

**SCHOOL TEACHING AND SCHOOL
REFORM: A COURSE OF FOUR LECTURES
ON SCHOOL CURRICULA AND METHODS,
DELIVERED TO SECONDARY TEACHERS
AND TEACHERS IN TRAINING AT
BIRMINGHAM DURING FEBRUARY 1905**

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OLIVER LODGE

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By

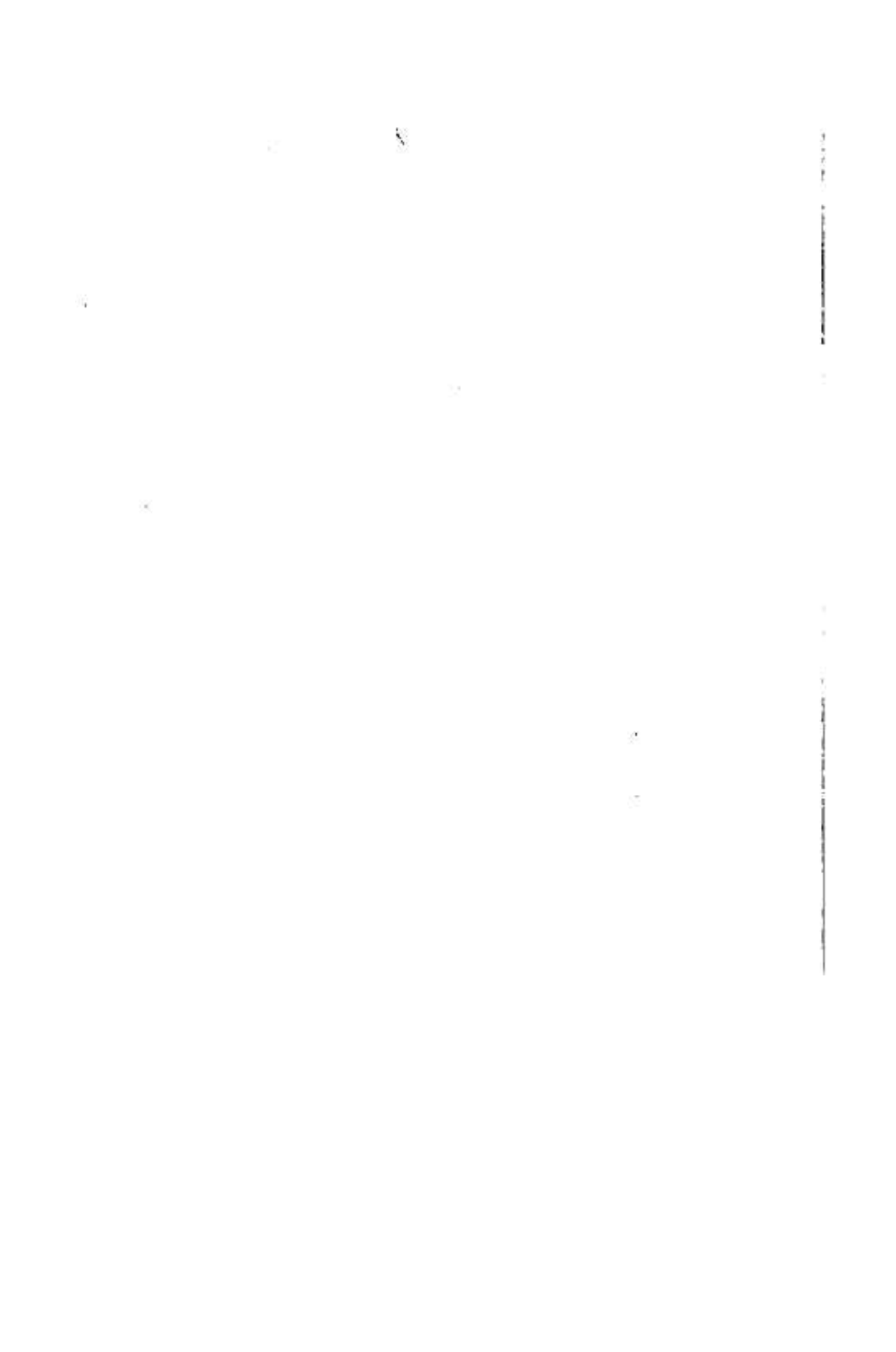
Sir Oliver Lodge

Principal of the University of Birmingham

Williams & Norgate
14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London
1905

"The result of handing over education to the most comprehensive theorist, with whatever gifts of lucid expression, would be, I doubt not, disastrous. The history of education is the battle-ground and burial-ground of impracticable theories : and one who studies it is soon taught to abate his constructive self-confidence, and to endeavour humbly to learn the lessons and harmonise the results of experience. . . .

"It not unfrequently happens—and perhaps it is not surprising—that even successful schoolmasters, immersed in the business of their profession, are found to have learned the theory of what they are doing casually and long ago from other men, and to have let it remain in their minds in undigested fragments, not really brought to the test of, and therefore not modified by, experience." HENRY SIDGWICK.



Preface

THE origin of the following Lectures was a request from our Professor of Education that I should take part in a course of Lectures on Teaching which he was arranging with several Professors to deliver to Secondary Teachers in Training. On condition that my lectures were thrown open to teachers in general, I consented ; though I was well aware that I necessarily regard the matter from the University point of view, and have not that intimate acquaintance with school work which would justify my entering into details in any dogmatic spirit. Sometimes, however, suggestions from an outsider are useful ; and the number of distinguished teachers who attended showed

that they were welcome. It was in full recognition of the truth of both portions of that utterance of Professor Henry Sidgwick which I prefix to this book as a motto that I undertook the task.

An excuse and warrant for my interference, if so it be regarded, is contained in a Presidential Address and Official Circular issued by the Royal Society, here partially reprinted as an Appendix, to which I wish specially to direct attention.

OLIVER LODGE.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM,
March 1905.

LECTURE I

CURRICULA AND METHODS

THERE are two burning questions in the air at the present time concerning English Schools. One is as to the curriculum : what subjects should be selected for teaching ; the other is as to the method : how they ought to be taught.

These two questions are closely related, and are constantly tending to merge into one another : so that, for instance, those who oppose the compulsory retention of classics often express themselves as satisfied with them as subjects, if only they were properly taught so that they might become really known by the majority of pupils ; while others advocate the retention of these languages as the staple item in a school

curriculum because, of the whole range of knowledge, they are the only subjects which the masters by generations of hereditary practice know how to teach, the only subjects for which appropriate text-books and sound pedagogic tradition exist. So it is said.

The obvious contention of reformers is that, in spite of all this, the majority of the boys upon whom this traditional battery of education has been expended leave school full of indifference to Greek and Latin literature, with the merest smattering of the language, which they speedily manage to forget, and sometimes with an active dislike for all studies that ever formed part of their school course. To which the traditional reply is, that the object of education is not to impart knowledge of a subject, but to train the mind, to render it elastic and subtle and adaptable, and to enable its cultured possessor to hold his own among similarly educated men.

This reply, at least on its positive side,