

**SOME
OLD-FASHIONED
EDUCATIONISTS**

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Some Old-Fashioned Educationists by James Colville

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JAMES COLVILLE

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"If we wish to understand modern theories of education, we must recognise the imperfections of the old on the wreckage of which they have been built; and it is the understanding of such imperfections which can alone save us from a foolish reaction."

Some Old-fashioned Educationists

By

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Preface

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to bring to bear on the elucidation of an ever-present and everpressing subject the fruits of a long experience alike in historical research and in the practical work of teaching. In attempting such a combination instead of fishing in the troubled waters of educational policy, I am happy to shelter myself behind the example of an educational writer so able and so well known as Mr R. H. Quick. In the preface to his *Educational Reformers* he says: "My plan has been to select a few people who seemed specially worth knowing about, and to tell about them in some detail just what seemed specially worth knowing. If we ignore the Past, we cannot understand the Present or forecast the Future." I had almost completed my self-imposed task before I met with these essays of Mr Quick, published so long ago as 1868, but still as wise and valuable as ever. Except for a casual illustration, I have made no use of any modern writer, my object being to take a very few entirely fresh names¹ and make them tell their own story. Of these, most has been written about Brinsley, but I have confined myself

¹ Of course, Bacon's is very far from being an entirely fresh name; but, as far as I know, the present attempt is the first to evolve from his writings (from the point of view, not of the philosopher, but of the schoolmaster) a system of what he conceived to be intellectual culture.

to an independent reading of his *Ludus Literarius*. As educationists I believe the others to be fresh subjects. Bacon, Cordery, Williamson, and Kirkwood are not ostensibly educational theorists at all. The first I have regarded mainly from the point of view of method as applied to the teaching of English, partly because herein lay my own practical experience, partly because the teaching of the mother-tongue is the one key to the whole situation. But Bacon, as a consummate artist, has woven a mantle ample enough to shelter a varied crowd. The others I have used mainly to resurrect the old grammar-school under the long unchallenged reign of Latin.

It is surprising how few Scottish schoolmasters have contributed anything to the literature of their profession which is of other than local or text-book interest. My friend the late Mr A. H. Hutcheson will live in connection with his thorough piece of work, the *History of Stirling Grammar School*. The *Comenius* of another valued friend, the late brilliant Professor Meiklejohn, will keep alive his memory. Equally admirable and permanently valuable is Professor Edgar's *History of Scottish Burgh Schools before the Reformation*. And lastly, in the works of a distinguished ornament to the profession and a Scotsman to boot, Professor Adams of the University of London, we have an able exposition of the philosophy of Education.

I have pleasure in adding that this work appears under the auspices of the Grants in Aid of Research Scheme of the Carnegie Trust.

JAMES COLVILLE.

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¹ Cordery, as he is familiarly known, is a corruption of Corderius, the Latinized form of his French name, Cordier.