

**STUDENT LIFE IN
TRINITY
COLLEGE, DUBLIN**

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Student Life in Trinity College, Dublin by H. A. Hinkson

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Student Life
IN
TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

BY
H. A. HINKSON.

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P R E F A C E .

THE Contents of this little book are with some alterations and additions, reprinted from a series of articles, which appeared in the "*Evening Herald*" during the present year, and which, through the courtesy of Mr. Moore, the Editor, I am enabled to publish in this present form. The aim of the book is to give some notion of College life from a Student's point of view, and the author claims no special qualification for the task he has set himself, save that having lived more than five years within the walls of Trinity College he has had ample opportunity both in his own person and as an observer of others, of noting both the joys and the sorrows of a Student's life.

Bearing in mind, too, the familiar estimate made by Carlyle, of the intellectual capacity of the British Isles, and being desirous of catering for the tastes of the majority, he has in an access of philanthropy determined to provide, by the insertion of advertisements, a mental pabulum, suitable to that large and influential class to which the above-mentioned dictum referred.

TRINITY COLLEGE.

June, 1892.



CHAPTER I.

Trinity College, Dublin.

Monimentum aere perennius.

WHERE Trinity College now rears its gaunt front once stood a priory of the Augustinians, which made the eastern outpost of the city. It was a little city then, clustering about Dublin Castle, and with a tendency to stretch westward rather than east or south, where its prosperities now abide. If one lets his thoughts fly back a few centuries, it is easy to picture the monks in cowl and habit as they prayed and toiled amidst their marshy surroundings, away from the noise of the city—for Westmoreland-street was still far on in the future, and the northern river-banks were lonely marshes, given over to gull and curlew. The one bridge spanning the river was at Essex Gate, and led to the great Abbey of St. Mary, which, with its dependencies, made a little city of itself to the north-west of the river. At the foot of the bridge stood a little squat tower—Izod's Tower—where, they say, La Belle Isonde, of many legends, used to watch for the coming of the messengers from Mark of Cornwall. Another relic of her survives in Chapelizod, beyond Phoenix Park, where her father built a chapel for her soul's sake. But to turn aside from apocrypha to hard facts, the Monastery of All Hallows was sequestered in due course by Henry VIII., and by him handed over to the Mayor and Corporation of Dublin, as a reward for their help in suppressing the insurrection of Silken Thomas.

Harry's daughter was on the throne before the foundations were laid of the new college, which was to bear the state and title of the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. On

the application of Archbishop Loftus, the site was granted by the Mayor and Corporation. The laying of the first stone was performed with great ceremony by Thomas Smyth, Mayor of the city, on the 13th March, 1591, and so well was the building pushed forward that the first students were admitted on the 9th of January, 1593.

The buildings of Trinity College have no such mellow age as those of Oxford and Cambridge. None of them dates later than Queen Anne, and there is no fragment of the little square of red Dutch brick which formed the original college. For all that, the place is venerable enough, cobwebby, dusty, worm-eaten, looking at least as ancient as the English universities. Perhaps it presents a somewhat forbidding seriousness of aspect. A visitor would say that by contrast Trinity represents the Protestant genius in architecture, for whatever Protestantism may have done for us intellectually, she has given us little that is artistically beautiful. It is all mathematically arranged, cold and stern and dark. There are none of those quiet grass-grown quads with the graves of the dead under the cloisters, and rose-trees climbing the arches to the low-browed college windows, such as one remembers lovingly at Oxford. If it has kinship with any of its fellows across sea, it is with its namesake at Cambridge, which seems to suggest somewhat similarly the dominance of Christopher Wren and the Protestant austerity.

There are three quads in Trinity College. The front includes Parliament-square—so-called because of the liberal grants given the college by the Irish Parliament for its rebuilding and that of the west front of the college—and the Library-square. These were once divided by a row of buildings, where the Campanile now stands. In one of these buildings Goldsmith is said to have had rooms. The Library-square contains Rotten-row—the oldest buildings in college, some of which were standing in the latter part of the 17th century. The front square has a fine spaciousness, somewhat marred by the hideous waste of uneven pavements in the midst. It has the principal buildings—the Library, under which, until a few years ago, was a grand old cloister, now unhappily built up, to afford greater accommodation for the books and their readers; the Chapel, gloomy and dark within, with its heavy pews of carved oak, but with a fine window of Munich glass, and steps and chancel-rails of Galway

marble, not Carrara, as in many of the Catholic churches in Ireland; the Examination Hall, with its walls covered with portraits, and containing the tomb of Provost Baldwin, while in the gallery stands the famous organ which was taken from the Spaniards in Vigo Bay, 1702, repaired and enlarged by Cuvillie in 1705, and presented to the college by the second Duke of Ormonde; and the Dining Hall, which also contains a number of portraits, including one of Henry Grattan. The new square consists of solid, respectable-looking houses of a very unacademic type, but their ugliness is somewhat atoned for by the beauty of the ancient thorn-trees in the well-kept quadrangle. In May and June the rich bloom of pink and white makes the new square almost beautiful; and the eastern wall is covered with Virginia creepers—thanks to the loving care of Mr. Cathcart, the only one of the Fellows who seems to care for such things. The Museum buildings, ornate out of keeping with the rest of the place, overlook the new square, and, it is said, won the approval of Mr. Ruskin. Botany Bay, the third quadrangle, is popularly held to be the habitation of the wilder spirits, though hard-reading men are as common there as in most other places. At the end of Term, especially, it is the scene of many a festive gathering, and oft-times the stillness of midnight is broken by the cheers which greet the successful lighting of a bonfire, or the cries of "Tally-ho," which announce to the initiated that a cat has been started.

The buildings in the Bay are more than usually hideous, and one longs for a mantle of green ivy to cover their nakedness. A grass plot has of late struggled into existence, but sadly intersected by footpaths. Some time ago a fence of barbed wire was put up, to discourage students from taking short-cuts across the grass, but it was demolished within about an hour of its erection by the indignant inhabitants. Behind the new Square lies the "Wilderness," so called, and to the south stretches the College Park. There it is pleasant to lie in flannels in the summer, and smoke and dream, with three good months of freedom before one, and when the Campanile bell no longer summons to chapel or to the Examination Hall. Very pleasant it is to be away from the noise of the streets, which makes but a dreamy hum in the distance. The place, despite its gloominess of face, has the charm of stillness and seclusion in the heart of a city. The quaint old-world air which belongs to a