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ART. I. *The Life of William Farel, prepared from original authorities*, by Melchior Kirchhofer, Minister at Stein on the Rhine, in the Canton Schaffhausen, &c. Vol. I. Zurich, 1831. 8vo.*

THE lives of some men are an integral part of history; and of none is this statement more emphatically true than of the Reformers. Notwithstanding its immediate and ulterior effects, the Reformation is an event which has not yet been fairly estimated by the world. The time is coming when this mighty revolution will be seen to surpass, in every attribute of grandeur, all political convulsions put together; and when those who were the instruments of bringing it about, will, by general consent, take precedence of all who have been recognised as heroes. In the mean time, it is pleasant to extend our knowledge of their personal history, especially in the case of some, with the details of whose biography we have not been familiar. Among these we may reckon that impetuous thunderbolt, and terror of the papists,

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and negotiations now took place, with a view to the restoration of peace. Farel and Calvin frankly admitted in a conference at Zurich, that they had perhaps gone too far in their attempts at discipline, as well as in their refusal to comply with harmless ceremonies. They continued, however, to urge certain requisitions as essential to the welfare of the church. Among these were the division of the city into parishes, and the appointment of pastors and ruling elders over each; the introduction of psalmody into the church service; the ordination of ministers by ministers, without the interference of the magistrates or others; the monthly administration of the Lord's Supper; and lastly, the exclusion of offenders from the church. The government of Berne interfered at last, and sent one of their own magistrates to procure the restoration of the exiled pastors. The latter went with him, but were met by an imperious prohibition from Geneva, and on still advancing, found the gates of the city actually guarded by a military force! They returned to Berne, and there our author leaves them at the close of this first volume.

It will be perceived, that this biography possesses a historical interest, for which reason we have been more minute in our account of its contents than we should otherwise have been. To us many parts of it have proved as entertaining as the liveliest romance, with the addition of that charm which no romance can boast, the charm of truth. If the foregoing abstract should afford our readers any pleasure or instruction, our design will be accomplished; and in that case, should another volume come into our hands, we shall embrace the opportunity to finish our analysis.

ART. II.—THEORIES OF EDUCATION.

IT is a curious fact, though not an unaccountable one, that the wildest speculations are, and always have been, upon practical subjects. Religion, ethics, civil government, derive their importance altogether from their practical relations. Yet who can enumerate the imaginary commonwealths, the theories of virtue, and the schemes of false theology, which have been generated by the human fancy? The same may be said of education. If there is a theme within the range of human thought, which might be safely classed among the things of real life, and considered safe from the incursions of romance, it is the art of teaching children. We are abundantly aware of the propensity in some minds to

belittle this employment, and underrate its difficulties. But we also know that there is more than one extreme, in this as well as every other case. Because the instruction of the young is not a mere mechanic art, consisting in a blind routine of formal usages, it does not follow that it is a subject for wanton experiment and the vagaries of a wild imagination. Yet such it has, in fact, become to a deplorable extent. Amidst all the zeal which has, of late years been exerted, and the real improvements which have been adopted, it remains a truth, that education has been trifled with. A large proportion of the public have been gulled. Many young minds have been impaired in power, or retarded in advancement, by empirical imposture. If this be so, and we must leave it to the reader to convince himself of it, we see no reason why an attempt should not be made to remedy the evil. Why should the quack in medicine be scouted as contemptible, or denounced as dangerous, for vending his inoperative mixtures, while the quack in education is allowed to tamper with the delicate texture of our children's minds? It is unreasonable, it is wrong. Let us look, then, for a moment at the true state of the case, not with a view to the suggestion of expedients, or the vindication of peculiar doctrines, but for the simple purpose of detecting sophistry and disabusing those whom it has duped.

Before we enter on a subject which may seem to have somewhat of an invidious aspect, we wish to preclude misapprehension. It is not the specific scheme of this or that man that we quarrel with. In relation to this matter, it is almost as hard to find a person wholly wrong, as to find one wholly right. Some innovations which have been suggested are extremely plausible. Some have been proved by fair experiment to be genuine improvements. The instances of error are detached, and for the most part trifling, as they seldom affect the *tout ensemble* of a plan, but only some of its details. Of such minutiae, we, of course, can take no notice. The tone of censure, which we have assumed, and which we cannot honestly abandon, has relation, not to actual arrangements, or the details of any given system, but to certain circumstances which are characteristic, in a greater or less degree, of nearly all novel schemes of reformation and improvement in the method of instruction. A few of these characteristics we shall now attempt to specify.

I. The first is a preposterous disposition to exaggerate the vices of existing modes, and the necessity of new ones. That the methods of instruction which have prevailed in former times are imperfect, may be readily admitted. That the general progress of improvement should produce a change in this as well as

other things, is a very plain and very harmless proposition. The state of feeling which induces men to question both or either of these doctrines is a state of unenlightened prepossession. We are aware of very few things more unfavourable to the progress of knowledge, than a superstitious attachment to the forms which happen to exist, in combination with substantial excellence. As such an attachment always springs from inability to draw the line between substance and shadows, it is of course a blind attachment; and we need not say that blind attachments only grow more violent and obstinate when their objects are convicted of futility and worthlessness. Against this spirit those should guard with very special vigilance, whose interest it is to hold up ancient institutions in their primitive integrity. The great mass of those who receive a college education, form a traditional attachment to their Alma Mater, which is fortified at first by emulation with regard to other seminaries, and made stronger and stronger, as the man grows older, by the influence of memory and association. As it cannot be supposed that one in fifty of our ordinary graduates ever enters very deeply into the rationale of instruction while himself the subject of it, we can scarcely think it strange, that this attachment to the place of education should be rather an instinctive than a rational affection. As little can we wonder that the views, with which the student leaves his college, do not gain, in depth or compass, by the lapse of time. Those especially who pass at once, or very soon, into active life, are apt, not only to retain their views unaltered, but to lay increasing stress upon them year by year. Such persons, therefore, are extremely apt to look upon the course of mental discipline through which they passed in youth, with a partiality exclusive of all others. As it is from this class that the legislators of our public institutions are for the most part taken, we have no doubt that there is a leaning towards undue tenacity in many of our learned bodies, and that of course there ought to be a corresponding effort to control and counteract it.

We have said thus much about inordinate attachment to established forms and usages, in order to evince that we have no morbid antipathy to change, but are strong believers in the possibility and need of very great improvement in our modes of education. We now proceed to say, that even this blind zeal for what is ancient, is less hurtful in its tendency and actual operation than the mania of experiment. The latter, moreover, springs from a false assumption. We deny the charges which are urged in general terms against the methods of instruction that have hitherto prevailed. We dispute the claim to philo-

sophical exactness and superior conformity to the laws of human intellect, on the part of many pompous innovations. It is scarcely possible to read the prospectus of a school at present, without lighting upon some explicit or implied assertion of peculiar skill in the philosophy of teaching. Now, we are not satisfied with passing these things over as mere bagatelles. One by one they are such; but the obvious tendency of all united is to blind the eyes and warp the judgment of the public. The most wary and judicious cannot grow familiar with these arrogant pretensions in the public prints, without sooner or later yielding tacit credence to at least a part of them—without receiving the impression that some great discovery has certainly been made, and that education is no longer what it was. We have two strong reasons for disliking this effect. One is that it insensibly engenders a contempt for the great men and great performances of former times. The moral unworthiness of such a feeling is sufficient to condemn it; but it has other crimes to answer for. It encourages the notion, always current among ignorant and self-conceited people, that the only useful knowledge is contained within the limits of the present generation, and that any recurrence to the wisdom of the past is arrant pedantry. This is the prolific parent of a thousand schemes for getting rid of what is thought to be a plethora of learning. Hence the rigid process of depletion which the course of study in some schools has undergone. Hence the strong solicitude to purge out from a liberal education such malignant elements as classical learning and its kindred branches. Hence the outcry against pedants, raised by half-bred caterers for the public press. No man, who understands the character and aspect of the present age, can fail to have observed, that there is a very strong and growing spirit of aversion among some to genuine learning, and a disposition to apply that name to something altogether different. This we regard as one legitimate result of these exaggerated statements with respect to old-fashioned education.

But besides the unhappy influence of these exaggerations upon public feeling, they produce effects more practically and directly hurtful. The suspicion or belief, that what is antiquated is absurd and useless, cannot fail to push the process of amendment to extremes. A rational persuasion that all human systems are imperfect, and to some extent erroneous, will, when applied to education, serve to awaken vigilance and quicken invention; while at the same time it will hold in check the feverish propensity to mere capricious change. A conviction, on the other hand, that there are essential and pervading vices in established systems, that the whole science of instruction is a recent discovery, and that its very fundamental principles are just undergoing the pro-

cess of development, can lead to nothing but disorganization. Those who maintain, and act upon, these doctrines, are the Jacobins of learning. We say those who act upon them; for we know that there are many who indulge themselves in harmless speculation, though their common sense is too preponderant, to let them err in practice. But still, it may be asked, what, after all, is the practical result of these appalling heresies? Their practical result is the rejecting, or a proneness to reject, under the name of obsolete absurdities, a number of principles and expedients, which have received the sanction, not of great names only and of lofty patronage, but of abundant fruit, of rich success. This result is, of course, most obvious in men of narrow minds and very partial cultivation; the soil of whose intellect is, at best, but shallow, and has scarcely been indented by the ploughshare of instruction. It is a fact deserving observation, that the more expanded and profound men's views become, the less are they likely to appear before the public in the character of levellers. It requires no small amount of personal improvement to enable one to estimate the real value of existing institutions. To the eye of the upstart and the ignoramus, that may wear the aspect of a privileged absurdity, which, in the view of one more deeply versed in human nature and the bonds which hold society together, is an invaluable safeguard of man's happiness and rights. We do not wish this to be viewed as a gratuitous assertion. Let the reader bring it to the test of observation. Let him candidly determine for himself what class of men are most intemperately fond of innovation, and most active in the overthrow of all that time has sanctioned. Let him observe among his neighbours whether the loudest brawlers against ancient usage are the most profound and most enlightened in regard to other matters. A little folly and a little self-conceit suffice to raise a suicidal opposition to establishments and systems which owe their existence to the accumulating wisdom of successive generations. Now it happens to be true, most unfortunately true, that the profession of teachers as a body (we need scarcely say that there are great exceptions) is by no means what it ought to be. The average ability expended on the arduous and momentous business of instructing youth, is notoriously far less than the interests of society demand. The office of a teacher is regarded by many as a *pis aller*, and by still more as a stepping-stone to other walks of life. This opens the door of that employment to a multitude of sciolists and smatterers wholly incompetent to estimate the value of those principles and plans which have in past times regulated this important business. We need not wonder, therefore, at the increasing disposition to have novelty in every thing, and to banish every vestige of the

old regime, or at least to transmute its base metal into gold by the pretended alchemy of some new Paracelsus. We are not now enumerating the particular effects thus brought about. All that we have to do with here is the procuring cause of these effects; an extravagant contempt for ancient methods, and an exaggerated estimate of new ones.

II. The second circumstance that strikes us as a characteristic of too many recent theories, is an apparent misconception of what education is. There are some, very many, who appear to think that they have gained a great advantage, when they have excluded from their course of elementary instruction whatever does not bear directly upon some form of active business. The cant phrase with theorists of this class is "practical utility." We need scarcely say, that the expression, thus applied, is grossly perverted, or at least unfairly limited. Until it can be proved, that a foundation must consist of the same materials and be constructed in the same way as the superstructure, we shall maintain that this confounding of professional with preparatory studies has as little pretensions to practical utility as it has to philosophical exactness and consistency. Such as have had it in their power to compare this mushroom vegetation with that sure, though tedious growth, which has a sound root to depend upon, need not be told where lies the difference.

Of this mistake the practical result is rather felt than seen. It is felt by the community, when it finds men pressing into public stations, with minds subjected to no other discipline than that which is likely to result from this false principle. It is felt by teachers, when they find their plans of subsequent improvement all defeated, by the radical defect of the incipient stages, or their efforts hampered by the prejudice of parents against every thing which they do not perceive to be directly conducive to the making of money or the gaining of distinction. Above all, it is felt by students, to their lasting detriment. It is hard enough, at best, to bring the feelings of young men into concert with their judgment, even when that is right. The utility of abstract study is so far from being obvious before it is experienced, that without great authority upon the teacher's part, and great self-command upon the pupil's, it is very unlikely to have justice done it. Now when to this repugnance there is superadded a suspicion that these studies are in fact unprofitable, and when this suspicion is encouraged by parental sanction, or the current slang of fashionable circles, it affects the nerve and muscle of the students' diligence, so far as the branches in question are concerned, with incurable paralysis. Having once been taught to estimate preparatory studies, in proportion to their obvious and ultimate con-

nexion with professional employments, he very naturally applies the test with rigour. What some would think a close connexion he regards as a remote one; and what is really remote he considers none at all. Even those parts of learning which, on his own false principle, are worthy of attention, though as mere preliminaries, he postpones without reluctance as inferior in importance to the rudiments of medicine, theology, or law. These last, thus learned, can never be learned well, though this premature study may afford a fair pretext for neglecting or omitting them, when they become the proper objects of attention. And hence it comes to pass that the exclusion of whatever does not bear upon its surface, the proofs of its "practical utility," instead of giving ampler depth and compass to professional acquirements, helps to make them immature and superficial. We appeal to the leading men of all the liberal professions, whether we are not warranted by facts within their knowledge, in asserting that professional accomplishments are gained with far less ease by those who antedate the study on their principle of "practical utility," than by those who let "practical utility" alone, till their minds have been prepared for it by thorough-going discipline. Such discipline is out of the question, when practical utility, in this perverted sense, is made the test and standard of preliminary study. The only test which ought to be applied to any subject, as a part of elementary instruction, is its adaptation to develop and improve the powers, which are afterwards to act upon the affairs of real life. There can be no doubt, indeed, that where there is equality in this important point, those studies ought to be preferred which will be afterwards available in business. But to make this the sole criterion is a gross absurdity, the *πρῶτον δεῦδος* of this utilitarian theory.

Thus far we have proceeded on the supposition, that there is a course of study introductory to professional employments, but that this course is interrupted and disfigured by the exclusion of some branches and the anticipation of others, on the mistaken principle of "practical utility." It is possible, however, that in the progress of improvement, the idea of a general preparatory course of mental discipline may be discarded altogether. Assuming such a change, (we hope it never will be more than an assumption,) the foregoing arguments will still be relevant, but with redoubled force. And in addition to them all, there is another certain consequence of such a revolution, which appears to us alarming. Who does not know the tendency of what are called "professional studies" to disturb the equilibrium of intellect, to narrow the views, and to produce a partiality of judgment upon general subjects? Who does not know, moreover, that the danger

of this consequence is just in proportion to the exclusive zeal with which the study is pursued? What then? Is professional learning to be sacrificed in order to escape this evil? Not at all. The wisdom of past ages has provided us a check upon this hurtful tendency, and taught us to fortify the mind against it by a wise preparatory discipline. The virtues of this antidote need no certificate. It has living testimonials in the persons and performances of many, who have mastered the lore of their professions with the grasp of giants, and yet show no signs of intellectual distortion. Look, on the contrary, at those whose first transition was from boorish ignorance to the details of law, theology, or medicine, and you will learn to what extent one power may be strengthened at the expense of others, and how little mere professional accomplishments, even combined with genius, can supply the lack of discipline and culture. Such examples, and they are not wanting even in high places, are a practical comment upon "practical utility."

III. Another prominent feature in some new plans of instruction is the disproportionate regard to forms and mere external regulations. In some cases, this degenerates into a paltry ostentation and attempt at pomp. As might be expected, it occurs in close connexion with the exaggerated estimate of modern improvements spoken of before. The fact that parading advertisements are growing every day more common, is an alarming one to us; for it evinces, that the interested parties find a growing disposition, on the part of parents, to be governed by such influence. In very many cases, it is scarcely possible that parents, or their substitutes, should make an election upon any other principle than that of weighing rival claims against each other. It is a necessary result of the peculiar state of things with us at present, that a multitude of persons who have themselves received but little education, are most laudably desirous of affording that advantage to their children. In this very numerous and respectable class, there is a liability to errors just the reverse of those which we have mentioned as unfortunately common among educated men. While the latter are prone to be unreasonably prejudiced in favour of the forms and methods practised on themselves, the former are as likely to be duped by the pretence of striking novelty and original invention: With such, the display of uncouth terms and strange conceits is very apt to pass for evidence of vast superiority to antiquated systems; and on such, no doubt, the puffs which we allude to, are primarily designed to operate. We wish we could say that they extend no further. But unhappily we know it to be true, that even these paltry artifices take effect in minds of higher order. It is a melancholy

fact, that some whose taste and judgment are offended by such nonsense, are actually ashamed of their attachment to old usages, and, for fear of being obsolete, are fain to swallow the absurd concoctions of capricious innovation. We might say more, much more: though not perhaps without relinquishing our purpose of avoiding all specification and detail. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with an expression of our fears, that the usual tendency of ostentation and undue attachment to mere form, will not be varied or reversed in this case.

IV. We trust that we shall not be misapprehended when we mention, as a fourth characteristic of too many novel schemes, that they tend to encourage superficialness of study and acquirement. This may be thought by some to belong to the practice, not the theory of teaching, and therefore, to be incident to all plans, good or bad. To some extent this is unquestionably true, and we are willing to exclude from our description all that falls within the limits of mere practice, and is therefore chargeable on careless or unskilful operators. We refer at present to no other superficialness than that which is the legitimate result of an erroneous system, and which cannot fail to flow from such a system, be the faithfulness and skill of the performer what it may. The fact that such a tendency exists in many systems, we shall not attempt to prove; but content ourselves with simply assuming and asserting it. The causes of it we consider twofold.

In the first place, it arises from the passion for new methods and devices. Whatever education may have gained by innovation, we are sure that nothing has been gained in depth. The advocates of novelty may say what they will about the conformity of their plans to the laws of mind and the practical utility of their expedients. They may amplify *ad libitum* the superficial area of study and acquirement, and indefinitely multiply the individual objects of attention. But the very act of doing so confirms our strong belief, that in regard to one grand attribute, all modern speculations are diverging vastly further from the standard of truth than any former systems. This one attribute is nothing else than thorough-going accuracy. The crying sin of old fashioned methods of instruction is the sacrifice of time, and ease, and "practical utility," in order to secure profound and solid acquisition. The most plausible objections to existing systems will be found upon inspection, to involve an admission that they make too much of mere correctness and provide too little for the pleasantness and swiftness of the students' progress. We are far from saying that there has been no excess in these respects, or that among European scholars of the olden time there was not a strong propensity to overdo the matter; but we do say, that at present,

there is very little ground for such complaints. The age of scrupulous and sifting study has, we fear, gone by. The current sets, at present, in an opposite direction, and those who are at all disposed to favour the old methods, find it hard enough to save themselves from being overwhelmed in the prevailing freshet. If these statements be correct, it follows that at least the greater part of the improvements now proposed, have some other end in view than an increase of depth and accuracy. They are rather designed to soften the harsh features of the ancient discipline; to sweeten the edge of its bitter cup; to oil the articulations of its ponderous machinery. It follows, of course, then, that these new expedients not only may, but must, have a tendency to generate the habits of superficial study.

This fault, however, is not wholly chargeable on the mere rage of novelty. There is another cause which mightily contributes to the same effect. The multiplicity of objects now included in the course of study, is sufficient, of itself, to render depth and accuracy as to any one, impossible. We have no idea of attempting to define the boundary between inexpedient and expedient subjects of preparatory study. After all that could be said, much must, of course, be left to individual discretion; and a better test of judgment in a teacher could not be desired. Thus much, however, we are prepared to say, that there are indications of a disposition to enlarge the field of study, or more properly the number of things studied, to a preposterous extent. And to make bad worse, this rage for multiplicity of topics, is too often attended by a woful lack of judgment in selecting and arranging them. The specifications necessary to confirm this statement must again be left to private observation. So strong, however, is our own conviction of the fact and of its probable results, that we are almost tempted to estimate an institution or a teacher in the inverse ratio of the bill of fare which they exhibit to the public.

V. The features which we have portrayed may, we think, be readily recognised in almost every novel scheme of education that has been given to the public, not equally prominent in all cases, but in all sufficiently discernible. To these we may add another not quite so common, nor so likely from its nature to become so. There is a fondness, among some whose zeal for learning and endeavours to promote it merit high applause, to mystify the subject of instruction by removing it from the class of sober, practical realities, to that of metaphysical refinements and conceits. The theories broached by some of these philosophers require more time, in order to be fully understood, than would be necessary for the practical development of many other plans. This sort of speculation is extremely captivating to ill-

balanced minds; for, as it gives indulgence to the imagination under the pretext of profound intellectual operation, it enables men to earn the reputation of deep thought without the toil of thinking. As minds of the highest order are but little exposed to the fascinations of this philosophic trifling, it is practised, for the most part, by the shallow, the erratic, and the half informed. It is not surprising, therefore, that the fruits of this philosophy, so far as they have yet been imparted to the world, are as unsubstantial as they are pretending. We are not unwilling to see education brought into conformity with scientific principles; but we are unwilling to see time expended and the public mind amused by a mere flourish of trumpets. The effect of this philosophising mania is to divert attention from the essentials and realities of actual instruction to the unprofitable subtleties of empty speculation, and by necessary consequence to expose the minds of youth to the hazardous process of conjectural experiment. Both these effects, however they may seem in contemplation, are proved by experience to be always hurtful, and not seldom ruinous. Those who subject their children or themselves to this empirical procedure, very seldom fail to pay dearly for their whistle.

We do not think it necessary to go into the inquiry, how these evils may be remedied; because they have begun already to correct themselves. The morbid appetite for novelty has sickened, and we trust, will ere long die. As its disease, however, seems to have reached a crisis, we are anxious to determine it in such a manner as will best insure a fatal termination. This has been our aim in the preceding strictures, and we shall certainly be gratified to find, that they have in any degree contributed to a consummation so devoutly wished for. But while we honestly believe that there is common sense enough remaining in society to crush all mere impostures, we are far from thinking that there is no occasion for discussion or inquiry with respect to education. There are some questions strictly practical and highly important, in regard to which the public mind is still unsettled. Most of these have, from time immemorial, been subjects of dispute among the friends of education, in a greater or less degree. Some of them, however, which were once warmly agitated, now attract less attention, as a large majority have formed conclusions in relation to them. Others, on the contrary, which in former times were canvassed only by a few, have of late become more generally interesting. With regard to some in both these classes, we would say, that the existing doubts respecting them arise not so much from any intrinsic difficulty in the subject, as from the unwise zeal of party disputants. The truth lies on both sides, and

a just conclusion can only be reached by compromise. An extended illustration of this statement, in its application to specific points of controversy, would transcend our limits and the reader's patience. We must be contented with a glance at one or two of these vexed questions.

1. Take, for example, that respecting the comparative advantages of public and private education. In the controversies once kept up among the learned on this subject, the golden mean of truth appears to have been utterly lost sight of. The advocates of public institutions spared no terms of strong contempt in speaking of domestic instruction. Not contented with insisting on the obvious facilities afforded by colleges and schools, beyond the means of individual teachers, with respect to books, varied methods of instruction, and collision of mind among the youth themselves, these zealous champions virtually denied those negative advantages which are implied in the very idea of a fire-side education. They pertinaciously maintain that education in a public institution was more favourable to the students' morals—a paradox too gross for refutation. Those, on the other hand, who were afraid of schools and colleges, endeavoured to justify their preference of private education, by denying to the other system the possession of those merits which result from the very constitution of a public seminary. At present, we believe, these extreme opinions are but little prevalent. No one seems now to question, that it would be a happy thing if the advantages of public schools could be combined with the incommunicable privileges of domestic discipline. Nor, on the other hand, would it be easy to find any one extravagant enough to think such a combination, in its full extent, practicable. The utmost that is now expected, by the sober-minded, is such an arrangement of our public institutions as would make them approximate, in all important points, as near as may be, to the economy of families. This we regard as a desirable and feasible improvement. We have no doubt, that expedients might be easily suggested which, if fairly carried out in execution, would produce a most surprising metamorphosis. We cannot here enlarge upon the subject, but we may, at some future period, communicate our thoughts upon it to the public in detail.

2. Another question of the same general class, though far from being equally adjusted, is that respecting the value of classical learning as a part of general education. This subject is, in fact, a more perplexed one than the other; and although our own views in relation to it are distinct and fixed, we shall not run the risk of injuring the cause which we espouse, by attempting even an outline of the arguments on either side. A fair presentation of

the subject is impossible, without a sufficiency of time and space to present it in detail. There is nothing, however, to prevent our entering an earnest protest against ultra sentiments and language upon this point. There is more occasion, it is true, for such a caution on the part of those who vilify than of those who patronise the study of the classics. There are few, we apprehend, among ourselves at present, who are disposed to give classical learning that extravagant preponderance assigned to it in the practice of the Grammar Schools of England. But whether there be any such or not, there can be no doubt that the general current sets decidedly against them. We have reason now to fear, not that too much time will be bestowed on Greek and Latin, but that these antique acquirements will be soon lost sight of, in the growing multitude of more refined accomplishments. We have already hinted at one cause which operates in this direction, while animadverting on the mistaken principle of "practical utility," considered as a rule for determining the value of particular studies. We have seen this sophistical and hurtful doctrine preached and practised too, by men who owe all their distinction to the very system which it aims to overthrow. And on the other hand, we have heard it trumpeted by men of no distinction, as a justification of their own deficiencies, upon the same sound principle which led Esop's fox to recommend the amputation of his brethren's tails. It might *a priori* be supposed, that such assaults upon the citadel of learning would be wholly futile. But experience teaches that even the prate of gossips, if vivacious and incessant, may affect the strongest and most guarded intellect. *Gutta cavat lapidem non vi sed saepe cadendo.* This is our only fear, as well as our only reason for alluding to the subject here. If the public can be put upon their guard against a foe which seems too paltry to be feared, there is but little danger of a disastrous issue.

3. The only other specimen that we can afford to give of these unprofitable controversies, is, to use a bold expression, the absurd dispute about *parental discipline*. This phrase is now entitled to the unenviable honours of a regular cant term. Advertisements or lectures, and colloquial twaddle, have conspired to render it disgustingly familiar. Those who use it in the fashionable manner would appear to have attached a novel meaning to the epithet 'parental.' We could not possibly enumerate the instances in which we have observed its application as the opposite of authoritative, rigorous, or harsh. It seems to be regarded as peculiarly appropriate, when corporeal punishment is disavowed. "No bodily chastisement or other harsh expedients will be used, the discipline of this school being entirely parental." "The age of

flogging and imprisonment is past. No discipline would now be tolerated, but that which is strictly parental."

A more puerile confusion and abuse of terms we never met with. Is the use of the rod so entirely foreign from domestic government, that its exclusion from a school must be denoted by the term parental? The truth is just the other way. Corporeal punishment is so delicate and hazardous a thing, that, as a general rule, it is perhaps expedient no where but at home. And whatever may be thought of the propriety of practising this method of correction in a school, the right to practise it is clearly vested in the head of every household. The father who never whips his son may be perfectly right; but the father who sets out with the determination not to do it, come what may, is most indubitably wrong. The term "parental," therefore, far from denoting the exclusion of the rod, implies distinctly the authority to use it. We beg the reader to observe, however, that we find no fault with the phrase 'parental discipline' when properly interpreted. On the contrary, we think that it expresses fully the true principle of government in public institutions. There discipline should always be parental. We have already hinted that the organization of our literary seminaries would be much improved by an approximation to the internal regulations of a well-ordered family. It follows, of course, if this be just, that the controlling and directing power in such an establishment, should be analogous in operation to the corresponding power in a family. In other words, the discipline should be, as far as possible, parental. We do not mean, however, by parental discipline, that sickly, fondling and old-womanish cajolery, which bribes and coaxes children to behave themselves. We mean a firm, kind, steady exercise of that discretion, which Providence allows to every parent, and which every parent, when he sends his son to school, transfers, so far as it admits of transfer, to the teacher whom he trusts. This, and this only, is parental discipline.

Most of these remarks have been suggested by the perusal of the London Quarterly Journal of Education, though we have not intended them as a formal review of that work. The plan of the Journal renders it extremely difficult to give a bona fide criticism of its contents in such a way as would be interesting to the general reader, though at the same time its design and scope might bring it legitimately before us. We feel it due, however, to the respectable character and standing of this journal, to disclaim all intention of charging its conductors with any peculiar bias towards the errors and absurdities which we have undertaken to expose. The faults of that periodical are almost wholly of another kind;

and though it could not be expected that in such a work, there should be no departures from the line of strict sobriety, we must confess that we have found as few in this, as in any contemporary publication. And on some points which we have adverted to in terms of disapprobation, it should be distinctly stated that the Quarterly Journal very strenuously advocates what we consider as the cause of truth and common sense.

We cannot dismiss the subject without hinting at some topics, which we wish to see presented in their true light to the public, as a means of rectifying false impressions, and exciting well directed efforts for the promotion of true learning in our midst. Besides some of those which have been slightly touched in the present article, we attach great importance to the question, how the profession of teachers may be raised to a higher point upon the scale of actual merit and of public estimation? Nothing to us appears more evident than that there is an urgent call for some peculiar and effectual expedients, corresponding to the peculiar circumstances of American society. There are safeguards and provisions in the old world, which are here unknown; and we do honestly consider that the man who shall devise a method of supplying this defect and of raising the business of instruction to its proper elevation in the public eye, will merit far more gratitude than many deep-mouthed demagogues, whose apotheosis is the order of the day. Next to the character of teachers, we desire to see the influence of the press on elementary instruction brought before the public mind. While public-spirited and enterprising publishers are showing themselves willing to do much for education by the supply of books, we are anxious to see learned men and authors duly sensible of their obligations to co-operate in this important work. America possessing, as she does, so many highly gifted sons, will have no excuse for coming short, in this respect, of other nations. Though we do not mean to give any pledge to that effect, it is our present purpose to attempt such an exhibition of these subjects as we think agreeable to truth, and likely to produce a good effect.