

**AN HISTORICAL NOTICE
UPON THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF MESSRS. HACHETTE &
CO. MAY, 1876**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649375561

An Historical Notice Upon the Establishment of Messrs. Hachette & Co. May, 1876 by F. W. Christern

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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F. W. CHRISTERN

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8 MAY, 1876

I
EDUCATION
AND
TEACHING

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The establishment of Messrs. Hachette was at first an exclusively classical bookseller's.

Formerly a pupil of the *École Normale Supérieure*, and forcibly impressed at the commencement of his career by the measures which suppressed his school in 1822, M. L. Hachette undertook to establish a publishing firm for the sale of classical works, the object of which was to continue teaching in this way at least, since it was impossible for him to do so otherwise. *Sic quoque docebo* was then his maxim, and his firm has continued faithful to the motto he gave it at its rise. Though changed since 1852 by the addition to the classical catalogue of a series of publications embracing *General Literature and Useful Knowledge*, the establishment has, nevertheless, continued to be pre-eminently the School-Book Library. It is the ambition and honour of the successors of M. Hachette to bear in mind both the origin of their house and the intention of its founder.

We will now give a brief notice of the whole of our

school publications, beginning with the simplest of children's books (for infant schools) and finishing by those employed in the highest forms of teaching (the faculties).

I

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Our lists under this head comprise books for the earliest age—viz., for infant schools.

The catalogue comprises, in works of this kind, a methodical collection of publications, giving *instruction by figures*: collections of varied pictures, representing a series of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, insects, trees, and flowers; the principal arts and trades; the most remarkable scenes from Sacred History, etc.

These pictures are accompanied by texts, intended to aid governesses in their explanations in their schools.

In the next place, we offer to teachers, or rather to governesses, who have the direction of infant schools, books necessary to a proper understanding of school routine and all else referring thereto. We will only mention a few of these here, a few which the names of the authors alone suffice to recommend to all those who interest themselves in the great affairs of education. *Practical Instruction in Infant Schools* and *Advice upon the Direction of Infant Schools*, by Madame Pape-Carpantier. When this work appeared, more than thirty years ago (1845), it broke forth like a revelation. Nobody before this had presented the education of poor children under such an aspect. The newspapers treated

of it with the highest commendation. It was crowned by the French Academy. The illustrious M. Villemain, perpetual secretary to the Academy, a judge always as severe as his authority was great, and whose praises were never bestowed without reserve, did not on this occasion hesitate to eulogize warmly the writer of the *Conseils sur la Direction des Salles d'Asile*. The book is a synthesis of moral instruction, so accomplished that M. Villemain said, "Experience here may be likened to a realized Utopia." M. Sainte-Beuve relates that whilst the Academical commission were deliberating upon this work, a member remarked that from its nature it was not one on which the Academy was properly authorised to bestow its recompense. Whereupon Victor Hugo rose and recited from memory several pages from the book in question, and asked if a work of such a nature were not worthy the suffrages of the Academy.

As regards the *Practical Instruction in Infant Schools*, it is an application of the principles and views considered in the *Conseils*. It points out in the minutest manner the path that should be followed in all branches of teaching.

M. Ritt, one of the most competent of the general inspectors in the public instruction, who had studied instruction in Germany and Russia, said of this book, "It is the foundation of effectual children's teaching, and has no analogy either in France or elsewhere."

We may also mention, by the same writer, the *Histoires et Leçons de Choses (History and Lessons of Things)*, crowned by the French Academy, as were the two preceding. The works of Madame Pape-Carpantier were rewarded in 1862 by the great prize medal of the London Exhibition, and in 1867 by the Halphen Prize (which the Academy of Moral Sciences awards), which is intended for "the person who, either by his works or

teaching, shall have done the greatest service to primary instruction."

Let us not forget, however, to notice a considerable work in which Madame Pape-Carpantier has summed up the whole of her experience in pedagogy: *The Course of Education and Primary Instruction (Cours d'Éducation et d'Instruction Primaire)*. The object of the method employed in this work is to render teaching easier and more fruitful than it generally is. Its system tends to awaken in the child a personal activity, and to make it co-operate with the child's own natural development. Its true name would be *méthode naturelle*. It is divided into three degrees—the elementary, the middle, and the superior, and is preceded by two years of preparation, and is thus so arranged as to be a guide between the ages of five and fourteen years. Seventeen volumes have already appeared, and about twelve remain still to be published.

The work of Madame Pape-Carpantier is an honour to French elementary instruction, and it enables it to bear comparison with instruction in those countries where progress in this science has made the greatest strides.

II

ELEMENTARY TEACHING

Primary instruction in France goes no farther back than to 1833. In the year even that the *École Normale Supérieure* was suppressed (1822) the elementary instruction budget amounted 50,000 fr., a sum accorded under the title of *encouragement*.

A deputy proposed that the amount should be doubled. Corbière, at that time minister, made opposition, and the Chamber yielded to him. Ten years after, however, when elementary instruction was properly founded by the very patriotic and political initiative of the illustrious M. Guizot, it was seen that everything had to be formed, and both masters and books to be found. M. Hachette undertook to furnish the latter, and the activity he displayed served not a little to second the intentions of the minister. He began in November, 1832, by the issue of the *General Manual of Primary Instruction* (*Manuel Général d'Instruction Primaire*), a periodical publication, designed to show the importance which was henceforth paid to primary instruction in a public point of view, and which was destined to do it considerable service. Among the distinguished men who have undertaken the direction of the *Manuel Général* for forty years past, we cannot omit to mention the name of the respected M. Barrau, whose high reputation has been openly acknowledged by two public rewards. His work entitled, *Moral Direction for Schoolmasters* (*Direction Morale pour les Instituteurs*) was crowned by the French Academy, and in 1864 M. Barrau received the Halphen Prize from the Institute, of which we have already had occasion to speak in treating of the works of Mme. Pape-Carpantier.

The *Manuel* has always lent the support of its publicity to all useful measures and to all happy innovations, and it will remain faithful to its traditions under the able direction of its present editor, M. Defodon, but lately chosen professor at the *École Normale Primaire* at Paris.

All publications of value written with a view to assist the elementary instruction of the present or of the future are most thankfully received by our establishment. Amongst others we may cite the works of M. Charles Robert, formerly general secretary to the