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Christopher Wordsworth

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Social Life at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century

Christopher Wordsworth (1848-1938), was a great-nephew of the poet, and part of a Victorian dynasty of Cambridge academics. *Social Life at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century*, first published in 1874 while Wordsworth was a Fellow of Peterhouse, is a comprehensive survey of student life in England a century earlier. Its seven appendices include the diary of a student at Trinity College, Cambridge during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth's research covered hundreds of works relating to the political and moral condition of the universities, relations between different categories of members, and proposals for reform that were put forward at the time. Music, dramatic entertainment, and expenses are other areas explored in this thorough overview, which remains a useful source for historians of education and society. A companion volume, Wordsworth's *Scholae Academicae* is also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection.

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IN THE
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'Celebrare domestica facta.'—HOR.

COMPILED BY

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, M.A.,

FELLOW OF PETER-HOUSE,
AND SOMETIME A SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
IN CAMBRIDGE.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are the result of several months' miscellaneous reading of the ephemeral literature and of the biographies which bear upon Social Life in the English Universities during the eighteenth century.

That so portly a volume is now sent out into the world, is due partly to the inexperience of the compiler, in part to the interest which he could not fail to feel even in the minute and comparatively trivial particulars of the life of those who, in earlier generations and very different times, had passed through the same stages through which he was passing; in a measure also to the circumstances under which the first instalment of the work was written, as a prize competition to be completed by a fixed date; and in no slight degree to the abundance of material which the libraries poured forth.

It was hoped that the end proposed by the authorities of our University in their choice of a subject for the Le Bas Essay in 1871, viz. *University*

L. B. E.

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Life and Studies in England during the Eighteenth Century, would be more easily attained through the existence of such a collection as the present, and of the materials gathered for the two remaining subdivisions of the subject which are mentioned on page 4:—for where the supply of information is so great, and at the same time lies so much in the dust of pamphlets and books of little general interest, it would seem to require the familiar study of many years to justify even an expert historian in undertaking to give an intelligent and trustworthy view of the times: a view, that is, in which ideas and theories should be presented to the reader with that assumption of a right of judgment which only long experience can claim.

In the present instance the old materials have been, as it were, carted to a clear spot, and the reader may re-construct for the home of his academic ancestors prison or nursery, hut or palace, as each loose stone tells its own history to him: or else he must look for some skilled architect, or be content to wait till the carter has learnt mason's work.

In order that the pile of materials may not utterly appal or deter from the work of construction, a TABLE OF CONTENTS has been furnished for the purpose of indicating the nature of the materials which make up the heap, and shewing the method in which they are arranged; where it may be seen

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that they have not been shot as mere rubbish in disregard of future usefulness.

It remains for the compiler to express his thanks to the following gentlemen, without whose help the work would have been more imperfect than it is. The Reverend Henry Wilkinson Cookson, D.D., Master of Peterhouse or Saint Peter's College, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge; Henry Bradshaw, Esquire, M.A., Fellow of King's College and University Librarian; The Reverend Henry Octavius Coxe, M.A., of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and Bodley's Librarian; The Reverend William Magan Campion, D.D., Tutor of Queens' College; The Reverend Henry Richards Luard, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College and Registry of the University; The Reverend John Eyton Bickersteth Mayor, M.A., senior Fellow of Saint John's College and Professor of Latin, who has kindly assisted while the sheets have been passing through the press; J. Bass Mullinger, Esquire, M.A., of Saint John's College (who in his recent work on the *Early History of the University of Cambridge* and of European education, has already restored the more ancient portion of the structure, whose *débris* of later workmanship still need a master-hand to call them up before the sight of this our generation); The Reverend John William Nutt, M.A., Fellow of All Souls' College, Sublibrarian of the Bodleian; The Reverend

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Richard Shilleto, M.A., Fellow of Peterhouse; and the Compiler's brother, with other friends. All of whom, though in no way responsible for the errors of this volume, have by different acts of kindness contributed to its completion.

From the nature of the work the debt due to authors of books is very great: such authorities as Mr Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*, Dr Bliss' *Reliquiae Hearnianae*, and Professor Mayor's additions to *Baker's History of St John's College Cambridge*, have been used unsparingly. The Compiler hopes that the references given by him in the text and notes may be accepted as a grateful acknowledgment of the assistance which he has received from these and many other writers.

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for the first only of which materials are collected in the present volume.

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¹ The history of our Cambridge term TRIPOS, as equivalent to 'honour examination,' is curious and interesting.

(1) The B.A., who sat on a *three-legged stool* (pp. 211, 227) to dispute with the 'Father' in the philosophy schools on Ash-Wednesday, was called Mr Tripus, from that on which he sat.

(2) The satirical speech made by him (pp. 219, 220) was called the *Tripus-speech*: and

(3) His humorous verses distributed by the bedels were called *Tripus-verses*.

(4) His office became obsolete in the last century; and similar verses being still circulated by authority each *sheet of verses* was called 'a *Tripus*,' or '*Tripus Paper*' (*Gradus ad Cantab.* ed. 1803).

(5) On the back of each sheet after the year 1748 a *list* of 'Wranglers' and 'Senior Optimes,' or of 'Junior Optimes' (*Gradus ad Cantab.* ed. 1824). These lists were called the '*Tripuses*,' or first and second '*Tripus lists*' (pp. 210, 255).

(6) The mathematical *examination*, whose interest centered in this list, was called the *Tripus*.

(7) When other 'honour examinations' were instituted they were distinguished as the '*classical tripus*,' &c. from the '*mathematical tripus*.'

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