The Education of Children

by Desiderius Erasmus

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Author: Desiderius Erasmus

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The text is based on scans of two different physical copies. In a few cases, the two versions have different spelling, or one has an error where the other does not. These are shown with mouse-hover popups. Typographical errors are similarly marked. All pilcrows in the body text were added by the transcriber (see endnotes).

The book was originally (1550) printed together with Richard Sherry's A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes. Since the two texts have no connection except that Sherry is assumed to be the translator, they have been made into separate e-texts.

Title Page Transcriber's Notes

¶ A treatise of Schemes & Tropes very profytable for the better vnderstanding of good authors, gathered out of the best Grammarians & Oratours by Rychard Sherry Lon doner.

¶ Whervnto is added a declamacion, That chyldren euen strayt frõ their infancie should be well and gent- ly broughte vp in learnynge. Written fyrst in Latin by the most excel- lent and famous Clearke, Erasmus of Rotero- dame.

see end of text

If thou wilt harken vnto me, or rather to Chrisippus, the sharpeste witted of Philosophers, yu shalte prouide yt thyne infante and yonge babe be forthewyth instructed in good learnyng, whylest hys wyt is yet voyde from tares and vices, whilest his age is tender and tractable, and his mind flexible and ready to folowe

euery thyng, and also wyl kepe fast good lessons and preceptes. For we remẽber nothynge so well when we be olde, as those thynges yt we learne in yonge yeres. Diuision of yt confutaciõ Care not thou for those fooles wordes which chatter that thys age, partly is not hable inough to receiue discipline, & partlye vnmete to abyde the labours of studies. For fyrst, the beginninges of learning, stãd specially by memorie, which as I sayd, in yõg ones is very holdfast. Secondly because nature hath made vs to knowledge the study of yt thynge can not be to hasty, wherof ye author of al thyng her self hath graffed in vs ye seedes. Beside this some thinges be necessary to be knowẽ whẽ we be sũwhat elder, which by a certẽ peculier readines of nature, ye tender age perceiueth both much more quickly, & also more esily thẽ doth ye elder, as ye first beginnings of letters, ye knowledge of tõges, tales & fabels of poetes. Finallye, why shulde yt age be thought vnmete to lerning, which is apt to lerne maners? Or what other thinge shuld chyldrẽ do rather whẽ they be more able to speake, seyng nedes thei muste do sumwhat? How much more profite is it yt age to sporte in letters, then in trifles? Thou wilt say yt it is but of litle value yt is done in those fyrste yeres. Why is it dispised as a smal thing, which is necessary to a very greate matter? And why is yt lucre, be it neuer so litle, yet a lucre, dispised of purpose? Now if you oftẽ put a lytle to a litle, there riseth a greate heape. Herewith cõsider this also, if beyng an infant he lerne smaller thinges, he shalt lerne greter, growynge vpwardes in those yeres, in which those smaller shuld haue ben lerned. Finally whyle he doth these thinges, at ye least he shal be kept frõ those fautes, wherwt we se comẽly yt age to be infected. For nothynge doth better occupy ye whole mynd of man, thẽ studies. Verely this lucre ought not to be set light bi. But if we shuld graũte that by these labours ye strength of ye body is sumwhat diminished; yet thinke I this losse well recõpensed by winnynge of wyt. For the minde by moderate labours is made more quicke, & lustye. And if ther be any ieopardy in this pointe, it may be auoyded by our diligẽce. You must haue for this tender age a teacher to enter it by fayre meanes, & not discorage it by foule. And ther be also

some things both plesaũt to be knowen, & as it wer sibbe to childrẽs wittes, whiche to lerne is rather a play thẽ a labour. Howbeit childehod is not so weake which euẽ for thys is ye more mete to take paynes & labour, because they fele not what labour is. Therfore if thou wylte remember how far vnworthy he is to be counted a mã which is void of learning, and how stirring the life of man is, how slypper youth is to myschiefe, and mans age howe it desyreth to be occupied, how baren olde age is, and further how few come vnto it, thou wylt not suffer thy yong babe in the whych thou shalte lyue styll as it were borne agayne, to let go any parte of hys tyme vnoccupied, in the whych any thynge maye be gotten that eyther maye do muche good to all ye whole lyfe afterwardes, or kepe it awaye from hurtes, and mischiefes.

The selfe same matter enlarged by copye.

After the longe despayred fruitfulnes of thy wyfe, I hearsay thou art made a father, and that wyth a man chylde, whyche sheweth in it selfe a meruelous towardnes, and euen to be lyke the parentes: and that if so be we maye by such markes t the fast holdyng bryers of vices. ¶ Yea rather euẽ now loke about for some man, as of maners pure & vncorrupt, so also wel learned: & into his lap deliuer your litle chyld, as it wer to a nurse of hys tẽder mind, that euẽ wt his milke he may sucke in swete lerning: & deuide the care of thy litle sõne to his nurses & teacher that they shuld suckun the litle body wt very good iuyce, & so indue hys mynd wt very wholsom opinions, & very honest lernynge. For I thinke it not conuenient that yu one of al the best learned, & also wysest shuldest geue care to those piuyshe women, or vnto mẽ very lyke to thẽ the beard excepted, whych by a cruell pytie, & hateful loue, iudge that the chyldren euen vntyl they waxe springoldes, shuld be kept at home kyssyng theyr mothers, and among the sweete wordes of theyr nurses pastymes, and vnchaste trystynges of seruauntes and maydens. And thynke that they ought vtterlye to be kepte awaye from learnyng as t the weakenes of the chyldrẽ shuld be vexed. Whyle I proue euery of these thynges false, I pray you a lytle whyle take hede, countyng as the truth is, fyrst that these thynges be writtẽ of him which loueth you as wel as any

mã doth, & inespecially of yt thing which so perteineth to you, yt none can do more. t thei do leudly & also vntowardli which in tilling their lãd building their houses, keping their horse, vse ye gretest diligẽce thei cã, & take to counsell men yt be wyse, & of great experience: in bringing vp and teachynge theyr chyldren, for whose sakes al other thinges ar gotten, take so litle regard that nether e body that is sene, hathe lyen hyd in the secrete place. or housebande manne wolde haue it to serue for, excepte oure dylygence helpe nature? The sooner it is donne, the better will it come to passe. t shuld shew hym self a trustye and healpynge sonne in a lawe, a good husbande to his wife, a valiaunte and profitable citizen to the common wealthe, I saye to haue suche one, eyther they take no t shal be heire of thẽ can not vse thẽ? With vnmesurable studye be possessions gotten, but of the possessor we take no kepe Who prepareth an harpe for the vnskylfull of musycke? Who garnysheth a librarie for hym that can skyl of no bookes? And are so great ryches gotten for hym whyche can not tell howe to vse them? If thou gettest these thynges to hym that is well broughte vp, thou geueste hym instrumentes of vertue: but if thou get them for a rude and rusticall wytte, what other thynge doest thou then minister a matter of wantonnesse and mischiefe? What canne bee thoughte more folyshe then thys kynde of fathers? They prouide that the bodie of the sonne maye be wythout faute, and shulde bee made apte to do all manner thynges comelye, but the mynde, u markest to what vse he is good, & trimly thou bryngest hym vp to some craft, either of e hyest place of the citye, & there crie out as loud as he could, & caste them in the teeth wyth theyr madnesse in this wyse. You wretches what madnesse driueth you? Take you suche thought to gette money and possessions, & take you no care for your children for whom you get these thynges? As they be scante halfe mothers whych onlye bringe forth, and not vp their chyldren, so be they scante halfe fathers, which when they prouide necessaries for theyr chyldrens bodies, euẽ somuch t in the playing place one stone sytte not vpon an other. Very properly another Philosopher Diogenes I trowe, bearynge in the mydday a candle in his hand, walked aboute the

market place that was full of men: beinge axed what ¶ It is sayde that beares caste oute a lumpe of fleshe wythout anye fashion, whych wyth longe lyckyng they forme and brynge into a fashyon, but there is no beares yonge one so euyll fauored as a manne is, borne of a rude mynde. u forme and fashion this, thou shalt be a father of a monster and not of a man. e best maner, that matter that will obey & folow in euery poynt. If thou wylt slacke to do it, thou hast a beaste: if thou take hede thou hast, as I myght saye, a God. Chyldren euyl broughte vp, brynge shame to their parẽtes Agayne into what shames and greate sorowes they cast their parentes that bee euyll broughte vp. There is no nede to bryng here vnto the examples out of olde chronicles: do no more but remember in thy mind the housholdes of thine owne citye, howe many examples shalt yu haue in eueri place? I know thou doest often hear such wordes. u muste u haste gotten thẽ to the cõmon wealth, not to thy self only; or to speake more lyke a christen man, yu hast begottẽ thẽ to god, not to thy selfe. Paul wryteth that so in dede women be saued, if they bryng forth childrẽ, & so brynge thẽ vp that they continue in ye study of vertue. God wil straitly charge the parẽts wt the childrẽs fautes. Therfore excepte yt euen forthwith thou bryng vp honestly yt, that is borne, fyrst yu dost thy self wronge, which thorow thy negligence, gettest yt to thy selfe, then the which no enemye could wyshe to an other, ether more greuous or paynful. Dionisius did effeminat wt delyghtes of the court Dions yong son yt was run awaye from him: he knew yt this shuld be more carefull to ye father, then if he had kylled hym wt a swerde. A litel whyle after when the yong manne was forced of his father that was come to him, to returne agayne to his old vertue, he brake his necke out of a garret. In dede a certeyne wise hebriciõ wrot very wisely. A wise child maketh the father glad, & a folish son is sorow to ye mother. e french pockes, beareth his death aboute wyth hym: another hathe burste by drynkynge for the beste game, an other goyng a whorehuntynge in the nyghte with a visar, was pitifullye kylled. What was the cause? Bycause theyr parentes e tailers craft, as in time paste dyd Africa, bringeth forth some new mõster, yt we put vpon

our infãt. He is taught to stand in his own cõceite: & if it be takẽ away, he angerly axeth for it again. the learne to loue the swearde, and to geue a strype. From such beginninges thei are deliuered to the master: and do we merueyle if wee fynde them vnapte to lerne vertue, whych haue dronke in vyces, euen wyth the mylke? But I hear some men defendynge theyr folye thus, and saie that by thys pleasure whiche is taken of the wantõnes of infantes, the tediousnes of noursyng is recõpẽsed. What is this? Shuld it be to the verye father more pleasaunt if the chylde folowe an euyll deede, or expresse a leude worde, thẽ if wyth his lytle stuttyng tonge, he spake a good sentence, or folowe any deede that is wel done? Nature specially hathe geuen to the fyrste age an easines to folowe and do after, but yet thys folowyng is somewhat more prone to naughtynesse then to goodnes. Is vyce more plesaunte to a good man then vertue, specially in hys chrldren? If anye fylthe fall vpon the yonge chyldes skyn, thou puttest it away, and dost thou infect the mynd wyth so foule t bewitche their childrẽ, or hurt their weake bodies with poisons: what do thei deserue which corrupt ye chiefe parte of the infãt wt most vngracious venome? t infecciõ: but in dede fautes of the mind crepe vpon vs more priuely, & also more quickely, & settel deper. The apostle Paul worthily gaue this honor vnto the verse of Menãder, yt he wold recite it in his epistels: Euyl comunicaciõ, corrupteth good maners: but this is neuer truer thẽ in infantes. Aristotle whẽ he was axed of a certen mã by what meanes he myghte bringe to pas, to haue a goodly horse: If he be brought vp quod he, among horses of good kynde. And yt if neyther loue nor reason can teach vs howe greate care we ought to take for ye first yeres of our children, at ye least waies let vs take example of brute beastes. For it oughte not to greue vs to learne of thẽ a thynge yt shall be so profitable, of whome mãkinde now long ago hath lerned so many fruitful things: sence a beast called Hippopotamus hath shewed ye cutting of veines, & a bird of egipt called Ibis hath shewed ye vse of a clister, which ye phisiciõs gretly alow. t Iuy helpeth sickenesses. t nature hathe shewed vs an example in brute beastes, that they that haue not learned philosophy and other sciences, maye

be warned at the least waye by them what they shulde do. Do we not se howe that euery beaste, not only doth beget yonge, but also fashion them to do their natural office? The byrde is borne to flye. u woldest wyshe so greate myschiues to thy sonne. Moreouer philosophye teacheth more in one yere, then dothe anye experience in thyrty, and it teacheth safely, whẽ by experience mo men waxe miserable then prudent, in so much that the old fathers not without a cause sayde: a man to make a perill or be be looked for of the cõmon t vyces, before we teache them vertues. And it is no maruell if we haue them not verye apte to learne honestye, seyng they are nowe already taught to myschiefe. And who is ignoraunt, that the labour to vnteache, is both harder, and also goth before teachyng. e worst of our seruauntes. e day dyet, which longe ago was muche spokẽ of in ye name of Crates. They report it after thys fashion. Alow to thy coke .x. poũd, to thy physicion a grote, to thy flatterer .v. talẽts, to thy coũseller smoke, to thy harlot a talent, to thy philosospher .iii. halfpẽs. What lacketh to this preposterous count, but to put to it yt the teacher haue .iii. farthings: Howbeit I thinke yt the master is meant vnder ye name of philosopher. Whẽ one that was riche in money, but nedy of wit axed Aristippus what wages he wold axe for teching his son, & he answered .v.C. grotes. You axe quod he to great a sũme: for wt this much money a man maye bye a seruaunte. t speake good wordes .xx. pounde. No man can geue nature, eyther to himselfe, or to other: howbeit in this poynte also the diligẽce of the parẽtes helpeth much. behauinge hym selfe not verye soberlie, it is meruell quod he, but if thy father begat the whẽ he was dronke. e time of concepcion and byrthe, haue her mynde free from all crimes, and be of a good cõscience. For ther can be nothyng eyther more quiet or more merye then such a mynd. The thyrd point is yt the mother noryshe with her own brestes her infãt, or if ther hap any necessitie that it maye not so be, let be chosẽ a nurse, of a wholsome e very beginninges of lyfe, both of the bodye and of the mynd, abyde fast vntyl we be olde. t it skilleth muche who be his sucking felowes & who be his playfelowes. Fourthlye that in due season he be set to a chosen scholemaster alowed

by all mens witnes, and many waies tryed. You must be diligẽt in chosyng, and after go thorowe with it. Homer disaloweth wher many beare rule: and after the olde prouerbe of the grekes. The multitude of captaines dyd lose Caria. And the oftẽ chaunginge of physicions hath destroyed manye. There is nothynge more vnprofitable, then often to chaunge ye master. For by that meanes the web of Penelopes is wouẽ and vnwouen. But I haue knowen childrẽ, whych before they wer .xii. yere old, had more thẽ .xii. masters, and that thorowe the rechelesnesse of their parẽtes. And yet after this is done must the parẽtes be diligẽt. e figure of the face and the behaueour of the rest of the bodie, what disposicion a man is of. Certes Aristotle so greate a philosopher vouchsaued to put oute a booke of phisiognonomye verye cunnynge and well laboured. As saylyng is more pleasaunt when wee haue borne the wynd and the tyde, so be we soner taught those things to the whych we be inclined by redines of wyt. Virgyll hath shewed markes wherby a man may know an oxe good for ye plough, or a cowe meete for generacion & encrease of cattell. Beste is yt oxe that looketh grimly. He techeth by what tokẽs you may espie a yong colt mete for iusting. Straight waye the colt of a lusty courage trãpleth garlic in the fieldes .&c. for you know the verses. sciences. Philosophy hath his infancie, hys youthe, and rype age. An horsecolt, which forthwyth sheweth his gentle kynd, is not straight way forced wyth the bytte to cary on his backe an armed manne, but wyth easy exercises he learneth the fashion of warre. The calfe that is appoynted to the plowghe, is not strayght wayes laden wyth werye yockes, nor prycked wyth sharpe godes, but as Virgyl hath elegantlye taught: Fyrst they knyt aboute his necke circles made of tender twygges, and after when his free necke hathe bene accustumed to do seruice, they make rounde hoopes mete, & when they be wrythẽ, ioyne a payre of meete ons together, and e offices of Cicero, or the Ethickes of Aristotle, or the moral bokes of Seneca or Plutarche, or the epistles of Paule, I confesse, but yet if he do any thyng vncomly at the table, he is monyshed, and when he is monyshed, he fashioneth hym selfe to do as he is taught. He is brought into the temple, he lerneth to bowe his kne,

to holde hys handes manerly, to put of hys cap, and to fashion all the behaueour of hys bodie to worshyp God, he is e image of the crucifix. Thei that thinke yt these lytle rudimẽtes help nothing to vertue, in my mind be greatly deceiued, A certẽ yonge man whẽ he was rebuked of Plato because he had plaied at dice cõplained yt he was so bitterly chiddẽ, for so litle harme. Thẽ quod Plato, although it be but smal hurt to play at dice, yet is it great hurt to vse it. . Yet nedes must be some excellẽt wryter, which put forth such a booke that euen learned menne thought it to be of Hesiodus doing. But in case it were Hesiodus, without doute yet no mans authoritie oughte to be of suche force vnto vs, that we shulde not folowe the better if it be shewed vs. Howebeit who soeuer wer of thys mynd, they meant not thys, that all thys time vntyll seuen yeres shulde bee quite voyde of teachyng, but that before that tyme chyldren shulde not bee troubled wyth the laboure of studies, in the whych certeine tediousnes muste bee deuoured, as of cannyng hẽce we ought so much the more to take heede, because that yonge age led rather by sense then iudgemẽt, wyll assone or peraduenture soner lerne leudnes & things yt be naught. Yea we forget soner good thinges thẽ naught. Gentile philosophers espyed that, & merueyled at it, and could not search out the cause, whiche christẽ philosophers haue shewed vnto vs: which telleth yt this redines to mischiefe is setteled in vs of Adam the first father of mãkind. theyr onlye care, to seeke for their chyld a wyfe wyth a good dowrye. That done, they thynke they haue done all that belongeth to a father. But as the world is alwayes redy to be worse and worse, dayntines hathe perswaded vs to comune this office to a tuter that is one of our householde, and a gentleman is put to be taught of a seruaunte. In whyche thynge in deede, if we wolde take heede whom we chose, the ieopardy were so muche the lesse, because the teacher liued not only in ye fathers syght, but also wer vnder hys power if he dyd amysse. They that wer very wyse, either bought lerned seruauntes, or prouided they myghte be lerned, that they myghte be teachers to their children. But howe muche wyser were it, if the parents wolde get lernyng for thys entent, that they them selues myght teach theyr

owne chyldren. Verelye by thys meanes the profite wolde be double, as the cõmoditie is double if the Byshoppe shewe hym selfe a good man, to the entente he maye e good health of the tender bodye weaker. t althoughe the strength of the bodye wer sumwhat taken awaye, that thys incõmoditie is well recompensed by so goodly gyftes of the mynd. For we fashion not a wrestler, but a philosopher, a gouernour of the common wealth, to whõ it is sufficient to be healthful, although he haue not the strengthe of Milo: yet do I cõfesse that somewhat we must tender the age, that it maye waxe the more lustye. But there be manye that foolyshely do feare leste their chyldren shulde catche harme by learnynge, whych yet feare not the much greater peryll that cometh of to muche meate, whereby the wyttes of the litle ons no lesse be hurted then bee theyr bodyes by kyndes of meates and drynkes that be not meete for A wayward feare for hurting childrẽs bewtye. Neyther do we more weywardlye fear any other thyng then the hurt of it to come by studie, where it is hurt a greate deale more by surfet, dronkennes, vntymelye watchynge, by fyghtyng and woundes, finally by vngracious pockes, which scarse Prouisiõ for easinge chyldrens labour Howbeit thys also may be prouided for by our care & diligẽce that ther shuld be very litle labour and therfore litle losse. This shal be if neyther many thyngs, neither euery lyght thynge be taught them when they be yong, but the best only & that be mete for their age, whiche is delighted rather in pleasaũt thynges then in subtile. Secondly, a fayre manoure of teachynge shall cause yt it may seme rather a playe then a labour, for here the age must be beguiled with sweete flattering wordes, which yet cã not tell what fruit, what honour, what pleasure lernyng shall brynge vnto them in tyme to come. And this partly shal be done by the teachers gẽtlenes & curteous behaueour, & partlye by his wit & subtile practise, wherbi he shal deuise diuerse prety meanes to make lerning plesaũt to ye chylde, & pul hym away frõ feling of labour. that one brought vp of one liberallye. e Scots say, ther be no greater beaters then frenche scholemasters. When they be tolde thereof, they be wonte to answere, that that naciõ euen lyke the Phrigians t dyd much helpe to caste

downe the fiersnes of their wittes, & tame the wãtonnes of their youth. He neuer feasted amonge hys flocke, but as , remembrynge that they are rather felow seruauntes then masters, because they both haue a common master in heauen, whyche as well wyll punyshe the masters if they do amysse, as the seruauntes. The Apostle wolde not haue the masters ful of threatning, muche lesse full of beatynge: for he saythe not, pardonynge your strypes, but pardonynge your threatenynges, and yet wee woulde haue oure chyldren nothynge but beaten, whyche scarse the Galeye masters or Sea robbers do agaynste theyr slaues and rowers. But of chyldren, what dothe the same Apostle commaunde vs? ¶ A chylde yet scante .vii. yere olde, whose honeste parentes had done good to his master, they handled so t scarsely he coulde spit, but was cõpelled to swallowe doune a great parte of it. What tiraunt dyd euer suche kynde of despyght? After suche daynties, they exercysed suche lozdelynes. The chylde naked was hanged vp wyth cordes by ye armeholes, as though he hadde bene a stronge thyefe, and there is amonge to Germanes no kynde of punishement more abhorred then thys. Anone as he honge, they all to beat hym wyth roddes, almoste euen tyll deathe. For the more the chylde denyed the thynge that he dyd not, so muche the more dyd they beate hym. Put also to thys, the tormentour hym selfe almoste more to be feared then the verie punyshemente, hys eyes lyke a serpente, hys narowe and wrythen mouth, hys sharpe voyce like a spirite, hys face wanne and pale, hys head roulyng about, threatninges and rebukes suche as they lusted in sicknes of the body was somewhat put away by medicines, yet was the minde so astonied, that we feared leste he wold neuer come agayne to the olde strength of hys mynd. Neither was thys ye cruelty of one daye, as longe as the childe dwelte wyth hym there passed no daye but he was cruelly beatẽ once or twise. I know yu suspectest o reader, that it was an haynouse faute, wherunto so cruell remedie was vsed. I wyl shew you in few words. t was beaten, and of two others, theire bookes blotted wyth ynke, their garmentes cutte, and their hose arayed wyth mannes donge. t a good and diligent master, when in deede he dwelte wyth a boucher, & was

continually in company, and made drudge with a man that was halfe mad, and continually sicke. Thus fauoringe more his kynseman then hym by whom he had so much profite, the suspicion was layde vpon the harmeles, to whom they ascribed so muche malice that he wolde teare and defile his owne garmentes to auoide suspicion if any suche thyng had bene done. But the child commyng both of good father and mother, dyd neuer shewe any tokẽ of such a naughtie disposicion: and at thys daye there is nothing farther from all malice then are hys maners, whyche nowe free frome all feare telleth all the matter in order as it was donne. ¶ To suche tutors do honest citizens committe their chyldren whome they moste loue, and suche do complayne that they be not wel rewarded for their paynes. And this tormentour wolde not once knoweledge he had done amisse, but had e Scithians, of ye which I wyl shew one much like this matter. The yong gentlemã is send in to ye vniuersitie to lerne the liberall sciences. But wt how vngentle despightes is he begun in them? Fyrst they rub his chyn, as though they wolde shaue his bearde: hereunto thei vse pisse, or if ther be any fouler thyng. This liquour is dashed into his mouth, & he may not spit it out. e wyld cõpany of yong mẽ to geue him: for whẽ they begin the play, thei make him swere yt he shal obey al that they e backe yt neuer cã be remedied. Certes this foolishe play endeth in a drõken bãket: wt such beginninges enter they into ye studies of liberal sciences. But it were mete that after this sorte ther shuld begin a boucher, a tormẽtour a baud or a bõde slaue or a botemã, not a child appointed to ye holy studies of lerning. It is a meruel that yong mẽ geuen to liberal studies be mad after this fashiõ, but it is more meruel yt these things be alowed of suche as haue the rule of youth. To so foule & cruel folyshenes is pretẽsed the name of custume, as though the custume of an euil thing wer any thing else thẽ an old errour, whiche ought so much the more diligẽtly to be pulled vp bicause it is crept among many. So cõtinueth amõg the diuines ye maner of a vesper, for they note an euyl thynge wt a like name, more mete for scoffers thẽ diuines. But thei yt professe liberal sciẽces, shuld haue also liberal sports. e plowgh, or an asse to bear paniars,

and not a mã to vertue? And what rewarde doth he promise vs? t beyng wel brought vp, they maye haue at home a meanes to lyue well, and not be cõpelled to beg counsell at their neighbours how to do their busines. Licon the philosopher hath shewed .ii. sharpe spurres to quicken vp chyldrens wyttes, shame, and prayse: shame is the feare of a iust reproch, prayse is the norysher of all verteous actes: wyth these prickes lette vs quicken our chyldrens wyttes. Emulacion is an enuye wythout malice, for desire to be as good as an other, & to be as much praysed. And if we cã not profite by monicions, nor prayers, neyther by emulacion, nor shame, nor prayse, nor by other meanes, euen the chastenyng wt the rod, if it so require, ought to be gentle & honeste. e custume to beate gentle chyldrẽ. Some mã wil saye, what shall be done to them if they can not be driuen to study but by stripes? I answer roũdly, what wold ye do to asses or to oxen if thei went to schole? Woldest thou not driue them in to the contrey, & put the one to the backhouse, the other to the plowe. For there be men as well borne to the plowe and to the backehouse, as oxen and asses be. e rethoricians an oratour, such one as scarse maye be foũd in anye place: So muche more easye it is to prescribe what manner of man a scholmaster shuld be, thẽ to find many yt wil be as you wold haue thẽ. Ciuile officers and prelates shuld se that ther wer good schole masters. ¶ But this oughte to be a publyque care and charge, and belongeth to the ciuyle officer, and chyef prelats of the churches that as ther be men appointed to serue in war, to singe in churches, so muche more there shulde be ordeined that shuld teach citizens chyldren well and gently. Vespasian. Vespasianus oute of hys owne cofers gaue yerely sixe hũdred poũde to Latine and Greke rethoricians. Plinie. Plinie the nephew of his owne liberalitie bestowed a great sũme of money to the same purpose. And if the comẽty in thys poynt be slacke, certenly euerye man ought to take hede at home for his owne house. ¶ Thou wylt saye: what shall poore men do which can scarse fynd their chyldren, muche lesse hyre a master to teache them? Here I haue nothynge to saye, but thys out of the comedie: We muste do as we maye do, when we can not as we wolde. Pouertie

hurteth good wittes. I wyll that the gentlenes of the master shulde be so tempered, that familiaritie, the companion of contempte, put not away honeste reuerence, suche one as men say Sarpedo was, tutour to Cato of Vtica, which thorowe hys gentle maners gat greate loue, and by hys vertue as lyke authoritie, causynge the chylde to haue a greate reuerence, and to set much by him wythout anye feare of roddes. But these yt can do nothynge elles but beate, what wolde they do if they had taken vpon them to teache Emperoures or kynges chyldren, whome it were not lefull to beate? They wyll saye that greate mens sonnes muste be excepted from thys fashion. What is that? Be not the chyldren of citizens, men as well as kynges chyldren be? Shulde not euerye manne as wel loue hys chylde as if he wer a kynges sonne? If his estate be sũwhat base, so much the more neede hath he to be taught, and holpen by lernynge, that he maye come vp, if he be of hye degre, philosophy & lernyng is necessary to gouerne hys matters well. Further not a fewe be called frome lowe degre to hye estate, yea sometyme to be great byshops. All men come not to thys, yet oughte al men to be brought vp to come to it. I wil braule no more with these greate beaters, after I haue tolde you this one thing: How that those lawes & officers be condemned of wyse men, whych can no more but feare men wyth punyshement, & do not also entyse men by rewardes: and the whych punyshe fautes, and prouide not also yt nothyng be done worthy punishmẽt. The same must be thought of the cõmon sort of teachers, whych only beate for fautes, and do not also teache ye mynd that it do not amysse. They straitlie require their lesson of them: if the chylde fayle, he is beaten: and whẽ this is done daily because the child shuld be more accustumed to it, thei thinke they haue plaied the part of a gaye scholemaster. But the chyld shulde fyrste haue ben encoraged to t both the child wil lerne more gladly, & he shal fele lesse tediousnes of his laboure. A sentence to be marked. For in euery busines loue taketh away ye greatest part of hardnes. And because after the olde prouerbe: Lyke reioyseth in lyke, ye master muste in maner play the childe againe, that he may be loued of the chylde. Yet this lyketh me not, yt men set theyr children to be taught

their fyrst beginnings of letters vnto those that be of extreme and dotyng olde age, for they be chyldren in verye deede, they fayne not, they coũterfait not, stuttinge, but stutte in deede. A lykenynge of scholemasters and nurses together. Thys man shulde do in fashionyng hys wytte, that parentes and nurses be wont to do in formynge the bodye. Howe do they fyrst teache the infante to speake lyke a man? The fedyng of the bodye and mynd cõpared together. So then as by small morsels, and geuen now and then, the lytle tender bodies are noryshed: in lyke manner chyldrens wyttes by instruccions meete for them taught easely, and as it were by playe by lytle & litle accustume thẽ selues to greater thyngs: & the wearynesse in the meane season, is not felte, because that small encreasynges so deceyue the felynge of labour, that neuerthelesse they helpe much to great profite. As it is told of a certen wrestler, whych, accustumed to beare a calfe by certein furlonges, bare hym whẽ he was waxen a bull, wythoute anye payne: for the encrease was not felt, whych euerye daye was put to the burden. t they thẽ selues wer once children. How much more curteouse is it that Pliny warneth a certen master that was to sore. Remember saythe he, that bothe he is a yonge man, and that thou hast ben one thi selfe. But many be so cruel against the tender chyldren, as though thei remẽbred not neyther them selues, neyther their scolers to be menne. What things lytle yonge chyldrẽ shold be fyrste taughte. Thou woldest that I shulde shewe the those thynges that be meete for the inclinaciõ of that age, and whiche shuld by and by be taughte the lytle yongons. Fyrst the vse of tonges whych commeth to them without any greate studye, ther as olde Chyldren desyre naturally to folow & do as other do. And here to as we sayde, moueth the chyldrẽ a certen desyre to folowe and do as they se other do: of the which thing we see a certen lyke fashion in pies and popiniayes. What is more delectable then the fabels of poetes, which wyth their swete entisynge plesures to delight childrens eares that thei profite vs very much whẽ we be olde also, not only to ye knowledge of the tong, but also to iudgement and copye of elegant speche? Bucolicall, where ye herdmen do speke of nete and shepe. Also what is more mery conceited thẽ the

verses called Bucolicall? what is sweter then a comedie, whych standing by morall maners, deliteth bothe the vnlearned and chyldren? And heare how great a parte of philosophye is lerned by playe? Adde vnto thys the names of all thynges, in the whych it is meruell to see howe now a dayes, yea euẽ they be blind which are taken for wel lerned mẽ. That is a teacher of holye lernynge. And what he is now I can not tel, for I sawe hym not beynge growẽ vp. To the knowledge of the tonge it wyll helpe verye muche if he be broughte vp amonge them that be talkatiue. Fabels and tales wyll the chylde lerne so muche the more gladly, and remember the better, if he maye see before his eyes the * The same shall helpe as much to lerne without boke the names of trees, herbs, and beastes, and also their properties, inespecially of these whych be not common to be seene in euerye place, as is Rhinoceros, whyche is a beaste that hathe a horne in hys nose, naturall enemye to the Elephant: Tragelaphus, a goate hart, Duocrotalus, a byrd lyke to a swã, whyche puttyng hys head into the water brayeth lyke an asse, an asse of Inde and an Elephant. The table maye haue an Elephant whom a Dragon claspeth harde aboute, wrapping in his former feete with his tayle. The litle chyld laugheth at the syght of thys straunge paintynge, what shall the master do then? He shall shewe him that ther is a greate beaste called in Greeke an Elephante, and in Latine lykewyse, saue that sometyme it is declined after the latine fashion. He shall shewe, that that whyche the grekes cal proboscida, or his snout, † in the genitiue case. He shall shewe that naturallie betwyxte the dragons and the Elephantes is great fyghte. And if the chylde be somewhat gredy of learnynge, he maye rehearse manye other thynges of the nature of Elephantes and dragons. Manye reioyse to see huntinges paynted. Here howe manye kyndes of trees, hearbes, byrdes, foure footed beastes maye he lerne and playe? I wyll not holde you longe wyth examples, seynge it is easye by one to coniecture all. Autumne is the tyme betwyxt somer and wynter. so muste the master marke what is mete for euerye age. Mery and plesaunte thynges be conueniente for chyldehod, howbeit all sourenesse and sadnes muste be cleane awaye from all studies. The meaning of ye poetes deuise

touching the muses & Charites. And I am deceyued except the olde men ment that also, whyche ascribed to the muses beynge virgins, excellent bewtye, harpe, songes, daunses, and playes in the pleasaunt fieldes, and ioyned to them as felowes the Ladies of loue: and that increase of studies dyd stande specially in mutual loue of myndes, and therefore the olde Wherfore lernyng is called humanitie For what letteth that they shulde not lerne eyther a proper fable, arte of poets, or a sentence, or a notable prety hystorie, or a learned tale, as well as they lerne and can wythout boke a piuyshe songe, and oftẽtimes a baudy one to, & folishe old wiues tatlynges, & very trifles of triflyng womẽ? What a sũme of dreames, vaine ryddels, and vnprofitable trifles of spirites, hobgoblines, fayries, witches, nightmares wood men and gyauntes, how manye naughty lies, how many euyll sayings remember wee, yea euen when we be men, whych beyng lytle chyldrẽ we lerned of our dadies, graũdmothers, nurses, & maydens whyle they were spynnynge, and heard thẽ when they kissed & plaied wyth vs? And what a profite shuld it haue bene to lernynge, if in stede of these moste vaine garringes, not only folyshe, but also hurtfull, wee had lerned those thynges that we e childe Samuell. And ther be now a daies whych eyther for a lytle money, or for theyr plesure take almost more payne in teachyng a pye or a popiniay. There be some that for deuocions sake take vpon them iourneys that both be farre of and ieoperdeous, and other laboures besyde almost intollerable. Why dothe not holynes cause vs to do thys office seynge nothyng can please god better? Howbeit in teachinge those thynges that we haue rehearsed, the master must neyther be to much callyng vpon, neither to sharpe: but vse a continuaunce rather then be wythout measure. Continuaunce hurteth not so it be mesurable, & spiced also wyth varietie and plesaũtnes. Finally if these thynges be so How learnyng may be made swete vnto ye chyld. which before we somwhat touched. To be able to speake redely, as I told you is easely gotten by vse. After thys cõmeth the care to reade and write whych of it selfe is somwhat tedious, but the griefe is taken awaye a great parte by the cũnyng handling of the master, if it be sauced wt some pleasaunt allurementes.

For you shall fynde some whych tarye long and take great paine in knowyng & ioynynge their letters & in those fyrst rudimẽtes of grammer, whẽ they wyl quyckely lerne greater thyngs. The yrksõnes of these thinges must be holpẽ by some pretie craft, of the which ye old fathers haue shewed certẽ fashions. Some haue made the letters in sweete crustes and cakes that chyldren loue well, that so in manner they myghte eate vp their letters. The practise of a certen englishe man to teache hys chyld hys letters by shootyng. The englyshe mẽ delyte principally in shotynge, and teache it their chyldren fyrst of all: wherefore a certen father that had a good quicke wyt perceiuinge his sonne to haue a greate pleasure in shotyng, bought hym a prety bowe & very fayr arrowes, & in al partes both of hys bowe & arrowes were letters painted. Afterwards insted of markes, he set vp the fashiõ of leters, fyrste of Greke, and after of latẽ: when he hyt, & tolde the name of the letter, besyde a greate reioysinge, he had for a reward a cherye, or some other thynge that chyldrẽ delyte in. Of that playe commeth more fruite, if two or thre matches playe together. For then the hope of victorie and feare of rebuke maketh them to take more heede, and to be more chereful. By thys deuise it was broughte aboute that the The beste craft for memmorie. The best crafte for memorie, is thorowlye to vnderstande, and then to brynge into an order, last of al oftẽ to repete that thou woldest remember. And in litleons there is a natural e shame: whych thynge capteyns be wonte to dooe in batayle. And sometyme we shall suffer that the chyld shuld thynke he hadde gotten the better, when he is worse in deede. Finally by enterchaungyng, prayse and disprayse, he shall noryshe in them, as Hesiodus sayth, a stryfe who shall do best. Perchaunce one of a sadde wyt wyl be loth so to play the child t natural loue of our children, and hope of great profit is wunt to make those thynges also pleasaũte, whyche of them selues be sharpe, sowre and bytter. I confesse that the preceptes of grammer be at the beginnynge somewhat sowre, and more necessary then pleasant. But the handsomnes of the teacher shal take from them also a greate parte of the payne. The beste thynge and playnest muste be taughte fyrste. ¶ But nowe wyth

what compasses, and hardenesse be chyldren troubeled whyle they learne wythout the booke the names of the letters before they knowe what manner letters they bee? A good schol master in teachyng, muste folow a phisicion in medicines. whych whan they shalt gyue a bytter medicyne do anoyut, as Lucrecius faith, the brimmes of their cuppes with honye, that the chylde entised by pleasure of the swetenes shuld not feare the wholesome bytternes, or else put suger into ye medicine it selfe, or some other swete sauoryng thynge. Yea they wyl not be knowen that it is a medicine, for the only imaginacion sometyme maketh vs quake for feare. Finally thys tediousenes is sone ouercome, if things be taught them not to much at once, but by lytle and litle, and at sundrie times. Note the sentence. In some thinges a flye passeth an elephant. Euerye thyng is mighty in that, to the , And howe muche they lacke in strengthe, so muche they be holpen in thys part, that is, that they feele not labour, The last obieccion touching the profit of ye chyld in his young yeres. There remayneth one doute, wonte to be obiected by those whych saye: The profite that the chylde getteth in those thre or foure yeres to be so lytle, that it is not worthe the laboure, eyther to take so muche payne in teachynge, or bestowe so much coste. And these in dede seme vnto me, not so muche to care for to profite the chyldren, as for the sparyng of theyr money, or the teachers labour. But I wyl saye he is no father, whyche when the matter is of teaching his child, taketh so greate care for expenses. t Fabius sayth, yt more good is done in .i. yere after, then in these .iii. or .iiii. why shuld we set light by this litle yt is won in a thyng far more precious. .iiii. yeres in oure chyldren, when there is nothyng more costly then tyme, nor no possession better thẽ lerning? t goeth swyftest awaye. The husbande manne if he be anye thynge diligente, wyll not suffer anye parte of hys lande to lye vacante, and that that is not meete to brynge forthe corne, he setteth it eyther wyth yonge graffes, or leaueth it to pasture, or storeth it wyth potte hearbes. And shall we suffer the beste parte of our lyfe to passe awaye wyth oute all fruite of lerning? Newe falowed ground must be preuented wyth some fruitfull thynge, leste beynge vntylled, it

brynge forthe of it selfe naughty cockle. For needes muste it brynge forthe somewhat. Lykewyse the tender mynde of the infante, except it bee strayghte wayes occupyed wyth fruitefull teachynges, it wyl be ouercoued wyth vyce. An earthen potte wyll keepe longe the sauoure of the liquore that it is fyrste seasoned wyth, and it wyll be long or it go out. But as for an earthen vessell beynge newe and emptye, you maye keepe it for what liquore ye wyll. Ouide. Ouide beyng a verye yonge man wrot hys verses of loue. What olde man is hable to do lyke? Lucane. What maner of man Lucane was in hys youth hys workes declare. Howe came thys? Because that beynge but .vi. moneths old he was brought to Rome, & strayght waie deliuered to be taught of two the best gramarians, Palemõ, and Cornutus. Bassus. Hys companions in studye were Salcius Bassus, and Aulus Persius: Persius. that one excellente in

Doubtles hereof cam that most perfite knoweledge that he had in all the seuen sciences, & his so marueylous eloquence, that in verse he was both an excellente oratoure, & also a Poet. In thys our time ther wãteth not exemples of good bringing vp (although thei be veri few) & yt as wel in womẽ as mẽ. Politiã praised ye wit of ye maidẽ Cassãdra. ¶ And what is more marueylous thã Vrsinus a childe of .xii. yeres olde? for the remẽbraunce of him, he also in a very eligãte epistle put in eternall memorye. How fewe men shal you nowe fynd, whiche at one time be able to endite two epistles to so manye notaries, that the sẽtence in euerye one do agree, and that there shoulde happen no inconueniente speache. That chylde did it in fyue epistles & gaue the argumentes wtout any study, & was not prepared afore hãd to do it. Some men when they se these things, thinking that thei passe al mens strength, ascribe it to witchcraft. It is done in dede by witchcrafte, but it is an effectual enchaũting, to be set in time to a learned, good, and vigilant master. It is a stronge medicine to learne the best things of learned men, and emonge the learned.

Alexander. By such wytchcrafte Alexander the greate, whan he was a yonge man, besides eloquence, was perfit in al the parts of Philosophie, and except the loue of

warres, & swetenes to raygne had quite raught away his inclinaciõ, he might haue bene counted the chiefe among the beste Philosophers. By the same meanes Caius Cesar beinge but a yonge man, was so eloquent & wel sene in the mathematical sciences. So well sene also were many Emperors: Marcus Tullius, also Virgil, and Horace in their lusty youth were so excellent in learninge and Eloquence, all bycause they were straygh waye in their tender age learned of their parentes & nourses the elegancy of the tonges, and of the beste maisters the liberal sciences: as Poetry, Rhetorique, Histories, the knowledge of antiquities, Arithmetique, Geographye, Philosophye, moral and political. And what do we I praye you? wee kepe our children at home till they be past fourtene or fiftene yere old, and whan they be corrupted wyth idlenes, ryot, & delicatenes, with muche worke at the laste we sende them to the cõmen scholes. There to further ye matter wel, they taste a little grammer: after, whan they can declyne words, & ioyne the adiectiue and the substãtiue togither, they haue learned al the grammer, and thã be set to that troubled Logike, wher they must forget againe if they haue learned to speake anie thynge well. But more vnhappye was the tyme whan I was a child whiche al to vexed the youth with modes of signifiinge, and other folyshe questions, & teching nothinge els then to speake folishelye. Verely those masters bicause they wold not be thought to teach folish thinges, darckened grammer wyth difficulties of Logike and Metaphisike: euen for this verelye, that afterwardes they shold returne backwardelye to learne grammer, whã they were olde, which we see happeneth nowe to some diuines that be wyser, that after so manye hye degrees and all their titles, wherby they maye be ignoraunte in nothing, they be faine to come againe to those bookes, which are wonte to be reade vnto children. I blame thẽ not, for it is better to lerne late then neuer, that thing which is necessary to be knowen.

Good Lorde what a world was that, whan wyth greate boastynge Iohn Garlandes verses wer read to yonge men, and that with longe and painefull commentaries? whã a greate parte of tyme was consumed in folyshe verses, in saying thẽ to other,

repetynge them, and hearynge theim agayne? whan Florista and Florius were learned without booke? for as for Alexander, I thynke him worthye to be receiued amonge the meaner sorte. Moreouer howe muche tyme was loste in Sophistrye, and in the superfluous mases of Logyke? And bicause I will not be to longe, howe troublesomelye were all sciences taughte? howe paynefully? whiles euerye reader to auaunce him selfe, wolde euen straighte waye in the begynninge stuffe in the hardest thynges of all, and sometyme verye folyshe thyngs to. For a thyng is not therfore goodly bycause it is harde, as to stand a far of, and to caste a mustarde seede thorowe a nedles eye & misse not, it is hard in dede, but yet it is a verye trifle: and to vndo a payre of tariers, it is much worke, but yet a vayne and idle subilltye.

Adde here vnto, that oftentymes these thynges be taught of vnlearned men, and that is worse, of lewd learned men, somtyme also of sluggardes and vnthriftes, which more regarde takynge of money thã the profite of their scholers. Whã the commune bryngynge vp is suche, yet do wee maruayle that fewe be perfitly learned before they be old. Nota. The beste parte of oure lyfe is loste wyth idlenes, with vices, wherewith whan we be infected, we giue a litle parte of our tyme to studies, and a greate parte to feastes and plaies. And to an yll matter is taken as euil a craftes manne, either teachynge that is folyshe, or that whiche must be vnlearned againe. And after this we make our excuse that the age is weake, the wyt not yet apte to learne, the profite to be verye small, and manye other thinges, whan in dede the fault is to be ascribed to euill brynginge vp. I wil not trouble you any lẽger, onelie wil I speake to your wisdome whyche is in other thynges verye sharpe and quycke of syght. A goodli brief rehearsall of the thinges before spokẽ. Consider howe deare a possession youre sonne is, howe diuerse a thynge it is and a matter of muche worke to come by learnynge, and how noble also the same is, what a redines is in all childrens wyttes to learne, what agilitie is in the mynd of mã howe easily those thynges be learned whyche be beste and agreable to nature, inespeciallye if they be taught of learned and gentle maisters by the waye of playe: further how fast those

thynges abide with vs, wherewt we season fyrste of all the emptye and rude myndes, whiche selfe thynges an elder age perceyueth boeth more hardelye, and soner forgetteth: Beside thys how dear and the losse neuer recouered, tyme is, howe much it auayleth to begin in seasõ, and to learne euery thyng whan it shold be, how much continuaunce is able to do, & howe greately the heape that Hesiodus speaketh of, doeth increase by puttinge to little and litle, how swiftly the time flieth away, how youth wyll alwayes be occupied, & howe vnapte olde age is to be taught: If thou consyder these thynges thou wilt neuer suffer that thi litle child shoulde passe away (I wil not say) seuen yere, but not so much as thre dayes, in the whiche he maye

be eyther prepared or in- structed to learnynge though the profit be neuer so litle.

FINIS.

see end of text

Title Page

¶ That chyldren oughte to be taught and brought vp gẽtly in vertue and learnynge, and that euen forthwyth from theyr na tiuitie: A declamacion of a briefe theme, by E- rasmus of Rote- rodame.

Final Page

¶ Impryn- ted at London by Iohn Day, dwellinge ouer Aldersgate, beneth saint Martyns. And are to be sold at his shop by the litle conduit in Chepesyde at the sygne of the Resurrec- tion.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum. Per septennium.

Notes on the Text

Paragraphs

Some paragraph breaks in this e-text are conjectural. The printed book had the following kinds of breaks:

conventional paragraph with indented first line

unambiguous paragraph with non-indented first line

ambiguous paragraph: previous line ends with blank space, but the space is not large enough to contain the first syllable of the following line

sentence break corresponds to line break: this happens randomly in any printed book, and only becomes ambiguous when the book also has non-indented paragraphs

In this e-text, the second type of paragraph is marked with a simple line break (no space) and pilcrow ¶. The third type has a pilcrow ¶ but no break. The fourth type is not marked.

Spelling

The pattern of initial v, non-initial u is followed consistently.

The spelling “they” is more common than “thei”.

The form “then” is normally used for both “then” and “than”; “than” is rare.

The most common spelling is “wyll”, but “wyl”, “wil” and “will” also occur.

Word Division

Line-end hyphens were completely arbitrary; words split at line break were hyphenated about two-thirds of the time. The presence or absence of a hyphen has not been noted. Hyphenless words at line-end were joined or separated depending on behavior elsewhere in the text:

Always one word (re-joined at line break): som(e)what, without, afterward(e)s

Usually one word: often( )times, what( )so( )euer

One or two words: an( )other

Usually two words: it/him/my.. self/selues; shal( )be; straight( )way

Always two words: here to

Roman Numerals

Numbers were printed with leading and following .period. When the number came at the beginning or end of a line, the “outer” period was sometimes omitted. These have been supplied for consistency.

Transcriber’s Footnotes

* “in a table”

In context, “table” looks like an error for either “tale” or “fable”, but it means picture (Latin tabula)

† “the grekes says dracontes in the genitiue case”

Latin draco, draconis Greek δρακων, δρακοντος (drakôn, drakontos)

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN ***

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