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978-0-521-09583-9 - Four Hundred Years of English Education, Second Edition

W. H. G. Armytage

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## FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

Historians undertake to arrange sequences—called stories, or histories—assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect. These assumptions, hidden in the depths of dusty libraries, have been astounding but commonly unconscious and child-like; so much so, that if any captious critic were to drag them to light, historians would probably reply, with one voice, that they had never supposed themselves required to know what they were talking about.

*The Education of Henry Adams*, (1918) 382

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# FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

BY

W. H. G. ARMYTAGE

*Professor of Education, University of Sheffield*

SECOND EDITION



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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

‘What has the history of education always been?’ asked Oswald in H. G. Wells’ *Joan and Peter* (1918). ‘A series of little teaching chaps trying to follow up and *fix* the fluctuating boundaries of communities . . . like an insufficient supply of upholsterers trying to overtake and tack down a carpet that was blowing away in front of a gale.’ The winds of change were often not as forceful as he implied, nor have the teachers been quite as helpless. For Wells, and the traditionalists whom he opposed, tended to quote history at each other, and by so doing they evaded rather than illuminated the problems of growth and adaptation. Such special pleading often prevails where histories of education are centred round certain institutions or educational thinkers, relegating the influence of national policy, religious conviction and economic needs to the periphery. As a result little attention is paid to the way in which these affect schools and colleges, and indeed to the way in which schools and colleges affect each other.

Such attention is often impeded by the time lag between what is intended and what happens. Thus the effects of the Fisher Education Act (passed at the same time as *Joan and Peter* was published) have only just exhausted their impact, whilst the plans outlined in the last chapter of this book will have only really worked themselves out at the beginning of the next millennium—unless a millennium is ushered in before that time. This book sketches the historical determinants of English educational endeavour over the last four hundred years, and its development around certain recognisable turning points, in order that the student may acquire insight as well as information. Yet information has not been ignored, and to indicate where more can be obtained, bibliographical notes linked (at times perhaps too closely) with each chapter, are given. They do not include

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## PREFACES

references to *Hansard* for, where necessary, the text gives day and month and year. Nor are full references given to various Royal Commissions or Select Committees, for which readers are advised to consult P. and G. Ford, *A Guide to Parliamentary Papers* (1953), *Hansard's Catalogue and Breviate of Parliamentary Papers 1696-1834* (1953), *Select List of British Parliamentary Papers 1833-1899* (1953), *A Breviate of Parliamentary Papers 1900-1916* (1957), *1917-1939* (1951) and *1940-1954* (1961). Similar statistical help can be found in B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (1962).

Other bibliographical assistance can be found in the *British Journal of Educational Studies*: on educational periodicals by Asher Tropp (vi (1958), 151-155); on the history of English grammar schools by W. E. Tate (i (1953), 164-175; ii (1954), 67-81, 145-165); on the history of science teaching in England by J. F. Kerr (vii (1959), 149-160); on the history of teacher training in England and Wales by N. R. Tempest (ix (1961), 57-66); and on the history of education in the British Army by T. A. Bowyer-Bower (iv (1956), 71-77). Moreover the Library Association issued in 1961 a *British Education Index* covering published work from 1954 to 1958, and another it is hoped will follow, whilst the National Foundation for Educational Research have published, under the editorship of Mrs. A. M. Blackwell, *A List of Researches in Education presented for higher degrees in the Universities of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic 1918-1948* (1950); *A Second List . . . 1949-51* (1952), *Supplement I, 1952-53* (1954) and *Supplement II, 1954-55* (1956) and *Supplement III, 1956-57* (1958).

W. H. G. A.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

A new final chapter, dealing with events since 1963, has been added, encompassing the Plowden, Dainton, Latey and Swann Reports and their implications.

W. H. G. A.