

A HISTORY OF EDUCATION

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A History of Education by Thomas Davidson

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BY

THOMAS DAVIDSON

AUTHOR OF "ARISTOTLE AND THE ANCIENT EDUCATIONAL IDEALS,"
"ROUSSEAU AND EDUCATION ACCORDING TO NATURE," ETC.

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PREFACE

To be strictly accurate, the title of this book should have been "A Brief History of Education, as Conscious Evolution." To record, even summarily, the facts and events in the long history of education, within the narrow limits of a text-book, would have been both impossible and undesirable. My endeavor has been to present education as the last and highest form of evolution—that great process which includes both Nature and Culture. I have tried to show what it is that evolves, why it evolves, and why evolution, finally attaining to consciousness, becomes education. Seeing that the immanent purpose of evolution is the realization of free individuals, that is, moral personalities, I have endeavored to mark the steps by which this has been gradually attained, and to indicate those that have yet to be taken.

By placing education in relation to the whole process of evolution, as its highest form, I have hoped to impart to it a dignity which it could hardly otherwise receive or claim. From many points of view, the educator's profession seems mean and profitless enough, compared with those that make more noise in the world; but when it is recognized to be the highest phase of the world-process, and the teacher to be the chief agent in that process, both it and he assume a very different aspect. Then

2 May 1909

teaching is seen to be the noblest of professions, and that which ought to call for the highest devotion and enthusiasm.

In the present work I have given special attention to those portions of educational history that are usually ignored or neglected, at the expense of those that are more generally known. This accounts for the chapter on Muslim Education and several others. And I have laid somewhat less stress on those portions of the history treated in the "Great Educators," issued by the same publishers.

Reference to the Bibliography will show that I have made very little use of previous histories of education. The reason of this is, not that I failed to appreciate them, but that my aim was different from theirs.

Some of my generalizations are, I know, open to question. In defence, I have only to say that in all cases I have given what seemed to me best calculated to impart a comprehensive view of the entire subject.

The quotations at the head of most of the chapters are intended as texts for lectures or discussions.

THOMAS DAVIDSON.

NEW YORK, April 20, 1900.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

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