

An American in Victorian Cambridge

Charles Astor Bristed's 'Five Years in an English University'

edited by Christopher Stray

DESCRIPTION:

Charles Astor Bristed (1820-1874) was the favourite grandson of John Jacob Astor (the first American multi-millionaire, and the Astor of the Waldorf-Astoria). After gaining a degree at Yale, Bristed entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1840, graduating in 1845. "An American in Victorian Cambridge" is a richly detailed account of student life in the Cambridge of the 1840s. The rationale for the book, which is as appealing today as it was then, is that this is pre-eminently a book about an American student at an English university. The book belongs to a fascinating C19th trans-Atlantic publishing genre: travel accounts designed to describe British culture to Americans and vice-versa.

In this new edition, some substantial additions have been made: the Foreword and Introduction both help to contextualise the work, and point to its significance as an important historical source and as a fascinating memoir of life in Victorian Cambridge; annotation helps to identify the individuals who appear in Bristed's text; and an index allows full use to be made of the text for the first time.

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Christopher Stray, Department of Classics, Swansea University, is the author of Classics Transformed: Universities and Societies in England 1830-1960 (OUP 1998); The Living Word: WHD Rouse and the Crisis of Classics in Edwardian England (BCP 1992); Gilbert Murray Reassessed: Hellenism, Theatre and International Politics (OUP 2007). He has been described by Professor Amy Richlin (UCLA) as 'the God-Emperor of Victorian Classics'.