

**THE OXFORD STAMP AND
OTHER ESSAYS, ARTICLES FROM
THE EDUCATIONAL CREED OF
AN AMERICAN OXONIAN**

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The Oxford Stamp and other essays, articles from the educational creed of an American Oxonian by Frank Aydelotte

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BY

FRANK AYDELOTTE

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PREFACE

THE essays collected in this volume are all fruits of a Rhodes Scholarship. The holder of one of these appointments, who on his return from Oxford engages in university teaching in this country, inevitably makes comparisons, and looks at many of our educational problems from a new point of view. Much in the work and atmosphere of an English university is strikingly different from the adaptations of German university methods which have prevailed in our higher education for half a century. In the hope that this point of view may interest students of our educational problems, these essays are put together.

That the volume deals more with the study of English than with any other subject is due primarily to the fact that the writer is a teacher of English. It seems also that the time is fast approaching when the study of English in our

universities is destined to have the same importance and popularity as a means to liberal and literary education that the classics have so long enjoyed at Oxford. From the Oxford school of *Literæ Humaniores* hints and suggestions can be drawn which point to a wider opportunity for our study of the literature of our own tongue.

It is a curious fact, if the position maintained in these pages be correct, that the point of view which is responsible for the thinness and futility of much of our study of English in America during the last forty years was inherited from the study of the classics as pursued in this country in the middle of the last century, while the point of view which is now gaining in popularity and which, in the opinion of the writer, is destined to be the salvation of our English studies, has much in common with the Oxford study of the literatures of Greece and Rome. Our study of the classics and of English literature as well has tended to confine itself to *belles-lettres*, while the study of the classics at Oxford owes its distinction to the fact that it is a study of Greek and Roman civilization.

This whole matter is discussed more fully in the fifth essay below, and those that follow describe the writer's attempt to draw conclusions for English studies from the principles there laid down. If all this sounds more like the dream of an Oxford undergraduate than the sober sense needed in a practical American university, it may be said, in answer, that this book represents not merely the theories of a student at Oxford, but also the experience of ten years of practical application of these ideas in elementary and advanced courses at Indiana University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The picture of Oxford given in these essays goes back, already such a long way, to the years before 1914. It is to be assumed that the war will make far-reaching changes in English education and in Oxford, as in everything else. New degrees and new courses are already being planned to meet the demands of the new era. This is inevitable, but at the same time every son of Oxford will hope and believe that no desire for economy or efficiency or popularity will drive her to sacrifice the thoroughness and

the humanity which were her glory before the war.

My thanks are due to the editors of the *North American Student*, the *Indiana University Alumni Quarterly*, the *Nation*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Educational Review*, the *English Journal*, and to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for permission to reprint various essays. The exact date and place of publication of each is mentioned in the footnotes throughout the volume.

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