

Thomas Allen (1540-1632), Gloucester Hall and the Survival of Catholicism in Post-Reformation Oxford

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"Saepius dominabitur astris:

Astra regunt homines sed deus astra regit"

Thomas Allen, Horoscope for the birth of Robert Pierrepont,
Earl of Kingston, 1584.

SUMMARY

The following account, drawn from Anthony Wood's, Alumni Oxonienses, Heralds' Visitations, Aubrey, Hearne, Camden, and other sources, including printed books and manuscripts in the British and Bodleian Libraries, offers a portrait of a sociable Church Papist don — mathematician, astrologer, manuscript collector, teacher and tuft hunter — with his friends and pupils in the setting of late 16th- and early 17th-century Oxford. Born in 1540, he was an early 16th-century humanist rather than a Counter-Reformation Roman Catholic. Leaving Trinity College in an exodus of Catholic Fellows, he succeeded in retaining his place at Gloucester Hall for 60 years — through the reigns of Elizabeth and James I and well into that of Charles I. With his friend Edmund Reynolds, he drew into Gloucester Hall many sons of noble and gentry families of Papist sympathies. He also played a significant role in the life of the University and the founding of the Bodleian Library. Here is one of the "hidden springs" through which Catholicism survived the Reformation to re-appear in Laudian Anglicanism and the Anglo-Catholic and Roman revival of the 19th century.

Like many other 16th- and 17th-century figures, Thomas Allen comes vividly to life in the jottings of John Aubrey.¹ 'Mr. Allen was a very cheerful, facetious man and everybody loved his company; and every House on their Gaudy Days were wont to invite him. The Great Dudley, Earl of Leicester, made use of him for casting of Nativities, for he was the best Astrologer of his time. Queen Elizabeth sent for him to have his advice about the new star that appeared in the Swan or Cassiopeia . . . to which he gave his judgment very learnedly. In those dark times, Astrologer, Mathematician and Conjuror were accounted the same thing; and the vulgar did verily believe him to be a conjurer. He had a great many mathematical instruments and glasses in his chamber, which did also confirm the ignorant in their opinion; and his servitor² (to impose on Freshmen and simple people) would tell them that sometimes he should meet the spirits coming up his stairs like bees . . . He was generally acquainted; and every long vacation he rode into the country to visit his old acquaintance and patrons, to whom his great learning, mixed with much sweetness of humour, made him very welcome . . . He was a handsome, sanguine man and of excellent habit of body'. Aubrey is usually pretty near the mark; and his sketch is confirmed by the portrait of Allen in the flesh, at the age of 87, that hangs in the President's lodging at Trinity. The face reveals no ascetic scholar but a bon viveur with a twinkle in his eye.

¹ *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Clark (1898), i. 26-28.

² Allen's personal servant or 'scout' for many years was John Murtagh, presumably an Irishman (see note 178, below).



Thomas Allen (1540–1632), from a portrait in the possession of Trinity College, Oxford, by kind permission of the President and Fellows. The original is 22 ins. × 17½ ins.

Of his intellect, however, there can be no doubt. Aubrey's fellow antiquary and sparring partner, Anthony Wood bestowed on Allen a long and glowing encomium. He was 'clarissimus vir' and 'very highly respected by other famous men of his time . . . Bodley, Savile, Camden, Cotton, Spelman, Selden, etc. . . . a great collector of scattered manuscripts', 'an excellent man, the father of all learning and virtuous industry, an unfeigned lover and furtherer of all good arts and sciences'.³ Thomas Hearne called Allen 'a very great mathematician and antiquary' and 'a universal scholar . . .'.⁴ Thomas Fuller in his *Worthies of England* echoed these sentiments, adding, 'he succeeded to the skill and scandal of Friar Bacon' and 'his admirable writings of mathematics are latent with some private possessors, which envy the public profit thereof'. Selden called him — even in comparison with William Camden, Sir Thomas Bodley and Sir Henry Savile — 'the brightest ornament of the famous university of Oxford'.⁵

There is no direct reference in these writers to Allen's Catholicism, though Wood implies it. Yet the history of his college⁶ describes him as a 'distinguished Catholic'. On what evidence is this based, apart from college tradition? The answer is given in the following account. The person who emerges is a Church Papist of the most circumspect kind — not a Counter-Reformation, nor even a Marian, Catholic but a survivor from pre-Reformation Renaissance humanism. For Allen was not only a most discerning collector of ancient manuscripts but also a famous astrologer and a bibliophile who played a special part in founding the Bodleian Library.⁷

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Thomas Allen was born in or near Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, then a town of 3,500 inhabitants, on St Thomas' Day, 21 December 1540.⁸ His father, William, was the third of five brothers, three of whom lived in Uttoxeter. This is clear from a pedigree, probably by Sampson Erdeswicke, the Catholic antiquary of Staffordshire.⁹ Wills in the Staffordshire Record Office reveal several cousins engaged in small farming and 'repping'

³ A. Wood, *Antiquities of the City of Oxford*, ed. A. Clark, ii (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xvii), 136; *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. P. Bliss (1813–20), ii, 541–543.

⁴ Thomas Hearne, *Collections*, ed. C.E. Doble, ii (Oxf. Hist. Soc. vii), 263.

⁵ *Notis Ad Eadmerum* (1623), 200; Thomas Fuller, *Worthies of England*, ed. J. Nicholls (1811), ii, 310.

⁶ C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College* (1900), 98. Gloucester Hall was refounded at Worcester College in 1714.

⁷ The author acknowledges with thanks the generosity of Dr. A. Davidson in putting at his disposal an unpublished Bristol University Ph.D. thesis, 'Roman Catholicism in Oxfordshire c. 1580–1640' (Bodl. MS. Top. Oxon. d. 602 (1970) and of Dr. A.G. Watson, Reader in Manuscript Studies at University College, London, to whose 'Thomas Allen of Oxford and his Manuscripts' in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays presented to N.R. Ker*, ed. M.B. Parkes and A.G. Watson, Scholar Press 1978, the author is much indebted. The author's 'Thomas Allen, Gloucester Hall and the Bodleian Library', *Downside Review*, c. April 1982, covers Allen's university role in more detail.

⁸ *17th Century Uttoxeter*, Staffordshire C.C. (1975), 20. *D.N.B.*, following an entry in Trinity College Library, gives the date of birth as 1542 (Bodl. MS Selden Supra 120). Allen's will (P.R.O., PROB 11/162, f.110) says he was 'four score and eight years' of age when he signed it on 29 January 1629 (NS). An antiquary, 'complete in good and perfect health of body and of perfect memory' seems unlikely to have mistaken his age. This is confirmed by his evidence in the Chancery suit, *Wheare v Hawley*, early in 1628, (Oxford University Archives, W P α /60/1). Thomas Hearne says 'he was 92 years of age when he died' in 1632 (*Collections*, iii, 78) — exaggerating by 3 weeks. For the source of the confusion see note 181, below.

⁹ B.L.Add.MS. 27984, Henry St. George Pedigrees, 15b–17b. Robert Glover's Visitation of Staffordshire in 1583 (B.L.Harl.MS. 6128 f.17b) includes an almost identical pedigree. Bodl. MS. Ashmole 1750 f.19 refers to a pedigree 'laboured by Mr. Erdeswicke' going back to the year 1380. This is the starting-point of both.

or weaving corded cloth.¹⁰ William, however, must have prospered, for he married an unnamed 'Basset of Blore, Staffs', whose family had held land in the county since the 12th century. This may have been Margery, daughter of Thomas Bassett and Ellen Coates.¹¹ The Bassetts were connected by marriage with the Fitzherberts of Norbury. William Allen's heir, Richard, married a Curzon of Croxhall, Staffordshire and acquired a manor at Brailsford, Derbyshire. The Bassetts, Fitzherberts and Curzons were to be distinguished for recusancy in the 17th century. Evidently William's wife died young, for Thomas Allen was her last child. One Ralph Allen made a fortune in London, collected estates in Staffordshire and other counties and established his seat at Sudbury in Derbyshire; and his heir, Thomas Allen, a priest, left money in May 1558 'to keep, find and maintain' in Uttoxeter a grammar school,¹² whose scholars were to pray for 'their founder, morning and evening, with the psalm De Profundis . . . and . . . with the collect Inclina Domine'. This foundation replaced, very belatedly, the dissolved church schools of the neighbourhood; perhaps as a result, Allen did not go up to Oxford until he was 20 — 5 years or more older than most of his contemporaries. None of the Uttoxeter Allens appears on the extant recusant rolls¹³ but there is evidence here of strongly Catholic connexions.

The earlier background of the Allens is obscure. Erdeswicke noted 'between the Conquest and Edward II's time . . . one Alanus de Buckenhall, from whom the Allens of this county, as they say, trahunt originem; and from whom is descended Thomas Allen of Cantaman [probably Cotwalton or Coton, 11 and 8 miles respectively west of Uttoxeter] so well known for his virtue, knowledge and learning that he needs no commendation of mine'.¹⁴ The starting point for Erdeswicke's researches seems to have been a seal, annexed to a deed dated 1380, showing the coat of arms of John, son of Henry Allen of Buckenhall — 'party per a chevron gules and ermine in chief two lions' heads erased or'.¹⁵ A William Allen is recorded as Abbot of Dieulacres in Henry VIII's reign. A 'Willielmus Filius Alani' together with a 'Petrus Blundus' contributed scutage for Richard I's Welsh campaign in 1192-3.¹⁶ The Allens may have been feudal tenants of Dieulacres (the second biggest landowner in the county) and the Blounts of Blount Hall — whose name survives in 'Blount's Green', just south of Uttoxeter. John Blount was High Sheriff in 1527 and in the 17th century Sir Henry held more than 500 acres in the area.¹⁷ In the 1550s James Blount, Lord Mountjoy, held the manor and a farm in Coton worth £80.¹⁸

¹⁰ Uttoxeter registers start in 1596. More details are given in note 173, below.

¹¹ Margery appears on Glover's Bassett pedigree as a daughter of William Bassett of Fole, Staffordshire, son of Thomas. But the continuation of a line would make her William's sister, in which case ages and dates fit. It looks an easy slip in transcribing from Glover's notes. Margery is shown as marrying an unidentified Uttoxeter citizen (B.L. Harl. MS. 6128 f.5a).

¹² See *Seventeenth century Uttoxeter*, Staffordshire C.C. (1975). The will is printed, with a garbled account, in *The Reliquary*, April 1884. Masses were to be said in perpetuity for the souls of the family at Sudbury Parish Church. Ralph does not appear on the Allen pedigrees, perhaps because his line was extinct.

¹³ Letter from Staffordshire C.C. Record Office.

¹⁴ *Antiquities of Staffordshire*, ed. Sir Simon Degge, (1717, 1723), 7-8. T. Harwood's editions of 1820 and 1844 alter 'Cantuman' to 'Oxford', perhaps following a note, 'Oxford', by Sir Peter Le Neve, Norroy King of Arms, in the margin of the B.L. copy of Degge's 1717 edition. The author reads this as a comment, not a correction. The original MS. cannot be traced.

¹⁵ A drawing survives in Bodl. MS. Ashmole 1750, f.19. Robert Glover's *Visitation of Staffordshire* in 1583 shows a similar drawing.

¹⁶ B.L. Harl. MS. 280, f.78b; *Mag. Rot. Pip.* 5 Ric 1, *Historical Collections of Staffordshire*, ii (1881), pt. i. 26, 82, 225.

¹⁷ F. Redfern, *Uttoxeter* (1865), 330.

¹⁸ H.M.C. *Hastings MSS*, i. 351 (auditors' roll for County of Stafford).

OXFORD

Late in Henry VIII's reign Elizabeth Blount married Thomas Pope of Tittenhanger, Hertfordshire (1507–59), who became a Privy Councillor under Queen Mary and guardian of the young Princess Elizabeth. He refounded a monastic house at Oxford, Durham College, as Trinity College in 1555. Sir Thomas bought the property from George Owen of Godstow, physician to Henry VIII, who had acquired a good deal of monastic property around Oxford. Sir Thomas's town house was in Clerkenwell, where a nest of Catholics remained; and a bequest was left in his will to the parish church of St. James, where the vicar was later to be accused by an informer of conniving at recusancy and allowing Mass to be celebrated by a (probably mythical) 'John Allen of Gloucester Hall'.¹⁹

The new college of Trinity, with its President, 12 Fellows and 12 Scholars, had a strongly Catholic flavour until well into Elizabeth's reign. Sir Thomas Pope died in 1559 and his wife married Sir Hugh Powlett; but she continued to exercise the right to nominate the scholars of Trinity.²⁰ When, therefore, a mathematical prodigy from Uttoxeter sought admission to Oxford it was natural that his schoolmaster — perhaps an ex-priest — should look to Trinity. Allen was duly nominated a scholar and admitted on 4 June 1561. With George Blackwell (later to be archpriest of the English Catholic clergy) he proceeded BA on 13 May 1563, a few months before Thomas Bodley, and was chosen Fellow of the college in 1565.²¹ He proceeded MA at the beginning of Trinity term, 1567, in a small group which included the Catholics, Thomas Ford and Edmund Campion.²² The next year, having been named an elector of proctors by the 'instantes', George Blackwell and Robert Dewhurst, together with William Pullen, John Sherwood, and others, they elected as proctors James Charnock and Edmund Campion.²³ We know little of Allen's personal life at Trinity, except that he began his great manuscript collection while he was an undergraduate there,²⁴ and that he must have been happy because he retained a profound love and loyalty for the college all his life. It is reflected in his will, his friendship with President Kettell and his portrait which still hangs in the President's lodging. Probably he was tutored in mathematics at Merton, for Trinity library, founded only six years before his arrival, seems to have been small and mainly theological, while Merton had a long mathematical tradition and was rich in books and manuscripts. But he was interested in Trinity's predecessor, the Benedictine Durham College, and its library founded by Richard de Bury (or D'Aungerville), as is shown by extensive annotations of his copy of John Bale's *Catalogus* of ancient manuscripts in Britain;²⁵ while, according to William Burton, his move to Gloucester Hall was due to its association with Benedictine mathematicians of the past.²⁶ The interest — closely linked

¹⁹ *C.S.P.D.* 1591–94, 28. No priest of this name, secular or regular, appears in any known list. Evidently Thomas Allen was a visitor. Elizabeth Lady Dormer (nee Browne, widow of the 1st Baron Dormer) rented a house here (*H.M.C. Report* xii, Appendix i, Part i).

²⁰ Apart from the period 1563–78 (T. Warton, *Life of Sir Thomas Pope* (1772), 189).

²¹ J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*.

²² Register of Congregation and Convocation, Oxf. Univ. Arch., NEP Supra Register KK, f.42v. Another was John Sherwood, later a (probably Catholic) physician in Bath. Wood adds George Blackwell (*Fasti Oxonienses*, i, 179).

²³ *Ibid.* f.54v. A William Pullen (MA University College May 1566) became a priest (G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests* (1968), i; James Charnock may be related to another priest, Robert, of Northamptonshire.

²⁴ With a manuscript originally at Merton, A.G. Watson, *Essays to N.R. Ker*, 289.

²⁵ Bodl. A.4.12. Art.

²⁶ See below page 127.

with his passion for ancient manuscripts — was unsurprising in one whose ancestors had for centuries lived in the shadow of the Abbey of Dieulacres and who, as a child, may often have come across fragments from its library.

According to Anthony Wood, Allen often used to tell his young friend Brian Twyne (later Keeper of the University Archives) of a scholarly Benedictine, Hugh Whitehead, one time Warden of Durham College who, after its dissolution, left all his mathematical manuscripts to his landlord in London, Henry Billingsley, a collector of customs. The percipient Billingsley, who later became Lord Mayor and a knight, published these under his own name as *The First English Euclid*; which, with an authoritative preface by the astrologer, John Dee, became a best seller. Allen heard the story from 'old Dr Barnes of Merton College'.²⁷ Evidently the plagiarism rankled; its repetition hints of sensitiveness to Twyne's use of his own knowledge of the antiquities of Oxford. For, according to one view recorded in Hearne, Twyne's work was almost entirely Allen's.²⁸ (Allen could not know that Twyne would suffer a worse fate at the hands of Anthony Wood).

It was a time of great unrest in Oxford. After the brief reunion with Rome under Mary (1553–1558) had come the uneasy compromise of the Elizabethan Settlement. All depended on the life of the Queen. Her heiress was a Catholic, Mary Queen of Scots, under whom a return to Rome seemed certain. In a university rooted in a massive tradition of Catholic learning, extending from the 13th and 14th centuries, there was much conservatism. While all incumbents of town parishes seem to have conformed to the Settlement, nine heads of houses were expelled in 1559.²⁹ Successive Commissions were appointed to visit Oxford colleges to purge them of Popish practices. The Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance and attendance at Communion services of the Established Church became ever more strictly enforced and difficult to avoid.

Perhaps owing to its solid conservatism, the troubles which disrupted other colleges seem to have been delayed at Trinity. But a fellow, Christopher Wharton, left for Douai in 1569, the same year as Gregory Martin and Edmund Campion left St John's. In 1570, as a result of further pressure, Thomas Allen, then aged 29, also left the college, though in his case it was not for Douai but for Gloucester Hall where, according to Anthony Wood, 'lovers of the Catholic religion retired for their quiet'. Allen, he noted, was 'much inclined to live a retired life and averse from taking holy orders'.³⁰ Here he joined Edmund Reynolds, who had been expelled from Corpus Christi in 1568 with two other friends of Allen, Miles Windsor and George Napper.³¹ The following year 6 more fellows resigned or were expelled from Trinity, including Thomas Ford, who left for Douai, and George Blackwell, who retired to Gloucester Hall.³² About 1573 John Appletree left for Douai. In

²⁷ Wood *City of Oxford*, ii. 472; E.G.R. Taylor, *The Mathematical Practitioners of Tudor and Stuart England* (1954), 171.

²⁸ *Antiquitatis Academiae Oxoniensis Apologia* (Oxford 1608); Thomas Hearne, *Collections*, i (Oxf. Hist. Soc. ii), 185. The argument of William Smith, fellow of University College, who was well acquainted with the University Archives, was that at 28 Twyne could not have collected notes on a sufficient scale. However, none of Allen's historical notes have been identified; nor did Twyne acknowledge his help. Twyne was a prodigious worker and the view of the current Keeper is that 'he did his own work'. No doubt, like Camden, he sought Allen's advice on sources. Smith also pointed out Wood's unacknowledged debt to Twyne.

²⁹ *V.C.H. Oxon.*, iii. 21; iv. 175.

³⁰ A. Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 542.

³¹ Miles Windsor, the antiquary, was the son of Andrew, Lord Windsor (noted by the Papal Nuncio to Spain as a Catholic in 1567, *C.S.P. Rome 1558–71*, 260) and a cousin of Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton. George Napper came from Holywell Manor. Two volumes of Windsor's *Collections* are in Corpus Christi College Library. He died in 1624.

³² H.E.D. Blakiston, *Trinity College* (1898), 77–80.

1576 Edward Hindmarsh, a close friend of Allen (whose Benedictine namesake had been the last Warden of Durham College), was also expelled and went to live as private tutor to the Dormer family, where he was to remain for the rest of his life until his burial at Wing, Buckinghamshire in 1618.³³ In 1582 four more Trinity men left for exile, including William Spencer.³⁴ Then in 1583 Richard Blount, brother of the founder's heir and the Earl of Leicester's agent, Sir Thomas Pope Blount, although nominated to a Trinity fellowship from Balliol, also left for Douai. He was accompanied by 9 others, including Richard Smith, John Atkins and John and Walter Owen of Trinity.³⁵ Blount was destined to become Provincial of the English Jesuits, Smith the second Roman Catholic bishop in England since the Reformation. The departure of Thomas Allen from Trinity therefore forms part of an exodus of Catholics from that college. How far he was influenced by a distant relative, William Allen of Oriel, sometime proctor and Principal of St. Mary's Hall and later cardinal, we can only speculate but he must have had contacts with Campion and Martin next door in St. John's.

AULA GLOCESTRIENSIS REDIVIVA

When its gate opened for Thomas Allen in 1570, Gloucester Hall stood among fields to the north-west of Oxford. There for three centuries had spread the pleasant 'edifices, chambers, walks and gardens' of Gloucester College,³⁶ before its suppression. The foundation dated from 1283 — the fifth oldest in Oxford. Like Durham College a house of study for Benedictine monks,³⁷ by the early 16th century the original hall and court had sprouted a row of cottages, each with its staircase, cluster of rooms and arms of the parent abbey over the doorway. There was a fine library, enriched by gifts from Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, a chapel, and a matching front of staircases and rooms to the north. Together they formed — as they do today — three sides of a quadrangle, with gardens and water meadows beyond, leading down to the river.

John Oman, or Feckenham as he was known from the name of his native village in Worcestershire (?1515–85), the last Abbot of Westminster, came up to Gloucester College in 1533. He refused the Archbishopric of Canterbury under Elizabeth, voted against the Act of Supremacy, and spent much of his life imprisoned at Wisbech. In sharp contrast was Anthony Kitchin, one of the last Priors of the College. When the house was suppressed he became the last Abbot of Eynsham, was pensioned off when the abbey was dissolved and later — with full Catholic rites — was consecrated Bishop of Llandaff in 1545. He kept pace with the changes under Edward VI; burned Protestant martyrs under

³³ Allen may have got him the post: Dorothy Lady Dormer was sister of Sir William Catesby, then at Gloucester Hall (see below p. 112). Hindmarsh (also Hyndmer) in his will left his library, with £157.14s for bookcases, to Trinity; legacies to the Dormer household; a ring to Sir Henry Savile; and 'to Mr. Thomas Allen, my old friend . . . my gold ring with death's head enamelled, which was some time our friend Mr [William] Saltmarsh's'. The Saltmarsh family of Saltmarsh, Yorkshire, produced several priests. Yet Hindmarsh wished to be buried in Trinity chapel. (T. Warton, *Sir Thos. Pope*, 389–91; Sir William Flower's *Visitation of the North*, *Surtees Soc.* 146).

³⁴ Of the Yarnton, Oxfordshire family which produced the mother of Walter Montague, Abbot of Pontoise and Confessor to Queen Henrietta Maria.

³⁵ The Blounts were sons of William Blount of Blount's Hall, Staffordshire (*Harleian Society Pedigrees*). The Owens seem not to be the Godstow family recorded in *Visitations of Oxford 1592–1633*.

³⁶ A. Wood, *City of Oxford*, ii. 249, 261.

³⁷ See W.A. Pantin, *Oxoniensis*, xi–xii. 65–6; A. Mansbridge, *The Older Universities of England* (1923), 16; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii. 298–309.

Mary; accepted the Elizabethan Settlement; and died, still in harness, five years later at the age of 86. These two men symbolised the conflicting influences of Rome and English continuity that were to govern Thomas Allen.

Suppressed in 1541, Gloucester College, according to Anthony Wood, 'did not lose its buildings, being all in a manner though ruinous, yet extant; excepting the chapel and library, both which . . . was quite demolished . . .'.³⁸ Its fate epitomised the iconoclasm and vandalism over which Aubrey and Wood repined a century later. The buildings were used for a few years by Robert King, last Abbot of Oseney and first Bishop of Oxford, but by the end of 1559, decayed and derelict, their only occupants were two ex-monks living on pensions.³⁹ However, they were bought in 1560 by Sir Thomas White, the Catholic founder of St. John's College, and, after a lapse of 19 years, re-opened as a private hall on St. John the Baptist's day, 24 June. The first four Principals of Gloucester Hall, as it now came to be called — William Stock, Richard Eden, Thomas Palmer, and Henry Russell — all came from St. John's and they covered the period 1560–80.⁴⁰ A Cistercian monk at Hailes Abbey, Gloucestershire, before the Dissolution, Richard Eden had been cellarer of the restored Benedictine abbey of Westminster in Mary's reign.⁴¹ Thomas Palmer, after persistent refusal to conform in religion, had to retire to his estates in Essex. But it was Stock whose conservatism was most influential. When commissions extruded Catholic sympathisers from college fellowships, Stock recruited them. One of the first tutors at the Hall was James Fenn of Montacute, Somerset, ejected from Corpus Christi College in 1562, who seems to have spent several years there before leaving for the continent. He returned to England a priest and was executed at Tyburn in 1584. Edmund Reynolds, also of Corpus, followed him to Gloucester Hall in 1568, Thomas Wharton and George Blackwell of Trinity in 1569 and 1571. In 1565 money for the Hall's first Exhibition was left by the exiled Marian Bishop of Worcester, Richard Pate — on condition that the schism with Rome was ended.⁴² Of the fourth Principal, Henry Russell, Commissioners visiting the Hall reported in November 1577 'the house is greatly suspected but the Principal there presenteth nothing . . .'. Despite this, he was left in possession until 1580, when he was succeeded by a fellow of Balliol, Christopher Bagshaw (1580–81) — subsequently known to Catholic fellow-exiles for his wayward tendencies as 'Doctor Erraticus'. He was soon sacked. Bagshaw sent his formal resignation to the Chancellor, the Earl of Leicester, by the hand of the Romanist, Edmund Reynolds. There followed John Delabere (1581–93) and then the long reign of John Hawley (1593–1626) of St. John's, an able administrator who was for many years assistant to the Vice Chancellor and, as such, became 'works manager' for Sir Thomas Bodley's project for a new university library in 1598. Hawley, who seems to have spent time and money in planning and planting the grounds, was evidently on excellent terms with his Church Papist colleagues, though under him the Hall seems gradually to have lost its Catholic character.

³⁸ A. Wood, *City of Oxford*, ii. 262.

³⁹ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii. 298. These monks appear to link the old and new foundations. King retained the see until his death in 1557. John and Henry King, bishops of London and Chichester, were his great and great great nephews.

⁴⁰ C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College*, 98. Stock was Principal 1560–1 and 1564–76 (also President of St John's 1564–70); Eden 1561–3 ('Edon' in *Alumni Oxonienses*); Thomas Palmer 1563–4; Henry Russell 1576–80.

⁴¹ He was probably third son of Thomas Eden, Clerk of the Star Chamber (*Alumni Oxonienses*; D. Knowles, *Religious Orders in England* (1959), iii. 442).

⁴² C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College*, 100.

Allen and Reynolds gave evidence for Hawley's widow, in a Chancery suit relating to her continuing residence in the lodgings of her husband's successor, Diggory Wheare (1626–47).⁴³ According to Wood, Wheare 'was reputed by some a learned and genteel man and by others a Calvinist'.⁴⁴

By 1572 Stock had built up a community of 73: 8 MAs, 13 BAs, 43 undergraduates, 8 servitors and 1 resident, the Catholic Sir George Peckham in the Principal's lodging⁴⁵ — the college was ill endowed and rents from lessees were useful. In 1575 it had 36 matriculations and by 1605, 54. In 1611 there were 74 members — second or third highest of the eight private halls.⁴⁶ In 1612 there were 1 Principal, 22 MAs, 5 BAs, 26 scholars and commoners and 8 'famuli', and it ranked fourth. The variations partly reflected the varying calibre and religious views of the Principals. It was in the early years of Diggory Wheare, whom Allen had helped to attract, that the Hall reached its greatest numbers. Whereas in 1627 it held only 40–50 students, by 1630 subscriptions were being collected to rebuild the ruined chapel and John Aubrey noted that 'Mr. Gibbon, Bluemantle', showed him a manuscript recording that in 1634 there were 92 students, 'some . . . persons of quality: ten or twelve went in their doublets of cloth of silver and gold'.⁴⁷ Numbers of undergraduates are difficult to gauge because matriculation lists were irregularly kept and recusants may have been excluded, but of students traced over the period 1570–1714 almost 40% came from Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, 15% from Wales and 8% from Middlesex⁴⁸ — curious evidence that the pre-Reformation bias of the College to the West of England continued. Perhaps this was, in the first place, because ex-monks turned schoolmasters, who had themselves been educated there, sent boys to the Hall.

THE POPISH GROVES OF ACADEME

When Thomas Allen entered Gloucester Hall in 1570, the outstanding character among the tutors of Catholic sympathies was Edmund Reynolds, who during 60 years at the Hall made no secret of his 'Romanist' views. Born in 1538 on the family property at Pinhoe, near Exeter, Edmund was one of five brothers, three of whom became fellows of Corpus while one proceeded from Winchester to New College. An uncle, Thomas, was Warden of Merton College (1545–59), Vice-Chancellor (1556–57) and Dean of Exeter (1554–59) under Bishop James Turberville, last Marian bishop of that see; he was deprived and died in the Marshalsea prison in 1559. Edmund, William and John pursued divergent courses after the Elizabethan Settlement. William left New College for Hart Hall in 1572 and then for the University of Louvain and the seminary at Douai,⁴⁹ while the youngest

⁴³ Chancery suit, *Wheare v Hawley*, 1627–45 (Oxf. Univ. Arch., WP α/60/1). His family were of Brentford, Middlesex (*Alumni Oxonienses* and Visitation of London 1633–5), where Susan Hawley (1622–1706), foundress of the English Canonesses Regular of the Holy Sepulchre, Liege, was born (J. Gillow, *Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics*).

⁴⁴ A. Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. P. Bliss, iii, 216.

⁴⁵ C.E. Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford* (1924), 294; A. Clark, *Registers of the University of Oxford*, ii, pt. 2 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xi), 34–5.

⁴⁶ A. Clark, *Wood's Life and Times*, iv (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxx), 151; *V.C.H. Oxon.*, iii, 298–9.

⁴⁷ *Brief Lives*, ii, 296; *Wood's Life and Times*, ii (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxi), 398.

⁴⁸ J. Gutch, *Collectanea Curiosa* (1781), i, 203; C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College*, 257–8. The percentages relate to 850 of the 1050 pupils recorded in *Alumni Oxonienses* as matriculating or taking degrees at the Hall.

⁴⁹ D.N.B. s.v. William Rainolds; *Bibliographical Dict. Eng. Catholics*.

and most ambitious, John, was an Anglican controversialist who became Dean of Lincoln and finally President of Corpus in 1599.⁵⁰ By an amazing irony, John played a main part in producing the Authorised (or King James) Version of the Bible while William, a professor at Rheims, played an even more prominent part in the Douai Version. Thus two brothers on opposite sides of the religious divide were responsible for the standard translations for Protestants and Catholics for over three centuries.

Edmund Reynolds of Gloucester Hall sat, for the most part comfortably, on the fence — a posture described as 'moderate Romanist' — conforming to the minimum required observances of the Established Church. (Priests surviving from Mary's reign did not condemn compulsory attendance.)⁵¹ In spite — or because — of this, Stock made Reynolds Deputy Principal of Gloucester Hall.⁵² In 1585 John and Edmund Reynolds carried out an evenly fought debate on the Catholic and Calvinist positions before the Chancellor of Oxford, the Earl of Leicester. Later that year Reynolds narrowly escaped execution for receiving seditious literature from abroad, including Cardinal Allen's *True . . . Defence of English Catholics*, published the previous year.⁵³ The real views of Reynolds are shown in his relations with his nephews and heirs and his land transactions, for he spent his years at Gloucester Hall amassing land. One nephew, William Reynolds, was a pupil at the Hall and he and his wife were recusants in 1612.⁵⁴ He appeared on later recusant rolls and one of his sons became a Bridgettine monk at Lisbon.⁵⁵ This William inherited the chief farm at Cassington from his uncle. Here, in the moated manor house adjoining the church, there was an attic chapel which was still in existence at the turn of the present century.⁵⁶ His brother, Richard, also appears on Jacobean recusant rolls:⁵⁷ he inherited a farm at Eynsham from his uncle. A third nephew, Matthew Cheriton, and his wife were also recusants.⁵⁸ Matthew was left a farm at Wolvercote;⁵⁹ when his wife, Avise, died on 23 June 1636, he married again, and Edmund Napper of the recusant family of Holywell was a party to the marriage settlement.⁶⁰ In the 1650s two members of the Cheriton family became Benedictine monks.⁶¹ It was a Francis Reynolds, with fellow pupils of the priest John Huddleston, who kept watch for the pursuers of Charles II when he lay hidden at Boscobel.⁶²

Anthony Wood noted that Reynolds' lodgings were on the staircase on the south side of the quadrangle, furthest from the hall, directly adjoining the door-way into the park. Next to them, and nearer the hall, were the rooms of Thomas Allen, 'an industrious

⁵⁰ *D.N.B.* s.v. John Rainolds (1549–1607).

⁵¹ A. Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (1978), 176.

⁵² *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii, 298; *Registers of the University of Oxford*, ii, pt. 2 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xi), 34.

⁵³ *C.S.P.D.* 1581–90, 238, 242. Thomas Alfield, the carrier, was executed on 6 July 1585. Reynolds said that the material had been sent by his brother and blandly claimed that his 'frequenting of divine service, receiving of holy communion and whole trade of life' proved he was no 'enemy to the state of religion in this realm established'. He got away with it.

⁵⁴ *Alumni Oxonienses*; Trinity College Cambridge MS, R5 14, Article 6.

⁵⁵ *Wood's Life and Times*, i, 305.

⁵⁶ *Parochial Collections*, Oxon. Rec. Soc. (ii), 77; Mrs. B. Stapleton, *Post Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire* (1906), 194.

⁵⁷ P.R.O. E 377/26, 28, 29.

⁵⁸ P.R.O. E 377/40, 44–47.

⁵⁹ The house apparently still existed in 1939 (Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, *City of Oxford* (1939), 187).

⁶⁰ Douai Abbey MS Scott Papers 34, 94.

⁶¹ *Downside Review*, iii, 249; iv, 80, 83, 132.

⁶² Thomas Blount, *Boscobel* (1680), 68.

antiquary and a student here for 60 years . . .⁶³ Thomas Hearne recorded that 'the late Dr. Benjamin Woodroffe, Principal of Gloucester Hall, used to take great pleasure in talking of this Allen and showing his room'.⁶⁴ From 1570 to 1630, when Reynolds died aged 92, the two men, united by affection, philosophy and longevity, remained neighbours.

The styles of the two friends were sharply contrasted. Reynolds, the more combative and practical in early life, was also the more retiring by nature; Allen, the soul of discretion in the opinions he expressed, was the more convivial. John Aubrey recalled that 'Mr. Allen came into the Hall to commons; Mr. Reynolds had his brought to his chamber'.⁶⁵ Allen had an old book of rhymes, which he often quoted 'at times of refection' to entertain his companions.⁶⁶ Unlike Reynolds, Allen never seems to have held a special college post; nor does he appear to have contributed to the rebuilding of the chapel in 1630. He also differed from Reynolds in owning no property other than books, manuscripts, instruments and clothes, though he had enough capital to leave sizeable bequests to relatives. Both, however, were notably lax in fulfilling the minimum duties required by statute to authenticate loyalty to the Queen and the Established Church. The Visitation of 1581 found Allen, then aged 40, conveniently absent from Gloucester Hall; while, as late as 1613, when Allen was 72 and Reynolds 75, an Ecclesiastical Commission visited Gloucester Hall on 20 April and was told that 'some of our seniors (as Mr. Marmion, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Parks, Mr. Allen and Cole, commoner) are found deficient' in the required observances.⁶⁷

True humanist that he was, although his specialty was mathematics and astrology, Allen's passion was studying and collecting ancient manuscripts. He was in touch, not only with antiquaries like Henry Ferrers, Brian Twyne and Sampson Erdeswicke and with Oxford collectors like Sir Henry Savile and Miles Windsor, but with major collectors such as Sir Robert Cotton and John Selden and the historian William Camden. The esteem of Camden for Allen can be seen in a handsome expression of thanks for discovering sources for *Britannia*⁶⁸ and in his leaving him the third highest of 20 odd bequests in his will.⁶⁹ Two of Allen's letters to Camden survive.⁷⁰ Allen's was probably the biggest private collection in Oxford; and, though Thomas Hearne was no doubt exaggerating when he reckoned that it contained about 600 manuscripts, it was a major collection by national standards too.⁷¹ The surviving material illustrates Allen's interests and religious sympathies. About half the 250 or so manuscripts that can be traced are mathematical or scientific; 15 medicine; 40 theology; 3 patristics; 3 liturgy; 16 saints' lives; 28 history and

⁶³ Wood, *City of Oxford*, ii. 253-9.

⁶⁴ Hearne, *Collections*, xi (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxii), 263.

⁶⁵ J. Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Clark (1898), i. 27.

⁶⁶ A. Wood, *Athenae*, i. 264.

⁶⁷ Oxford University Archives, Visitationes Aularum, N E P Supra, 45 ff.78 and 81-9. These references were recently discovered by Miss Ruth Vyse of the University Archives.

⁶⁸ *Britannia*, ed E. Gibson (1727), i. c/vii. It was of Henry Ferrers, however, that Camden said, 'He . . . from his candle . . . hath lighted mine'.

⁶⁹ £16 (T. Hearne, *A Collection of Curious Discourses* (1771), ii.391).

⁷⁰ B.L. MS. Cotton Julius C v, f.295, f.353. The first, dated 1 March 1619, wishes his friend a speedy recovery from illness; for the second, see below, p. 111.

⁷¹ 'Sir Kenelm Digby . . . had his noble collection of MSS after his death, many of which are now in the Bodleian Library . . . but then they are hardly the third part of what Mr Allen had' (T. Hearne, *Collections*, ed H. E. Salter (1914-21) xi, 263). Even the 200 preserved in the Digby Collection have been said to 'contain more information respecting the scientific work of the early Oxford school than any other collection'. (R.T. Gunther, *Early Science in Oxford*, i (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxvii), 13.

chronicles; 5 cartularies; 3 law. The mathematical manuscripts included those of Oxford's greatest mediaeval scientist, Roger Bacon. There were astronomical and astrological works by John Hollywood (De Sacrobosco), Gerard of Cremona and John Ashenden, a great Merton astronomer of the 14th century, together with Bede's 'Super Computum' and Ramon Lull's 'De Secretis Naturae'.⁷² Theological works included those of Robert Grosseteste, the 13th-century Oxford theologian, and others annotated in his hand, St. Aldhelm's 'De Virginitate' and 6 or perhaps 7 manuscripts of the mediaeval mystic, Abbot Aelred of Rievaulx. There were about 100 pages of Italian humanist writings. There were mediaeval English literary works by William Langland, Richard Rolle and Lydgate; mediaeval French included the earliest known version of the 'Chanson de Roland', from Oseney Abbey. The oldest was a fragment of an 8th-century version of Pope Gregory the Great's 'Regula Pastoralis'.⁷³ The most splendid was part of the Abingdon Missal, preserved from the destruction of that Abbey.⁷⁴ Two were relics of great sanctity. One, a volume from Glastonbury Abbey, contained four manuscripts written in Brittany, Wales and England in the 9th and 11th centuries and included a line drawing of St. Dunstan, thought to be by the saint himself;⁷⁵ the other was the illuminated St. John's Gospel, found in the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Durham Cathedral in 1104 and now at Stonyhurst College.⁷⁶ But the most intriguing clue to Allen's religious sympathies is an anonymous late mediaeval treatise defending the use of images, removed from New College Library, probably by Allen's friend, Richard Haydock who was a fellow, during the purge of 1599.⁷⁷

Only about 40 manuscripts came from the Oxford neighbourhood, the rest from all over England.⁷⁸ Some came from his pupils' families, perhaps in payment of fees. Allen's copy of John Bale's *Catalogus* of ancient manuscripts in Britain was carefully annotated with comments on the writers and their work.⁷⁹ Plainly he was a very discriminating collector at a time when the country was flooded with the debris of monastic libraries, and Commissions were attempting to purge those of Oxford colleges. He was generous in lending or giving away manuscripts. Apart from 26 which Sir Robert Cotton's librarian, Richard James 'got away from the good old man' in the 1620s, Brian Twyne received several, Henry Fellers, the antiquary, John Bancroft, Master of University College, Ralph Bathurst of Trinity, Corpus Christi College and John Selden others. Thomas Harriott was among those who borrowed his mathematical manuscripts — for so long that, dying of cancer at Syon in 1620, he could not remember how many.⁸⁰

Despite his great reputation as a mathematician, Allen seems to have produced little written work and he published nothing in print. He apparently wrote notes on the

⁷² Bodl. MSS. Bodl. 491, 714, 879, Auct. F.3.15.

⁷³ Bodl. MS. Arch Selden B.26, f.34.

⁷⁴ Bodl. MS. Digby 227.

⁷⁵ Bodl. MS. Auct. F.4.32.

⁷⁶ Archbishop Ussher, who was in touch with Allen about manuscripts, noted that he owned it (Bodl. MS. Rawlinson D.280 f.41v). It was given to the Jesuit College at Liege by an English canon of Tongres in 1769.

⁷⁷ Bodl. MS. Auct. E.4.9.

⁷⁸ For a more detailed analysis of the manuscripts see A. G. Watson, *Essays to N.R. Ker*, 293 et seq. For discussion of those mentioned here see the author's article in *Downside Review* c., April 1982.

⁷⁹ Bodl. MS A.4.12 Art. Wood says these notes are his but were entered 'by another hand' (*Athenae* ii. 544). The handwriting is not his sloping, straggling epistolary hand but in neat italic lettering, which he may have kept for notes, since it is not unlike another fragment preserved as his handwriting (Bodl. MS. Rawl. D 1386, f.7).

⁸⁰ Will of Thomas Harriot in R.C.H. Tanner, 'Thomas Harriot as Mathematician', *Rivista Internazionale di Storia della Scienza*, ix. (1967); *Wood's Life and Times*, i. 249.

astrological works of William Lilly and also on religious foundations in and about Oxford, especially Gloucester Hall and its scholars, which came into the possession of Twyne.⁸¹ But the only long manuscript that survives is a commentary on a classic astrological work, the second book of Ptolemy's 'De Astrorum Judiciis'. This, however, has recently been called the most elaborate native piece of astrological learning of the Elizabethan period.⁸² His public lectures were very popular,⁸³ which may be why Sir Philip Sidney (an undergraduate at Christ Church 1568–71), and the other courtiers who accompanied Prince Albert Laski of Poland on his visit to Oxford in June 1583, brought the Prince to see him. Allen was also a great encourager of the young. He helped to bring Diggory Wheare and John Budden (later Principals of Gloucester and Broadgates Halls) to the Hall, while Brian Twyne and Richard Hegge, the mathematician, were among those who benefitted from his influence. At the age of 90 he contributed a testimonial to Hackwell's 'Epiphanius'.⁸⁴ His eccentric, many-sided friend, Richard Haydock — fellow of New College, painter, brass engraver, 'sleeping preacher' and doctor — left the tribute that might most have pleased a humanist. In his translation of Lomazzo's 'Trattato dell' Arte della Pittura', published in Oxford in 1598, he acknowledged that Allen first obtained it for him — 'that unfeigned lover and furtherer of all good arts'.⁸⁵ However, the best known case of Allen's beneficence, and his greatest coup, came more than 20 years later. On 19 November 1621, when he was nearing his eighty-first birthday, he wrote to William Camden. The letter, though formal and in another's crisp, italic hand, is in Allen's gentle, courteous style and bears his signature:

'Sir, there is a report in Oxford of your noble intention toward the University for the erecting of a History Lecture, with a large endowment . . . If you have not already in your resolutions designed some more eminent and able person . . . I shall be bold to commend unto you with earnest entreaty an acquaintance of mine, one Mr Wheare . . . now resident in Gloucester Hall . . . You shall receive such ample testimony from the University that you shall think him not unworthy of your respect . . .'

He went on to say that he would account the appointment 'a special fruit of our ancient friendship'.⁸⁶ The Chair of History, which resulted, is Camden's memorial in the University of Oxford; its placement in Gloucester Hall is Allen's.

His discretion, in spite of reports to the authorities of non-attendance at Communion services, enabled Allen to play a significant part in the life of the university. He seems to have been expert in university law and custom, especially those affecting private halls, for he owned a copy of the medieval statutes, the 'Liber Diversorum Privilegiorum Universitatis Oxon', and a Bedell's Book, together with the university statutes for the government of halls and the regulations of two medieval colleges, St. George's in the Castle and St. Mary's.⁸⁷ His name appears in the records of various committees

⁸¹ Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 54; *Biographia Britannica* (1707), 142; A. Wood, *City of Oxford*, ii, 259, 261.

⁸² K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1979), 342. William Lilly's copy of 'Claudii Ptolemei Pelusiensis, de Astrorum judiciis . . . liber secundus . . . cum expositione Thomae Alleyne . . .' is Bodl. MS. Ashmole 388; the commentary on Ptolemy's third book, which Wood saw, has disappeared.

⁸³ See the funeral oration, below p. 127.

⁸⁴ Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 282, 457; iii, 216, 439; Hearne, *Collections*, iii, 29.

⁸⁵ A.L. Rowse, *The Elizabethan Renaissance: The Cultural Achievement* (1972), 178.

⁸⁶ B.L. Cotton MS. Julius C v, f.353.

⁸⁷ Bodl. MS. Rawlinson Stat. 34; MS. Bodley 337; MS. Wood D 32, pp.553–68; *Wood's Life and Times*, iv, 105, 106, 127, 130, 138.

appointed between 1588 and 1613. With his close friends, Provost Blincowe of Oriel and William Gent of Gloucester Hall, he was a member of the small steering committee set up by Convocation on 30 March 1598 to supervise and assist Thomas Bodley in furnishing the new university library. Bodley indeed singled him out for unique praise as 'ever a most careful provoker and solicitor of sundry great persons to become benefactors'. The father of a Gloucester Hall pupil, the Catholic Viscount Montague, was the third name on Bodley's register; while two of Allen's patrons, the ninth Earl of Northumberland and Sir John Scudamore, were among the earliest donors. The father of other pupils, Sir John Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, also contributed, as did Catholic acquaintances — for example, Sir Richard Fermor of Somerton, Robert Chamberlain of Shirburn and Jane Owen of Godstow, Oxfordshire. It was Allen's friend, 'old Sheldon of Beoley', who provided the craftsman to make the book-chains for the new library and his pupil, Kenelm Digby, is said to have provided '50 good oaks' for the new Schools building from his park at Gotehurst.⁸⁸ Allen and Gent alone, of all Bodley's friends and colleagues, were recognised in his will, receiving his two best cloaks. Allen in return apparently contributed a Latin elegy to a collection of poems made on Bodley's death.⁸⁹ About 230 of Allen's manuscripts are now in the Bodleian Library. Twelve came from Allen himself in 1598, 7 in 1602, and 2 in 1608, apart from printed books in 1604; and over 200 came from an ex-pupil to whom he had bequeathed them, Sir Kenelm Digby, in 1634. Allen never held a University Chair, being too old (and his astrological ideas perhaps too antiquated) at 78 when his friend, Sir Henry Savile, Provost of Eton and Warden of Merton, founded a chair of astronomy in 1619; but, typically, he seems to have agreed to the appointee, John Bainbridge, being elected a senior member of Gloucester Hall.

Edmund Reynolds and Thomas Allen were Church Papists who compromised with the law. There were Catholics of deeper dye in the Principal's lodging. Sir George Peckham came to reside at the Hall in the time of Principal Stock. His father and brother had been Privy Councillors under Queen Mary and his second wife was of an obstinately Catholic family, the Gerards of Bryn, Lancashire.⁹⁰ This seems to have led him into strict recusancy; and it was probably as a result of fines that he gave up his seat at Denham and by 1572 had taken up residence in the Principal's lodging. Nevertheless he joined his brother-in-law, the courtier and Gentleman Pensioner, Thomas Gerard, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and that arch-Protestant seadog, Sir Richard Grenville — with Sir Philip Sidney in support — to found a colony for Catholics in the Americas (like Maryland, subsequently founded by yet another Trinity Catholic, George Calvert, Lord Baltimore). A settlement in Newfoundland failed.⁹¹ In 1584 Sir George and his family were thrown into the Tower; but evidently he returned to his estate soon after.⁹² He was followed in the Principal's lodging by another recusant, this time from Ashby St Ledgers,

⁸⁸ For Allen's role in the foundation see the author's 'Thomas Allen, Gloucester Hall and the Bodleian Library', *Downside Review*, c. April 1982. For Catholic donors see A. Davidson, 'Catholics and Bodley', *B.L.R.* viii, 252-7.

⁸⁹ *Bodleionnema* (1613), B.L. 1213 l.g., quoted in *Downside Review*, c. The only other specimen of Allen's verse that appears to survive is a poem on the visit to Oxford of the Queen's brother, Christian IV, King of Denmark, in 1606 (B.L. Royal MS. 12A lxiv).

⁹⁰ John Gerard, the Jesuit escaper from the Tower, was Peckham's brother-in-law (C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College*, (1900), 96; P. Caraman, *John Gerard* (1956), 217).

⁹¹ *D.N.B.*; R. Howell, *Sir Philip Sidney* (1968), 120. The Gloucester Hall link may have helped George Blackwell to escape from the Marshalsea Prison about Christmas 1598. Thomas Gerard, then Knight Marshal, was blamed (N.E. McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, (1939), i. 63).

⁹² Lady Peckham was living at Denham by Whitsun 1586 (P. Caraman, *John Gerard*, (1956), 217).

Northamptonshire. The register of St. Thomas's for 1577 recorded 'that Sir William Catesby, lying at Gloucester Hall with the Lady Catesby his wife . . . the said lady being delivered of a woman child, did pay her chrism and all other duties to the vicar and clerk of St. Thomas' Parish, acknowledging the parish to be their own parish during all the time of their abode there . . . The said child was not christened by the said vicar but by a Popish priest . . .'.⁹³ Possibly this priest was the Jesuit, Robert Dibdale, chaplain to the Peckhams till about 1586. The same register recorded that in 1600 Mr. John Fettiplace of Gloucestershire, 'equitis filius', occupied the Principal's lodging. He was followed by a Mr. Richard Ingram, who was not a Catholic.⁹⁴ The ambience provided by Peckham, Catesby and Fettiplace during the years 1575–1600 was perhaps reassuring to a recusant mother or a Church Papist father.

In the 17th century the relationship of teacher and pupil was based on that of master and apprentice.⁹⁵ Personal arrangements were made between tutors and parents for the care of their sons — an important point in considering the role of Allen and his friend, Reynolds, in recruiting undergraduates for Gloucester Hall. The usual age for admission to university was about 15, but younger boys were allowed. Recusants were inclined to come up early because the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy only became obligatory at 16; noblemen were exempt. Sir George Peckham and Sir William Catesby seem to have recommended the Hall to their neighbours, Sir John and Lady Fortescue of Salden (son and daughter-in-law of the executed Sir Adrian), for their sons William and Thomas, aged 16 and 12, matriculated on 3 August 1578.⁹⁶ From Somerset in 1581 came the 5 Fitzjames brothers of Redlynch, the youngest aged only 7. One, James, was arraigned before the Star Chamber after the Gunpowder Plot;⁹⁷ the youngest, Nicholas, became a Benedictine monk in 1607. This family were related to the Dorset Turbervilles and, one year later, George Turberville of Bere came up to the Hall. From the Welsh line, 2 brothers, Richard and William Turberville of Brecon, matriculated in 1581 and 1587. From Northamptonshire there came in 1586 Robert Catesby and his brother, William: Robert was to lose much of his estate in Essex's rebellion and his life in the Gunpowder Plot. One of his accomplices, Francis Tresham, also seems to have been at the Hall.⁹⁸ A great-grandson of Sir Thomas More, Philip Roper of Eltham, Kent, arrived in 1588. Then Thomas and Henry Hawkins of the strongly recusant family of Nash Court, Kent, came up in 1591 and 1592. They had been taught by a recusant tutor called Greene (perhaps Adam Green who matriculated at St. Mary's Hall in 1584).⁹⁹ In 1601 Humphrey Baskerville of Herefordshire arrived: he was connected by marriage with the Catholic Scudamores of Holme Lacy and the Throckmortons of Coughton Court. Three

⁹³ Wood, *City of Oxford*, iii. 259.

⁹⁴ Allen's evidence in the Chancery suit, *Wheare v Hawley* (Oxford University Archives, WP α/60/1) gives Fettiplace's christian name as Richard. If so, he was perhaps the son of Francis Fettiplace and Dorothy Yate; his brother John is said to have been a priest (MSS Notes 'Swyncombe Collections', Stonor Park). Thanks are due to the Hon. Georgina Stonor for this information. Ingram is referred to in the Chancery case quoted. A Balliol man, he became a rector in Gloucestershire.

⁹⁵ See Sir Simonds D'Ewes, 'Diary', in *College Life in the Time of James I* (1851), ed J.H. Marsden.

⁹⁶ These and similar details are mainly drawn from J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, supplemented by county 'Visitations'. William Fortescue was knighted by the Catholic Sir Christopher Blount in 1600. A generation later this family, friends and neighbours of the Catholic Digbys of Gotehurst, were, like them, to be connected by marriage to the heiresses of the Catholic Sir Edward Stanley of Eynsham, Frances and Venetia.

⁹⁷ Richard Fitzjames, the Warden of Merton commemorated by Fitzjames Gateway of that college, was a relative.

⁹⁸ Wood says 'either at St John's College or Gloucester Hall or both' (*Athenae*, i. 754). The hall would be a more likely place for a non-matriculating recusant.

⁹⁹ He arrived in Rheims in 1589 (G. Anstruther, *op cit*, i; A.C.F. Beales, 'A Biographical Catalogue of Catholic Schoolmasters', *Recusant History*, vii).

younger brothers of Henry, fifth Baron Windsor (1562–1615) of Bradenham, High Wycombe, whose names were not registered, were tutored at the college about 1585 by Richard Norris 'under one Mr. Allen' according to a spy's report.¹⁰⁰ The Windsor boys, relatives of Allen's friend Miles Windsor, had been taught by a priest, Richard Chapman, at Addington, Buckinghamshire; the Windsors were connected by marriage with Allen's friend and fellow antiquary, Henry Ferraers of Baddesley Clinton. One, Edward, was to become involved in the Babington Plot.¹⁰¹

Allen's influence is more clearly seen in a further cache of noblemen. In 1589 there came up William Percy, second brother of the ninth Earl of Northumberland, who had become a patron of Allen in the 1580s. His Petworth neighbour of the same age, Anthony Browne, son of Viscount Montague of Cowdray, arrived the same year. William became a poet and playwright. Evidently his stay was rewarding for in the years 1593–5 the sixth, seventh and eighth sons of the eighth Earl, Alan (1577–1613), Jocelyn (1578–1631) and George (1580–1632), came up from Eton College. Probably associated with these Percies were three Lawsons, James, Ralph and Edmund, said to be of Derby, Durham and Yorkshire respectively, who arrived in 1586, 1587 and 1595. The first two were certainly from a northern family with recusant connexions, and linked to the earl's family; Edmund, born after 1567, was presumably a younger brother.¹⁰² The Percies had apparently been tutored at Syon by an ex-pupil of Gloucester Hall, Robert Widmerpoole, executed in 1588.¹⁰³ Then from Dorton, Buckinghamshire, came the Dormers, Robert and Giffard, in 1601, sons of Sir John Dormer, cousin of the Catholic Sir Robert of Wing, first Baron Dormer. His first wife was a Giffard of Chillington, his third a Blount of Mapledurham (both of Catholic families) and his son Robert was heir to Allen's friend, Sir Michael Dormer of Ascott, Oxfordshire.¹⁰⁴ Another old friend, Edward Hindmarsh, ex-fellow of Trinity, was at this time a tutor of the Dormers of Wing and Allen himself was a visitor of the Dormers of Ascott. A few months before, John Fettiplace of Gloucestershire had come up, no doubt by arrangement with his cousin in Principal Hawley's lodging. John Smith, son of the Catholic George of Ashby Folville, Leicestershire and Anne Giffard of Chillington, Staffordshire, attended for 3 years: he was later to become a priest.¹⁰⁵

Thirty years earlier, William Bishop of a recusant gentry family of Brailes, Warwickshire had come up to the Hall in or about 1570; he was followed in 1590 and 1597 by Roger¹⁰⁶ and John. William was to succeed George Blackwell, the archpriest, and in 1623 to receive episcopal consecration — the first since the Reformation. The Sheldons were neighbours of the Bishops and it was perhaps thus that Allen made one of his best

¹⁰⁰ Of Milverton, Somerset, brother of Silvester Norris S.J.; banished 1585 (Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, ii; P.R.O. SP 12/185, 55; Mrs. B. Stapleton, *Post Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire*, 8).

¹⁰¹ P. Caraman, *William Weston* (1955), 78. Presumably Chapman was at the Curzons' house at Addington (Stapleton, *Missions*, 107). Henry Ferraers' mother was Bridget, daughter of William Lord Windsor of Hewell Grange, Tardebigge, Warwickshire.

¹⁰² *Visitations of the North* (Surtees Society), 146.

¹⁰³ A.C.F. Beales, 'A Biographical Catalogue of Catholic Schoolmasters', *Recusant History*, vii, 285.

¹⁰⁴ A. Davidson, Thesis, 227; M. MacLagan, 'The Dormer family in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire', *Oxoniensia*, xi–xii, 90–101. The latter shows no Giffard in a 'key pedigree': perhaps this is a cousin, Geoffrey, whose father died in 1595 and may have been living at Dorton. As Sir John's brother appears to have been Vicar of Olney, the extent of his Catholic sympathies is doubtful but he seems to have been executor to the Catholic Lord Dormer (N.E. McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ii, 42).

¹⁰⁵ G. Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, ii.

¹⁰⁶ A. Clark, *Registers of the University of Oxford*, ii, pt. 2, 85 (not in *Alumni Oxonienses*).

friends, the older Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, Worcestershire and Weston, Oxfordshire.¹⁰⁷ Twenty years after the death of John Dormer of Steeple Barton in 1584, Sheldon bought his manor house for his second son, Edward. Sheldon in 1612 bequeathed to his 'dear and good friend Mr. Doctor Blincowe, Provost of Oriel', his 'best roan gelding or nag' and to his 'like good friend Mr. Thomas Allen so much fine black cloth as will make him a long cloak and £10 in money'.¹⁰⁸ Another Edward Sheldon (1599–1687) of Stratton, Gloucestershire, came up about 1613.¹⁰⁹

Converts made at Gloucester Hall included Sir John Davies, subsequently a follower of the Earl of Essex and of Sir Christopher Blount. In 1574, Anthony Wood noted, 'under the tuition of one who was much inclined to the Roman persuasion', Davies 'made great proficiency in his studies; and Mr. Thomas Allen of that house, finding that his genii were much addicted to the mathematics, instructed him therein and gave him all the encouragement imaginable'. An informer, Thomas Fitzherbert, in league with the priest-catcher, Richard Topcliffe, alleged that Davies accompanied Allen to the house of his cousin, William Bassett, Sheriff of Staffordshire, in the summer vacation of 1591 and helped them in astrological predictions.¹¹⁰ Since judicial astrology involving the life of the Queen had been made a felony by Act of Parliament and Bassett was also accused of harbouring priests, an offence punishable by death, it was a serious charge. Nothing came of it. In 1601 Davies took part in Essex's rebellion and was captured. 'Taunted that he was a Papist, he denied not that in Oxford he was instructed in the Romish religion by his tutor; he was confirmed by [Sir Christopher] Blount's example of life . . .'.¹¹¹ Condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered, he was reprieved in 1601 and lived in retirement at Bere Court, Pangbourne. A son, John Davies, came up to Gloucester Hall in 1626. Then there was Sir Kenelm Digby of Gotehurst, Buckinghamshire, who, although his mother was a pious recusant and he had been brought up a Catholic, 'about the year 1618 . . . was sent to Gloucester Hall . . . and committed to the care of Thomas Allen . . . but to the tuition of another'.¹¹² Digby, whom Allen called 'the Miranda of the age' (after the youthful genius of Lorenzo de Medici's 'Platonic Academy'), seems to have been his favourite pupil and hope for the future. Son of the Gunpowder Plotter, Sir Everard, apart from a spell during 1630–36 when he conformed in vain hope of high office, Digby remained throughout life a Catholic of an unorthodox kind.¹¹³

Apart from the archpriest, bishop, and seminary priests mentioned earlier, the Hall produced four Jesuits — John Falconer (1577–1656), Henry Hawkins (?1577–1646),¹¹⁴ Francis Geoffrey and Henry Stanton. Four former members were executed for their religion. James Fenn suffered at Tyburn in 1584, Robert Widmerpoole at Canterbury in

¹⁰⁷ It was the younger, also a Catholic, who was Anthony Wood's patron and hence partly responsible for his favourable view of Catholicism.

¹⁰⁸ P.R.O. PROB 11/(PCC 28 Capell), proved 19 April 1613.

¹⁰⁹ Of Edward's ten children Lionel became a Benedictine monk and Ralph a Royal equerry; he himself was buried in the Catholic Chapel Royal founded by Queen Henrietta Maria at Somerset House (*D.N.B.*).

¹¹⁰ B.L. Harl. MS. 6998, f.248, printed in B. Camm, *Forgotten Shrines* (1910), Appendix B, Article 10.

¹¹¹ Wood, *Athenae*, ii. 373. Blount is said to have been taught as a boy by William Allen, subsequently cardinal.

¹¹² *Athenae*, iii, 688: i.e. Allen was his 'moral tutor'.

¹¹³ His brother (Major General Sir) John, educated at St Omers and the English College, Rome, was a recusant. Kenelm's attitude is clarified in his letters, especially on his wife's death ('A New Digby Letter Book', ed. V. Gabrieli, *National Library of Wales Journal*, ix and x).

¹¹⁴ Second son of Sir Thomas Hawkins of Nash Court, Boughton-under-Blean, Kent; author of 'Parthenia Sacra', 1633, the most important Catholic emblem book in English literature. A sister Benedicta was a Benedictine nun in Brussels. See W. Lottes, 'Henry Hawkins and Parthenia Sacra' in *The Review of English Studies*, xxvi, cii (May 1975).

1588; Nicholas Garlick and Robert Ludlam, who were at the Hall in the 1570s, were hanged, drawn and quartered at Derby in 1588. As the years proceeded, the even tenor of life at the Hall was interrupted by ghastly reminders of the dangers of recusancy. The execution of colleagues and pupils must have made a profound impression. There were also Allen's friends, Thomas Ford of Trinity, executed at Tyburn in 1582, and George Napper of Corpus, hanged, drawn and quartered outside the gates of Trinity in Broad Street, on 4 November 1610. There was the execution in Oxford in 1589 of George Nicholls, Richard Yaxley, Thomas Belson and Humphrey Pritchard; and the trial of John Owen of Godstow in 1615, whose sentence of execution was commuted to banishment. Disaster came near with the arrest and interrogation of Edmund Reynolds in 1585; it came nearer in 1591 when the articles of complaint against his cousin, William Bassett, directly involved him. But the deepest shock—reverberating through all the Catholic country houses — was the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, resulting in the death of Allen's former pupil, Robert Catesby and the execution of Sir Everard Digby, stepson of his old acquaintance, Sampson Erdeswicke. Yet the old don survived every hazard. Perhaps these horrors seemed pointless as well as frightening; no doubt, as the years wore on, religious sentiment and political aspirations weakened. Then, as his position in the university became stronger, it was natural for him to find friends outside the Hall among heads of colleges. But Lady Digby's choice of Allen as moral tutor for her son, Sir Kenelm, in 1618, when he was 77, strongly suggests that his deepest sympathies had not changed. For, as Aubrey records, Kenelm 'did not wear a gown there', that is, as a recusant pupil, did not formally matriculate.¹¹⁵

However, the extent of Popery at Gloucester Hall must not be exaggerated. Some of the tutors were there because marriage lost them fellowships at other colleges. There were always up to a dozen private residents, and not all were Papists. That cheerful gossip and go between, William Gent, who frequently figures in the letters of John Chamberlain and Sir Thomas Bodley¹¹⁶ lived at Gloucester Hall with his wife, a close friend of Allen. Sir Thomas sent his stepson, Henry Ball, to the Hall in 1600. John Hawley, the Vice Chancellor's assistant for many years and the 'Mr. Principal' of Bodley's letters, can hardly have been a Catholic. His cousins, Jerome of Boston, near Brentford, Middlesex arrived in 1604, followed by his brother Richard, and Somerset cousins, Hatton and Edward, in 1600 and 1605. The extent to which Hawley's Calvinist successor, Wheare, altered the tone of the Hall is shown by the fact that the Parliamentary leader, John Pym, who had studied under him at Broadgates Hall, in 1623–5 sent his sons John and Alexander¹¹⁷ to Gloucester Hall. Evidently by that time there was little for a Puritan to fear; and there were always plenty of students with no special Catholic sympathies. In fact the Catholics seem to have been a minority of varying size, some of them of very high social standing.

Of all the English counties, Oxfordshire was perhaps the richest recruiting ground for priests. Even by the early 17th century, though few appear on recusant rolls, about one third of the gentry families were Catholic.¹¹⁸ They were correspondingly influential. In 1612 'convicted or indicted recusants and non-communicants' in Oxfordshire included no less than 156 gentry and 282 yeomen. Among them were Sir Francis and Sir Henry Stonor, Sir John Curzon, Sir Richard Fermor, Sir Edward Stanley, Sir Richard Blount of

¹¹⁵ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i. 225.

¹¹⁶ N.E. McClure *Letters of John Chamberlain*; G.W. Wheeler, *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James* (1926).

¹¹⁷ C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College*, 105. Alexander is not listed in *Alumni Oxonienses*.

¹¹⁸ *V.C.H. Oxon*, ii. 43 et seq.

Mapledurham, Sir George Raleigh, Sir Francis Fortescue, Sir Henry Browne, Sir Edmund Lenthall, Francis Plowden, Benedict Winchcombe, Robert Harcourt, William Tempest, Edward Napper, Charles Babington and George Throckmorton.¹¹⁹ Several sheriffs were Catholic, including Sir Richard Fermor of Somerton, Sir John Curzon of Waterperry and Benedict Winchcombe of Noke.

Marian priests — the non-conforming, or not fully conforming, Elizabethan clergy ordained in Mary's reign — are poorly documented and difficult to trace but must have been fairly plentiful until the 1580s. During Elizabeth's reign the county produced about 30 secular priests and it yielded 12 Jesuits in the first half of the 17th century. There was a good supply of clergy and some were frequently in Oxford.¹²⁰ Robert Parsons and, until their capture, Edmund Campion, William Weston and John Gerard, were among the Jesuits who appeared in Oxfordshire; and in the years 1588–91 the central meeting place for the English Jesuits is thought to have been across the Warwickshire border at Baddesley Clinton, seat of Allen's friend, Henry Ferrers. Tusmore, Woodstock, Sandford, Waterperry, Somerton, Kiddington and Oxford itself were among the mission centres they served.¹²¹ Thomas Plowden, Thomas and Giles Poulton, Edward Bentley, John Falconer, John Gardiner, Thomas Fermor, Richard Jennings, William Gage, Henry Gascoigne, Anthony Greenway (brother-in-law of Robert Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt), Thomas Talbot, Charles Waldegrave, Edward Walpole and William Lacey or Wolfe were among those who worked in this district before 1640.¹²² As for Benedictines, Benet Smith (d. 1636) and Robert Sherwood, probably the son of Allen's friend John of student days,¹²³ who came to England in 1624 and died in 1665, were chaplains to the Brownes at Kiddington, a few miles north of Woodstock; Anselm Turberville (d. 1645) was also in the area; Laurence Lowick died at Little Stoke in October 1633; Lewis Edner died at Temple Cowley in April 1635; and John Curry was in the county before his death in June 1634. The Brownes were friends of Allen's pupil, Sir Kenelm Digby of Gotehurst. Sir Henry had purchased 3 manors in the neighbourhood from Philip Earl of Montgomery in 1609 and his first wife, Anne, was sister of another pupil, Robert Catesby.

¹¹⁹ A. Davidson, Thesis, 724–31, prints the full list from Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.5 14 art 6.

¹²⁰ William Hartley and Gregory Gunnes (ex-chaplains of St John's and Magdalen Colleges) were among the Marian priests in the county. Apart from Humphrey Hyde (who seems often to have been in Hampshire) during the years 1604–34, seminary priests trained at Douai or the English College, Rome, included John Colleton and Thomas Ford, both living with the Yate family at Lyford for a few years before their capture in 1581; John Filby between the years 1579 and 1610; his brother William between 1581 and his capture and execution in 1582; perhaps Allen's one-time assistant at Gloucester Hall, Richard Norris who from 1579 till his capture in 1581 was attached to the Owens of Godstow (though he was mainly at their town house in Holborn); William Harris who was at Iffley around 1577; George Nicholls between 1584 and his execution in Oxford in 1589; Anthony Tickner (Tuchiner) before 1604; George Napper of Holywell between 1603 and 1610; Oliver Almond between 1591 and 1625; John Appletree perhaps between 1579 and 1610; Henry Clinch between 1581 and 1610; William Fleckney between 1601 and 1604; Francis Foster around 1610; Arthur Pitts, chaplain to the Stonors of Blount's Court from about 1603 to 1635; Richard White from 1582 to 1612 (Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*; Davidson, Thesis, *passim*).

¹²¹ P. Caraman, *Henry Garnet* (1964), 102, 128; Stapleton, *Missions*, 6. Tusmore was bought by the Fermors in 1612 and had hiding places; Kiddington was bought by the Catholic Brownes (the family of Lord Montague) in 1613 (Stapleton, *Missions*, 74, 123).

¹²² Wolfe, who arrived in 1635, after Allen's death, spent most of his missionary life in and around Oxford and seems, at any rate in his later years, to have been on excellent terms with members of the university (Wood, *Athenae*, iii. 994–6).

¹²³ John Sherwood, Allen's contemporary at Trinity, left Oxford to practise medicine in Bath (d. 1621). Robert was born in Bath and was presumably his son (Stapleton, *Missions*, 127).

There can have been little difficulty, normally, for any Catholic tutor or their undergraduate charges in attending Mass. This might be held at the Nappers' home at Holywell, one of the four public houses in the town owned by Catholic publicans — the Star, the Blue Boar, the Mitre and the Dolphin¹²⁴ — or at a convenient manor house nearby. They might ride to the Brownes at Kiddington; to Eynsham Abbey, home of Sir Edward Stanley and his wife, Lucy Percy, daughter of the Catholic seventh earl;¹²⁵ to one of the farms nearby belonging to Edmund Reynolds; to the Powells of Sandford; to Waterperry, where in 1562 Vincent Curzon of an old Derbyshire family (to which Allen was related), had bought the manor;¹²⁶ or, perhaps usually, to Godstow where 'Mr. Owen of Godstow keepeth continually in his house Hynd, a priest'.¹²⁷ We know from Hearne that Allen was familiar with Godstow, for he left a note of the design found on the headstone of Henry II's 'Fair Rosamund' and the Priory's recusant owner gave him a manuscript.¹²⁸ It was obviously a place to interest undergraduates, only a short distance up-river from Gloucester Hall. Waterperry was presided over from 1610 by John Curzon's wife, Magdalen Dormer (daughter of Sir Robert of Wing), to whom a mural tablet remains: 'Magdalen by name, a saint by grace, died much bewailed and buried in this place'. But as John and his brother Richard went, not to Gloucester Hall, but to New Inn Hall (aged 11 and 7) in May 1588 there may have been no close connexion with Thomas Allen. Perhaps their Jesuit missionaries distrusted him; or perhaps it was considered dangerous to link two local centres of Popery so closely.

THOMAS ALLEN AND THE BEAU MONDE

The convivial Thomas Allen liked to escape from Oxford once the summer examinations were over. According to Aubrey, 'he was generally acquainted and every Long Vacation he rode into the country to visit his old acquaintance and patrons, to whom his great learning, mixed with much sweetness of humour, rendered him very welcome'. We have seen how many Catholics there were among the gentry around Oxford and how the duties of religion drew them together. Further afield, he certainly knew Richard Fermor of Somerton, Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton, whose family derived from Staffordshire, and the Dormers of Eythorpe and Wing. Within a day or two's journey of Oxford by horseback, lived old pupils with more influential families. Among them were the Catesbys of Ashby St Ledgers, Northamptonshire and Chastleton, (until its confiscation after Essex's rebellion in 1601); the Percys of Syon House, Middlesex; the Peckhams of Denham, the Digbys of Gotehurst, and the Fortescues of Salden, Buckinghamshire; and

¹²⁴ Holywell Manor had a hide (M. Hodgetts, 'Priests' Hiding Holes', *The Venerable*, xix, 431–42). For the inns see A. Davidson, 'An Oxford family', *Recusant History*, xiii, 289–90 and, more generally, *V.C.H. Oxon*, iv, 412–13.

¹²⁵ P.R.O. KP/145/13/25 contains a conformity certificate dated 2 June (?) 1593 for 'Edward Stanley Esquire and Dame Lucy, his wife', suggesting that they were recusants before that date; the family were recusants again by 1612, though Sir Edward had 'hereafter promised . . . to show all Christian duties'.

¹²⁶ The Curzons leased the manor from 1523 and Vincent's grandson, John became Sheriff and was knighted (1641). It remained in the Curzon name and Catholic hands until 1815 (*V.C.H. Oxon*, v, 298).

¹²⁷ Stapleton, *Missions*, 184–5. Humphrey Hyde, alias Hynd (?1579–?1635) arrived in England from the English College, Rome in 1604; Thomas Aldington followed in 1611, bound for Godstow. (Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, ii). In Hearne's time the Priory was owned by 'John Powell of Sandford Esq., Roman Catholic' (Hearne, *Collections*, v, (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xlii), 204–5).

¹²⁸ Hearne *Collections*, v, 204; *Wood's Life and Times*, i, 342; Bodl. MS. Rawl. D 1386, f.7. A fragment said to be Allen's handwriting indicates, 'T. Alleni hoc e: ex dono magistri Ricardi Owen'. Owen was imprisoned at Ely in 1588.

the Sheldons of Beoley and Weston, Warwickshire. Then there were his Staffordshire relations and connections: Bassetts of Blore, Fitzherberts of Norbury and Swynnerton, Burtons of Falde, Erdeswickes (afterwards Digbys) of Sandon and, no doubt, many more. Allen seems to have been a special friend of his cousin the Catholic Sheriff of Derbyshire, William Bassett, and visited the 'goodly houses', set in parks, at Blore and Langley. The informer, Thomas Fitzherbert, spotted the 'necromancer' there in 1580 and again at Michaelmas, 1591.¹²⁹

But the pilgrimage of which we know most, owing to the happy survival of John Chamberlain's correspondence with his young friend Dudley Carleton, was to the house of Sir Michael Dormer of Ascott in Great Milton, Oxfordshire. Sir Michael seems to have been a Protestant or Church Papist who returned to Catholicism in old age. In 1619 he and three servants were presented as recusants 'for not receiving the communion and seldom coming to church to divine service'.¹³⁰ He was a distant cousin of the Catholic Dormers of Wing, whom Allen knew through his old Trinity friend Edward Hindmarsh, for many years their family tutor, and perhaps, the Catesbys (for Dorothy Dormer was the sister of that Sir William Catesby whose family were at Gloucester Hall in 1577). Sir Michael was first cousin of Sir John Dormer of Dorton and Long Crendon whose sons were pupils at Gloucester Hall. The convivial atmosphere and abundant hospitality of Ascott to John Chamberlain, William Gent and Thomas Allen, emerge vividly in Chamberlain's letters to Dudley Carleton.¹³¹ Of Brightwell Baldwin, Oxfordshire, later ambassador at the Hague and Paris, Viscount Dorchester and K.G., Carleton had several connexions with Allen. He was godson to Allen's first patron, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and had started his career as secretary to Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, Allen's second patron, at Syon House. He had met Thomas Allen, in 1598 at Ascott, Oxfordshire, a few years after coming down from Christ Church.¹³² Carleton seems to have had no special religious opinions but his sister Bridget was a Catholic recusant and another sister a sympathiser who accompanied her on pilgrimage to St Winifred's Well in 1608, while his cousins of Holcombe seem to have been Catholic.¹³³ He seems, like everyone else, to have been fond of 'Tom Allen', and used Chamberlain to pass on letters to him from abroad.¹³⁴ But it was not merely the pleasures of a country house dinner-table, library, and garden that attracted Thomas Allen. He hankered after the company of great courtiers and his patrons were among the mightiest in the land. He was a prototype of the politically oriented don of a later age.

¹²⁹ *Leland's Itinerary*, ed. L.T. Smith (1964), v. 171; B.L. Harl. MS. 6998 f.248 printed in B. Camm, *Forgotten Shrines* (1910) Appendix B, Articles 8-10. Bassett was brought up by Sir Thomas Fitzherbert, a staunch Catholic. His daughter Elizabeth married Sir Robert Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire.

¹³⁰ *Oxfordshire Peculiars* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. x), 154. The Dormers of Wing lived at Eythorpe, Oxfordshire 1590-1608 (T.B. Trappes-Lomax, 'Some Homes of the Dormer Family', *Recusant History* (May 1976); John Marsh (Mush) was chaplain on their return to Ascott, Wing, Bucks 1608-12 (H. Foley, *Records* iv. 18; vi. 69, 134).

¹³¹ N.E. McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, passim.

¹³² *C.S.P.D.* 1598-1601, 6 March 1598.

¹³³ McClure, *Letters of J. Chamberlain*, i. 263. His nephew, Sir John of Holcombe, Oxfordshire, married Anne, daughter of the Catholic Sir Richard Hoghton of Hoghton, Lancashire and inherited the manor of Brightwell in 1631. A Thomas Carleton of Cambridgeshire (d.1666) was a Jesuit.

¹³⁴ McClure, *Letters of J. Chamberlain*, i. 111, 142. Chamberlain, to judge from his letters to Carleton, held Protestant opinions, but was apparently prepared to contemplate putting up his Oxfordshire cousin, George, at his house near Great St Bartholomew's for the winter of 1597-8: George Chamberlain was an ex-student of Seville and was ordained at the English College, Rome 2 years later (H.M.C. *Salisbury MSS.* vii. 475; G Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, i).

Allen probably became acquainted with Queen Elizabeth's prime favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, through Lady Powlett (née Blount). Leicester was Chancellor of Oxford University from 1564 to 1580 and her nephew, Sir Thomas Pope Blount of Tittenhanger, Hertfordshire, was the agent who managed his Oxfordshire estates and a familiar figure in Oxford as heir of the founder of Trinity College. When Leicester's wife, Amy Robsart, on 8 September 1560, broke her neck falling down the stairs of Cumnor Hall, it was 'cousin Blount' whom Leicester asked, to 'use all the devices and means you can . . . for the learning of the truth . . .',¹³⁵ and to arrange the funeral on 20 September. 'She was secretly brought to Gloucester College [then newly re-opened], a little distance out of the town of Oxford, at which place . . . was hanged with black cloth . . . a great chamber where the mourners did dine'.¹³⁶ She was buried in the University Church, the cortege being accompanied by heralds, university dignitaries, Sir Thomas Pope Blount, and a large concourse. Presumably it was Blount who picked out a young member of St. John's College, Edmund Campion — though as University Prize Orator he perhaps chose himself — to pronounce her funeral oration.

The Blounts' Catholic connexions were no handicap for Leicester. His rival, William Cecil, was a strong Protestant and opposed to Leicester's flirtation with the young Queen; while the Spanish Ambassador, de Quadra was, for political reasons, more sympathetic, seeing a way of helping his persecuted English co-religionists. Dudley's brother-in-law, Sir Henry Sidney of Penshurst, had been sufficiently Catholic in Queen Mary's time to have Philip II as godfather to his son and heir, Philip; and it was through him that Leicester propounded a plan to marry the Queen, with Spanish support, and bring England back into communion with Rome.¹³⁷ Later Leicester's liaison with Lady Douglas Sheffield,¹³⁸ resulted in a son, Robert, who seems to have been brought up a Catholic in his early years and certainly became one in later life.¹³⁹ Like all his family, Leicester was an exponent of real politik; and he was bound to have an eye to the Queen's successor, the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots. Elizabeth herself encouraged him to think of marrying Mary to secure a Protestant influence on her succession.

Allen's intelligence, sociability and — in those uncertain times — his powers as an astrologer seem to have established him as Leicester's confidant. The words of John Aubrey echoed Thomas Fuller on this.¹⁴⁰ Anthony Wood affirmed that 'Allen was so great with that Count that few matters of state passed but he had knowledge of them; and nothing of moment was done in the University but Allen gave it to him in writing'.¹⁴¹ Gloucester Hall must have been a valuable source of information on Catholic opinion, through its many links with Church Papist and recusant families and their clergy in England and overseas; and while Leicester leaned towards the Catholic cause up till the 1580s there was every advantage in having an astrologer other than John Dee, the Court

¹³⁵ A.D. Bartlett, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Cumnor Place, Berks* (1850), 40.

¹³⁶ Ibid. 61.

¹³⁷ For Leicester's links with Rome, see C.G. Bayne, *Anglo-Roman Relations, 1558–65* (1913) especially 85–6, 211–17. The Papal Nuncio to Spain listed him among the nobles 'well affected to Catholics' in 1567; he was considered 'neutral' in 1571 (*C.S.P. Rome 1558–71*, 266, 400).

¹³⁸ Widowed daughter of William, 1st Lord Howard of Effingham.

¹³⁹ Born 1574, the year after a secret wedding; first brought up by his mother and Sir Edward Stafford of Grafton, Staffordshire who became her husband; then put to school under Robert Owing, a Catholic schoolmaster of Offington, Sussex. Owing was Master of Chichester Grammar School 1556–61 but ejected (A.C.F. Beales, 'A Biographical Catalogue of Catholic Schoolmasters', *Recusant History*, vii. 280; *V.C.H. Sussex*, ii, 407). At Christ Church 1587–9, Robert later eloped with the beautiful Elizabeth Southwell and set up house in Florence, becoming known as 'Duco di Nortombria' (*D.N.B.*).

¹⁴⁰ *Worthies of England*, ed J. Nicholls (1811), 310.

¹⁴¹ Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 542.

functionary, to cast horoscopes in confidence. Last but not least, Allen, like Leicester, was of Staffordshire origin and both men seem to have felt strong affinity for friends and relatives from their county.

The exile, Charles Arundell, in his satirical work, 'The Secret Memoirs of Robert Dudley',¹⁴² accused Leicester of ruthless greed for wealth and power and of 'atheism' (a common term of political abuse). As 'Chief Governor of Oxford University', he 'useth the place only for gain and spoil . . . His spies and intelligencers . . . advertise him from time to time with any little morsel is offered; and the principal instruments . . . have been the physicians, Bayley and Culpepper, both known Papists a little while ago but now just of Galen's religion . . . [and] . . . Dee and Allen, two Atheists, for figuring and contriving'. This, for what it is worth, confirms Aubrey's comment on Allen's role as the earl's political astrologer and confidant. He seems to have been offered a bishopric if he would take orders but 'the desire of a sedate life and the good wishes he bore the Church of Rome' made him refuse it.¹⁴³ However, Leicester's founding of the Protestant Association and his disappearance to the Netherlands in the vain pursuit of military glory in the 1580s probably broke his link with Thomas Allen. For about this time, from among Leicester's relatives, Allen found himself a new patron.

It may have been shortly before Henry Percy succeeded to the earldom in 1585 that Allen became acquainted with the ninth Earl of Northumberland (1564–1632). A Catholic ex-pupil of Gloucester Hall, Robert Widmerpoole, appears to have been teaching the Earl's younger brothers at Syon House, Isleworth in the 1580s — and the influence behind his appointment was presumably Allen's. Widmerpoole was to be hanged, drawn and quartered at Canterbury in 1588 in the wake of the Babington Plot.¹⁴⁴ Henry Percy was eighth in line to the throne and had powerful connexions at Court, being married to Dorothy Devereux, sister of Queen Elizabeth's favourite and Leicester's stepson, Robert Earl of Essex. It was Percy who assumed the mantle of Essex as a leader of the pro-Catholic cause when Essex was executed in 1601. The Percys had adhered, openly or in secret, to the Old Religion for several generations after the Reformation. Henry's grandfather, Thomas, had taken part in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536–7 and had been executed at York. His uncle, Thomas, the seventh earl had been executed in 1569 for his part in the Rising of the North. Henry's father, the eighth earl, was involved in the Babington Plot in the 1580s and died in mysterious circumstances in the Tower. Henry's cousin (Thomas' daughter), Lady Mary Percy, was abbess of the convent of English Benedictine nuns at Ghent. Henry's household included his Catholic relative, the Gunpowder Plotter, Thomas Percy¹⁴⁵ as agent for his northern estates; for 30 years he employed the staunchly Catholic Wycliffe family as cofferers, receivers-general and agents and there were probably others.¹⁴⁶ Though never himself a Catholic, there is convincing evidence of his attending Mass, with his brother, Lord William, in London around 1600–5.¹⁴⁷ Sympathy mingled with political ambition. It was Thomas Percy, the earl's emissary to Edinburgh, who secured from King James VI of Scotland an undertaking fateful to the

¹⁴² *Collectanea Adamantaea*, xxiv (1887). Arundell was younger brother of Sir Matthew of Wardour Castle.

¹⁴³ A. Wood, *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, ed. J. Gutch (1792–6), ii. 231–2. Wood accepts that Walter Bayley of New College, Regius Professor of Medicine and Physician to the Queen, and Martin Culpepper, Warden of New College, were specially close to Leicester, together with Allen.

¹⁴⁴ Born at Widmerpoole, Nottinghamshire, matriculated Gloucester Hall 1578 (*Alumni Oxonienses*; A.C.F. Beale, *Recusant History*, vii).

¹⁴⁵ Great-grandson of Henry Percy, Fourth Earl of Northumberland (N.E. McClure, *Letters of J. Chamberlain*, i. 213).

¹⁴⁶ G.R. Batho, *The Household Papers of Henry Percy* (Camden Society xciii), 150–164.

¹⁴⁷ Information of W. Crashaw, 26 August 1606, H.M.C., *Salisbury MSS*, xviii, 250–1.

hopes of Catholics for a brighter future when the old Queen died: 'As for the Catholics, I will neither persecute any that will be quiet and give but outward obedience to the law; neither will I spare to advance any of them that will by good service, worthily deserve it . . .'.¹⁴⁸ The earl hoped to be very near the throne in the new reign and, like several of Allen's Oxford friends,¹⁴⁹ calculated that the son of Mary Queen of Scots would wish to be rid of the Cecils.

However, Allen's main attraction for this new patron was not astrology but his mathematical talent. In the early 1590s the earl began to collect a group of Oxford mathematicians, his 'three Magi', at Syon House — Walter Warner, Robert Hughes and Thomas Harriot.¹⁵⁰ Allen may have had a hand in choosing them, though the main influence was probably Sir Walter Raleigh (himself an Oriel man), who knew them all as ship's navigators. According to Wood, Allen was 'often courted to live in the family of that most noble and generous Count . . ., a great patron of mathematicians: whereupon spending some time with him, he was infinitely beloved and admired, not only by that Count but by such artists who then lived with or often retired to him . . .'.¹⁵¹ Certainly Harriot had a long acquaintance with Allen, for his will, made shortly before his death in 1621, recorded that he wished to return '12 or 14' of Allen's manuscripts. He had held them so long that he could not identify them and left it to Allen to do so.¹⁵² The earl was also building up a library and Allen's advice may have been valuable. Their association was crowned by the conferring of an honorary MA on the earl, 'as of Magdalen College', in August 1605.¹⁵³

But, as the earl was sadly to write, 'the sunshine of my day is drawing fast on to his evening and the moonshine of my night doth turn his horns westward'.¹⁵⁴ Although he was made a Privy Councillor and Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners, the aristocratic guard which surrounded the sovereign, he achieved little political influence. The disaster of the Gunpowder Plot in November 1605 led to the earl's imprisonment for many years in the Tower of London. There is no record of Allen, like the three Magi,¹⁵⁵ visiting him there. Instead he seems to have turned to a third patron to whom the Earl of Northumberland had introduced him — the Standard Bearer of the Gentlemen Pensioners and landowner of ancient family, Sir John Scudamore of Holme Lacy, Herefordshire (d. 1623).

Sir John was perhaps an extreme example of the Church Papist. In his earlier years apparently a recusant,¹⁵⁶ Sir John must later have conformed for he was MP for Herefordshire in five Parliaments and Gentleman Usher to Queen Elizabeth. Sir John's

¹⁴⁸ *Correspondence of King James VI* (Camden Society xxxvii), letter of 24 March 1603.

¹⁴⁹ Sir Henry Savile and Sir Thomas Bodley were of the Essex party. The Chancellor, Lord Buckhurst, subsequently first Earl of Dorset, had two daughters married to Catholic peers and sent three sons to Hart Hall, which had Catholic sympathies. One son became a Catholic.

¹⁵⁰ Of Merton, Magdalen Hall and St Mary's Hall respectively (*Alumni Oxonienses*, where Harriot appears as Herriot); G.R. Batho, *Household Papers of Henry Percy*, pp. xxi, 154–164; E.G.R. Taylor, *The Mathematical Practitioners of Tudor and Stuart England* (1954). Unlike the 'Magi', Allen was unpaid.

¹⁵¹ Wood, *Athenae*, ii. 542.

¹⁵² Harriot's will, printed in R.C.H. Tanner, 'Thomas Harriot as Mathematician', *Rivista Internazionale di Storia della Scienza*, ix (1967). All Harriot's manuscripts preserved at Petworth, according to the archivist, Mrs A. M. McCann, appear to be in Harriot's hand, not Allen's; so presumably they were returned.

¹⁵³ *Alumni Oxonienses*.

¹⁵⁴ Syon House MS P.1.

¹⁵⁵ J.W. Shirley, *The Scientific Experiments . . . in the Tower, 1603–17*, Ambix, iv (1951), 52–66.

¹⁵⁶ 'A List of Catholics in England' (*C.S.P.D.* 1547–80, p. 490) shows John and his cousin, John Scudamore of Kentchurch, as recusants. Acts of the Privy Council dated 30 August 1576 and 25 May 1580 suggest the same.

compromise — or the development of his opinions — showed in his employing Thomas Holford as tutor for his sons but sending his grandsons, John and James, in 1616 and 1621, to Magdalen College, Oxford, where a more powerful Marcher magnate, the Catholic Edward Somerset, Earl of Worcester, sent his sons. Holford, who later became a priest, was executed at Clerkenwell on 28 August 1588.¹⁵⁷ Sir John's eldest son, John, became a priest and lived abroad for some time but seems to have apostatised (or at any rate became an informer) after the Gunpowder Plot. Evidently his family rejected him for he was taken into the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury and was still there in 1615. It was the second son, James, who was heir to the estate.¹⁵⁸ Yet Sir Thomas Bodley's letters to Sir John after the Plot suggest that Bodley at any rate thought him an anti-papal convert capable of arguing with his deeply Popish cousin, Sir Philip Scudamore.¹⁵⁹

Perhaps it was through Allen that Sir John became a patron of learning, a friend of Sir Thomas Bodley and a benefactor of his new library. Allen used to stay at Holme Lacy in summer vacations and John Aubrey recounts an anecdote of one such visit which evidently lingered in the senior common room of Gloucester Hall until his eager ears snapped it up. 'One time, being at Holme Lacy in Herefordshire at Mr. John Scudamore's . . . he happened to leave his watch in the chamber window. (Watches were then rarities.) The maids came in to make the bed and, hearing a thing in a case cry, 'Tick, tick, tick', presently concluded that that was his Devil and took it by the string with the tongs and threw it out of the window into the moat (to drown the devil). It so happened that the string hung on a sprig of an elder that grew out of the moat and . . . so the good old gentleman got his watch again'.¹⁶⁰

Sir James Scudamore was a courtier and the 'Sir Scudamore' of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'. Possibly his religious views also shifted about this time. In 1605 he was said to be helpful in detecting priests and recusants.¹⁶¹ His wife, Mary Throckmorton, on 18 September 1609 complained to the Earl of Salisbury that she had been turned out of her house by her father-in-law, maltreated by her husband and refused justice by the Bishop of London.¹⁶² Her husband and father-in-law had positions at Court that were at stake. When her son, John, succeeded in 1623, he emerged as a Laudian High Churchman.

However, by that time Allen was beyond long journeys on horseback into remotest Herefordshire. For a few years more Ascott offered hospitality; he accompanied Sir Michael Dormer and William Gent to visit John Chamberlain in London in October 1608.¹⁶³ But Sir Michael Dormer's health was failing by 1612; his wife died in 1616 and he himself in 1624. 'Old Sheldon of Beoley' and Allen's crony, William Gent, died, like Sir Thomas Bodley, in 1613. Yet the coach route to Stafford still lured him and a letter of 9 July 1616 shows that even in old age the habit was ingrained: 'Good Master Selden, . . . I am now . . . preparing to go my wonted progress into Staffordshire, which will serve me till Michaelmas; so that if you come to Oxford in the meantime I shall miss you, which I am very sorry for'.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps it is not surprising that Erdeswicke's 'Survey' of

¹⁵⁷ A.C.F. Beales, *Recusant History*, vii, 278.

¹⁵⁸ N.E. McClure, *Letters of J. Chamberlain*, i, 233. As a priest he had maintained vehemently that he would defend the Queen if attacked and opposed the Jesuit faction, according to John Dowland, the musician and Government agent, 10 November 1595 (H.M.C., *Salisbury MSS*, v, 446-7; Anstruther, *Seminary Priests*, i).

¹⁵⁹ *B.L.R.*, (1941-49), 134-139.

¹⁶⁰ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i, 27.

¹⁶¹ H.M.C. *Salisbury MSS* xvii, 258-9.

¹⁶² *C.S.P.D.* 1603-10, 543: from her father's seat, Coss Court.

¹⁶³ N.E. McClure, *Letters of J. Chamberlain*, i, 266.

¹⁶⁴ Bodl. MS. Selden Supra 108 f.110.

Staffordshire, Thomas Habington's of Worcestershire, William Burton's of Leicestershire, Henry Ferrers' of Warwickshire and Thomas Blount's of Herefordshire were compiled by men from gentry families — all except Blount from Oxford and all but Burton Catholic — who were acquainted with the old don whose interest in antiquities pre-dated their own and whose houses lay on the path of his 'wonted progresses' in summer vacations.

The association of Allen with powerful pro-Catholic or Church Papist patrons for some 30–40 years is a very marked feature of his life. However, it would be misleading to describe these without referring to other connexions. He cast a horoscope for William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, Grand Steward and later Chancellor of Oxford University, about 1626, and a nativity at the birth of Robert Pierrepont, subsequently Earl of Kingston, in 1584. That for Pembroke became famous because it forecast the time and manner of his early death several years later, with remarkable accuracy. There are longer and shorter versions of Allen's horoscope, by copyists, giving charts and purporting to quote in full his 'last chapter of death', which would be 'betwixt violent and natural' and perhaps due to 'sudden flashes of apoplexis' and 'suffocating very suddenly', around the age of 51 and a half years.¹⁶⁵ In fact Pembroke died at the beginning of his 51st year. Aubrey tells the story. 'His nativity was calculated by old Mr. Thomas Allen: his death was foretold . . . Being well in health he made a feast; ate and drank plentifully; went to bed; and found dead in the morning'.¹⁶⁶ Pierrepont's lengthy and detailed nativity, covering temperament, capacity, marriages, children, wealth and success at court, was also remarkably fulfilled.¹⁶⁷ Both survive in the Bodleian Library, together with a description of an elixir or charm against sickness, debility and melancholy which evidently accompanied Allen on his visits to damp, remote country houses. No doubt these skills made the old wizard popular with his hostesses.¹⁶⁸

Allen's memory was long preserved in the Reede family of Bonsil Castle, Herefordshire. About the year 1600 their sleep was plagued by visits of a restless spirit and they were advised, perhaps by the Scudamores of Holme Lacy, to consult Allen. After studying the matter, his opinion was that the only way to pacify the intruder was to obtain the bones of a Lord Beauchamp who had formerly owned the Castle. When this was done the trouble ceased. The bones, enclosed in a cedar box, were kept by the Reedes, whence they passed to the Sheldons of Abberton, Worcestershire — relatives of that 'old Sheldon of Beoley' who had been one of Allen's dearest friends.¹⁶⁹

THE DEATH OF THOMAS ALLEN

Thomas Allen had been born in the reign of Henry VIII, just after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. In the fourth year of the reign of Charles I he made his Will. It is dated 29

¹⁶⁵ Bodl. MS Ashmole 350, iv; MS Bodl. 394, f.76a. Wood, *Athenae* ii, 482, says the prediction was made for Pembroke only 'several years' before the Earl's death. Since the nativity chart indicates 'Grand Steward Pierrepont' it was made after his appointment on 18 August 1626.

¹⁶⁶ *Brief Lives*, i, 378.

¹⁶⁷ Bodl. MS Ashmole 394, ff.113a–114b. According to Ashmole, 'the preceding judgment was made by Mr Allen, he being present in the house at the time of the nativity and wrote it down in a book, which Henry Pierrepont Esquire, one of the native's younger sons, transcribed and from which I copied it this 13th of December 1672'. A relative, Gervase of Holm Pierrepont, Notts, was imprisoned for recusancy at Broughton c.1588 (*Acts of Privy Council*, xix, 366). Robert married Gertrude Talbot, niece of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Evidently they formed another of Allen's Church Papist connexions.

¹⁶⁸ Bodl. MS. Ashmole 1441, f.369.

¹⁶⁹ *Transactions of the Hereford Woolhope Club* (1880), 230–231. Thanks for this reference are due to Mr Norman Reeves of the Catholic Record Society.

January 1629 and has the normal Protestant preamble.¹⁷⁰ 'In the name of God Amen. I, Thomas Allen of the University of Oxford, being now of the age of fourscore and eight, complete in good and perfect health of body and of perfect memory, calling to mind that death to a man of my years cannot in likelihood be far off, do thereupon make and declare my last Will and Testament . . . First I commend my soul into the hands of God the Father, my Creator and Maker, and to his Son Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer by the merits of whose death and passion I do steadfastly believe to be saved'. He asks his executor, John Tolson, Provost of Oriel, or 'such friends as shall happily be present at the hour of my death' to arrange a 'funeral to be performed with as small charge as may be'. Having spent his money on manuscripts and good living, he had only 'a small portion of goods' to leave. First, his 'niece, Ellen Dudley of Uttoxeter', 'for the sake and benefit of her poor children'¹⁷¹ received £70 — a large bequest in those days. He was thinking partly of her sons, Thomas, who was then at Trinity, and Henry, who was to go up to Oriel in 1639.¹⁷² His 'brother' John's daughter 'married in Uttoxeter to one Jordan' got £20.¹⁷³ Then Trinity College received '£20 as a poor memorial of my love of that house, to be disposed of in such manner as it shall be thought fit by the President'. Part of this was spent by President Kettell on a portrait for his lodging, where it still remains.¹⁷⁴ Perhaps because Allen had taken part in a law suit against Diggory Wheare, the Calvinist Principal, in 1627–8,¹⁷⁵ there is only a cold reference: 'to Gloucester Hall where I have continued a long time the sum of £10' — for a feast or whatever the Principal thought fit.

Almost all his friends had predeceased him but it is noteworthy that Brian Twyne, who helped catalogue his manuscripts, his friend, John Selden, and his younger protégés, got nothing. Nor, more surprisingly, was anything left to his prosperous Allen, Bassett and Curzon relatives — especially the Allens of Fulford, Fradley and Newborough, all near Uttoxeter.¹⁷⁶ Instead, he asked that if his assets realised a bigger sum than he had estimated, the bequests to his 'poor kindred' should be increased — a conscious reversal of the tuft-hunting of his active days. The watch, whose ticking had so alarmed the maids at Holme Lacy, was left to Mrs Martha Holman.¹⁷⁷ The 'gold ring with death's head enamelled', bequeathed to him by Edward Hindmarsh, may have been disposed of earlier

¹⁷⁰ P.R.O., PROB 11/162, f.110. Thanks are due to Mr A.P. Jenkins of the Bodleian Library for discovering the P.R.O. reference.

¹⁷¹ It was Ellen's need that seems to have prompted Allen to make a will in January 1629. A Richard Allen's goods and chattels listed on 6 January 1629 show him to have been a small farmer. Unless Thomas Allen's brother, Richard of Brailsford, lived to be 90 and returned to Uttoxeter in old age, this seems to be a nephew (no other Richard is given on the pedigrees). Ellen was evidently a widowed daughter.

¹⁷² *Alumni Oxonienses*.

¹⁷³ No brother John appears on Erdeswicke's or Glover's pedigree but a Uttoxeter cousin John had several children, including an Eleanour. Another cousin, Edmond's will made on 5 May 1602 shows him living in lodgings in Uttoxeter, 'repping' or weaving. He left 10s each to his brothers John and Francis (the London mercer), and the proceeds of woodland, on long lease to the Bagots of Blithfield, to his wife Amy for the rest of her life and the residue to his son, Willie. The latter evidently had no aptitude for business for an inventory of his worldly goods made on 22 July 1631 totalled £8.14.3d. Edmond's brother John had died in no better case in December 1619. Edmond's woodland is probably that known as Bagot's Wood, between Blithfield and Uttoxeter.

¹⁷⁴ Painted in 1633 from a drawing or painting made when Allen was 87, according to an inscription on the portrait. See J. Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i. 27.

¹⁷⁵ See above, p. 107 and note 43.

¹⁷⁶ Sir William Dugdale's *Visitation of Staffordshire 1663-4* shows Allens of Glover's pedigree surviving the Civil War in these places.

¹⁷⁷ 'Wife of Thomas Olman' suggests a servant.

for there is no mention of it. His scout, John Murtagh,¹⁷⁸ presumably an Irishman, 'if he continue till my death' was bequeathed £20. The will was signed in the presence of John Murtagh, and Robert Jennings, a scholar of Oriel College. His books and manuscripts were dealt with in a codicil made on 26 October 1630, when he was almost 90: 'to Sir Kenelm Digby, knight, my noble friend, all my manuscripts and what other of my books he . . . may take a liking unto, excepting some such of my books that I shall dispose of to some of my friends at the direction of my executor'. When Digby had them bound they amounted to 163 volumes. His great concave glass and other scientific and astrological material seem to have gone to Sir Thomas Aylesbury.¹⁷⁹ How his executor, Provost Tolson of Oriel, fulfilled Allen's instructions as regards other friends is unclear but an 'epitaph by a certain scholar of Trinity' says:

"To Trinity College Library
He left his books and last astrology . . .
His furred coat of mickle fame —
Sir Kenelm Digby's gift by name —
To Dr Kettell he bequeathed,
To lap him warm while as he breathed'.¹⁸⁰

The residue of his goods and chattels went to Provost Tolson, who also (presumably by arrangement with Allen) took over his scout, John Murtagh.¹⁸¹

Tolson seems to have been sufficiently devoted to Allen, or gratified by his bequest, to have a glass medallion of his old friend copied from a portrait at Trinity and placed in the window of his lodging, where it still remains.¹⁸² The medallion and portrait may have been done by Richard Haydock, Allen's friend and protégé of earlier years.

Edmund Reynolds predeceased Allen. He died, aged 92, at Gloucester Hall on 20 November 1630 and was buried in the chancel of Wolvercote Church, near one of his estates.¹⁸³ They had been on neighbouring staircases for 60 years. Mercifully, and with equal unfairness, death spared Thomas Allen until 30 November 1632 when the old Church Papist was almost 92. Early that autumn perhaps he felt a hand on his shoulder, for on 30 September he gave 20 books to Trinity.¹⁸⁴ The end, when it came, was swift.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁸ 'Moorether', 'Murthaw' in Allen's will, P.R.O. PROB 11/162, f.110.

¹⁷⁹ A contemporary of Allen's friend Dudley Carleton at Westminster and Christ Church. The clause quoted may have allowed for this. Wood says that 'some mathematical books' went to Aylesbury (*Wood's Life and Times*, i. 249).

¹⁸⁰ Bodl. MS. Rawlinson C.866. The gift to 'my good friend Dr Kettle' is confirmed in his will.

¹⁸¹ 'Epitaph by a certain scholar', op cit. Allen's will was proved on 26 November 1633 by Henry Marten, Judge of the Court of Arches, libertine and regicide, in the presence of Tolson and William Smith, Vice Chancellor. The age at death is given as 88 and the date 1629, both of which are contradicted by Burton's oration, below. Marten, having read the first sentence of the will, was assuming the age at signature was the age at death. This must be the source of the subsequent confusion over Allen's date of birth. Even the year of probate was incorrectly entered as 1632. See above, note 8.

¹⁸² R. Lane-Poole, *A Catalogue of Portraits in . . . Oxford* (1912), iii. 125; ii. 107. According to A Kippis, *Biographia Britannica*, (1707), following Wood, copies of the portrait went to the Cotton Library and to Dr Thomas Clayton of Pembroke College. Wood adds that a copy in crayon was placed in the Bodleian Library (*History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*), ii, ed. J. Gutch (1796), 978. According to *City of Oxford* (Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, 1939) 94b, there is a 17th-century painted glass panel of Allen, with his arms and the date 1638, in Oriel Hall.

¹⁸³ *Parochial Collections* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. ii), 17. A brass tablet placed in Yarnton Church seems to have disappeared: its text is preserved in Le Neve, *Monumenta*, i, 123, no.244.

¹⁸⁴ Bodl. MS. Selden Supra 120. He had given 22 books in 1625.

¹⁸⁵ 'Epitaph by a certain scholar', Bodl., MS Rawlinson c.866, 'Thomas Allen . . . ended in half an hour or less . . .'

The University gave him a funeral with full honours. His old protégé William Burton, Master of Kingston Grammar School, returned to Oxford to pay his last tribute in Gloucester Hall before the Vice Chancellor and heads of houses. Burton made no direct reference to Allen's religious views. Instead, recalling Allen's 'genius, his mastery of all arts and so many sciences', he cited the banishment and indignities suffered by academics of earlier ages — Hypatia of Alexandria, the great Roger Bacon and John Bale. Allen had been less captivated by the studies taught at Trinity than by mathematics; and his choice of Gloucester Hall was due to its being the habitation of great mediaeval mathematicians of the Benedictine Order, whose libraries, crammed with mathematical books, showed their continuing devotion to such studies. Of his predecessors none achieved fame without producing a mathematical work. But Allen was the Coryphaeus of the mathematicians of his time. His public lectures were so popular that it was feared the rooms would burst — whereas in the Schools at the time of speaking, the walls themselves were the only listeners. After many invitations, he joined the entourage of 'that most noble hero, the Earl of Northumberland'.¹⁸⁶ There [at Syon Park] the 'Atlases of the mathematical world', Harriot, Dee, Warner and others adorned him with honours; and from thence the most illustrious Earl of Leicester, Chancellor of Oxford, tried to snatch him away, even offering him a bishopric — an honour he refused, preferring the private life which captivated him.¹⁸⁷ In the words of Tacitus, 'he shone to himself alone because he was not seen'. Now, having completed almost 92 years, he had gone forth from his narrow home to become an august member of the heavens and to live forever in the memory of men: 'Rejoice indeed, O Allen, rejoice O divine spirit, for no further vicissitudes can assail you now'. The funeral procession, accompanied by assembled university dignitaries, moved on to Trinity chapel where George Bathurst delivered a further panegyric.¹⁸⁸ There he was buried, according to Anglican rites, under a plain stone slab — as his cheerful, unobtrusive spirit would have wished — not far from the Founder, Sir Thomas Pope and his wife, Elizabeth Blount.

These were the official ceremonies due to Thomas Allen as an eminent figure in the University. Whether a private Catholic ceremony preceded it can only be conjectured. The Irish scout John Murtagh could have fetched a secular priest from Godstow, one of the Benedictines, Benet Smith or Robert Sherwood from Kiddington or, less likely, one of the 12 Jesuits known to have been in the 'Oxfordshire District' in the year of Allen's death.¹⁸⁹ A 'character' of Allen in Trinity College library, presumably written by or at the behest of his friend, President Kettell, describes him as 'strictly tenacious of academical discipline, always highly esteemed both by foreigners and . . . by all in the Church of England and the University of Oxford whose merits had raised them to the highest dignities . . .'. There is no reference to Allen's loyalty to the Established Church. Kettell himself, Aubrey tells us, was a 'right Church of England man'. On the other hand, so was Allen's great nephew, and beneficiary, Henry Dudley, who became parson of Broad Hinton, Wiltshire.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ It is significant that Burton could expect sympathy from a distinguished Oxford gathering with such sentiments about the earl, then still alive, who had spent 15 years in the Tower for alleged complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. However, Kingston is near the Northumberlands' residence at Syon.

¹⁸⁷ Burton's chronology seems wrong: Allen's popularity with Leicester dated from the 1570s while Northumberland's 'three Magi' were not assembled until the 1590s.

¹⁸⁸ Thanks are due to Miss Jane Barrett for translating Burton's oration. The two orations were published with a preface addressed to Sir Kenelm Digby: *In Viri Doctissimi . . . Thomae Alleni . . . Ultimo Septembris MDCXXXII . . . demortui . . . Orationes Binae* (London 1632).

¹⁸⁹ Stapleton, *Missions*, 325, 331, 338, 343.

¹⁹⁰ W. Innys *et al.*, *Biographia Britannica* (1747), i. 106 note A; Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i. 18, 28.

A cluster of funeral verses in memory of Thomas Allen, collected from friends, remains in the Bodleian Library. They are regrettably undistinguished. But among them, as the faded leaves are turned, is one whose fragrance faintly recalls the spirit of the humanist who, when his Trinity friends had fled abroad, lingered 60 years on a Benedictine staircase at Gloucester Hall:

'What region is there in earth, air or sky
That was a stranger to thy industry?
T'was not this globe's exactly measured face,
Nor all the aerial sublunary space —
From whence the pearly frost, the fleecy snow,
Soft showers do fall and angry winds do blow,
Whence frightful thunders roar and lightnings fly —
Could bound the prospect of thy searching eye;
Which, penetrating higher, could survey
How all the bright ethereal regions lie —
What every glorious house contained there
And what their powers and influences were . . .¹⁹¹

Thomas Hearne felt that:

'Mr Allen being so eminent an example of modesty, temperance, humanity, learning and judgement, as well as industry in collecting old manuscripts . . . his memory ought to be carefully preserved, . . . with his picture . . . from the original (drawn to the life) in the President's Lodging of Trinity College; to which other things of the same nature might be annexed'.¹⁹²

It is in the same belief that this tribute to his memory is offered.

¹⁹¹ Anon, *Elegy on the death of Thomas Allen*. A dozen poems include verses by William Burton and Allen's great nephew, Thomas Dudley (Bodl. MS Selden Supra 120).

¹⁹² *Leland's Itinerary* (1770), ii. 137.