

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE ROYAL INJUNCTIONS OF 1535 TO THE
FOUNDATION OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

THE destinies of learning in England, in the year with CHAP. I. which the preceding volume closes, must have seemed to depend on the decisions of a single mind. It illustrates the completeness of the revolution that was impending in the domain both of letters and of belief, that it was the newly-elected chancellor of the university who sent his predecessor to the scaffold. Months before his purpose found its accomplishment on Tower Hill, an entry among Cromwell's private memoranda,—‘*Item*: when Master Fisher shall to his execution?’—had recorded his stern and relentless design.

Cromwell
elected
chancellor
of the
university.

Cambridge, by the general admission, had stood honourably by her late chancellor¹, but now that her generous patron was no more, the instinct of self-preservation became

¹ Fuller (ed. Prickett and Wright, p. 215) says that Fisher continued to be chancellor to ‘his last hour,’ that is, to June 22, 1535, and the lists which represent Cromwell as created chancellor in 1533 are certainly in error (see Cooper, *Annals*, i 371, note 5). ‘Had this,’ continues Fuller, ‘been imitated in after ages, Cambridge had not been charged with the suspicion of ingratitude, for deserting some of her patrons as soon

as greatness deserted them; as choosing not their persons but prosperity for her chancellor.’ Cromwell’s letter to the mayor and burgesses, in which he says, ‘Understanding that the body of that the universitie of Cambridge hath elected and chosen me to be their hed and chancelor,’ (printed without date in Cooper, *Annals*, i 372.) was probably written just before the commencement of the academic year 1535–6.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAP. I.

His claims to this distinction, as compared with those of preceding chancellors.

paramount. 'The university,' says Lloyd, 'made Cromwell chancellor to save itself.' Already Master of the Rolls, chancellor of the exchequer, and secretary of state, the signs of his growing power were such as none might safely disregard; although his claims, in other respects, might hardly have seemed to entitle him to this new distinction. Hitherto it had been deemed essential that the head of the university should have acquired a certain academic status or that he should represent the name and influence of some noble and powerful house. To the latter class belonged the Percys and the Fitz-Hughs; to the former, such men as Thomas Rotheram, who was not only the son of a knight but also a fellow of King's and at the time of his first election, in 1469, bishop of Rochester,—Thomas Cosyn (1490), master of Corpus,—and Thomas Ruthill (1503), the same whose incaution when lord keeper of the privy seal had betrayed to the royal eyes the record of his inordinate wealth, and who, at the time of his election, was archdeacon of Gloucester and in high repute at Oxford for his attainments in philosophy; Fisher, when already Margaret professor and master of Michaelhouse, had succeeded to the chancellorship and the bishopric of Rochester in the same year. Their newly-elected successor, on the other hand, was a man of humble origin,—according to common report, the son of a blacksmith,—and one whose early experiences had been gained in the licence of the camp rather than in the discipline of the schools. He seems first to have come prominently into public notice by his energy in carrying out Wolsey's plans for the suppression of the smaller monasteries and by the ability he evinced in the task of applying their revenues to the use of his patron's foundations at Oxford and Ipswich. But the prevalent impression of his character at this time appears to have been that of a clever and not very scrupulous adventurer in whom the king had recognised a fit instrument for his bold designs in asserting his independence of Rome.

Lukewarmness as a friend or a patron was not among

¹ *State Worthies*, p. 61.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Cromwell's defects, and already two of the most eminent Cambridge men of the day had reaped the advantage of his personal good will. Edward Fox, of King's College, of whose abilities he had already had personal experience as his coadjutor in the organisation of Wolsey's foundations, was raised in September to the see of Hereford, notwithstanding that he had been prominent among the opponents of the royal divorce; and Latimer, who was perhaps Cromwell's most trusted friend, succeeded a few weeks earlier to the bishopric of Worcester¹. They were both men well qualified for carrying out the work which Henry and his minister had in view. Fox's dexterity in debate and unrivalled oratorical powers had already, according to one writer, made him the 'wonder of the university'². His genius however inclined him rather to the stirring arena of political life, and before the end of the year he was on his way to Smalcald, together with Heath and Barnes, deputed to warn the assembled princes against the lures of both pope and emperor; while Latimer, a few months later, in his memorable sermons before Convocation, was making the ears of men tingle with his satire and denunciation of the old abuses and his stirring appeals for reform both in doctrine and practice.

CHAP. I.

His patronage of Latimer and Edward Fox.

The new chancellor's connexion with Cambridge was of but recent date,—apparently not earlier than the year 1532. At that time the chronic strife between university and town had risen to a point which led the former to make application to the Crown for assistance in the defence of its prescriptive rights, and Cromwell, then the royal secretary, had listened favourably to the petition. The university, to mark their sense of his good offices, had bestowed on him a complimentary pension for life, and two years later, on the decease of their high steward, lord Mountjoy (Erasmus's old pupil), had elected him to the vacant office. To the additional distinction now conferred upon him by his election to the dignity of chancellor, Cromwell responded by measures which afford a good illustration of his consummate skill and tact in winning popular support. The feud with the townspeople

¹ Cooper, *Athenae*, i 531.² Lloyd, *State Worthies*, p. 89.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

4

A.D. 1535 TO 1546.

CHAP. I.

had not been allayed, and it was foreseen that at next Sturbridge fair the fray between 'town' and 'gown' would probably assume serious dimensions. Another element had also been imported into the dispute. The jurisdiction of the two 'taxors' of the university, exercised throughout the year conjointly with two burgesses of the town, included a right of 'search of vitail' at the fair¹. The mayor and burgesses now boldly declared their intention of excluding the taxors from the fair and also of claiming exemption from taxation for certain articles of consumption. In other ways they had also thwarted the legitimate action of the university: they had failed to appear on the juries summoned to the two half-yearly assizes which the university was empowered to hold, and when appearing, under compulsion, had refused to convict offenders². Their malice, their subtrefuges, and their continual encroachments appear to have often tried the temper of the academic authorities to the utmost. "They are wonderfull maliciouse," wrote Ralph Aynsworth, proctor of the university and afterwards master of Peterhouse, nor does he hesitate to accuse them, in connexion with one particular suit, of "uncharitable lyes³."

Growing boldness of the town authorities.

However faint the interest that now attaches to the

¹ *Stat. Antiq.* lxx, lvi; *Documents*, i 349-50; Peacock, *Observations*, pp. 25-6. The real cause of the sore feeling between the town and the university at this period appears to have been the loss of trade to the town owing to the development of the college system. The colleges made and baked their own bread and brewed their own ale, and thus became independent of the town brewers and bakers. This appears very plainly from an appeal, addressed in 1532 to the lord chancellor of the realm and the chief justices by the mayor and burgesses of Cambridge, in which they urge that 'at the time of the said grants made to the university for the said assize of bread and ale, the substance and greatest part of the said university consisted in hostels, halls, and other small places ordained for students, which at that time were furnished of all

their bread and ale and other victual of the poor occupiers and inhabitants of the said town; now at this present time, the great substance and more part of the said university consisteth in colleges as well of old time as more lately builded, which by reason of their great riches, substance, and possessions wherewith they be endowed, been waxen so politic and dilligent that they have provided brew-houses and bakehouses of their own, and so at these days the more part of the said colleges do brew and bake in their own houses, by means whereof the officers of the said university give the less care and diligence to the true and just assize of bread and ale, but many times for lucre, meed, gifts and reward do suffer great misusage in that behalf.' Cooper, *Annals*, i 349.

² *Ibid.* i 372-3.

³ Lamb, *Documents*, p. 34.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

history of these local grievances, it is probable that as a ^{CHAP. I.} serious source of disquiet they were, for the time, more effective than either the Royal Injunctions or the Oath of Supremacy. In the preceding year, Dr Heynes, the vice-chancellor, had already addressed a letter to the university suggesting the imperative necessity of concerted action in defence of their privileges, and significantly adding, 'also I pray you remember that ye send letters to Mr Cromwell, thanking him for his goodness and to desyre him to conytynew¹.' It was this suggestion that the authorities now proceeded to carry out. In his interference on behalf of the body over which he had been elected to rule, Cromwell displayed his usual tact. Professedly the man of the popular party, he was anxious not to make enemies among the burgesses; but at the same time he was well aware that the announcement of his designs in connexion with the university would shortly try its loyalty and temper to the utmost, and that something must be done to win as far as possible the favour both of Catholic and Reformer in its midst. He had already, in conjunction with Sir Thomas Audley, lord chancellor of the realm, given the townsmen warning to keep the peace. This was shortly before the fair of 1535. On the fifth of the following September he issued another mandate to 'his loving friends' the mayor and burgesses, enjoining them to 'permit and suffer' the university 'to use and exercise their privileges' in the matters above described. On the 15th of October he reiterated these commands in somewhat more peremptory language: and on the 15th of December a fourth letter, after specifying certain direct violations of the law on the part of the town, concluded with the following menace: 'yet in cace prayer and gentle entreatie cannot pull and allure you away from the doing of wrong and injury, both to the king and his subjects, I will not fail to advance, to the uttermost of my power, justice, and to see punished with extremytie the interrupters thereof, to the example of other²'

¹ Cooper, *Annals*, i 367-8; Lamb, *Documents*, p. 35.

² *Ibid.* i 377-8.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAP. I.

A letter from the corporation to Cromwell, dated on Michaelmas Day in the following year, reveals another source of contention between the town and the university. It was customary for the newly-elected mayor to take a formal oath that it was his intention and wish to observe and enforce due consideration for the rights of the academic community. This oath the vice-chancellor claimed to administer in person. The burgesses now evaded the obligation under the pretext that it rested with Cromwell and the high steward of the town (then the Duke of Norfolk) to appoint the day for the administration of the oath. As however they had altogether omitted to communicate with either authority no day had been fixed, and they could only plead that this was the result of the negligence of the 'olde mayer,' who was 'so remysse in assembling his brithern to knowe their opynions and myndes in that behalf.'

Evasive conduct of the mayor and burgesses.

They put in counter allegations.

In the year 1537 we find the corporation assuming the aggressive, alleging 'a certain case of disorder and misdemeanour' done by the proctors' servants. The result of this indictment does not appear, but on the 15th of May a letter from Cromwell to the town authorities shews that his patience was wearing out before the interminable strife. He laments that 'no entreatie or good meane' can bring about peace between the two bodies, and intimates that it may be his duty to bring the 'perverse inclinacions' of the town under the notice of the king himself². Even this warning however seems to have produced but little effect, for at the ensuing Sturbridge fair the town element distinguished itself by a brutal assault on some members of the university and by other acts involving a breach of the peace. Another letter from Cromwell followed, purporting this time to have been written by the royal direction, wherein he laments that by their 'perverse doings' they should have shewn themselves 'so unkind' to him, 'contempning all my letters written unto you in the favor of the universite,' and enjoining, in his majesty's name, prompt submission and obedience.

¹ Cooper, *Annals*, I 384-5.

² *Ibid.* I 388.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

But still the obstinacy of the townsmen was unsubdued and they responded only by a series of plausible demurrers which roused the royal wrath to the highest pitch. A letter signed with the royal manual now appeared, enjoining instant compliance with the chancellor's commands, 'any contempt of which,' says the letter, 'we shall not fail to see so punished as it shall be heavy for the transgressors of the said commandment to bear it'.¹ The danger they had invited was now too obvious to admit of further trifling, and in their anxiety to escape the penalties that seemed imminent the burgesses resorted to the disingenuous expedient of bringing a series of counter-allegations against the university. Deputies were hastily despatched to Hampton Court there to confront the vice-chancellor and his proctors in the presence of the king and the lords of the Star Chamber. That they met with but indifferent success may be inferred from the brief but pithy comment that accompanies the entry of the expenses in the accounts of the treasurers of the town,—that 'all was lost as it fortuneth'.²

CHAP. I.

The royal
mandate.Final ex-
pedients
of the
townsmen.

In the meantime Cromwell's influence at Cambridge had made itself felt in another direction, and one much more closely concerning the university as a seat of learning. Both there and at Oxford it begun to be clearly discerned that his accession to power portended not merely reformation, but revolution. We have already seen³ how the Royal Injunctions had changed both the ecclesiastical allegiance and the studies of the university,—substituting homage to the Crown for the ancient homage to Rome, and altogether suppressing the faculty of the canon law⁴, enjoining the professors to discard the Sentences for the Bible, and making it lawful for all students to study the sacred volume in private, banishing the prolix commentators, and requiring the colleges to institute lectures in Greek, putting aside the scholastic interpreters of Aristotle and introducing in their place the more scientific

Further pro-
ceedings of
Cromwell
as Visitor.¹ Cooper, *Annals*, i 389–90.² *Ibid.* i 391.³ Vol. i p. 630.⁴ 'King Henry stung with the dilatory pleas of the canonists at

Rome in point of his marriage, did in revenge destroy their whole hive throughout his own universities.' Fuller (ed. Prickett and Wright), p. 225.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAP. I. and intelligent expositions of Rudolphus Agricola and Melanchthon, or the simpler manual of George of Trebizond. At the same time that these Royal Injunctions were promulgated, Cromwell had been appointed Visitor to the university¹, with plenary powers to act 'according to his discretion, judgment, and experience.' Burdened however as he was with pressing affairs of state, it was impossible for him personally to discharge the office, and he was accordingly content in turn to appoint a delegate. His selection could hardly have failed to give warning of his purpose. Among the royal commissioners most distinguished during the following three years by their zeal in the work of suppression and confiscation, five names are especially conspicuous, those of Dr London, Dr Tho. Leigh, Dr Richard Leighton, Dr Ap Rice, and Richard Thornton, the suffragan bishop of Dover. Among these five, Leigh and Leighton acquired an unenviable notoriety by their harsh severity². They had both been educated at Cambridge and had graduated in civil law³. Leighton, as we have already seen, was about this time busy in expelling the scholastic writers from Oxford, and we also find him acting as one of the commissioners sent to interrogate More and Fisher in the Tower⁴. Leigh had recently returned from a diplomatic mission to Flanders. It would probably be unjust to conclude that he was indifferent to learning, for about this very time he rendered kindly assistance to the eminent but unfortunate Leland, whom he may have personally known when the latter was at Christ's College⁵. But all accounts agree in representing him as a man of imperious nature and unyielding will. Even those with whom he was shortly after associated as their fellow-commissioner cried out against him. Ap Rice could not but note his 'satrapike countenance,' and declared that he was

The Royal Commission.

Dr Leigh.

¹ By the 20th clause of the Act of 1533 the right of visitation was transferred from the pope to the king, and Cromwell, as the royal deputy, was invested with plenary powers.

² 'The two most active and unpopular of the monastic visitors,'

Froude, *Hist. of England*, II 509.

³ Leighton was B.C.L. in 1522; Leigh in 1527, and D.C.L. in 1531. Cooper, *Athenae*, I 84, 87.

⁴ *State Papers*, I 431.

⁵ Leland proceeded B.A. in 1521-2; Cooper, *Athenae*, I 110.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE NEW INJUNCTIONS.

9

‘too insolent and pompatique.’ Leighton, of whom Leigh CHAP. I. complained as too lenient, retorted by asserting that Leigh was ‘overweeningly proud and conceited,’ and that he ‘used the monks with great severity’¹. Such was the man whom Cromwell, who never, as Fuller observes, ‘sent a slug on his errands,’ now deputed to act as his representative at Cambridge.

The university was not long left in suspense as to the character of the new commissioner’s instructions, and but a few days’ interval separated the Royal Injunctions from those of Cromwell’s surrogate. The latter open, it is true, with requirements of no alarming nature. Scholars are enjoined to observe the ‘statutes, constitutions, ordinances, and laudable customs’ of the university; factions, whether of counties or of colleges are bidden to compose their differences; heads and fellows are directed neither to sell fellowships nor to take money for the reception of scholars. Then however follows the main purpose of the missive: within less than four months from the issuing of these injunctions², the vice-chancellor and proctors and the heads of houses are commanded to deliver their respective ‘charters of foundation, donation, or appropriation, statutes, constitutions, pontifical bulls, and other diplomas and papistical muniments, with a full rental of their immoveable property and true inventory of their moveable goods into the hands of Master Thomas Cromwell or of his deputy for the purpose, to await his good pleasure.’

Dr Leigh’s
Injunctions:
Oct., 1535.

Surrender
of the
university
charters, etc.

Another requirement in the injunctions must be looked upon as of considerable importance, inasmuch as it represents the introduction of a new principle into university education. This is the injunction directing that the university shall institute and maintain, *at its own expense*, a public lecture in either Greek or Hebrew. The details of the directions sound somewhat strangely to modern ears, for not only is the lecturer required to be one known for his attainments and

Institution
of a univer-
sity lecture-
ship in
Greek or
Hebrew.

¹ Cooper, *Ibid.* i 536; Ellis’s *Orig. Letters* (3) ii 354; Wright, *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 57.

² ‘Before the Feast of the Purifi-

cation of the Blessed Mary then next;’ i. e. the 2nd of February, 1535.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00350-6 - The University of Cambridge: 1. From the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535, Volume 1

James Bass Mullinger

Excerpt

[More information](#)

10

A.D. 1535 TO 1546.

CHAP. I.

his rectitude of life, but he must also be willing to lecture 'purely, sincerely, and piously,' and without 'carnal affection' or any other 'unjust regard.'

Within one month, the whole university is commanded to assemble at St Mary's on the occasion of the celebration of high mass for the souls of the founders of the university and its halls and colleges, as well as 'for the most happy state of our lord the king and of the lady Anne, his lawful wife, queen of this realm, and for the utmost increase of their high honour under whose auspices the Christian faith again flourishes.'

Finally the head of each house is required to provide himself with a copy both of these and of the Royal Injunctions, and to cause them to be read monthly in his house to all the scholars, any one of whom, if desirous of transcribing them, is to be at full liberty to do so¹.

Importance
of the above
measures.

Fuller's estimate of the importance of these injunctions is probably marked by the fact that he gives them at full length in the original Latin. They involved indeed a complete surrender of the university and college property into the royal hands, and perhaps no better proof of the terrorism represented by the rule of Henry and his minister can be given than the fact that both at Cambridge and at Oxford (where like demands were made) they were received not only with prompt and unquestioning compliance, but even with professed satisfaction². Other signs were not wanting which plainly foreshadowed a policy that demanded for its execution bold, if not unscrupulous, hands. Hitherto it had been deemed a necessary qualification for the vice-chancellorship that the candidate for the office should have already been admitted D.D. When however the election for the year 1534-5 took place, John Crayford, master of Clare Hall,

Election of
Crayford to
the vice-
chancellor-
ship, 1534-5
and 1535-6.

¹ Fuller-Prickett & Wright, pp. 216-219.

² 'Also the hole universyte of Cambrgye be very joyful of your Injunctions, whiche saye that ther cam never un to the universyte so lawdable, so good, and godly a purpose for the common welthe of all

the students ther in, savyng iij or iiij of the Pharysayeall Pharysys, from whom that blyndenes that ys rotyd in them ys impossybyll, or ells very hard, to eradycate and plucke awaye. Yet they saye they will doo well.' *Ellis's Letters*, (3) ii 363.