

THE ART OF EDUCATION

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The art of education by Ira Woods Howerth

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IRA WOODS HOWERTH

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THE ART OF EDUCATION

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TO THE MEMORY
OF MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

So many books have been written on the subject of education that one feels almost like apologizing for adding another to the list. But, of course, the apology, in any case, would involve the excuse that "no other book quite meets" a certain demand, or "quite supplies" a particular need; and perhaps this conviction, so naturally to be expected of an author, will receive charitable consideration by even the critical reader. The most that I will venture to say concerning this book is that it is meant to substitute a scientific for a sentimental conception of the social meaning and value of education, and that the ideas advanced have proved to be inspiring, and practically helpful, to many who have heard them expressed in the form of lectures.

It is obvious enough that the interest and enthusiasm of the teacher are dependent to some extent upon his ideas with respect to the importance and dignity of the work in which he is engaged. Public respect for education, too, and for the teacher, is affected more or less by the prevalent opinion concerning the relative standing of the art of education among the various other occupations. With the object of contributing to the

formation in the mind of teachers and the general public of a true estimate of the rank of education among the arts, and its relative dignity, I have devoted the first chapter to an attempt to construct a valid classification of the arts, in which the place and relation of education shall be revealed. I base this classification on potential social utility which, as the reader will see, is also the basis of complexity and relative difficulty of successful practice. So classified, the arts arrange themselves in an ascending scale, and education is shown to occupy a place subordinate only to those infinitely difficult arts the object of which is the transformation of social groups, and of society itself. It is the highest of the vital arts, outranking the mechanical arts, and even the so-called "fine arts."

With whatever additional respect for education the results of this classification may awaken in the mind of the reader, and with whatever inspiration they may furnish if he happen to be a teacher, the book proceeds to inquire into the essential nature of education considered as an art, to specify and analyze the motive forces involved in it, to determine which of these are most important, and to discuss some of the methods that may best be employed to direct the educational forces to approved individual and social ends.

Education being an art, it must share the characteristic common to all the arts, namely, the control of the forces of nature. It is distinguished, in part, from the