

# **EDUCATION IN ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

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Education in England in the Middle ages by A. W. Parry

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**A. W. PARRY**

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PREFACE.

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THE purpose of this book is to give an account of the provision which was made in this country for Education during the period from the Introduction of Christianity to the Eve of the Reformation. Preparatory to writing it, I tried to examine all the relevant, available evidence with the object of discovering the factors which contributed to the educational development of the nation during the period under consideration.

Whilst this work was in progress, the late A. F. Leach published his *Schools of Mediaeval England*. His book, however, differs essentially from mine, his aim is different, the conclusions he arrives at are different; further, as he does not quote the authorities for the statements he makes, I did not find his work of direct assistance. This criticism does not apply to his *Educational Charters*, a collection of documents of inestimable value to all students of English Educational History.

I have tried to acknowledge in every case my obligations to other writers. In addition, I give in an appendix a list of the authorities I have consulted, and of the other books I have studied for the purpose of this investigation. Still, as a great part of this book was written whilst I was on military service (1914-9) and I was consequently dependent on notes which I had compiled at various times and places, it is probable there may be some omissions and inaccuracies. My defence must be the special circumstances of recent years.

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May I take this opportunity of expressing my indebtedness to Professor Foster Watson, D.Litt. As one of his former students I owe to the stimulus and encouragement I received from him, my interest in matters relating to the History of Education. I wish also to refer in appreciative terms to Mr. J. E. G. de Montmorency's *State Intervention in English Education*. Mr. de Montmorency was the first writer to give a connected account of the development of English Education, and it is only fitting that those who essay a similar task should realise their obligations to the one who first "blazed the trail."

I must also thank Mr. G. St. Quintin and Mr. S. E. Goggin for relieving me of the distasteful task of correcting the proofs, and the Rev. Dr. Hughes for kindly preparing the Index.

A. W. P.

CARMARTHEN,  
*January 1920.*



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## INTRODUCTION.

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The history of education during the Middle Ages is closely interwoven with the history of the Church. Professor Foster Watson quotes with approval Cardinal Newman's dictum, "Not a man in Europe who talks bravely against the Church but owes it to the Church that he can talk at all."<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to trace three stages in the development of the English educational system during the period with which we are concerned.

The first stage covers a period from the Introduction of Christianity to the Norman Conquest. The Introduction of Christianity was the means by which education became possible for this country, and so it naturally came about that the provision of facilities for education was generally conceived of as a part of the function of the Church. In this connection it is important to realise the relationship of the State to the Church in Anglo-Saxon times. As Professor Medley points out,<sup>2</sup> the Church and the State during this period were largely identical. The bishops were *ex-officio* the advisers of the kings, and they sat in the local courts not only exercising jurisdiction in those cases in which the clergy were affected, but also concerning themselves with questions involving the morals of the laity. In a more real sense than at any subsequent time, the Church of England, during the Anglo-Saxon period, was the Church of the English nation. During this time the activities of the Church were essentially the activities of the State, and the work which was done for education might be conceived of, indifferently, as either the work of the Church or of the State.

<sup>1</sup> *English Grammar Schools*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Constit. Hist.*, p. 563.