

PREFACE.

THE history of Educational Theories may be of practical use to Teachers in two ways. It may show what is the historical ground for retaining existing practices in Education, or for substituting others; and it may, by telling us what great teachers have attempted, and what great thinkers have conceived as possible in this department, stimulate us to complete their work, or to carry out their principles under easier conditions. The dead hand of spiritual ancestry lays no more sacred duty on posterity than that of realising under happier circumstances ideas which the stress of the age, or the shortness of life, have deprived of their accomplishment.

The writer has attempted to give an account at once popular and accurate of the main lines of thought which have been followed upon educational subjects, so far as they are important at the present day. He is conscious of many omissions and shortcomings in the performance of his task. His chief qualification has been that he was for fifteen years a working schoolmaster.

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