

# The Acadia Athenaeum.

"Prodesse Quam Conspici."

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Vol. XX. No. 5.

ACADIA UNIVERSITY, WOLFVILLE, N. S.

March, 1894.

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## THE PLACE OF COMENIUS IN THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION.

THE earliest schools possessing a claim in the history of education are those of the Orient, and had as their object the training of youth for perpetuating class distinctions. Upon these defective systems the classic nations, Greece and Rome, evince a distinct advance. The individual comes into a certain prominence. Education is now the subject of careful scientific thought, and enlarged views of Nature are proclaimed. The Greek strove for a beautiful individuality, the sturdy Roman warrior for a practical one.

Ascending another step in this educational ladder the influence of Christianity is reached. The advent of Christian thought marks a crisis in the history of education no less than in that of man. Previously little thought had been given to the future life; education desired mainly to send into the world noble statesmen and valiant warriors; but now, by this great religious movement, men's minds were changed; they realized the great hereafter, and, in preparing for it, attached an importance to the Scriptures which made education literary. Scholasticism also played a prominent part in awakening the human mind from its past lethargy by the development of deductive reasoning.

During the Renaissance period this religious education tended to become more secular. Information also had been regarded as the aim of teaching, but now it had for its object discipline and training. The Reformation, necessitating a personal responsibility for our eternal happiness, ingrafted in all the desire of reading. Under its influence education passed from a dependence on reflection and reason to that on sense and observation.

At this period Comenius appears, shining among the literary stars of the seventeenth century as a comet which, though at first but dim, has as the years passed grown brighter and occupied a more prominent part in education. It is in his writings that the first attempt at a science of education is found. This literary patriarch believed Nature had implanted in us the seeds of learning, of virtue and of piety, to bring which to maturity was education's grand end.

Being an orphan and under neglectful guardians, very little attention was devoted to his training until his sixteenth year. Though this may be deemed an oversight, still it proved a hidden blessing, as at this age he was better able to note the defects in the educational system and inability of the teachers. Alive to