

## THE KEDERMINSTER LIBRARY

BY

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As the Society's Trustee of the remarkable library of Sir John Kederminster at Langley Marish, I feel that some account of the work of restoration lately carried out should appear in the *Records*, and some note be made of the actual contents of the library, and the general circumstances of the Trust.

I ventured to make some remarks upon the library and a few of the better known volumes it contains before this Society in 1937,<sup>1</sup> because, apart from brief notices in our *Records* after visits of the Society to Langley in 1891, 1899, 1914 and 1935, and a short article by Mr. H. Avray Tipping in *Country Life*,<sup>2</sup> it is surprising to find that there is no really adequate account of the library room anywhere, and none at all on the volumes it houses. There is still no proper catalogue, though I have been at work on one for some time past. Lipscomb<sup>3</sup> gives a full account of the heraldry and latin inscriptions and texts in the pew and library, and of the symbolic figures painted flanking the heraldic pedigree on the overmantel of the fireplace. The Royal Commission's *Inventory*<sup>4</sup> briefly describes the panelling, etc., of the library with little detail and one or two inaccuracies. The *Victoria County History* likewise<sup>5</sup> has a summary of the main points; and there is my own note in the Pilgrim Trust Report.<sup>6</sup> A short and interesting contribution on the library appeared in the *Athenaeum* some years ago.<sup>7</sup>

The amount of confusion about the founding of the library and other points connected with it is extraordinary, at least half-a-dozen different dates between

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1 *Records* XIII, pt. 5, 369 et seq.

2 *Country Life*, 31st July 1909, illustrated.

3 Lipscomb, *History of Bucks.*, IV, 540-3.

4 *R.C.H.M.*, Bucks., I, 224-5.

5 *V.C.H.*, Bucks., III, 299.

6 *Pilgrim Trust*, 8th Ann. Report, 1938, 64-66, illustrated.

7 *Athenaeum*, 29th July, 1905, 145-6.

1600 and 1649 appearing in various sources. It may be well, therefore, to recapitulate the facts. Sir John Kederminster's Will is dated 22nd February 1631<sup>8</sup>, and in it is the clear statement that the library (building) is "already prepared and adjoined" to Langley Church: certain books were also there, and others in his private collection evidently earmarked; and on his death his wife Mary was to add as many more as £20 would buy—quite a considerable sum in the early 17th century. The Kederminsters had owned land in Langley since 1554 at least.<sup>9</sup> Sir John had been connected, as a benefactor, with the church at any rate since 1609, at which date he presented the pulpit, which bears his arms. The Kederminster Almshouses, South of the Church, were built in 1617, not 1649 as stated in several works, and it is probable that work on the family pew or transept and the conversion of the medieval porch adjoining it into the library were undertaken not long after. The writer in the *Athenaeum* suggests that the founding of a hospital, almshouses, the theological library and other benefactions by Sir John were charitable acts to propitiate the Dean and Chapter of Windsor (patrons of the living) for adding his own private chapel and pew to the church! This vault and pew gave great offence to the Visitors who reported on the church in 1637<sup>10</sup>, and from the same source we learn that "the library wall seemeth low, dammed up at the S. windows". No alterations seem to have been made, however, though the windows have been unblocked for many years. Sir John only became lord of the manor in 1626, and a stone bearing this date is incorporated in the transept building. The vellum catalogue which still hangs in the library bears the date 1638, and it was probably about then that the library came into use for " . . . . . the benefit of Ministers of the said town of Langley and such other in the County of Bucks as resort there-

<sup>8</sup> *Reg. Prerog. Ct. Canterbury*: Reg. 58. St. John.

<sup>9</sup> Gyll, *Hist. of Wraybury, Colnbrook & Horton*, 88. Langley was formerly a chapel-of-ease to Wraybury hence the inclusion of much parochial matter on Langley in Gyll's History of Wraybury.

<sup>10</sup> *Records of Bucks.*, VI. 165.

unto. . . .” The actual founding of the Library Trust was by a deed or ‘Indenture tripartite’ dated 13th February, 1649.

It does not say much for the trustworthiness of these Ministers (where books were concerned, at any rate) since by the original will no book may be removed from the library to be read; and in the injunctions further laid down and embodied in the Trust Deed of 1649 above referred to, by the founder’s daughter Elizabeth, who married Sir John Parsons of Boveney (Lord Mayor of London in 1703), it is enjoined that *at least* one of the four poor persons occupying the Kederminster Almshouses should “attend within the door of the said library and not depart from thence during all the time that any person should remain therein, and should all that while keep the key of the said door fastened with a chain to one of their girdles. . . .” This precious key was normally to be kept locked up in an iron chest under all their four keys in the Almshouses. Should it be lost, they had to pay for a new one out of their weekly allowance. Books, of course, were rarer in those days, and public libraries, as we know them, non-existent. In later times these precautions seem to have been omitted, for breaks in several sets of volumes, and comparison with the original catalogue reveal missing books whose absence cannot be explained by decay alone, though that undoubtedly accounts for the fate of several. For example, the copy of *Purchas, his Pilgrimes* mentioned by Mr. Tipping in 1909, cannot now be traced: and *Holinshed’s Chronicles* and one or two others have disappeared.

The poor condition of some of the volumes may be accounted for by the extraordinary statement in Gyll’s History already referred to<sup>11</sup> that “. . . . This gentleman” (i.e. Sir J. Kederminster) “. . . . founded a divinity library, *which had been pent up for a century or more, and was discovered behind the wainscot of the Manor-pew at Langley about 30 years ago*” (i.e. circa 1830) “and is now placed *over the south porch*”

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<sup>11</sup> Gyll, *op. cit.*, 88.

of the old church. . . . .” (the italics are mine). Exactly what this means is not quite clear. The cupboards in the library room can hardly have been nailed up, and it is difficult to see why all the books should have been taken out and concealed behind the panelling of the Manor Pew. From this account, also, it would almost seem that the books were for a time after their “re-discovery” placed, not back on their shelves, but in the little space above the library building. It has a small window in the South gable, but no access now except by removing the tiles, or ceiling. On the whole we may assume that Gyll is incorrect in his facts on this matter, since the Library Trust has never, to my knowledge, ceased to function since 1649.

The Library Trust, which hitherto had been largely administered by the successive lords of the manor was revised in 1911, when the Charity Commissioners appointed four Trustees—the lord of the manor and the Vicar of the parish for the time being, and a representative of this Society and of the County Council. There were no funds and no endowment. £1 per annum was granted out of the Almshouse Charity to pay a fire insurance premium. The late Sir Robert Harvey virtually controlled the whole matter since, by an anomaly, the library structure is the private property and responsibility of the Lord of the Manor, and its only entrance is through the private family pew. Wood for the fire was however provided (and still is by his successors) to mitigate some of the dampness. Nine of what were then considered the most valuable books were kept in a strong-room at Langley Park. On Sir Robert’s death these were removed and incarcerated in Barclay’s Bank, Slough, inaccessible and steadily deteriorating from lack of air. One volume, the 11th Century *Gospels*, had been deposited on indefinite loan at the British Museum by the Trustees in 1932. An attempt had been made to sell some or most of the Books to augment the living at Langley: but this the Charity Commissioners mercifully forbade. Complaints about

the condition of the library resulted in correspondence with the Commissioners which elicited the information that they could give no help whatever, nor could any of the Trustees be held under any obligation personally to spend a penny on the library unless he liked. Even as long ago as 1905, the writer of the article in the *Athenaeum* already referred to deplored the "ravages of damp and rough usage", and stated that matters were rapidly becoming worse.<sup>12</sup> Thus the condition of the library room, and even more so of its contents, as a result of damp, dirt, decay and long years of complete neglect, was becoming increasingly serious. Two shelves were filled with tattered and mildewed bundles of paper and brittle leather that had once been books. There were a dozen or so unbound 16th and 17th century volumes. Many lacked backs: others had so suffered from damp and worm that half the pages were eaten through and could only with difficulty be handled. Most of the shelves were worm-eaten; and moreover had no backing or sides, the rubble or brick walls being exposed and affording a paradise for spiders and other creatures. This was the state of affairs when I became the Society's Trustee in 1936.

By the kind interest of our President, Lord Justice MacKinnon, after I had brought these matters to the notice of the Society in 1937, Lord and Lady Macmillan visited the library and were keenly interested. My subsequent appeal for funds to put matters right, addressed to Lord Macmillan as Chairman of the Pilgrim Trust, received sympathetic attention; and the Trust made a munificent grant of £300. I must here also gratefully acknowledge the help and encouragement of certain others in bringing this happy result about, notably, Mr. F. C. Francis, of the Printed Book Department of the British Museum, whose report and recommendations were invaluable; Mr. Francis has also kindly checked this account of

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<sup>12</sup> For short particulars relating to the charity before the revision in 1911, see pp. 99 and 100 of Vol. 25, Printed Parliamentary Report of Former Commissioners for Inquiry concerning charities, 1832.

the books: Mr. Collins, of the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum, for identifying sundry sheets of manuscript; and our Secretary for reporting and advising on the structure and fittings.

During 1939 and 1940, every book was removed and taken to Messrs. E. Zaehnsdorf, of Shaftesbury Avenue, a binding firm of high repute. The report of Mr. A. C. Phillips, one of the Directors, is given below.

“The books in the library before its restoration presented a problem of considerable interest to the bookbinder. When first examined it was obvious that they had lain more or less undisturbed for a considerable time; the amount of dust alone being eloquent of that fact.

“Owing to lack of handling, or possibly due to careful handling in their early life, comparatively few of the books shewed signs of extensive “mechanical” wear, but there was no evidence that any steps had been taken with a view to preservation.

“With one or two exceptions the library is bound in full contemporary calf, with the Kederminster arms blocked in gold on both sides. On practically all the books the adhesive used for covering had entirely perished, leaving the leather wrapped round the books but not adhering. The leather in all cases was extremely brittle and could easily be cracked by bending, but in most cases was unbroken in the joints. A number of the books were broken away at the head, and in a few instances portions of the backs were missing. It was necessary, therefore, carefully to remove the leather and first treat it with a preservative which not only replaced the natural oils, fats and salts, but which also rendered it supple and restored it to a condition in which it could be handled without undue risk of breaking.

“A number of the books had been badly attacked by damp and worm, and here the books were carefully

pulled, the paper neatly mended and re-sewn as before. No attempt was made to mend invisibly and no cleaning, apart from dry-cleaning, was done. In several instances the paper was so fragile and fragmentary that very fine, transparent linen mounted on to the surface of the paper was the only method of preservation open.

“ There are a number of good examples of stamped bindings on wooden boards, and these had to be treated with especial care to ensure that the depth of the impressions of the tooling was not impaired.

“ Missing metal clasps were carefully copied to match the originals.

“ The work of restoration was carried out in a manner which would preserve, as far as possible, the original atmosphere of the library.”

While the books were away under treatment, some structural work was done in the library itself. I had persuaded the Trustee of the lord of the manor (Captain the Hon. R. Morgan-Grenville) that it would be useless to spend £300 on the books unless the structure was made sound and cleaned up, and the condition of the shelving seen to. He agreed to do what was necessary, provided the library Trustees would help over the matter of the shelving. This was not strictly our province; but it was clearly a vital part of any preservation scheme undertaken; and I accordingly secured the permission of the Pilgrim Trust to allocate up to £30 of their grant towards this.

Messrs. Bowyer, of Slough, made an excellent job of the library; and Capt. Morgan-Grenville generously had every detail in Mr. Martyn's schedule seen to. The chimney-stack (liable to fall at any moment) was practically rebuilt, and the roofs overhauled, and the guttering and spouting attended to. Air-bricks and ventilators were inserted in the West wall, the floor (through which damp used to seep) was mended, the windows repaired and painted, the ceiling cleaned off and whitewashed and all plaster stopped and repaired.



The whole of the shelving was renewed with timber previously treated against beetle; and the backs and sides were lined with beaver-boarding, thus making a sound job. All this gave some opportunity for inspecting the walls behind, and the extent of the medieval porch was clearly defined. Moreover, the opening of one of the lower cupboards exposed the lower part of the jambs of the South doorway. This, from the rear arch visible from the nave of the church, the Royal Commission put down as 14th or 15th century: but it is almost certainly late 13th or early 14th century. A curious feature is that the East jamb is one of plain chamfered order, while the West jamb has a deep roll-and-hollow moulding, both of clunch. It is probable that the moulding on the East jamb was sawn off, thus making a plain chamfer. The other jamb has some graffiti on it, but is too inaccessible for them to be clearly deciphered.

The repair and treatment of the books is a most skilful piece of work. Many seemingly hopeless examples have become firm and can be handled, and there is no doubt that a great many have been saved from certain destruction within the next few years. The whole effect is now one of great richness and provides an unrivalled example of an early 17th century library interior almost in its original condition. The keen personal interest that Mr. Phillips took in the work was of immense value and was greatly appreciated.

The work on the books naturally revealed many interesting features, and brought to light the fact that there are a number of items of considerable merit and rarity in spite of the fact that most previous writers have dismissed the collection as a whole as "of no value, consisting almost entirely of 17th century works on theology". Everyone has picked out the obvious plums, such as the amusing *Pharmacopolium* of John and Mary Kederminster, 1630, with its MS. prescriptions and two illuminated vellum pages: the 11th century illuminated *Gospels* of the Winchester



School:<sup>13</sup> and the mid-13th Century French manuscript with coloured decorations and illuminated capitals of Peter de Riga's *Aurora*. But no one has made anything of the two Incunabula the library possesses—a Missal in blackletter printed on the Continent by Ludwich van Reuchen, circa 1480-90, with MS. capitals and initials, after the style of the Roman *Curia*; and a sumptuous volume in mint condition of the *Works of St. Ambrose* printed at Basle in 1492, also in blackletter with MS. coloured capitals and decoration. There are, moreover, contemporary MS. notes in this volume.

While the great majority of the volumes are patristic works in Latin printed on the Continent in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there are quite a large number of works both in English and Latin that fall within the first half of the 16th century, and since printing was still by no means a commonplace up to that date, these specimens perhaps deserve mention. Foremost among these early printed books is a particularly fine set of six volumes in beautiful condition of the *Textus Biblie* with glosses, notes and additions by Nico. de Lyra and others, printed at Lyons in 1520. It is in blackletter and a superb piece of type-setting. Another splendid set (unfortunately incomplete) consists of eight volumes out of ten of the *Works of St. Augustine* printed at Paris in 1531, vols. 3 and 4 being missing. Several of these had suffered seriously from damp, and would undoubtedly, in a short time, have been beyond repair: they are now secure. This series contains interesting title-page donor's inscriptions and a coat of arms—"ex donatione . . . . Johannis de Witte, episcopi Cubensis A.D. 1535". John de Witt was Bishop of Santiago de Cuba from 1525-1537. Another volume, Epi-phanus's *Contra Octoginta Haereses*, Basle, 1543, has another donor's inscription dated 1586, and used as binder's waste, endpapers and flyleaves are eight pages of MS. accounts of 1608 and later, with

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<sup>13</sup> See *Brit. Mus. Quarterly*, Vol. VI. No. 4, 1932, 93 (illud.), for an account of this.

references to large sums lent to finance some early East Indies and Virginia voyages; and several pages of manuscript notes not yet transcribed. Other volumes yielded similar surprises. One contained four consecutive leaves of a vellum manuscript from the collection of models of dictamen and letter-writing in Latin known as the *Flores Dictaminum* of Thomas of Capua, Cardinal priest of St. Sabina, died 1243, written in South France or Italy in the 14th century. Another dilapidated work produced four leaves, not consecutive, from a commentary on the *De Consolatione Philosophie* of Boethius in Latin, written in France in the late 13th century. Volume I, of *Origenis Adamantii Opera*, 1522, in a fine contemporary stamped binding mounted on oak boards, with original clasps, yielded two pages, written on both sides and stuck to the end boards under the leather, of a vellum manuscript not yet identified, with blue and red capitals, etc., probably early 15th century. These have been carefully lifted and mounted in the book. Volume II. of the *Paraphrase of Erasmus*, Basle 1535, has a sheet from a Missal or Antiphoner, early printed and possibly an incunabulum. Another contained an early calendar in blackletter with wood-block vignettes of the Signs of the Zodiac and Labours of the Months, and so on. Of the earlier printed English books, undoubtedly the most important is Berthelette's London Edition of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, 1532, in blackletter and this, though mentioned by several writers on the library, has not been sufficiently appreciated. It is very similar in binding to the specimen in the Chapter Library at Windsor.

A few other hitherto unappreciated items may here be mentioned. The renowned Plantin Press of Antwerp is represented by two volumes—one, still within the lifetime of the original founder Christopher Plantin, is a Bible on the lines of the great *Polyglot Bible* in Greek, Hebrew and Latin, a fine piece of setting of 1584: the other is Jerome Natalis's *Adnotationes et Meditationes*, 1607. The former

contains interesting MS. notes recording the number of times that a certain J. C. Wernedly had read the Hebrew Psalms, etc., in 1701-2. He appears to have reached a thirty-third reading. The whole Hebrew Bible he achieved no fewer than six times. Until recently no one had realised the interest of the large Bible on the library table. This is a "Speaker's Bible" presented in pursuance of ancient custom to each Speaker of the House of Commons by the Crown. This book was the property of Sir Edward Seymour, Bart., M.P. for Exeter, Totnes and Co. Devon; Treasurer of the Navy: elected Speaker of the House of Commons, 1673: in 1691 Lord of the Treasury: Comptroller of Queen Anne's Household. He was one of the principal supporters of the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679, and opposed the Exclusion Bill. The Bible was printed at Cambridge by John Hayes in 1674, and has a fine engraved title-page. A fly-leaf inscription (only just rescued in time, since it was loose and crumpled up at the end) is worded: "To the pious memory of his ever Honoured Father Sr. Joseph Seymour who dyed Mar. ye. 22. 1697 Aged 81, and lies buried in Sr. Harry Seymour's vault joyning to his library. To which Library, and for the use of Sir Harry Seymour's Seat, Henry his son gives this Holy Bible for ever.

Also in Gratefull commemoration of His Uncles, Henry, Father of Sr. Harry, and John Seymour Esq., and other his Dear Relations that lies in the same vault.

This Bible was given to ye Honble. House of Commons by the Crown (as usual) to Sir Edward Seymour then Speaker, who give it to Sr. Joseph Seymour. He dyed on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18, 1707".

The contents of the Library are an interesting reflection of the times. The great majority of the books, as has been stated, are prolix Latin Commentaries by early Divines and Fathers of the Church, such as Gregory, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome,

Thomas Aquinas, the Venerable Bede, St. John Crisostom, Theodore, Eusebius, Basil, Cyril, Clement, Athanasius and so on, printed at Paris, Basle, Geneva, Hanau, Hamburg, Cologne, Antwerp, Lyons, Frankfurt, Wittenburg, Leyden and elsewhere. But later authors are represented, and a few English works are included whose tenor is rigidly anti-papist. Erasmus, Calvin and Martin Luther appear; and other typical works are *A History of the Council of Trent*, by Polanus, London, 1629; *Five Bookes of the Church* by the celebrated Dr. Field (two editions) Oxford, 1628, 1635; *The True Church*, by Dr. G. Williams; *The Sermons* of Bishop Andrewes, and Bishop Lake, all London, 1629; *St. Augustine, Of the Citie of God*, London, 1620; W. Whitaker; *Adversus Thomae Stapletoni . . . . . defensionium*, Cambridge, 1594; Marloratus, *A Catholike and Ecclesiastical Exposition*, London, 1575; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, London, 1584. These have clearly been the most-used books, and some have interesting marginal annotations. *The Protestant's Appeale* by Thomas Morton is interesting and is heavily annotated in MS., and the anti-papistical works of Andrew Willett, London, 1600, are typical of the period. *The Works of Bishop Gervase Babington*, London, 1622, find a place, as well as F. Mason's treatise *On the Consecration of Bishops*, London, 1613, and of course Dr. Jewel and his *Defence of the Apologie of the Churche of Englande*, London, 1570, is represented. This volume formerly contained the signature of Sir John Kederminster on one of the end-papers. *A Catalogue of the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 1620, is one of the earliest printed catalogues of this Institution, and was presumably included here for the valuable bibliography and references to works on Divinity it contains.

It is interesting to compare these with the contents of other parish church libraries of the time. Unfortunately hardly any catalogues are available and one has to go and see the books for oneself. Wimborne Minster and Hereford (chained) and Grantham are much alike, and Swaffham also has

many of the same volumes, but possesses a greater variety of secular items. Of the contents of the other Buckinghamshire parochial library, that presented to Willen Church in 1695 by Dr. Busby and later augmented by Mr. Hume, Vicar of Bradwell, there is no catalogue available. The library Chamber, North of the West Tower, is now a coal hole and general lumber room. The books are stated to be at the Vicarage. According to the Royal Commission's *Inventory*<sup>14</sup> taken as long ago as 1913, the books are more numerous than at Langley, numbering about 620 as against the 277 now in the Kederminster Library: and are stated to be mainly theological works of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. There may well be a number of hidden treasures here also.

Winslow has a few books in a cupboard in the Church: and Broughton has Bishop Jewel's works chained near the chancel arch. There were formerly many of these parochial libraries up and down the country, founded by pious and generous lords of the manor or other benefactors in a day when books were scarce, and the Clergy in country districts, unless well-to-do, or with libraries of their own, had no other facilities for study and reference. Mr. Archibald Sparke writing some years ago in *Notes and Queries*<sup>15</sup> gave a valuable list of such parochial libraries totalling seventy-five: and several more could be added. It is tragic, that through damp, decay, lack of interest and general neglect, those places where anything of the collection survives are very few.

As has been said, the bulk of the books have been specially bound in full contemporary sprinkled calf, with the arms of Kederminster (*az. 2 chevronels or bet. 3 bezants*) quartering Wentham (*gu. a saltire bet. 4 fleurs-de-lys arg.*) blocked in gold on both sides. The condition of these handsome bindings and the brilliance of the original gilt after cleaning and treatment must be seen to be fully appreciated. A good

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<sup>14</sup> *R.C.H.M.*, Bucks II. 331.

<sup>15</sup> *Notes and Queries*. Dec. 31, 1927: 480-81.

many volumes are in plain calf. Two others have different armorial binding stamps—the *Novi Testamenti Catholica Exposito* of 1620 has a shield bearing five fleurs-de-lys on a cross, surrounded by a circle of fleurs-de-lys, and the *Praelectiones* of John Calvin, Geneva, 1567, has a much-worn cartouche with the arms of Cambridge University. A number of volumes have different ornamental devices in a central cartouche, usually gilt, and there are two volumes in limp vellum, one also gilt. One has a rough sheepskin cover. There remains a number of fine blind-tooled and stamped bindings of Renaissance type with Classical heads, animals, etc., in medallions or lozenges, from Oxford, Cambridge, London and abroad, some signed, and mostly mounted on oak boards, with clasps. For all these, swansdown-lined, gilt-lettered buckram binding-cases have been made. The most notable are: five volumes of the *Lucubrations of St. Jerome*, Basle, 1525/6, laid on oak boards, with clasps. (This set had no backs, and many of the volumes were seriously attacked by damp: they are now superbly repaired): *Origenis Adamantii Opera*, two volumes, 1522; *Syntagma Theologiae*, by Amando Polano, Geneva, 1617 (a limp cover, with the ties missing). This binding is by Westall, of Oxford. *Confessions of St. Augustine*, Dilingae, 1569, somewhat similar to the binding of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (especially fine), London, 1532; as is also Vol. II of Erasmus' *Paraphrasis*, Basle, 1535. Vol. I of this latter work, curiously, is not a matched volume, but was printed in London in 1548, and what was left of its binding was in so deplorable a condition that it was entirely rebound. The *Rubricon de Divinis Officiis* in blackletter, no date, but probably early 16th century (a somewhat curious work to find in this collection), also has a much-worn blind-stamped binding that was curling up off its boards and terribly brittle and worm-eaten, but has restored remarkably well.



A word should be said about the fittings of the library.<sup>16</sup> The cornice has a series of views, of which only two can with certainty be identified. These represent the Keep or Round Tower at Windsor Castle, and a general view of the Castle. Another has been called Eton College: it shows what appears to be Lupton's Tower with the oriel window of Election Chamber as seen from School Yard. But the range containing the Tower seems to have an extra storey, and there is no sign of Lower School and the King's Scholars' range on one side and the chapel on the other, flanking the quadrangle. I have heard it said that this particular view represents the old Manor House of Langley Park: but the building seems on far too large a scale for such a thing: and even granted the re-building craze of the 18th century, it is unlikely that the Duke of Marlboro' would have destroyed such a house so completely. On the whole one may accept Eton as the identification, allowing artist's licence for inaccuracies. Other views probably represent scenes in Langley Park, and on the Thames; while some very likely portray parts of Kederminster property elsewhere (they were a Worcestershire family). There are several seascapes and sea-shore scenes.

The inside of the cupboard doors are painted with blank open books having red tie-strings on a blue ground. The outsides are divided into compartments with a blank cartouche in strap-work. Whether it was ever intended to inscribe on these the titles or authors of the books on the shelves within cannot be said. There are dispersed about the panelling a large number of figures, and these undoubtedly are in consonance with the whole scheme of a Divinity Library. The Twelve Apostles can be recognised by their emblems on the East side; the others are undoubtedly the Doctors, Fathers, Prophets, Evangelists and Saints of the Church whose works are

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<sup>16</sup> For photographs of details of the interior see M. Jourdain, "*English Decoration and Furniture of the early Renaissance*". Batsford 1924.



continued on the shelves. Sir John Kederminster's portrait is a competent piece of work, and when cleaned and treated should gain much. Lady Kederminster's has been painted out for some reason. It is said to have been ruined by a former vicar in an attempt at restoration. This was done before 1890 at any rate, and it is stated (though I doubt its accuracy, from observation) that Sir John's was also obliterated. The original paint is still beneath the covering coat on the lady's portrait, and it is hoped to recover it later. The condition of the paintings as a whole is very good, though in many places, especially above the fireplace, they want cleaning. The panelling itself, however, is in some places showing signs of worm and dry-rot, and the lord of the manor should take steps to have matters seen to before it is too late. This is not the province of the library Trustees whose only schedule of property is "the collection of books known as Sir John Kederminster's Library" in a room attached to the church, and £1 per annum. The 17th Century table, stool or bench, and library steps remain. But the executors of the late Sir Robert Harvey have removed the fine set of four Jacobean or William and Mary chairs formerly in the library.

It has been already stated that a number of works have been deposited on loan at the British Museum and in the Society's Muniment Room at the Aylesbury Museum, a list appearing in Records XIII, 340. A further selection representing the rarer early printed books, the best specimens of stamped bindings and the Plantin Press works have recently been added at my suggestion by the Trustees, partly as a war-time measure of safety and also to keep the books available to bonâ-fide students, as we must do by the terms of our Trust. These are: Vol. II of Erasmus' *Paraphrasis*, Basle, 1535: *The Works of St. Ambrose*, second part, Basle, 1492. *Polyglot Bible* (Greek, Latin and Hebrew), Antwerp, Christopher Plantin, 1584. *Origenis Adamantii Opera*, 2 vols., 1520.

Thirteen volumes are therefore now at Aylesbury and one at the British Museum, where they are available to students.

The work of restoration proceeded gradually. As matters progressed we were able to see what items in really bad condition actually justified expenditure and what balance was available for dealing with them. As many as possible of the loose piles of sheets were collated and made up into books. Though most of the volumes thus made up are incomplete or damaged, they have been put into covers to preserve them from certain loss, and can be handled. There are eight of these with two or three too incomplete to bind. The very worst cases, not more than eight or nine books, or what remained of them, were so damaged and fragmentary that expenditure upon them was clearly not justified. Their remains were reverently dried, cleaned, disinfected and returned to the library in two large packages, to point the moral of what would inevitably have been the fate of the rest had not the Pilgrim Trust grant been energetically sought and so generously given.

It was not the policy of the Trustees to absorb the whole of the grant in expenditure on the books. A certain sum has been earmarked for the work of cleaning the paintings and the attempted recovery of Lady Kederminster's portrait at some future time. And £50 has been invested so as to produce a trifling annual sum till such time as any further expenditure on the preservation of the books becomes necessary—we hope that will not be for very many years to come. Thus has been preserved and restored to its original freshness the most remarkable 17th century parish library in England.