

**PETER RAMUS AND THE
EDUCATIONAL
REFORMATION OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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Peter Ramus and the educational reformation of the sixteenth century by Frank Pierrepont Graves

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FRANK PIERREPONT GRAVES

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TO

PAUL MONROE

WHO HAS GIVEN TO THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION

ITS PRESENT HIGH STATUS

IN AMERICA

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PREFACE

IT is difficult to understand why Ramus has been so much neglected by writers upon the sixteenth century. He was probably the foremost French philosopher of his century, and he stands well among the great educators, effective orators, and lofty characters of the world's history. In many respects he seems a striking forerunner of modern times. Alcuin, Abelard, Petrarch, Valla, Erasmus, Luther, Ramus, and Descartes are milestones that mark the pathway of progress from medievalism. Yet in few general histories do the life and work of this remarkable reformer figure in any detail. In treatises written in English he is barely mentioned, and while there have been for half a century some extended accounts of his career by French writers, and of late German scholars have been making careful contributions to elucidate the various phases of his work, there scarcely exists anywhere a complete account of his achievements that includes an analysis of his works.

Yet many pages are devoted in histories of education to such contemporaries of Ramus in France as Rabelais and Montaigne. While these men were of great importance in the development of literature and educational theory, they seem to have had comparatively little effect upon the schools or the movements of the times. Ramus, on the other hand, was a practical reformer, a writer of textbooks, the founder of a new and influential point of view in subject matter and method, a popular and successful teacher, and an active correspondent and personal acquaintance of the educational leaders of his day in all countries. No man more fully embodies the spirit of this age of reconstruction, the storm and stress period of the sixteenth century. Aside from the account of his own contributions to education and theology, the life and work of Ramus are well worth studying for the light they shed upon such a critical epoch in history.

In presenting this account of Ramus, I wish to tender my thanks to Professor Frederic Ernest Farrington, who first called my attention to the importance of the subject, to Professor Paul Monroe, who has critically reviewed the whole work, and to Professor David E. Smith, who furnished me with written suggestions concerning my treat-