

**HOW I SPENT MY
SUMMER
HOLIDAYS IN 1876**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649235476

How I Spent My Summer Holidays in 1876 by Robert Needham Cust

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ROBERT NEEDHAM CUST

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By AN ETON BOY.

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ETON COLLEGE: R. INGALTON DRAKE.

1887.

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How I Spent my Summer Holidays

IN 1876:

BY AN ETON BOY.

THERE have been published several books about life at Eton in various phases such as "A Day of My Life" and "About some Fellows"; not to mention a host of papers on the same sort of subject. These I know have been very successful, and well repaid the care spent upon them by their authors. I am afraid, that my present book will not have such a complete success throughout the whole 900 and odd boys, but I trust, that at least *some* may be interested by it, and that it may call forth other books detailing and depicting the delights of other ways of spending the Summer holidays. I know that, though I never could see the fun of it, some fellows think it great fun to stump across moor and bog on the chance of hitting a bird, or to stand for hours in a stream on the chance of hooking a fish, or many other sorts of amusement. But *chacun à son gout*, say I; I

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prefer certainly the way of spending the Summer holidays, which I will now detail.

It was one summer ago, that I first had the offer of going abroad. I had been to Paris at the previous Easter and enjoyed it very much. But now my Father offered to take me on a tour, which promised to be far more enjoyable; namely, to St. Petersburg, whither he was going as a member of the International Oriental Congress, by the way of Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. We started in the middle of August, our party consisting of my Father, another old Etonian and myself. It was extremely hot weather at the time, and the usual passage from Dover to Calais, so well known to most people, who have been abroad, was shorn of its horrors. Here a little time was given for dinner in an extremely dingy and tremendously crowded "buffet." Thence we travelled for sixteen hours to Cologne, through Lille and Brussels, and oh! the heat was awful. We arrived at Cologne half melted, and put up at the Hotel du Nord. Arising early next morning, we hurried round the Cathedral with its sacristy and shrine of the three kings, of whose

bones all that is to be seen are three mouldy skulls with gold crowns on them. We saw also the bones of Ursula's eleven thousand virgins. We then started by train for Hamburg. It was monstrously hot, and the compartment we were in was very full of people and extremely close. One young Frenchman squinted awfully. He was travelling with his mother, and she confidentially told my Father, that her son was going to meet his *fiancée* for the first time. The young girl, rather pretty, came to meet them at the station: we saw them meet: I pitied her.

After a long day's journey we arrived at Hamburg, and got rooms in an hotel, whose windows overlooked a great sort of half-harbour, half-lake. That evening we went in a little steamer across the aforesaid lake to a pleasure-garden to hear a "Monstre Concert" (*sic*). Here we found a large number of people sitting out under the trees at little tables drinking beer, and enjoying the strains of a band.

The lake looked very pretty with all the lights round it, and one or two boats were hung with coloured Chinese lanterns.

Thence home to our hotel and to bed, as Mr. Pepys would say in his famous Diary.

I forgot to say, that I was in the Middle Division of the Fifth Form, and, when my Father proposed to enter my name among the "Savans Orientalistes," and get a ticket, that I might enjoy the advantages, I was taken aback, but he reminded me, that I had been to India while a baby in arms, and was therefore an Orientalist, and that every Eton boy was a savant or "knowing one,"—some a little more, and some a little less. Besides, I found that my friend Anna, daughter of another old Etonian, whom we caught up at Stockholm, had taken out a ticket as a "savante," and she was only a girl, so I consented to be entered as a Savant Orientalist.

Next day we saw Hamburg, ran over to Lubeck, and saw that place. I read Murray's Guide-Book, and never leave any place, till I have verified every object mentioned. This takes time, but I acquired the habit at my Dame's of doing everything thoroughly. By sunset we got to Kiel, and went on board the steamer, which during the night took us to Corsor in the Island of Zealand. Here we

landed and took train to Copenhagen. Here we had a day's hard work visiting galleries, libraries, and museums. The whole place was full of naked marble statues. We lived in a state of ceaseless perspiration day and night. There were some capital open-air pantomimes in one of the public gardens.

Thence we took train to Elsinore, saw Hamlet's Castle, famous for Shakespeare's line :—

“ Who's there ? It is I, my lord, the early village cock !”

We saw also Ophelia's grave, and embarking on board a small steamer named “ Horatio ” we crossed the Sound, and landed at Helsingborg in Sweden. We had a fair view of the Kattegat. When we went to take our places in the train, we found that not only were there compartments for smokers, but also for swearers, for one was labelled “ Dam-coupè.” We found that the barmaid was called a “ Flicker,” and the ladies' cloak-room was marked “ Får Quinner.” We travelled all night, and reached Stockholm early in the morning. The city was beautiful, and our hotel was a grand one just opposite the palace. Here we joined a great

