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A MODERN PHILOSOPHY
OF
EDUCATION

By GODFREY H. THOMSON

*Bell Professor of Education at
University of Edinburgh*



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PREFACE

THE writing of this book, begun on an island holiday on Martha's Vineyard in the New World, and completed four years later on another island holiday on the Ultima Thule of the Old, has occupied a period of my life when circumstances have caused a rapid widening of my views on education. At its commencement I was Visiting Professor of Education in the department of educational psychology of Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York City. From there I returned to resume charge of the Education Department of Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. And after a year I was transferred to the chair of Education in the University of Edinburgh, originally endowed by legacies of Dr. Andrew Bell of monitorial memory, with which is now combined the post of Director of the Edinburgh Provincial College for the Training of Teachers. The rapid changes from England to America, back to England and then to Scotland, were well calculated to shake up any preconceived notions I might have possessed, and those which have survived the oscillation may, I suppose, be presumed to have a certain fixity of tenure in my mind. Meanwhile, I have renewed an acquaintance (which dates from 1901) with German education, where a revolution as great as can well be imagined has taken place. The chief impression left on my mind by the experiences of these four years is only a deepening of a former conviction, that one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives, and that when anyone is quite certain he has found truth it is proportionally certain that he is only

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narrow-minded, as most of us are. Everyone sees the truth through his own special spectacles: and it is imperative that each should recognize that fact, and try on other pairs now and then. He will find that he and his neighbour see by polarized light, darkness to one being light to the other, and will perhaps recognize that to temper one view with a tincture of the other may give a more solid, a stereoscopic, picture of what might be.

GODFREY THOMSON

SHETLAND,

September 1928

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