why should serious-minded students of Education concern themselves with the works of a man who has given to the English language a word which according to the dictionary means "outspokenly and coarsely humorous"? Let him answer for himself in the words of his prologue to the First Book wherein he compares his work to one of "those capricious caskets called Sileni" wherein you would have found "a heavenly and inestimable drug ...... Therefore is it that you must open the book and seriously consider of the matter treated in it, then shall you find that it containeth things of far higher value than the box did promise."
The details of his work are often incongruous, sometimes repulsive, his life like that of Rousseau, a denial of his own highest teachings, but it may be that along with this there existed a revulsion against the life of his times and of himself - a revulsion reflected in his essential message.

In any case he was a pioneer of educational reform, and as Mr. Chaturvedi indicates in his book he pointed the way along which other reformers walked, and along which, for that matter, we are still walking. Moreover as many of the obstacles to human progress which he denounces are still blocking the way - the deadening routine of tradition, the wiles of politicians, the greed that leads to war, and the dangers of false values and lack of clear insight.

The estimation in which he is held depends on the aspect of his work to which attention is given. To Sir James Stephen, Rabelais was "a genuine epicurean gifted with gigantic powers, but of cold affections and debased appetites" - one who could soar to the empyrean or wallow in the sty. To Michelet his ideas "press forward in the Pantagruel in sublime pages which, under a light and ironical form, are, none the less, the religious hymns of the Renaissance." Another writer advises us to view his work in the mass as we should an over-florid Gothic cathedral. We should then merge the details in the outline
of the whole and see the beauty, the majesty of his thought, and forget the flippancy, the grotesqueness, the indecency of its detailed form.

Mr. Chaturvedi's careful survey gives us all that is educationally valuable in Rabelais freed from the objectionable aspects of its setting. At the same time he shows how it came about that a man who had such little influence on practice in his own time had nevertheless an important share in subsequent developments of educational thought.

Aberystwyth,
June 4th, 1949.

J. A. Hiller.

University of Wales.