

often the failures, of other men and women serve as a guide for us, often more effective than the best abstract theory. "Where the discourse is without illustration," says Martin Luther, "no matter how just and excellent it may be in itself, yet it does not move the heart with such power; neither is it so clear nor so easily remembered."

. . . And did we but think of it, all laws, arts, good counsels, warnings, threatenings, terrors,—all solace, strength, instruction, foresight, wisdom, prudence, together with every virtue—flow from histories as from a living fountain." I would by no means decry the study of the theory of education. But any theory gets its significance through its historical development in actual human experience.

II.

The enumeration of reasons for the study of history of education is a simple matter. But the satisfactory discussion of means and ways is both difficult and beyond the limits of this paper. I shall consider merely a few aspects of the literature of the subject, and some profitable ways of dealing with it.

The literature of the history of education in English is now abundant; much of it is recent; some of it is scholarly. For convenience we may divide the material available for the average student into four parts. First, there are the so-called histories of education in one volume. These small text-books have been produced in response to a growing demand for the study of the subject. Not infrequently they are written by men who have had little special training for the work. Some of them are avowed compila-

tions from a few large French or German works, and none of them, within my knowledge, represents a first-hand study of sources. They attempt to give in a few hundred pages a summary of the principal educational theories, and the history of educational practices, in the chief countries of the world, from the beginning of records. The result is, as one might expect, a mere skeleton of facts, with little or no relation to the rest of history or to the present. The facts themselves seem to be curiously unreal and far away. Frankly, these books are not histories in any true sense of the word. None of them pretends to historical scholarship, and not one of them, I believe, is written by a well trained historian.

Their style, though of varying quality, is somewhat worse than the substance. It almost never rises above colorless mediocrity; it is sometimes depressing, dispirited, and deadly dull, and sometimes atrociously bad.

As a student and teacher of the history of education, I find these books invariably stupid. They will be used and multiplied for some years, possibly, but clearly they are books to get away from as soon as may be. In the present state of research on the subject any well-proportioned and accurate single-volume history is out of the question. There must be, first of all, much careful and detailed investigation of special topics and special periods.

The second body of material to which I have referred is made up of precisely such investigations. We have at least a good beginning in the numerous educational biographies which have been issued within the past ten years. The