

**NOTES ON THE  
HISTORY OF TRINITY  
COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE**

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Notes on the History of Trinity College, Cambridge by W. W. Rouse Ball

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THE HISTORY OF

Trinity College, Cambridge,

BY

W. W. ROUSE BALL,

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF THE COLLEGE.

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## PREFACE

THIS booklet is but little more than an orderly transcript of what I have been accustomed to tell my pupils about the history of Trinity College, Cambridge. It contains no original investigations, nor anything more than such gossip about the college and the university as might occur to most residents who find pleasure in like matters.

I have given but few references. I admit that the authorities could not be given too fully or explicitly in a serious history, but a mere outline like this would be overloaded with them. Even apart from the slight character of the work, the reasons which have induced me to issue it as it stands without revising every detail would make it unnecessary to quote authorities. In the first place, we shall shortly have from the pen of an excellent authority—Mr. Boughey—a full history based on original documents. In the second place, to check every remark in this sketch would have involved considerable labour, for which I have not now—and,

so long as I continue to hold the office of tutor, cannot have—the necessary time: fortunately for many facts I could consult Mullinger's *University of Cambridge*, Cooper's *Annals and Memorials*, and the *Architectural History* by Willis and Clark; and the reader who wants references or fuller information will naturally turn to these works. In the third place, I am printing it mainly for the use of my own pupils, and to delay issuing it until I had ceased to hold the office of tutor, and thereby secured the necessary leisure for research, would deprive it of its chief use: I have indeed emphasized its domestic character by constantly using phrases, almost conversational, such as 'our college,' while the fact that it is intended for so limited a class has permitted me greater freedom than would be desirable in a work written for a wider public.

My first sketch was concise. Every time I read it I was tempted to insert additional matter: this has made it longer than I desired, but when I look at it and think how much more I could have said, I wonder at my own moderation. In writing it out I have naturally asked myself whether it is really worth the printing. I think that, pending the production of a fuller account, it is. I have been frequently asked where some account of our history can be found, and I have generally found undergraduates interested in the subject; while should these notes be so fortunate as to stimulate the interest of any in the records of the Society of which they

are members, I shall deem myself well repaid for the trouble of reducing them to order and preparing them for the press.

As to the arrangement of the subject. I first, in chapter i, sketch briefly the history of the university, and then, in chapter ii, that of King's Hall, one of the three leading foundations of medieval Cambridge. Chapter iii is devoted to an account of the surrender by King's Hall of its charter, and to the foundation of Trinity and its early development. In chapter iv, I consider Whitgift's rule, 1567 to 1577, under which the college rose to the leading position in Cambridge; and in chapter v, Nevile's mastership, 1593 to 1615, under which our older buildings assumed their present form. In chapter vi, I deal with our history during the rest of the seventeenth century, in which, although the material prosperity of the college increased, its efficiency (like that of the rest of the university) suffered from the civil disturbances through which the country passed. In chapter vii, I give an account of the disastrous rule of Bentley, 1700 to 1742; in chapter viii, of the gradual restoration of prosperity and order, culminating in the decisive victory of 1787 and the subsequent outburst of intellectual activity; and in chapter ix, of the rise in numbers and steady progress from 1820 to the present day.

I feel that I lay myself open to criticism in that I allude, especially in the earlier chapters, so constantly