

Early Life

Born in Limerick on the 12th of December 1803, Gerald was the twelfth of fifteen children, in a middle-class family. He seems to have gained his love of literature from his mother, who was a very cultured woman, and was a member of the prominent O'Brien family.

Gerald and his family moved westward, to settle in a house called Fairy Lawn, when he was only eight years old. The idyllic surroundings of the house would come to inspire the settings for many of his literary works.

In 1820, his father, along with the rest of his family, except Gerald's brother William, with whom he lived, emigrated to America. This seems to have had a negative influence on him as he was noted as having a sensitive and vulnerable nature.

The Collegians

The Collegians is probably Gerald Griffin's best known work. Originally published in 1829, and inspired by a celebrated criminal case, The Collegians is the best of the Irish romantic novels, as it follows Hardress Cregan, a collegian and a rogue, with a wicked roving eye. Gerald Griffin told his brother that it "wrote itself".

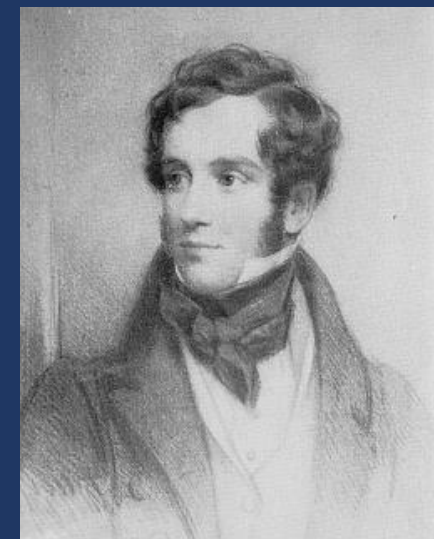
This novel gives us an interesting view of Gerald Griffin's world with the hero of the story having psychological parallels to Gerald himself. We can also see in The Collegians, a society in decay, which was in line with Gerald Griffin's own view of life at this time.

It is most likely that this view contributed to him finding a vocation for the priesthood, which seems to have been influenced also by a trip he took to France in 1836.

Joining the Brothers

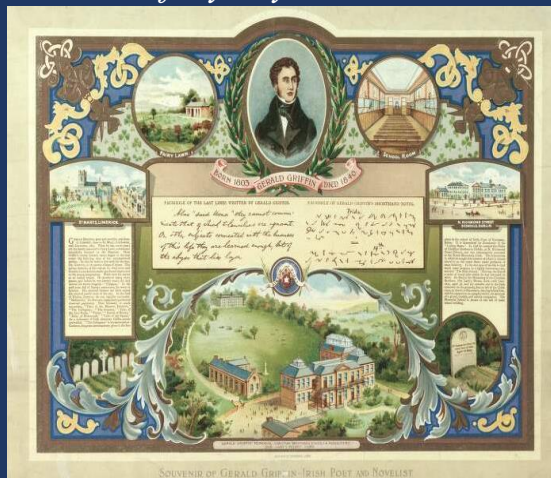
In 1838 Gerald Griffin entered the teaching order of Christian Brothers in North Richmond Street in Dublin. The following year Gerald was transferred to the North Monastery in Cork. During his time in The Monastery the Christian Brothers were engaged in the creation of their first set of school text books. Gerald seems to have assisted with the editing of these books and he also contributed some of his own works to the cause.

Picture (right):
Brother
Gerald
Griffin



Death

Gerald Griffin died of fever on the 12th of June 1840, at the age of 36. He died at the North Monastery, and he is buried in the Brothers' Cemetery, adjacent to the school. This early death was foreseen by Gerald Griffin himself who wrote "In the time of my boyhood I had a strange feeling that I was to die ere the noon of my day".



Picture (above): Memorial Print of Gerald Griffin. In this print we can see the earliest known image of the North Monastery.

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Brother Gerald Griffin

*The North Monastery's
Legend of Literature*

1803 – 1840

