

*STUDIES IN*  
**ENGLISH PROSE**

CONSISTING OF

SPECIMENS OF THE LANGUAGE IN ITS EARLIEST,  
SUCCEEDING, AND LATEST STAGES

WITH

NOTES EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL

AND

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
AND A CONCISE ANGLO-SAXON GRAMMAR

*Intended as a Text-Book for Schools and Colleges*

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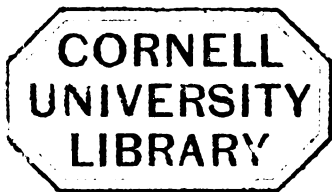
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THOMAS FULLER.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. THE GOOD SCHOOLMASTER.

(FROM "THE HOLY STATE," PUBLISHED IN 1642.)

THERE is scarce any profession in the commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly (*imperfectly*) performed. The reasons whereof I conceive to be these:—First, young scholars make this calling their refuge; yea, perchance, before they have taken any degree in the university, commence schoolmasters in the "country," as if nothing else were required to set up this profession, but "onely" a rod and a ferula (*hand-slapper*). Secondly, others who are able, use it "onely" as a passage to better preferments, to patch the rents in their present fortune, till they can provide a new one, and betake themselves to some more gainful calling. Thirdly, they are disheartened from doing their best with (*by*) the miserable reward, which, in some places, they receive, being masters to the children, and slaves to their parents. Fourthly, being grown rich, they grow negligent, and scorn to touch the school but by the "proxie"<sup>2</sup> of an usher.<sup>3</sup> But see how well *our* schoolmaster behaves himself.

I. His genius inclines him with delight to his profession.

(1) "All his (Fuller's) compositions have the same faults and the same excellencies—a somewhat loose style, with many trite and romantic stories; but withal an amount of wit and beauty and variety of truth, combined with practical wisdom, unsurpassed in any of the writers of that age. Coleridge puts him next to Shakspeare, as the writer who excites in him 'the sense and emotion of the marvellous.' The composition of all his works is strongly antithetic and euphuistic; but in him euphuism is part of the wit."—*Angus's Handbook of English Literature*.

(2) *Proxie*, or *proxy*, contracted from *procuracy*, wh. fr. Lat. *procurare*, to take care for another. Hence also, *procurator*, or *proctor*. In Hall's "Chronicles," we find "He sayde he would sent thither a sufficient *procuracie* and convenient *proctors*," &c. Davenant ("Gondibert") writes—

"And think their generals but their deputies,  
Who must for them by *proxy* wed the crown."

(3) *Usher*, *huisher*, *husher*, three forms of the same word, fr. Fr. *huissier* (fr. old Fr. *huis*, a door); one who lets in or out of the door, and figuratively, one who keeps the door, and therefore introduces to the elements, of knowledge. Ben Jonson uses *huisher*, and Strype *husher*, as equivalent to the older word *usher*, first employed by Gower.

Some men had as "lieve" be schoolboys as schoolmasters, to be tied to the school, as Cooper's [Latin] Dictionary and Scapula's [Greek] Lexicon are chained to the desk therein; and though great scholars, and skilful in other arts, are bunglers in this. But God of his goodness hath fitted several<sup>2</sup> (*different*) men for several (*different*) callings, that the necessity of Church and State, in all conditions, may be provided for. So that he who beholds the fabric thereof may say, God hewed out this stone, and appointed it to lie in this very place, for it would fit none other so well, and here it doth most excellent (*answers perfectly*). And thus God mouldeth some for the schoolmasters' life, [they] undertaking it with desire and delight, and discharging it with dexterity and happy success.

II. He studieth his scholars' natures as carefully as they their books, and ranks their dispositions (*characteristics*) into several forms (*separate classes*). And, though it may seem difficult for him in a great school to descend to all particulars, yet experienced schoolmasters may quickly make a grammar of boys' natures, and reduce them all (saving some few exceptions) to these general rules.

1. Those that are ingenious<sup>3</sup> (*clever*) and industrious. The

(1) *Lieve* or *lief*, fr. A. S. *leóf*, dear, beloved. The comparative *liefer* or *lever*, and the superlative *liefest*, are found in Chaucer and Shakspeare. The former has,

"Ne never had I thinge so *lefe*, ne *lever*,  
As him."

And the latter ("Julius Cæsar") "I had as *lief* not be," &c., and also ("Henry VI.," pt. 2), "Mine *alderliefest* (i.e. dearest of all) sovereign." *Had as lieve* is still in use, but its exact significance is diversely interpreted. Some think *had* is a corruption of "would," and take *as lief* for "as soon," while others treat the words literally, "have or hold dear." The difficulty is in the use of the past tense. Spenser has, "Death me *liefer* were to me (i.e. would be dearer to me) then such despiht."

(2) *Severall*, *separate*; the latter direct fr. Lat. *separare*, the former from the equivalent Fr. *sevrer*, wh. is also fr. *separare*. *Severall* is *separa e*, individual, as distinct from common, as "the several parts of a common whole." The usage in the text is no longer maintained. *Severall* now distinguishes individuals from the entire body, as "There were many members present: I saw several of them walk out."

(3) *Ingenious*, fr. Lat. *ingenium*, wh. fr. *in* and *gigno*, to beget or produce, and seems to imply that which is *born* in the man, native ability or disposition, as distinguished from what he acquires by instruction or the experience of life. The noun *ingeny* was for a time in use; "*Ingeny* and industry of mankind" (Hales). Of the same origin are *ingenuity* and *ingeniousness*, which, along with *ingenious*, were sometimes used where we now use *ingenuousness* and *ingenuous*. "He showed as little *ingenuity* as *ingeniousness* (ingenuousness) who cavilled at the map of

conjunction of two such planets (*i.e.* *ability and industry*) in a youth, presage' (*presages*) much good unto him. To such a lad, a frown may be a whipping, and a whipping a death; yea, where their master whips them once, shame whips them all the week after. Such natures he useth with all gentleness.

2. Those that are ingenious and idle. These think with the hare in the fable, that running with snails (so they count the rest of their schoolfellows) they shall come soon enough to the post, though sleeping a good while before their starting. Oh, a good rod would finely take them napping!

3. Those that are dull and diligent. Wines, the stronger they be, the more lees (*dreys*) they have when they are new. Many boys are muddy-headed till they be clarified with age; and such afterwards prove the best. Bristol diamonds<sup>2</sup> are both bright and squared and pointed by nature, and yet are soft and worthless; whereas Orient ones in India are rough and rugged naturally. Hard, rugged, and dull natures of youth acquit themselves (*come off, prove themselves*) afterwards the jewels of the "country;" and therefore their dulness at first is to be "born" with, if they be diligent. That schoolmaster deserves to be beaten himself who beats nature in a boy for a fault; and I question whether all the whipping in the world can make their parts,<sup>3</sup> which (*the abilities of those who*) are naturally sluggish, rise one minute before the hour nature hath appointed.

4. Those that are invincibly dull, and negligent also. Correction may reform the latter, not amend the former. All the whetting in the world can never set a "rasour's" edge on that which hath no steel in it. Such boys he consigneth over to other professions. Shipwrights and boatmakers will choose those crooked pieces of timber which other carpenters refuse. Those may make excellent merchants and mechanics which will not serve for scholars.

Greece for imperfect, because his father's house at Athens was no represented therein."

(1) *Presage*, fr. Lat. *præsagium*, to perceive acutely beforehand. The root *sag* is the same as that in *sagar*, keenly perceptive, sagacious, and is probably equivalent to the *sap* in *sapiens*, and therefore to the *sav* in Fr. *savant*.

(2) *Bristol diamonds*. Bits of quartz, so called because found near Bristol.

(3) *Parts*. This sense of the word, as denoting the faculties, qualities, or powers of man, seems to have commenced in the 16th century, and was maintained long after, though now, perhaps, obsolete. Shakspeare ("Julius Cæsar") has, "Cæsar's better *parts* shall now be crowned in Brutus." "A man of *parts*," in Pope's time, was a common expression, for a "man of ability."

III. He is able, diligent, and methodical in his teaching; not leading them (*his pupils*) rather in a circle "then" forwards. He minces his precepts for children to swallow, hanging clogs on the nimbleness of his own soul, that his scholars may go along with him.

IV. He is, and will be known to be, an absolute monarch in his school. If cockering<sup>1</sup> mothers proffer him money to purchase their sons an exemption from his rod—to live, as it were, in a peculiar<sup>2</sup> (*a private jurisdiction*), out of their master's jurisdiction—with disdain he refuseth it, and scorns the late custom in some places of commuting whipping into money, and ransoming boys from the rod at a set price. If he hath a stubborn youth, correction-proof,<sup>3</sup> he debaseth not his authority by contesting with him, but fairly, if he can, puts him away before his obstinacy hath infected others.

V. He is moderate in inflicting deserved correction. Many a schoolmaster better answereth the name of *παιδορπίης* (*boy-bruiser*) "then" *παιδαγωγός* (*boy-trainer*); rather tearing his scholars' flesh with whipping "then" giving them good education. No wonder if his scholars hate the Muses, being presented unto them in the shapes of fiends and furies. Junius<sup>4</sup> complains "*de insolenti carnificina*" (*of the excessive brutality*) of his schoolmaster, by whom "*conscindebatur flagris septies*

(1) *Cocker*, to pamper. A word of uncertain origin. Shakspeare in "King John," has—

"Shall a beardless boy,

A cockered silken wanton, brave our fields?"

(2) *Peculiar*, fr. Lat. *peculium*, the private property acquired by a son or slave, and held with the father's or master's consent; hence private property in general, or a private or particular right. The Eng. word above is used in this sense; a *peculiar*—an independent private right or privilege as contrasted with the master's jurisdiction.

(3) *Correction proof*. Several compounds of *proof* are in use, as *fire-proof*, *water-proof*, meaning *proof* against fire and water. But what does *proof* in such compounds mean? This question is not easy to answer. It comes from A.S. *prófsian*, to prove or try; hence *proof* means trial, test, and also, evidence or argument. Shakspeare ("Troilus and Cressida") has, "Troilus will stand to the *proof*;" and Milton, "And put to *proof* his high supremacy." Next we have it used elliptically for "of *proof*," meaning after *proof* or trial, as in Shakspeare ("Winter's Tale"), "I am *proof* against that title," i.e. I am of *proved* strength against, &c.; Milton, "Not *pr- of* enough such object to sustain." So *correction-proof* is "of *proof*, or of *proved* resistance to or against correction." Milton uses the word peculiarly, after an adjective, as "*massy-proof*," "*adamantean proof*." See note on these words in "Studies in English Poetry," p. 315.

(4) *Junius*, a Dutch physician and author of the 16th century.

aut octies in dies singulos" (*he used to be severely beaten with a rod seven or eight times a day*). Yea, hear the lamentable verses of poor Tusser,<sup>1</sup> in his own life:—

"From Paul's I went, to Eaton sent,  
To learn straightwaies the Latine phrase,  
Where fifty-three stripes given to me  
At once I had,

For fault but small, or none at all,  
It came to passe, thus beat I was;  
See, Udall,<sup>2</sup> see, the mercy of thee  
To me poore lad."

Such an Orbilius<sup>3</sup> mars more scholars than he makes. Their tyranny (*the tyranny of such schoolmasters*) hath caused many tongues to stammer which spake plain by nature, and whose stuttering at first was nothing else but fears quavering on their speech at their master's presence, and whose mauling them about their heads hath dulled those who in quickness exceeded their master.

VI. He makes his school free to him who sues to him *in forma pauperis*; and surely learning is the greatest alms that can be given. But he is a beast, who, because the poor scholar cannot pay him his wages, pays the scholar in his whipping. Rather are diligent lads to be encouraged with all excitements to learning.

VII. Out of his school he is no whit pedantical in carriage (*manner*) or discourse (*conversation*), contenting himself to be rich in "Latine," though he doth not gingle with it in every company wherein he comes.

To conclude. Let this, among other motives, make schoolmasters careful in their place (*take pains in their calling*), that the eminencies of their scholars have commended the memories of their schoolmasters to posterity who otherwise, in obscurity, had altogether been forgotten.

(1) *Tusser*, author of "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry," lived in the 16th century.

(2) *Udall*, the head master of Eton. See p. 61.

(3) *Orbilius*, a Roman schoolmaster, notorious for his severity.