

# **SOME WINCHESTER LETTERS**

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Some Winchester letters by Lionel Johnson

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**LIONEL JOHNSON**

**SOME WINCHESTER  
LETTERS**



SOME  
WINCHESTER LETTERS  
OF  
LIONEL JOHNSON

*ed. Sir Francis Russell*



LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.  
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Not on the vulgar mass  
Called " Work," must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;  
O'er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice :

But all the world's coarse thumb  
And finger failed to plumb,  
So passed in making up the main account :  
All instincts immature,  
All purposes unsure,  
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount :

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language and escaped :  
All I could never be,  
All men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

RABBI BEN EZRA





## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

LIONEL PIGOT JOHNSON was born on March 15, 1867, at Broadstairs, and had a Celtic strain in his ancestry. He spent six years as a scholar in College at Winchester, and then proceeded to New College. He was a great admirer of Walter Pater, of whom he saw a good deal at Oxford. His literary period, so far as the public is concerned, may be said roughly to have extended from 1890 to 1900, when he lived in London and supported himself by various writings for periodicals, many of which have since been collected and published. The work for which he cared was always the unremunerative one of poetry. In 1891 he became a Roman Catholic, and he died at the age of thirty-five on October 4, 1902.



## INTRODUCTION

**I**T is thought that these letters, written by a scholar of the College of St. Mary, Winton, may be of interest to a wider circle than that to which they were originally addressed, in several respects. In the first place it will be observed that they deal not with personal or temporary affairs, but with general questions of a kind which have interested the whole thinking part of the whole human race for centuries. They are further remarkable as the production of a schoolboy between the ages of sixteen and eighteen; showing as they do a most unusually extensive acquaintance with English literature and a great sense of values. It is true on looking back from the vantage-ground of middle age one may detect traces of immaturity, such as the excessive praise of Emerson, but these are few and far between. The letters also appear to have an interest, at any rate to contemporaries, in bringing again before one's mind's eye some of the outstanding