BOOK REVIEW


This excellent little volume, well authored, well written and well published, contains no preface stating its provenance and purport. Possibly the explanation is that the purpose was highly complex, for something of many matters is included.

There is, in the volume, no small proportion of history, especially of the region and locality. So far as this reviewer is concerned the historical material, while not extensive and while wisely devoted to the history of Latin and Greek instruction and studies in the University, yet is accurate in fact and sound in depiction. We have in the book a classical scholar looking at the past as recorded in trustworthy documents. Chapters I-II, "Colonial Apprenticeship," and "A Frontier University" fall into this category.

The classics versus the sciences is treated in Chapters III-IV, "Battle of the Books," and "The World is Too Much With Us," mainly as the framework for biographical and curricular data in regard to the struggle in this institution of learning. The data recorded are valuable not only for community benefit but as a fractional part of universal educational history.

Of twenty-six major classics teachers the reviewer knew personally eight, those who served after September 1918. The estimates of these eight do no violence to his recollection and impressions of these eight men.

One item in the volume of essential value to the public is the portrayal of the relation of the instructors here with community associations of many kinds. Probably, indeed almost certainly, this volume best serves the public and especially the cause of classical education in its final chapter (Chapter VII), properly entitled, "What Survives is Gold." Scores of quotations might be taken from it, depending of course upon the interests of the reader. Among them might be a dozen such as, "... the laxity of so-called progressive education" (p. 91); "... the socially constructive experience enshrined in the two literatures of Greek and Roman civilization" (p. 92); "the language must be to the literature as the instrument is to the melody" (p. 92); "The classics have suffered from their association with academic policemen trained in stern
methods of handling liberal studies illiberally" (p. 95); “A new set of propulsions needs to be associated with the classics. It is more likely that they will come from the rich stores of literature than from the vagaries of participated modification” (p. 95); “Education is too expensive and the potential of young lives too precious to serve a cheap utilitarianism or morely to prepare one for life as it is” (p. 95); “Education should release people from the doom of a parasitical approach to the society of which they are a part” (p. 96); “In its functional aspect education is closer to obstetrics than to taxidermy” (p. 96); “To give courses in creative writing to those who lack this background is often just a glamorous name for permissible sloppiness in composition and expression” (p. 98); “... a vision of life which transcends life’s chemistry” (p. 99); and “... people who know literary Parthenons only in cement copies” (p. 100).

This final chapter is a justification in itself of the purchase and use of the volume.

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