

**ARISTOTLE AND
ANCIENT
EDUCATIONAL IDEALS**

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Aristotle and ancient educational ideals by Thomas Davidson

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THOMAS DAVIDSON

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ANCIENT
EDUCATIONAL IDEALS**

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A.
The Great Educators

EDITED BY NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

ARISTOTLE

AND

ANCIENT EDUCATIONAL IDEALS

BY

THOMAS DAVIDSON

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PREFACE

IN undertaking to treat of Aristotle as the expounder of ancient educational ideas, I might, with Kapp's *Aristoteles' Staatspaedagogik* before me, have made my task an easy one. I might simply have presented in an orderly way and with a little commentary, what is to be found on the subject of education in his various works — Politics, Ethics, Rhetoric, Poetics, etc. I had two reasons, however, for not adopting this course: (1) that this work had been done, better than I could do it, in the treatise referred to, and (2) that a mere restatement of what Aristotle says on education would hardly have shown his relation to ancient pedagogy as a whole. I therefore judged it better, by tracing briefly the whole history of Greek education up to Aristotle and down from Aristotle, to show the past which conditioned his theories and the future which was conditioned by them. Only thus, it seemed to me, could his teachings be seen in their proper light. And I have found that this method has many advantages, of which I may mention one. It has enabled me to show the close connection that existed at all times between Greek education and Greek social and political life, and to present the

one as the reflection of the other. And this is no small advantage, since it is just from its relation to the whole of life that Greek education derives its chief interest for us. We can never, indeed, return to the purely political education of the Greeks; they themselves had to abandon that, and, since then,

A boundless hope has passed across the earth —

a hope which gives our education a meaning and a scope far wider than any that the State aims at; but in these days, when the State and the institution which embodies that hope are contending for the right to educate, it cannot but aid us in settling their respective claims, to follow the process by which they came to have distinct claims at all, and to see just what these mean. This process, the method which I have followed has, I hope, enabled me, in some degree, to bring into clearness. This, at all events, has been one of my chief aims.

In treating of the details of Greek educational practice, I have been guided by a desire to present only, or mainly, those which contribute to make up the complete picture. For this reason I have omitted all reference to the training for the Olympic and other games, this (so it seems to me) being no essential part of the system.

It would have been easy for me to give my book a learned appearance, by checkering its pages with references to ancient authors, or quotations, in the original, from them; but this has seemed to me both unnecessary and unprofitable in a work intended for the general public. I have, therefore, preferred to place at the

*the
note.*

heads of the different chapters, in English mostly, such quotations as seemed to express, in the most striking way, the spirit of the different periods and theories of Greek education. Taken together, I believe these quotations will be found to present a fairly definite outline of the whole subject.

In conclusion, I would say that, though I have used a few modern works, such as those of Kapp and Grasberger, I have done so almost solely for the sake of finding references. In regard to every point I believe I have turned to the original sources. If, therefore, my conclusions on certain points differ from those of writers of note who have preceded me, I can only say that I have tried to do my best with the original materials before me. I am far from flattering myself that I have reached the truth in every case, and shall be very grateful for corrections, in whatever spirit they may be offered; but I trust that I have been able to present in their essential features, the "ancient ideals of education."

THOMAS DAVIDSON.

"GLENMORE,"
KEENE, ESSEX CO., N.Y.
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