

WAR AND THE INNS OF COURT

It is scarcely to be expected that a nation which has no regard for any law other than the law of the jungle, should show consideration for any of the outward symbols of man's long struggle towards civilization, peace and order. The tragedy which has overtaken the Inns of Court is a particularly vivid reminder of the brutal reality which is facing the civilized world today. While our readers are in a general way familiar with the destruction of buildings sacred to the legal order, we believe that the following articles, written by Mr. H. A. C. Sturgess, Librarian of the Middle Temple, and which were published in the *American Bar Association Journal* of August and September of this year, (Volume 27, pp. 501, 625) should be of more than passing interest to members of the Canadian profession. We are grateful to the American Bar Association Journal for their kind permission to reproduce portions of the two articles.—ED.

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It is difficult to know how or where to begin to give an account of the disaster which has overtaken the Inns of Court since the previous London Letter was written. It is nearly as difficult to exercise the restraint in describing it which should be observed even in dealing with the barbarity practiced by the Nazis, with which the World has become so familiar. If anything can be said to their credit it is perhaps that this time no "military objective" has been claimed by them. Previous damage sustained by the Inns of Court, serious though it has been, has been far surpassed by the most recent calamities.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH

Perhaps one should place first on the list the tragedy of the Temple Church, which has been entirely gutted by fire. Not a single pew, nor even a charred splinter of wood remains in its interior. Every vestige of its furnishing has been completely destroyed by the raging inferno of flame which broke out as a result of showers of incendiary bombs dropped by the enemy on a night which was so bright that every detail of the City could be plainly seen. Where the organ stood is now an empty space, open to the air. The roof of the Round Church has fallen in, and the beautiful Purbeck marble pillars, which were an outstanding feature of the structure, have been cracked and broken by the intense heat. The recumbent figures of the Knights in the Round have been broken and burnt out of all recognition; one only, near the south side of the Church, having escaped destruction. The memorial tablets, high on the walls of the triforium, scarred and broken by the flames, can be seen from the court below. Standing in the Church on the following

day, the air still warm and the floor covered with a fine white ash, my thoughts were a jumble of emotions beyond the power of expression. To one who has lived and worked in the Temple for many years, the loss of the Church is a tragedy greater than any which have befallen this sadly battered part of London. The walls are still standing, and it may be possible to repair and re-furnish it, but at the moment it looks to be in a very dangerous condition, and expert advice must be sought on the matter. Some little comfort may be had in the knowledge that the Communion Plate and the Registers have been saved, but the latter are in a very sad condition, having been thoroughly soaked with water, and much expert work will be necessary before they can again be used.

The Round Church was stated by Dugdale to have been built in the form of the Temple near unto the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. It was erected by the Knights Templars and consecrated in the year 1185 by Heraclius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Henry II and his magnates. The Choir, or oblong, was added in the year 1240. The organ which, as stated by Baylis in his book on the Temple Church, for its number of stops, pipes, sweetness, and brilliancy of tone has not been surpassed, was built in 1688 by Bernard Schmidt (Father Smith) a German who came over to England in the reign of Charles II. It cost the two Societies £1,000 in equal moieties. Many additions have been made to the organ from time to time and, prior to its destruction, it contained 70 stops and 3,719 pipes. Now not a particle of it remains.

THE MASTER'S HOUSE

This house, which was partly demolished in an earlier raid, has now been entirely destroyed. It may be remembered by members of the American Bar who have been in this country, as having stood at the north-east corner of the Church, with a garden in front stretching to Lanfield Court. The Templars were exempted by a Papal Bull from Episcopal jurisdiction, and this exemption has continued in the Temple to the present time, the Master taking his place in the Temple Church without induction, on the authority of Letters Patent granted by the Crown. The present Master is the Rev. Harold Anson, Hon. Canon of Southwark.

THE CLOISTERS

The Cloisters, built in 1681 in accordance with plans prepared by Sir Christopher Wren, have also been destroyed by

fire. Earlier Cloisters, only half the width of Wren's, were destroyed in the great fire of 1679, and an inscription commemorating that disaster and the erection of those now lost was to have been seen in three places as follows: "Vetustissima Templariorum Porticu Inge Consumpta An^o 1679, Nova haec sumptibus Medii Templi extracta An^o 1681 Gulielmo Whitelocke Arm^o Thesaur^o." If, after the war, it is desired to reconstruct the Cloisters as they were, the plans drawn by Wren are still in possession of the Middle Temple.

LAMB BUILDING

Lamb Building is now nothing but a heap of burnt-out ruins. The few walls still remaining upright stand out as a stark monument to the fury of the fire which raged within. This building, of fine red brick, was thought by many to be the handsomest in the Temple. It was built in 1667, after the great fire of 1666.

INNER TEMPLE HALL AND LIBRARY

It has been noted in previous Letters that these two well-known buildings had already been seriously damaged in earlier raids. They have now been completely gutted by fire, which also destroyed the Inner Temple Treasury. Following the earlier damage referred to, the Librarian of the Inner Temple had been engaged in moving the more valuable books which had been salvaged to places less likely to be regarded as danger zones, and had prepared a place to be used by Members of the Inn as a temporary law library, which it was intended to open shortly. Now all his efforts in that direction have been brought to naught, and many thousands of books have been destroyed.

BRICK COURT

The site of the two oldest buildings in Brick Court (Nos. 2 and 3) is now covered by a heap of burnt bricks, above which stand only the walls of the staircase of number 2. It was in this building that Oliver Goldsmith came to live in 1768, and where he died six years later. His tomb at the north side of the Temple Church is now partly buried under the ruins of the Master's House. In the chambers below Goldsmith, Blackstone wrote his famous "Commentaries".

OTHER BUILDINGS DESTROYED

Mitre Court Buildings, at the top of King's Bench Walk, which had already been partly demolished in an earlier raid,

have been burnt out, as has No. 1 King's Bench Walk. Harcourt Buildings, extending from Crown Office Row to Temple Gardens on the east side of Middle Temple Lane have been completely gutted by fire, and were still smouldering several days after the disaster. On the opposite side of the Lane, and overlooking the Middle Temple Garden, No. 3 Plowden Buildings was also gutted, while No. 4 Temple Gardens was badly burnt on the top floor. A large part of Plowden Buildings fell into the garden two days later and only a few walls remain standing. The remainder of Crown Office Row, including Lamb's birthplace, has also been destroyed by fire. Number 2 Elm Court, which was the only building remaining more or less intact in that Court after previous raids, has now been burnt out and will have to be pulled down. The top floors of 4 Brick Court and 5 Essex Court have also been seriously damaged by fire.

PUMP COURT

The whole of the south side of Pump Court has been completely destroyed. All the floors have fallen in, and only some of the walls remain standing. It was in this Court that another great fire originated in the year 1679, when many barrels of beer were played on it in an endeavour to put out the flames, but it was only stopped by blowing up the houses with gunpowder.

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE LIBRARY

This building, already badly battered, suffered some additional damage to its roof by fire, but the promptitude of that Society's fireman, with the assistance of the fire brigade, prevented the fire spreading to the entire building. Only a very few books were damaged by water. It is surprising that this Library did not suffer further damage as a second high explosive bomb caused a large crater in the garden only a few yards away, but it seems that the resultant blast went straight upwards and did not, as is often the case, spread outwards. The Library was closed for three days pending the removal of a delayed action bomb from the garden, but is now functioning, as before, in the Common Room of that Society.

The destruction of so many sets of Chambers in the Temple has been the cause of very serious loss, not only to the Inns, but also to many residents and members of the Bar. Articles of furniture, important papers and law books have been lost, some still remaining buried under tons of wreckage. Many barristers had, for the time being, no place in which to meet

solicitors or to hold conferences, and, in order in some measure to lessen this difficulty, the main room of the Middle Temple Library, though not now exactly the acme of comfort, has been made as habitable as possible for use as a conference room.

GRAY'S INN

The tale of disaster is not all told with the fate of the Temple. Unfortunately, Gray's Inn has suffered as severely. The Hall, Chapel, Library and Treasury Office have been completely gutted by fire. Nothing remains standing of the Chapel but part of the walls. Every one of the 35,000 books in the Library has been destroyed. The pension room and other rooms reserved for the Benchers met a like fate.

THE HALL

How much of the original Hall of Gray's Inn was incorporated in the building now destroyed it is impossible to say, but it was rebuilt or re-edified in the years 1556 to 1560. Though smaller than the Middle Temple Hall it bore many points of resemblance to it. It was, as many members of the American Bar will remember, a very beautiful Hall, and a particularly fine specimen of Tudor architecture, 75 feet in length, 35 in width and 47 in height. At the west end stood a magnificent oak screen which, together with some of the tables with which the Hall was furnished, was said to have been presented by Queen Elizabeth. The screen was recently taken down, with the intention of transferring it to a place where it might reasonably be expected to be safer than in London and, when it was realized that nothing could save the Hall, attention was turned to the task of moving the screen out of danger of the flames. This effort was, happily, successful and it is gratifying to report that it has now been safely housed, and can be re-assembled when the time comes to restore the Inns of Court. The oak panelling in the Hall was enriched by the armorial bearings of a long succession of Readers and Treasurers. Now nothing remains but an empty shell.

THE LIBRARY

The earliest mention of a Library in Gray's Inn is to be found in the will of Robert Chaloner, of Stanley, who was Lent Reader in 1522. By this will, which was dated 7th July, 1555, Chaloner directed that all his law books were to be conveyed to his cousin, Robert Nowell, at Gray's Inn "and then xLs. in

moneye to be delyvered unto the said Robert Nowell, to th'entent that he maie by cheines therwyth and fasten so manye of them in the Librarye at Grauisin as he shall think convenyente." Since then the Library has been situated in various places in the Inn, but in 1788 it was moved to what later became known as the North Library, overlooking Gray's Inn Square.

MIDDLE TEMPLE TREASURES

In view of the tragedy which has befallen the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn, referred to in the last London Letter, the Benchers of the Middle Temple have decided to move more of their treasures to places of greater safety. The famous Molyneux Globes have gone. These Globes (one Terrestrial, the other Celestial) take their name from the maker of them, Emerie Molyneux, of Lambeth, who was described by Richard Hakluyt as "a rare gentleman in his profession." They are 2 feet 2 inches in diameter and are mounted on stands. They were completed in the year 1592, but the Terrestrial Globe received additions in 1603, and the original date has been altered with a pen. A Latin inscription on the Globe sets forth that Virginia was first surveyed, inhabited and cultivated by the English at the cost of Sir Walter Raleigh, assisted by Queen Elizabeth. The great voyage by Sir Francis Drake (1578 - 80) when he first achieved the circumnavigation of the Globe is traced by Molyneux with a red line; and the route taken by Thomas Cavendish when he repeated that feat in 1586 - 88 is indicated by a blue one. The great value of these Globes will be appreciated when it is mentioned that, with the possible exception of one pair, said to be at Cassel in Germany, no similar Globes made by Molyneux have survived to this day.

Another of the treasures to go is the collection of Plate belonging to the Inn. It might be supposed that, in view of the antiquity of the Middle Temple, much of it would have dated back to Tudor times, but this is not the case, the reason being that in earlier days it was customary to sell old silver in order to buy new. Another cause contributing to the lack of early specimens is to be found in the financial embarrassment occasioned by the Civil War in 1642, when the whole burden of financing the Society fell upon the shoulders of the Under Treasurer and, when conditions became more normal in 1647, it was found that the Inn's indebtedness to him was no less than £1,800. One of the expedients resorted to in order to liquidate the debt is found in an order of the 1st June, 1649:

"That all the Plate of the House more than is for ordinarie use be forthwith solde by Master Treasurer and the monies thereof coming payed to the Under Treasurer in parte satisfaction of his debt due to him from the House." In spite of this the Middle Temple has acquired a fine collection, much of it by presentation, and it is well worthwhile to take all precautions to preserve it.

The High Table, or Bench Table in the Hall has also been removed. This table is thirty feet long and three feet, two inches wide, and is made from four planks of oak grown in Windsor Forest. It was the gift of Queen Elizabeth when the Hall was built and, according to tradition was floated down the Thames and built inside the Hall. This is the first time it has been taken out of the Hall. Another table of special interest to go is the Drake Table, known as the "Cupboard." It is of English oak and was made from timber taken from the *Golden Hind*, the ship in which Drake sailed round the world. A "Cupboard" has, from the earliest times been the centre of ceremonies in the Middle Temple Hall and is mentioned in the surviving records of the Inn as early as the reign of Henry VII when the old Hall of the Knights Templars was in being. Proclamations affecting the Members of the Inn in their collegiate life were made from it. Readers stood by it to deliver their discourses. At it calls to the Bar were made, and the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance taken by the newly-called barristers, and those called to that degree in the present day sign the Society's Roll of Barristers at this table.

The magnificent oak screen in the Middle Temple Hall, the damage to which was referred to in the London Letter of March last, has also been taken to a place of safety. The many hundreds of pieces into which it was smashed have been carefully collected from the wreckage which covered the floor of the Hall after the disaster, and very little was lost. The pieces have now been carefully packed and stored pending a return to happier days, when the Hall may be restored to its former glory.

To avoid the fate of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn it was decided to move practically all of the law books from the Middle Temple Library to a place some distance from London, and this has now been accomplished. Approximately 50,000 volumes, as well as a collection of Parliamentary publications dating back to 1862, and a miscellaneous collection before that date, have been moved. As a matter of minor interest it may be mentioned that the estimated weight of these books is eighty

tons. Only a skeleton English law library has been retained for the use of Members of the Inn.

LINCOLN'S INN

The Benchers of Lincoln's Inn which, as previously stated has suffered less damage than the other Inns of Court, having sent away a selection of their most valuable books and manuscripts, as well as their historic Black Books, have decided to retain their library service in the hope that their good fortune may continue. They have generously offered the use of their library to all those Members of the Bar who may wish to consult books not now obtainable in their own libraries.
