

T H E S I S .

Subject, What the Romans Have Given
Us Educationally

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After the decline of the Greek Republic another mighty empire was founded upon its ruins, namely that of Rome. This new empire was destined to play an important part in the world's history both socially and politically. But the stern Roman was essentially different from the refined and cultured Greek and in consequence of this fact his education was based upon decidedly different principles. The education in Greece was very radical along certain channels and it was therefore not extensive enough in its influence. The Romans were a cool, practical people and therefore their education gradually drifted into the practical side of life. They paid little attention to the

luxuries of life and they did not worship at the shrine of the aesthetic as the Greeks were accustomed to do. The energy of the Romans was expended in building magnificent highways, bridges and aqueducts throughout their empire so as to facilitate trade and commerce.

Yet in this work they were not originators for we are told in history that they employed Greek surveyors and engineers for the completion of this gigantic work, for which they are especially noted.

It seems that the Romans had little regard for education because we find that the first schools were not founded until the third century B. C. Until that late day, for the empire had then been in existence.

for three centuries they had no teachers save the parents and the nature with which they were surrounded; with these influences at work the teaching gradually inclined toward religious and military instruction. The Romans worked for practical ends; their purpose was simply the education of soldiers and citizens who should be obedient and devoted to the laws and needs of Roman Empire. Regardless of the republican and more or less democratic character of their government the Romans never thought of establishing schools or institutions of learning of any kind and much less of making them free. A paternal education was the only one the child received and even that was extremely crude and narrow.

The Roman child had learned to read and write, and as far as our knowledge goes we are inclined to believe that he was master of these arts from the earliest times of the empire. The education of the Roman somewhat resembled that of the majority of the people in our own land who only lay the foundation of general knowledge, and then depend upon experience in life to supply what the schools have omitted. Public life and power were the predominant features of a Roman education. We are indebted to the Roman for originating the exalted idea of woman's social position. Here they made a decided step in advance of the Greeks, for they thought woman an inferior being, but at Rome

it was vastly different, for there
 she was almost considered the equal
 of man & could judge the strength
 of the Roman families by two in-
 cidents in history! He is told that
 when Coriolanus took up arms
 against his country, he could not
 withstand the tears of his mother
 Venturia. The jewels of Cornelia were
 neither diamonds nor rubies but
 her two rosy checked sons. The Romans
 had a fine code of morals and in-
 deed we can say that they were
 morally great. Their great moralist
 Seneca has given the world the
 truest set of morals it has ever
 seen. Where the Roman was truly great
 and where he appeared to the best advan-
 tage in the eyes of the world was in
 his extensive knowledge of military tactics.

But this art he was indeed a great master
 for his training began while he was yet
 a child and continued until life was
 over. This extensive training is what
 made the Roman strong politically.
 This accounts for Rome's being the source
 of government and laws. In fact every
 civilized nation today owes Rome a debt
 of gratitude for what she had contributed
 toward its form of government. In our
 own beloved Constitution principles
 maybe found that have been promulgated
 by the Roman statesmen. These people were
 the first to advocate making diplomats
 of the citizens in order to promote the
 judicious management of the empire.
 The governmental views of the Romans
 are the most important factors in
 civilization that they have transmitted
 to us. There were no great educators

among these people, because of the light
 inheritance assigned to education at
 that time. However Cicero, Varro, and Quinti-
 lian seemed to have some adequate
 conceptions of pedagogics, but even these
 were sadly deficient in the most import-
 ant characteristics of education. These
 men however gave such a lustre to the
 art of Oratory that it became the domi-
 nant feature in Roman education.
 The literary productions of the Romans
 are comparatively few and unimportant,
 this is owing to the fact that little at-
 tention was given to the literary art.
 The only literature of any significance
 that have been handed down to us are
 from the pens of Cicero, Caesar, and Pliny.
 Most of this literature pertains to polit-
 ical views and measures. But in summa-
 ring up all it must finally be admitted

that Roman literature is poor in material for educational study; some passages here and there from the classical authors prove that they were not absolute strangers to pedagogical questions. Taking all things into consideration the Romans have given us educationally only a higher regard for the condition of woman, better forms of government and an increased interest in the arts of Rhetoric and Oratory.

Bibliography

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