

# **A DOMINIE'S LOG**

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A Dominie's Log by A. S. Neill

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**A. S. NEILL**

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BY  
A. S. NEILL, M.A.

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AIRBORNE

AS A BOY I ATTENDED A VILLAGE  
SCHOOL WHERE THE BAIRNS CHATTERED  
AND WERE HAPPY. I TRACE MY LOVE  
OF FREEDOM TO MY FREE LIFE THERE,  
AND I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO MY  
FORMER DOMINIE, MY FATHER.

## PREFACE.

**T**HE first four instalments of this Log were published in the *Educational News*, under the acting editorship of Mr. Alexander Sivewright, who was very anxious to publish the Log in full, but apparently public opinion on the subject of the indiscriminate kissing of girls forced him to hold up the remainder.

Then teachers began to write me letters. Some of them were very complimentary; others weren't. These letters worried me, for I couldn't quite determine whether I was a lunatic or a genius. Then an unknown lady sent me a tract.

The title of the tract was: "The Sin That Found Him Out." The hero was a boy called Willie. He never told a lie, and when other boys smote him he turned the other cheek and prayed for them. "Life to him was one long prayer," said the tract. Then troubles came. He grew up and his father took to drink. His elder brother had a disagreement with



the local police about his whereabouts on the night of a certain robbery, and was decidedly unconvincing. Willie stepped in and took all the blame.

The next chapter takes Willie as a private to the fields of Flanders, and the penultimate chapter sees him a major-general. The last chapter contains the moral, but what the moral is I cannot well make out. In fact I don't know whether the title refers to Willie or his transgressing brother, but I feel that somewhere in that pamphlet there is a lesson for me.

Before the tract arrived I thought of publishing the Log as a brilliant treatise on education. Its arrival altered all my values. I then knew that I was the educational equivalent of the "awful example" who sits on the platform at temperance meetings, and with great humility I besought Mr. Herbert Jenkins to publish my Log as a terrible warning to my fellow sinners.

A. S. N.

1915.

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### I.

“**N**O reflections or opinions of a general character are to be entered in the log-book.”—Thus the Scotch Code.

I have resolved to keep a private log of my own. In the regulation volume I shall write down all the futile never-to-be-seen piffle about Mary Brown's being laid up with the measles, and about my anxiety lest it should spread. (Incidentally, my anxiety is real ; I do not want the school to be closed ; I want a summer holiday undocked of any days.) In my private log I shall write down my thoughts on education. I think they will be mostly original ; there has been no real authority on education, and I do not know of any book from which I can crib.

To-night after my bairns had gone away, I sat down on a desk and thought. What does it all mean ? What am I trying to do ? These boys are going out to the fields to plough ;