

**AN INTRODUCTION TO
HERBART'S SCIENCE AND
PRACTICE OF EDUCATION**

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An introduction to Herbart's Science and practice of education by Henry M. Felkin & Emmie Felkin

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SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF EDUCATION

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AN INTRODUCTION TO HERBART'S
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BY
HENRY M. AND EMMIE FELKIN

WITH A PREFACE BY
OSCAR BROWNING M.A.

Fellow of King's College Cambridge



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"Die erste und wichtigste aller Fragen, welche der Mensch für sich, für Andere, für den Staat, für die Erziehung, für die Welt, ja sogar in Bezug auf Vorsehung und Erlösung aufwerfen kann, ist die Frage nach der Möglichkeit des Besserwerdens."

—HERBART.

"To know how to suggest is the great art of teaching. To attain it we must be able to guess what will interest ; we must learn to read the childish soul as we might a piece of music. Then, by simply changing the key, we keep up the attention and vary the song."—*Amiel's Journal* vol. I., p. 181.

First Edition, June, 1895 ;

Second Impression (with a few additions and corrections), July, 1901 ;

Third Impression, January, 1904 ; *Fourth Impression*, November, 1906.

P R E F A C E

IN 1892 Mr. and Mrs. Felkin published a translation of Herbart's *Science of Education* and *The Æsthetic Revelation of the World*, to which I contributed a preface. The book has been well received, and adopted as a text book by the University of Cambridge and other educational bodies. The same writers now increase the debt which is due to them from all advocates of scientific educational training by publishing the present *Introduction to Herbart's Science and Practice of Education*. The object of the book is to answer a question which many students of education are now asking: Who is Herbart? and what did he and his followers teach? It answers this question better than any other account of the Herbartian method hitherto published in English. It is difficult to exhibit adequately the educational views of Herbart by merely translating his works. Herbart's use of philosophical phraseology is peculiar, and it is scarcely possible for any one to comprehend the full meaning of his pedagogical precepts who has not grasped the scope of his philosophy as a whole, an enterprise for which few students of education have either time or opportunity. Besides this, the doctrines of Herbart, like those of Pestalozzi and Froebel, have been developed by a school of Herbartians to conclusions of which, perhaps, Herbart would have approved, but which are not easily discoverable in the text of his writings. The Herbartian doctrine is not simply Herbart; it has been converted into a body of practice. So, while Mr. and Mrs. Felkin have devoted the first chapter of their work to an account of Herbart's psychology and the second to an account of his ethics, they add to their admirable presentation of Herbart's own views on practical teaching a description of the methods of modern German teachers who call themselves "Herbartians."

The book does not attempt more than this. It is an excellent descriptive account of one of the most important pedagogic schools which sprang out of the school of Pestalozzi. If some parts of this account are more satisfactory than others, it is not

the fault of the authors. Herbart's own treatment of the questions of government and discipline is not very satisfactory, nor are the difficulties inherent in them cleared up by his successors. If Mr. and Mrs. Felkin fail in this department to carry conviction to English readers, it is because those who preceded them have failed also.

As it is no part of the province of this book to criticise the doctrines of which it gives an account, such a criticism cannot be expected from the writer of the Preface. He would, however, venture to say, as a practical schoolmaster of some experience, that the part of the Herbartian doctrine which carries least conviction to his mind is that of the concentration centres and the historical culture epochs. Any uniformity in *curricula* is, so far as it goes, a hindrance to good education. The faculties of the mind do not develop in the same order in different individuals. The mind in the child and in the young man is always growing, and at a certain normal age it may be considered to be mature; but some minds have developed quickly, others tardily; and, besides this general difference, the tastes for different pursuits at different ages are strongly marked. *Curricula* naturally take but little note of this divergence. They assume the existence of a normal growth, the same for all. Just in proportion as the *curriculum* to which the learner is subject is rigid and uniform, so would it fail to be applicable to a large number of students. An ideal education would be different for every child, because the growths of no two minds are the same. Circumstances may force us to compromise, but we should take care that our compromise gains as much for us and loses as little as possible.

In conclusion I may express my conviction that the present book will prove a most welcome addition to the comparatively small number of works on the scientific study of education which exist in the English language.

OSCAR BROWNING,

*Director of the Cambridge University Day Training College
and Secretary to the Teachers' Training Syndicate.*

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
May, 1895.

AUTHORS' PREFATORY NOTE

To Mr. Oscar Browning we and our readers are a second time indebted for a preface to a work on Herbart, and we gladly take this opportunity of cordially thanking him. Our sincere acknowledgments are also due to Prof. James Sully for his kindness in revising the passages on Herbart's use of the term "soul"; to Miss K. M. Clarke for revision of part of the manuscript and for many valuable suggestions; to Dr. Hermann Fehse, of the Real-Gymnasium, Chemnitz, for his careful revision of some of the proofs; and to Herr Geheimerath Müller, the reviser of Hartenstein's edition of Herbart's works for the German press, for ready help and interest in the work.

CHEMNITZ, SAXONY,
April 17th, 1895.