F. A. KEYNES

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PREFACE

It has not been possible to mention in the text or the footnotes all the references to the Charters edited by Professor Maitland and Miss Mary Bateson; to the Annals compiled by Mr C. H. Cooper, formerly Town Clerk; to the works of Mr J. W. Clark (including the Clark collection of papers in the University Library); and to the valuable publications of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Access to the Minutes of the Cambridge Improved Industrial Dwellings Co. (Chap. VIII) was obtained by the courtesy of the late Mr A. B. Chater, Secretary to the Company, and permission to incorporate (Chap. III) an article on the 'Origin and Early Years of Orlando Gibbons', which appeared in the *Monthly Musical Record*, October 1936, has been kindly granted by Messrs Augener Ltd.

I am further indebted to many friends for assistance in various ways. Special thanks are due to Mr J. H. Bullock, a life-long student of Cambridge history and topography, to Dr Helen Cam, and to the Town Clerks of the Boroughs mentioned.

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INTRODUCTORY

It is rash for an amateur to venture upon a field of inquiry long and thoroughly worked by experts. The only excuse I can offer for presuming to write on a quasi-historical subject, lies in the hope that I may succeed in interesting some of those who share my love of Cambridge and desire to know more of her past without having the time or the opportunity to consult authorities for themselves.

My own interest is of long-standing. I came to live in Cambridge on my marriage sixty-four years ago, having been before that time one of the early students at Newnham, then a Hall of residence with rooms for about thirty. Those early students, many of them of mature age, pursued their studies under the more than maternal eye of Miss Anne Jemima Clough. Their kind friends in Cambridge, with Henry Sidgwick as leader, who were deeply interested in providing opportunities for women to obtain University education, were naturally anxious as to the impression they would make in a community where there were many critics. If the movement was to succeed, it must be very cautiously introduced and carefully guided. The task was not an easy one, but if the more emancipated spirits were sometimes irked by restrictions which seemed tiresome and unnecessary, the situation was in the main accepted cheerfully, and it was recognized that the advantages far outweighed the disabilities.

The desire of our Principal, Miss Clough, to whom we owed so much, was that we should be as inconspicuous as

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possible not only in behaviour but also in appearance, in order not to alarm the doubters—and here some difference of opinion arose. A period of dreary dowdiness in clothing and house decoration had persisted through the seventies, but towards the end of the decade reaction came in a riot of colour, 'when the shining morning of the Pre-Raphael Brotherhood dawned upon middle-class comfort'. Rossetti was painting women—or one woman, his wife—with burnished red-gold hair, clothed in purple and blue. Burne-Jones drew willowy forms clad in rainbow hues, William Morris wove textiles rampant in design;[1] dyers dipped silk and wool in all the Pre-Raphaelite tinctures. Newnham caught the fever. We trailed about in clinging robes of peacock blue, terra-cotta red, sage green or orange, feeling very brave and thoroughly enjoying the sensation it caused. Poor Miss Clough! Her students were the observed of all observers.

Fortunately, the fine efforts of the educationalists did not end in fiasco. Newnham calmed down and the good sound work done in the budding college bore fruit.

The pioneers into whose company I was admitted included outstanding personalities: Jane Harrison, the Greek

[1] When I married I clothed my house in Morris wall-paper, which still remains in my dining-room in very decent condition.

Interest in the Pre-Raphaelites seems to be reviving. The Poet Laureate has published an elaborate analysis of some of Rossetti's poems; a learned American interpretation of *William Morris, Medievalist and Revolutionary* has appeared, of which a reviewer says: 'The ghost of William Morris may feel a little uneasy in that new and highly industrialised country, but he will awake one day to find himself all the rage, the saint of a new aesthetic religion, with robes and stained glass windows already designed.' *Observer*, 19 May 1946.

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Plate II. Miss Clough and the writer, 1880

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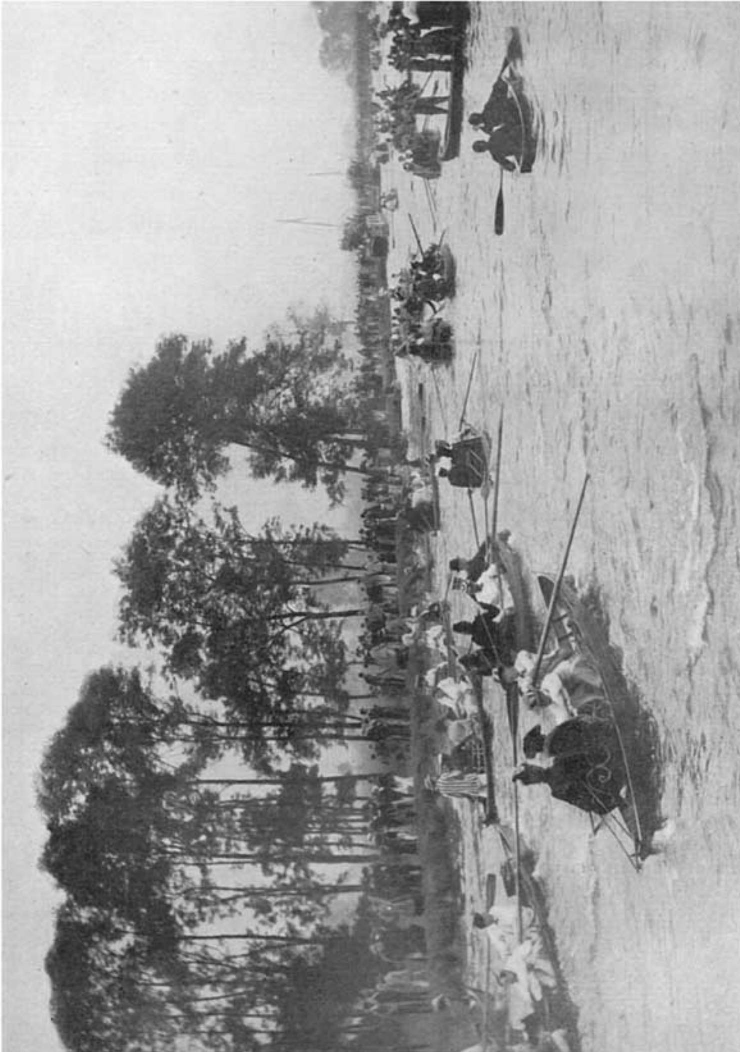

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(*See* p. xx)

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scholar; Penelope Lawrence, founder of Roedean School; Helen Gladstone, later a Vice-Principal; Margaret Merrifield, a College lecturer, long known in Cambridge as the wife and helper of Dr Verrall; Mary Martin, full of Irish wit and enthusiasm, who became the wife of the philosopher, James Ward; Alice Werner, the expert in African languages, of whom it used to be said that she alone of Europeans could produce the authentic 'click'; and many others who in their subsequent careers paved the way for further advances in the higher education and professional advancement of women. They builded better than they knew, and their dreams certainly did not include a vision of Newnham providing Professors for the University—although still standing outside full membership of that body.

It was the age of chaperones. Miss Helen Gladstone had a special joke that I, being the youngest of the students, should be the official chaperone. Miss Clough, however, did not regard me in that light, and I, having gone inadvertently with a family friend to her brother's rooms in College, was in deep disgrace. Somehow such lapses never failed to come to our Principal's ears. The chaperone system survived in full strength in the women's colleges for a long period, as it did indeed in general society. I remember hearing how my husband, then a young lecturer, went to coach at Girton in the middle seventies, and was taken aback to find the Mistress of the College, complete with knitting needles, installed in the room to watch over his staid pupil, senior to himself, and who eventually became Mistress of the College.

An important stage for women students in Cambridge

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was reached in 1881, and great was the excitement when a Grace was passed, by 398 votes to 32, admitting women to Tripos examinations formally, as of right, instead of by favour of the examiners. A Newnham student wrote a lively description of the event to her family, telling how Miss Helen Gladstone, then in residence, telegraphed to her father and got a special train put on, so that members of parliament could come to vote and return in time for an important division in the House of Commons; how the Senate House was so crowded that since the vote had to be given sitting, Masters of Arts queued up for seats; how the good news of victory was signalled by flags and handkerchiefs to a student on horseback waiting at the Backs. The writer ended with the words: 'When women get degrees, it will be nothing to this, we all feel it is the great crisis in the history of women's Colleges.'

In 1882 I joined the ranks of residents in the town; it was at a moment when University society was suddenly transformed by the new Statutes which gave general permission to Fellows of Colleges to retain their Fellowships after marriage.

This great change was the end of a long controversy which can perhaps be traced back to the question of the celibacy of the clergy. Queen Elizabeth disliked the freedom given them for marriage at the Reformation, and in 1559 decreed that no Head of a College should marry without the approval of the Visitor of the College, normally a Bishop, and that no priest or deacon should marry unless his future wife had been approved by the Bishop of the Diocese and two Justices of the same shire.

In 1776 there was an ineffectual attempt to obtain a

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Grace of the Senate for appointing a syndicate to petition Parliament that Fellows should not lose their Fellowships on marriage. The Rev. William Cole, in his account of the proceedings, says:

> There were those who would not believe it was or could be intended in earnest; who imagined it must be a jest only. However, the projectors and abettors of the scheme were in earnest. Accordingly a Grace was drawn up and brought into the House.

The original mover withdrew and 'there was the greatest confusion imaginable, but this excited and heightened the warmth and ardour of the partisans. Nothing was determined at the Congregation. But', Cole adds, 'the party continues hot, and is in hopes of downing to the ground with Celibacy.' After another vain attempt in 1798 there was in the course of last century some slight relaxation of the rule of celibacy in two or three of the colleges in varying degree, but nothing comprehensive until the Statutes of 1882. This change, which came just too late to allow my husband to keep his Fellowship at Pembroke, was inevitable if Cambridge was to attract and keep the services of scientists, who were required in increasing numbers, and who had no such resource as the earlier type of don, usually in holy orders, who could take a college living if he wished to marry; it was part of the general adaptation of the University to modern conditions. Thus Cambridge became a place where women could be educated and men could be married, and the results have not seldom been combined. Many children were brought up together in the first generation of University

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offspring, a small fresh society where we all knew one another.

Social life still had much of the formality typical of Victorian days, especially emphasized perhaps in University circles where order of precedence was a ruling feature. Before the influx of new life in 1882, few had been admitted into the inner circle beyond Heads of Houses and Professors with their ladies. The young brides were, however, received hospitably and formal dinner parties were graced by them one at a time in turn, sometimes to their embarrassment. Etiquette demanded that the bride should appear in her bridal gown and be taken in to dinner by the host. For this occasion only, she was the leading lady; she had to be on the alert to catch the hostess's eye when the suitable moment came for the ladies to withdraw, and hers it was to rise and precede the train of stately dowagers into the withdrawing-room.

When it became her duty to return this hospitality, it was a real puzzle not only to provide the seven or eight courses of the dinner but also to arrange the guests at table in proper order. The husband usually had to solve the problem by explaining exactly how the expected guests would walk in an official procession.

For the children of the house, when they were old enough to escape from the night nursery and lie in ambush on the stairs, it was all great fun. The waiters, a kindly set of men with children of their own, willingly paid toll and the melting ice-bomb speedily disappeared.

What did Cambridge look like then? Approach was by rail; there was little or no road-travel, which then seemed to be a thing of the past, not of the future. First

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impressions were therefore given by the Station which had been opened in 1845, and in a publication of that date was described as follows:

> The entire structure is extremely chaste and elegant in its proportions and remarkable for the convenience of its arrangements. The details are characterised by bold cornices and mouldings, and by an extreme simplicity of ornamental enrichment.

A description at the present time would probably be less eulogistic.

The distance from this impressive structure to the centre of the Town was covered by a one-horse tram. It was a slow journey, and if undertaken now in the same way would give time for noticing the changes. The famous landmark of the Roman Catholic Church built by Mrs Lyne Stephens was not yet there, the site given by the fifteenth Duke of Norfolk being occupied by a house surrounded by a brick wall overhung with lilac bushes. A magnificent poplar, which long survived in a mutilated form, was then in its glory at the corner of Lensfield Road. On the other side of the Hills Road there was no Perse School; it was then in Free School Lane.

In St Andrew's Street there was no imposing Police Station. On part of its present site there was Hobson's Spinning House, where disorderly women were taken by the proctors and detained—a system which continued until 1894. Next came the Baptist Chapel, then a plain oblong building standing back from the road, with no windows to the front, a precaution said to have been taken from fear that they might be the subject of attack by undergraduates.

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In the Cury there were still some finely decorated houses, and Falcon Yard was surrounded by the wooden galleries and stairs that had survived with little change for centuries.

Downing Street must be imagined as denuded of its scientific buildings, with the exception of the Natural History Museum on the old site of the Physic Garden, and with the iron gates of the garden still standing. Those gates now form the Trumpington Road entrance to the Botanic Garden. On the other side of Downing Street, there was an open view through Downing College grounds to Lensfield Road.

Harvey Road, which is still our home, was named, in the praiseworthy Cambridge fashion of commemorating great men, after William Harvey, whom our children firmly believed to have devised the circulation of the blood. My impression is that when I first saw the road, before our house was built, it was a private road, with iron gates across the entrance. The land then was, and still is, the property of Caius College, part of the territory marked off as belonging to the College by the award of 1807 when the open fields of Barnwell,[1] in which the College had a share, were enclosed. One of the allotments made to the College under this scheme consisted roughly of the land now bounded by Gonville Place, Hills Road, St Paul's Road, and Gresham Road, and since the original holding had come to the College from the Mortimers of Newnham and Attleborough, their property was still known as Mortimer's Dole, or share.

[1] See also 'Barnwell Priory', Ch. IV, p. 106.

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The houses, which were built in Harvey Road about 1882, and did something towards meeting the needs of the newly married dons, were still very much in the 'open fields'. My children looked from their nursery window across 'Bulman's field', where the drovers kept their cattle over the week-end, ready for the Monday market, and the lowing of the cows was a familiar sound. With the exception of the houses in Station Road there was, indeed, little or nothing between us and the Gogs. Roads were of the old macadamized sort, and after wet weather great pools of liquid mud were swept to the sides of the road, while in dry weather the dust was intolerable, despite an occasional sprinkling by a water-cart.

Cambridge was not only without motor vehicles, but practically without bicycles. The only type then in use was the old high machine, rarely seen in the town, with a front wheel sometimes measuring five feet in height.[1] 'Safety' bicycles, invented in 1876, were first marketed in practicable form in 1885; pneumatic tyres were not attained until 1889, and free-wheels in 1894.

In the eighties and nineties, May week visitors made more mark than now, and the May Races created a more general flutter. Going down to Ditton in a car or on bicycles is a far less important event than making up a party, engaging a suitable rowing-boat, securing stalwart undergraduates to row, packing tea-apparatus, and making an early start to the boating sheds in a horse-drawn carriage, in order to obtain a good place at Ditton Corner.

[1] The bicycle in its first form was invented in 1839 by Kirkpatrick Macmillan, a Scots blacksmith, known as 'The Devil on Wheels'. It has been estimated that at least seventy million bicycles are now in use.

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The return journey was equally thrilling—the river solid with boats, the scramble to get out first from the moorings, the risk of having the rudder removed, the splashing of the Cam water over summer gowns, pushing off other boats and scoring off them, avoiding the returning 'eights', and the triumph of landing in time to get to a College Concert or Supper-party.

Large barges with a covered saloon in the centre providing elevated seats on the top were popular for large parties. These were horse-drawn, and when the rope sagged—at Barnwell Pool, for instance—children were in peril of being caught and dragged into the Cam, as sometimes actually happened.

The river was crossed here and there by a 'grind', a wooden platform drawn by an iron chain, which with much jerking and groaning was worked from the bank by a hand-crank—in one instance by a horse. At the end of a race there would be a rush of spectators from the tow-path to the meadows, and I remember an occasion when a serious-minded individual wishing to cross in the opposite direction was repeatedly thwarted by the crowd when he tried to land and driven back to the other side.

The most rapid means of conveyance was by hansom cab, a lightly built cabriolet for two passengers. The driver sat on a high perch behind the cab, with the reins passing over the top; the only way of communicating with him was by pushing open a small trap-door in the roof. The horse used in a hansom was usually a throw-out from Newmarket, sometimes one past racing, sometimes a comparative youngster who had not realized the owner's hopes. In either case the pace was prodigious and could

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not quickly be checked by the driver. This was a serious danger when these cabs came racing recklessly along Hills Road to the Station.

The recreations and excitements of last century may seem tame to the present generation, but the young people had their thrills, though they knew nothing of pace as it is reckoned now, and nothing of many other things—good and bad—that are commonplaces to-day. We could say even then—like two old Cambridgeshire countrymen, whose talk I overheard in a train—'Lots of things have come about since we've been about.'

From my earliest days in Cambridge, I felt the spell that the Town casts over so many of her citizens, and by the time my children passed out of the nursery stage, I was ready to take a share in work for the community. The following chapters, with few exceptions, took form during the long period when I was in close contact with local activities; the subjects, though appearing detached, meet at various points and even occasionally overlap, while emphasizing one aspect or another of the Cambridge background.

The chapter on Mendicity House (Chap. VIII) might have been used as an introduction, since it was drawn up for the Cambridge Central Aid Society (formerly the Charity Organization Society, inaugurated in Cambridge by Dr Henry Sidgwick), to which I owed an intimate acquaintance with the borough dating from the early nineties. This knowledge of local conditions provided a basis for many years of work with the Poor Law from 1907, when a seat on the Board of Guardians was regarded as hardly suitable for a woman, until its transformation

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into Public Assistance in 1930—having taken my turn as Chairman of the Board.

My membership of the Borough Council began in August 1914, when an Act of Parliament made it possible for married women to become candidates for seats on County and Borough Councils. The position had previously been strangely anomalous, since married women could not be councillors or aldermen of a county council (other than that of London) or of a municipal borough council (except a metropolitan borough), whereas unmarried women could be. The change was brought about by placing qualification of candidates upon twelve months' residence for men and women alike, instead of restricting it to householders. In the eye of the law, no married woman could qualify as a householder, with the result that only a comparatively small number of spinsters and widows had been eligible.

Further barriers were removed at the end of the War of 1914–18, with the admission of women to legal appointments, and Cambridge took the lead with a larger number of women magistrates than any other borough in the first list in 1920. My interest in the work of the bench was increased by chairmanship for many years of a committee in London of the National Council of Women of Great Britain—a committee which was attended by women magistrates from all parts of the country.

The claims of Cambridge as my main interest were, however, never weakened, and with 1932—our Golden Wedding year—came election to the Mayoralty of the Borough. During my Mayoral year there happened to be an unusually large number of national and international

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conferences meeting in Cambridge. We had, for instance, the pleasure of receiving the Royal Institute of British Architects with Sir Raymond Unwin as President, the first visit of the Institute to Cambridge, followed by the conference of the Transport and General Workers' Union, when Mr Ernest Bevin was present as General Secretary. There were many others.

It was in connexion with one of the international conferences, the International Society for Musical Research, of which Professor E. J. Dent was President, that my attention was first directed to Orlando Gibbons. I was about to claim him—in an address to the Conference—as a native of Cambridge, when I was warned that this was a controversial subject.

A few weeks later it was my privilege as Mayor to accompany to Oxford those members of the Corporation, who were enthusiastic players of the historic game of bowls, to meet like-minded enthusiasts from Oxford City Council in an annual competition. It was a blazing afternoon in August, and after having made a deplorably bad opening for my side on the bowling green, I took refuge in a cooler interlude of research. Then it was that I saw the entry of the baptism of Orlando Gybbins (*sic*) on Christmas Day 1583, marked with a small cross in red ink. It would be interesting to know if the mark was placed there by Anthony Wood, the first to notice it. When I found time to investigate the question further, some of my results were published in an article in the *Monthly Musical Record* for October 1936. To this has now been added a general survey of Cambridge Waits (Ch. III).

Damaris Cudworth (Ch. VI) was brought to my notice

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by Mrs Graham Wallas, in her book *Before the Bluestockings*, and it seemed worth while to collect more information about this outstanding Cambridge woman. Part of this chapter was published in the local *Public Library Record* in December 1932.

Town and Country planning was frequently under discussion, and in *The Times* notice in 1936 of the bicentenary of Hawksmoor's death there was a reference to his Town Plan for Cambridge (Ch. VII) that led to a search in the British Museum. Quite recently, through the courtesy of the Keeper of the Map Room and the Librarian of the National Library of Wales, a photograph of the plan has been obtained, the original having been placed in safe custody at Aberystwyth during the war.

At the termination of my year as Mayor, the chairmanship of the committee charged with carrying out the decisions of the Council for building a new Guildhall fell to me, and it was in the course of this lengthy undertaking that the history of the Guildhall and Market Place (Ch. I) emerged as an agreeable diversion.

With increased leisure, after retiring from many public engagements just before the outbreak of the War of 1939–45, I found great pleasure in the development of the Cambridge and County Folk Museum. My special interest in Barnwell Priory (Ch. IV) naturally followed when the remaining available portion of the site of the Priory, together with the Old Abbey House, was presented by Lord Fairhaven to the Association, of which he was President, for the future home of an enlarged Folk Museum.

The inquiry into the history of the Office of High

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Plate IV. The last hansom cab in Cambridge

(*See* p. xx)

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