

IDEAL EDUCATION¹

THE ideal education as here set forth is that which gives the first place in its consideration to the building up of integrated personalities. The aim of humane education must be directed towards something more complete in the humanist sense than mere professional and vocational efficiency, however necessary this may be.

Dr. Castiello approaches the subject from the standpoint of empirical psychology and makes full use of all that is most valuable in this science. Educational psychology, however, is more concerned with problems of efficiency and skill than with cultural values. Its aim is strictly utilitarian, and so, to a great extent, materialistic. Nevertheless the various tests and devices invented for measuring intelligence and other abilities have their use, and are not to be despised.

A humane psychology of education reaches out to something beyond mere skill and ability and endeavours to penetrate more deeply into the constitution of personality.

Personality, as the author very clearly and definitely explains, is rooted in the rational nature of man, in which may be discovered, a three-fold fundamental urge, first by thought, to abstract meanings from the world in which man lives; secondly, creative power; and lastly the capacity for self-making. Personality itself may be viewed from two standpoints, individual and social. Self-possession is that which characterises individual personality. Whilst moral influence on others, a man's influence on society, on his fellow-men marks him as a social personality.

Analysis of the psychological functions of these fundamental urges is undertaken in the first part of the book. The chasm which separates man from the more intelligent animal, such as the chimpanzees, is shown precisely in the urges already alluded to. These transcend any capacity

¹ *A Humane Psychology of Education* by Jaime Castiello, S.J., Ph.D. (Sheed & Ward; 7s. 6d.)

which may be discovered in an animal however highly developed. We have followed the author's discourse on the creative power with much interest on account of the large part he assigns to art—to the cultivation of an æsthetic outlook—so much neglected by the usual educational programmes. The social value of art is strongly emphasised. "After religion," writes the author, "it is art that has the greatest influence in setting national standards of taste and even morality."

But man's greatest achievement lies in the making of the self, to which there corresponds nothing in animal psychology. Man can become the architect of his character.

In the second part, the reader is introduced to the problem of study courses, and their psychological function in the building up of personality. Though much importance is attached to a classical education, "it is not the contention in this book that a humane education is essentially linked up to a classical training so that only a man trained in the classics can be really humane. Humanism is not a question of study subjects, but of attitude and method in learning and teaching."

There are other subjects, literature, history, science, philosophy and religion, all of which in their several aspects can contribute to humane culture. From these as well as from the classics, may be derived that inspiration of values which has such far-reaching psychological and ethical effect. The significance of the Greek and Latin classics is further discussed, as also their relation to the training of the mind, and the transfer of such training to other subjects.

In the third and last part of the book personality is viewed in its social aspect, in so far as a well-integrated individual personality tends to irradiate on the community. The supreme example of an ideal personality is to be found in Christ. "Just and merciful, idealist and realist, leader and servant, intellectual and lover, King and Friend, Jesus harmonizes in His personality all the conflicting partial tendencies of human life. He is integrated; He is one."

This interesting and significant study closes with a brief

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summary of educational conclusions and practical applications. It shows the possibilities and limitations of school training, and discusses the personality of the teacher and the educational influence of great historical personalities.

In an appendix will be found points for discussion on the various topics treated, together with references for further reading.

We cannot but think that this book will be appreciated by all educators who have similar ideals at heart. In view, however, of the pressing need which exists to-day for the young of all ranks to obtain employment, education is exposed to the danger of regarding scholastic and vocational efficiency as its more important aim, with the consequent impoverishment of ideals such as are put before the educator in the present volume. The baleful influence on teacher and pupil alike of the—at present at least—unavoidable standard examinations may perhaps provoke the question how such a humane education can be combined with the exigencies of utilitarian teaching. Must the latter be utterly destructive of a true humanism? Is it not true to say that there will be a gain of efficiency on even a purely utilitarian level in proportion to the ideal level reached in humane education. When the educator is deeply imbued with such humanism he will inspire the utilitarian aspects of teaching with ideals tending to a more perfect integration of personality which should be the aim of education in the best sense of the world.

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