

**A BOOK ABOUT DOMINIES:
BEING THE REFLECTIONS
AND RECOLLECTIONS OF A
MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION**

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A book about dominies: being the reflections and recollections of a member of the profession by
Ascott R. Hope

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ABOUT DOMINIES

BEING

*THE REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF A MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION.*

BY

ASCOTT R. HOPE,

AUTHOR OF 'A BOOK ABOUT BOYS,' 'STORIES OF SCHOOL LIFE,' ETC.

'Turba, fere censu fraudata, magistri.'

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TO .M.M.U.
ABSPOTLIAO



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN issuing a second edition of this Book about Dominies, I think it right to say—what I would have said before, if I had not trusted more confidently than the result has justified to preserving my *incognito*—that it is more of a work of fiction than may have been supposed. I should be sorry to discourage any one who may take an interest in identifying the dominie, whose life, opinions, school, pupils, and acquaintances are sketched in these pages; but I feel it imperative on me to warn such investigators that their search is extremely unlikely to meet with much success, unless, indeed, Dr. Cumming be singularly far wrong in his views as to the duration of our mundane existence. For similar reasons, I should strongly advise all parents who may be pleased with my speculations, not to delay the education of their darlings till they can send them to my school to be placed under my charge.

I don't choose to let the public too far behind my scenes ; but if any curious spectator should look through the curtain, and have a peep at me trying on my cocked hat and feathers, he must not go away with the idea that I am a conceited individual in private life. As for the story that the appearance of this edition has been delayed by my printer's running short of capital *F's*, it is a pure fabrication.

I wish to take this opportunity of answering certain objections which have been made to this book. For instance, a friend of mine, who did not know that he was speaking to its author, informed me that it contained a great deal of very silly nonsense not at all necessary to the subject. But this gentleman did not remember, to fulfil its purpose, my book should be read by other and less hard-headed people than dominies, and that these people might be tickled into agreement with my views by the very passages stigmatized by him as 'silly.' I have been accused, too, of being a very old-fashioned dominie, and of making little mention of a large and influential class of schoolmasters of another type ; to which I would answer, that my book was about real dominies, and not about the clerical or other amateurs who, in certain parts of the country,

frequently undertake the temporary performance of scholastic duties.

It has also been objected that I am satirical and ill-natured, too fond of thinking and calling other people fools; and in this way I understand that I have procured for myself a good deal of ill-will and reviling. It is on record that certain inferior members of the brute creation objected strongly to the means taken for their destruction, and found their objections disregarded. I have certainly tried to speak what I believe to be the truth, without fear or favour; and, of course, some people don't like having the truth told of them, and are prone to recalcitrate to the best of their ability.

'Ah me, what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron'—

in the shape of a pen! But, after all, the world little knows where the satirist gets his models—who sits for his blackest pictures—what lay figure it is that is always in the studio.

The general meaning of these criticisms is, that I should have put my views about scholastic matters into a series of quiet, logical, and unpretentious essays, which no one could have objected to, and almost no one would have read. I foresaw this,

and resolved to secure my object in another way, which the reflective reader will perceive, and the partial success of which has been proved by the result. This object was the furtherance of a cause that I have at heart, and have before endeavoured to serve in this and other ways without much success. But, *civis Romanus sum*,—I am a Scotchman, and not easily discouraged.

It is the cause of the schoolmaster, too often, as Carlyle calls him, a 'down-bent, broken-hearted, underfoot martyr,' of which I would fain be an unworthy champion. Many schoolmasters are hirelings, caring not for their sheep; but there are many others who, at this moment, are wisely and bravely doing the most noble and useful work that can be done on earth, and getting little thanks for it. Is it vain labour to try to make people respect schoolmasters more, and to make schoolmasters more deserving of respect?

Long time have I kept vigil over my armour in the cold halls of publishers. At length the sun has risen, and I have received the knightly honours of publication. Mounted on my Rosinante, I come forth on what may seem to some the Quixotic adventure of fighting for dominies against the windmills, giants, and enchanters of this cruel world.



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