

# **SCHOOLBOYS AND SCHOOL WORK**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649698356

Schoolboys and School Work by Edward Lyttelton

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**EDWARD LYTTTELTON**

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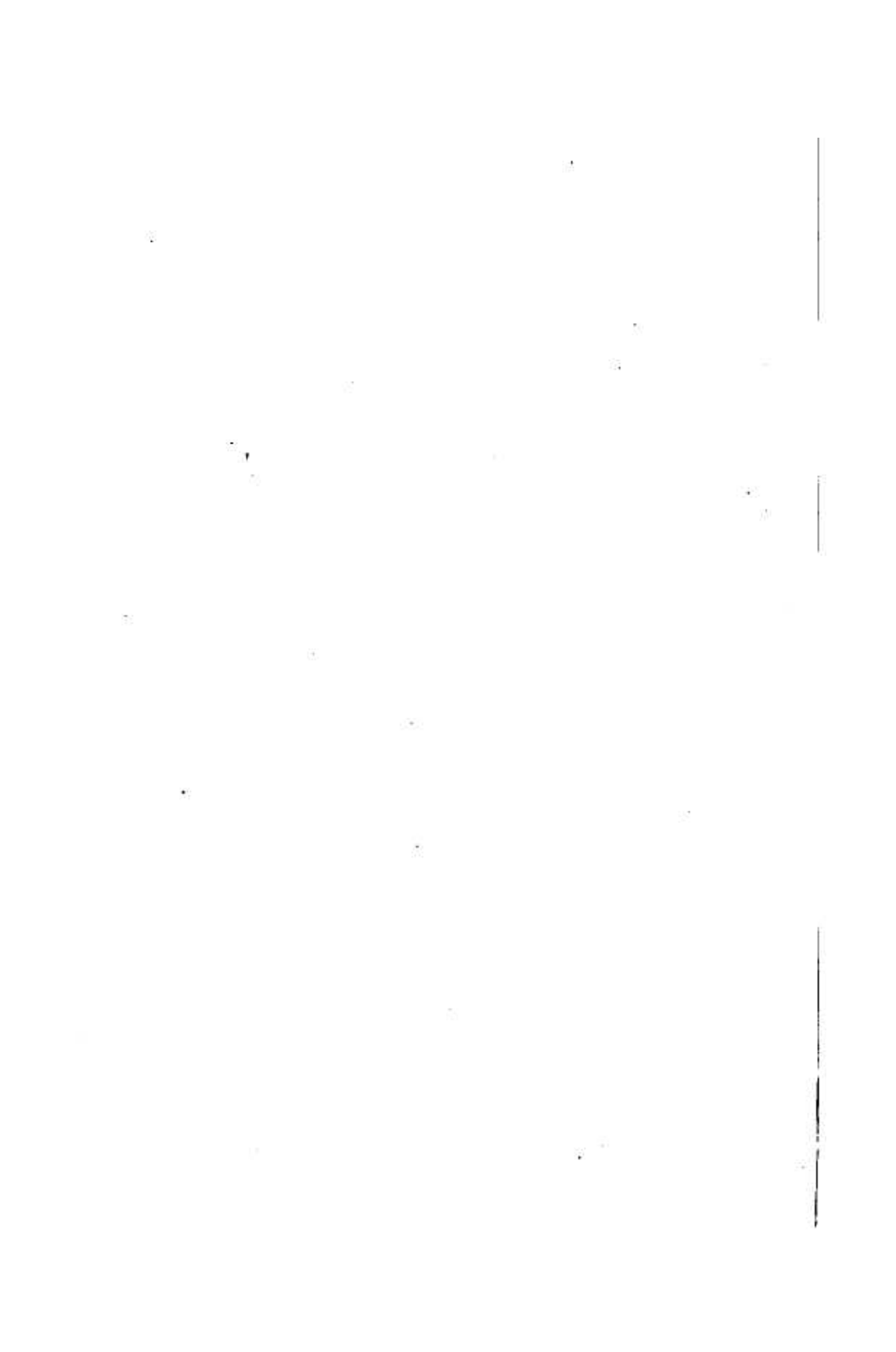
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SCHOOLBOYS  
AND  
SCHOOL WORK  
OF  
CALIFORNIA

BY  
REV. THE HON. E. LYTTTELTON, M.A., B.D.  
HEADMASTER OF ETON

Device of man in working hath no end;  
What thought can think another thought can mend  
---SOUTHWELL

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NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA  
1909





## PREFACE.

THE weariness of what has been unfortunately called "the Greek question," of which headmasters complain, may be interpreted to mean a desire to have done with talk and to see some constructive programme attempted. Few can be satisfied with the destructive criticisms which are poured upon us, or with the policy of drifting, or with the luxury of uttering jeremiads over the decay of culture and Hellenism; most of those who are interested in curricula are probably agreed that we have reached the time when some new line should be boldly taken. This little work is an attempt to indicate the possibilities of experiment, the simple principles upon which experiment should be made and the purpose to be attained. "Chaque siècle," says a French writer on Secondary Education, "introduit dans son régime d'éducation le résultat de ses découvertes et de ses travaux, la préoccupation de ses intérêts et de ses besoins." Our own age has certainly interests, needs and discoveries enough to produce the so-called "congestion" of any programme of education: a mass of literature and literary criticism

in our own and many other tongues, brought within easy reach of all, new views and new methods compelled by the discoveries of archæologists, fresh interest in vivifying history and geography, in opening the minds of all, even the youngest, to the processes and phenomena of nature, eagerness to bring all that is stimulating in music, singing, drawing and manual training into the course of education, desire to make every subject a reality in the training of young life, the many interests which are awakened by the communication of ideas and by contact with all kinds of systems both at home and abroad. We can well appreciate something of the bewilderment, as it is to be hoped we may imitate something of the enthusiasm, of the Renaissance of the sixteenth century : and we are reminded of Rabelais' famous description of Gargantua's ideal of education for his son, including the classic tongues, geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy, all the physical sciences, medicine, a study of the Sacred Books, Hebrew, Chaldaic, Arabic ; he will have his son, he says, "ignorant of nothing that exists". There was then evidently, as there is now, plenty of free play for the faddist ; there is now, as there was then, the acrid temper—we trust not the same material justification for it—which prompted Erasmus to declare that he carried away from a French College nothing but "disease and a plentiful supply of vermin".

But our own age has added—for good or for

evil—a new and very powerful stimulus: the test of examination, chiefly competitive and therefore based upon the assumption that young minds will or ought to have reached the same stage of development, intelligence and capacity at the same age. And the analysis of the admitted congestion of the programme seems to show that it is due partly to the multiplicity of interests with the seriousness and importance attached to each, but chiefly to the necessity imposed by examinations of reaching a required standard by a certain age; it means that right through a boy's education from the Preparatory School to the University he is compelled to begin new subjects and to cover a certain extent of ground in them, whether his mind is really ripe for it or ever capacious enough for it or not. Is it then possible so to construct a course of education by which a boy shall not be allowed to begin certain new subjects until his educators are convinced that he has the capacity for them?

The principle out of which the programme considered in this book arises is elementary—we almost blush to assert it—namely, that the object of education is to train the mind to think rationally, and to express itself intelligently and accurately; and this presupposes that in the process the mind will acquire some things to think about. Inasmuch as we hold that intelligent expression is vital, even if the most difficult of all objects to be attained, we make the basis of education what is called “literary” or