

**AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF EDUCATION**

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An introduction to the psychology of education by James Drever

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AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF
EDUCATION

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE *Modern Educator's Library* has been designed to give considered expositions of the best theory and practice in English education of to-day. It is planned to cover the principal problems of educational theory in general, of curriculum and organization, of some unexhausted aspects of the history of education, and of special branches of applied education.

The Editor and his colleagues have had in view the needs of young teachers and of those training to be teachers, but since the school and the schoolmaster are not the sole factors in the educative process, it is hoped that educators in general (and which of us is not in some sense or other an educator ?) as well as the professional schoolmaster, may find in the series some help in understanding precept and practice in education of to-day and to-morrow. For we have borne in mind not only what is but what ought to be. To exhibit the educator's work as a vocation requiring the best possible preparation is the spirit in which these volumes have been written.

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ALBERT A. COCK.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
SOUTHAMPTON.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

LIMITS of space have made it necessary to choose between a detailed treatment of only part of the field of the Psychology of Education and a general treatment by way of introduction to the whole subject. The latter alternative was adopted, in the main because it seemed to meet the most pressing need of the moment. There have been no less than three distinct and important thought developments within recent years, which have a direct and immediate bearing on the psychological aspects of education—those represented by Montessori, Freud and the American behaviourists respectively. All of these, so far at least as regards their main inroads into the educational field, are subsequent to the profoundly significant work of McDougall. Small wonder then that the psychology of education is in a chaotic state. If the present work succeeds in bringing some sort of order into the chaos, it will have fulfilled its main purpose.

In his Preface to *Instinct in Man*, the author stated that he had reserved the discussion of Freudian psychology for another occasion. The occasion is the present, but on account of space limitations the discussion is unfortunately much less detailed, and much more dogmatic perhaps, than it ought to be. There cannot be the least doubt that psychology and education owe a great deal to Freud and the psychoanalysts. In view, however, of the attitude of psychoanalysts towards what they contemptuously term "academic" psychology, there is no harm in pointing out that psychology did not begin with Freud, and that it is not a sufficient reply

to any criticism of Freud's teaching to say that the critic, not being a psychoanalyst, knows nothing about the matter. Frankly such an attitude is a very crude one. Possibly the comparatively undeveloped state of the science of psychology explains the kind of language used both by critics and by defenders of Freud, but one could hardly imagine the same sort of thing in physics or chemistry. What is of permanent scientific value in Freud's work will survive, and only that, and no making a religion of adhering to the letter of his teaching will alter the ultimate verdict of science.

The same kind of remark falls to be made with respect to the attitude taken up by some of the American behaviourists with regard to all psychologists who refuse to subscribe to the view that experimental and objective study of behaviour—mental testing and the like—is the only basis for a psychology of education. Again the immense services rendered to psychology by these workers in America is undeniable, but —. Let rival schools of philosophy fling stones at one another as they choose. Workers in different fields of science can find a better use for their time and energy.

In two respects the present work marks some advance in the author's position from that represented in *Instinct in Man*. On the one hand, the attitude towards behaviourism has become somewhat more sympathetic, though without surrendering what appear to be the key positions. On the other hand, his views regarding the nature of suggestion have become more clearly defined. He is very sensible of the defects of the work, but the life of a teacher of psychology in a British university is at the moment a very busy one, and he might plead this fact as some excuse for the defects, unless they are too grave to be covered by such an excuse. He has at least attempted to work out a general point of view from which it is possible to see the different developments of a psychology of education in their mutual relations.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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In conclusion, the author would place on record his sense of indebtedness to most of the leading psychologists of the day, and particularly to McDougall, Freud, Thorndike and Watson.

J. D.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
August, 1922.

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