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OF THE TERM AESTHETICS.

To keep out a new word is as hard as to keep out an imported weed from our cornfields; and we may as well sit down contented with some of the recent inventions, as we have done with the dandelion and the Canada thistle. It is not long since the word *Aesthetics* was as strange in Europe, as it still is to some in America. Like the modern *reliable*, stamped by Sir Robert Peel, it is made in an unscholarlike manner, against analogy; but we needed it, and it will pass into the currency. The Greek adjective *αισθητικος*, from the verb meaning *perceive, be sensible of*, is employed by ancient writers to denote whatever belongs to perception, sensible apprehension, especially by feeling; then, secondarily, for one quick of perception; and sometimes, by later authors, passively, for that which is perceptible. No classical instance can be produced, in which it is applied to the cognizance of the fine arts, as objects of taste. In the nomenclature of modern German philosophy, however, *ästhetisch* and *ästhetik* have become common and indispensable terms. Hence what was once called simply *taste*, with or without a qualifying epithet, is familiarly *ästhetisches Gefühl*, or aesthetic feeling.

The time can be nearly fixed, when it began to be used in

Provided always, and it is the true intent and meaning of this part of the constitution, that if at any time he shall be completely deprived of the clerical character by those by whom he was invested with it, as by deposition for cursing and swearing, drunkenness or uncleanness, he shall then be fully restored to all the privileges of a free citizen; his offence shall no more be remembered against him; but he may be chosen either to the Senate or House of Representatives, and shall be treated with all the respect due to his brethren, the other members of Assembly.' "

PROSPECTUS

OF THE NATIONAL AMERICAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL OF STATES
MANSHIP AND LEGISLATION.

Professor Z. Montesquieu Peck Sharp has at length the satisfaction of announcing, that his long cherished dreams are realized; in other words, that he has, after many years of toilsome effort succeeded in establishing an institution, the influence of which will be felt hereafter in our halls of legislation, no less sensibly and healthfully than that of West Point on the battle fields of Mexico. With a pardonable pride, he has abstained from promising the public any thing, until he could ascertain his power of performance, and for this self-denial he now reaps the rich reward of being able to describe his Seminary, not as a mere project or idea, but actual reality. Before proceeding so to do, he has only to write, what many know already, that he has long been training for this great national service, by protracted labours as a writer and lecturer on elocution, mesmerism, phrenology, mnemonics, English Grammar, natural magic, transcendentalism, aesthetics, and political economy, the fruit of which he

now deposes, with a proud humility, on the altar of his country. With this preliminary hint of his own claims to the attention of the public, he now proceeds to describe the organization of his demagogical and legislative institute.

The school consists of a limited number of young gentlemen, divided into two great classes, corresponding to the houses of the national legislature. Each of these is subdivided into states, and every pupil is designated by his fellow-students and instructors as the senator or member from such and such a state, as the case may be. The two school-rooms are miniature copies of the Senate Chamber and House of Representatives. No expense or trouble has been spared to make the former as comfortable, and the latter as hard of hearing, as their several originals. The boys act in turn as sergeants-at-arms, door-keepers, messengers &c. The furniture, although less expensive, is the same, in general appearance and design, with that at Washington. So much for the mere external arrangements of the school. Now for its educational principles and methods.

In his first experiment Professor Z. M. P. Sharp used text-books and delivered lectures on Moral Philosophy, Political Economy, Constitutional Law, the Law of Nations, and the theory and practice of Nomothesy or Legislation. But he soon abandoned this laborious method, for two reasons; first, because it was intolerably dry and irksome both to self and pupils; then because it did not really prepare them for the most important part of their legislative functions. Resolving, therefore, to confine his plans and efforts to those subjects and accomplishments which seem to be most highly valued and most frequently called into requisition in after life, he proceeded to organize a system of practical instruction, which is now in active operation and of which he begs leave to submit the following details.

From the first reception of a pupil he is constantly accustomed to speak without being listened to, and even to increase the loudness of his voice and the violence of his action, in

proportion to the negligence and inattention of his hearers. As a part of the same process, he is taught to read the newspaper, write letters, and converse aloud, while others have the floor. The proficiency of some of the young gentlemen, in this important part of their preparatory studies, is most striking.

In order to discipline the pupils' minds for the extraordinary efforts to be made hereafter in the framing of laws to govern a great nation, a large part of every day is spent in calling the yeas and nays, moving the previous question, stating points of order, making personal explanation, and correcting newspaper reports, occasionally varied by a motion to adjourn, a call of the house, or the pretty play of passing between tellers.

Another subject, to which special assiduous attention has been paid, is that of Franking. Old letters, newspapers, and even rags, are made to undergo this process, in which so large a part of the legislator's time will hereafter be consumed; and lest the attention of the boys should flag, a prize is given, at the close of every session, to the pupil who has franked the greatest number of letters and Pub. Docs. during the hours of public business.

That the spirit of their future calling may be perfectly anticipated, they receive a nominal per-diem at regular intervals, and attend a short course of familiar lectures on constructive mileage. They are also exercised, at proper times, in the important art of selling books, public documents, and even stationery. This part of the system has produced the most cheering and remarkable results, in fostering a national and legislative spirit with respect to money.

To prevent embarrassment and awkwardness in future life and active service, the young gentlemen are accustomed to use half a dozen pen-knives, paper-knives, and such like articles at once, being carefully reminded at the same time that they need not pay for them. In this way, it is hoped, they will be taught a generous economy in husbanding the

public money. It is true, the articles so used at school are old and worthless ; but diligent practice upon these as dummies will make them all the better able to appreciate the genuine article in after life. For similar purposes a quantity of old ink-bottles has been provided, which are filled with water and distributed daily, with a lavish profusion. Several wheelbarrow loads of sand from a neighbouring pit are applied to the same beneficial use.

Twice a week, the pupils have an exercise in fisticuffs, under the direction of an old boxing-master, now an ostler at the village tavern. This is not intended to strengthen their bodies or improve their health, but simply to prepare them for the manual exercise, in which they will hereafter be expected to engage on suitable occasions. To give more reality to this part of the system, every exercise is made to take the form of a fight on the floor of the house, the belligerent parties standing at their desks, and the others looking on as usual. This is rendered still more natural and life-like by the practice of giving one another the lie, or venting some equivalent abuse, before the fight begins. Sometimes, to vary the exhibition, an old broken pistol or a rusty knife is introduced with excellent effect ; and in every case, the intimate connection of the whole affair with legislation is recalled to mind by the appointment of a few boys as a committee of investigation, who report what all the school has seen with its own eyes, pronounce both parties in the wrong, and recommend them to mercy.

All this has an obvious tendency to form the manners of our future Solons. This effect is furthermore promoted by some minor regulations and instructions. All the pupils are required to spend a certain portion of the time with their feet upon the desks, and a small reward is periodically given to the one whose feet attain the greatest altitude above his head, and retain that elevation longest. Those pupils who are more effeminate, and shrink from this exposure, are permitted to commute by lying nearly on their backs in an atti-

tude of legislative nonchalance, casting looks at once languishing and supercilious, at a small gallery erected for the purpose, and usually filled with servant-maids and school-girls from the neighbourhood, to represent ladies of the real capitol. The only other exercise, connected with the forming of the pupils' manners, is that of spitting, which is diligently practised, both with real and mock tobacco juice, according to the stomach or the taste of the performer.

It will be seen at once that several of the methods here described have a bearing, not on manners only, but on morals, and that these rehearsals, as they may be called, bid fair to make the youthful actors in them fully equal to some older actors on the greater stage of real legislation. It is not to be supposed, however, that the subject of religion is forgotten. Two of the boys are required to officiate in turn as chaplain, during which performance the others are drilled by the instructors in small squads, some reading, some writing, some sitting with their hats on and looking about them, with an air of vast superiority to such superstitious mummery; while those who cannot be induced to join in these contemptuous proceedings are allowed to take part in the devotions. So great has been the success of this ingenious method, that some of the boys are thought by good judges to behave almost as ill, in time of prayer, as any full-grown member of Congress past or present.

The only wish of the Professor now is to give his Institute a national character and standing. For this purpose he proposes to visit Washington with his pupils, and obtain the use of the legislative halls there for a public exhibition. If the success of this new system has already been so great under every local and external disadvantage, he is thoroughly persuaded that its exhibition on the real spot, and before the faces of the real actors in the farce of legislation, would force them either to reward his methods or to change their own.

Z. M. P. S.