

# THE MICROCOSM.

The world was made so various that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, might be indulged.—COWPER.

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FOR THE MICROCOSM.

## LETTERS ON EDUCATION.

No. III.

MR. EDITOR—Addison has beautifully observed in one of his essays, that the constant efforts of the human mind to arrive at perfection, without being able to attain it, is a convincing proof of the immortality of the soul. The same remark he has also applied with equal judgment to our love of happiness. If we cannot be perfectly happy, we certainly find pleasure in the pursuit of happiness; and if we cannot be perfect in knowledge, we can undoubtedly attain a great degree of perfectibility in acquiring it: and this is what we mean by education. We consider the Supreme Being to be all-wise and omnipotent, and as we naturally suppose our minds to resemble his, so are we induced consequently to ascend as high in the scale of self-improvement as our nature and constitution will enable us to do. Now, this is the end and business of education. A mechanic who would excel in his art, must understand the nature and use of his tools and the quality of his materials. He who would "learn to venerate himself as man," must comprehend himself—know his own powers and faculties—and learn the qualities and combinations of the objects around him. Education then is placed in two things—it is necessary to know our own constitution, and to know the means of improving our powers and faculties.—Youth, in their studies, practice the latter while they are acquiring the former.

Education is *theoretical* and *practical*: theoretical, because it imparts the knowledge of our nature, and the nature of those objects which we perceive by our senses: practical, because it teaches us to use and improve our powers; and the powers of other animated beings or material substances. Theoretical knowledge constitutes science—art is the practical exercise of knowledge. Geography is a science—drawing is an art.

As the bodily and mental powers of childhood gradually unfold into manhood, so must the scholastic exercises of youth lead us by degrees to the perfectibility of our nature—that is, to the free and complete use of all our corporal and mental faculties in a high state of progressive improvement. Hence the natural division arises of the education of the *body* and the education of the *mind*, man being constituted of body and mind. To inform the mind, it is necessary to cultivate the faculties of perception, attention, memory, reason, and invention: to rear the body, we must give it health, strength, activity, and dexterity. "*Sana mens in corpore sano.*"

In the compass of our knowledge three subjects may be distinguished. First, the things themselves; next, the properties of things; and lastly, their relations. The things subject to our knowledge are mind & matter. We know directly only one mind—our own; indirectly we become acquainted with the minds of other men and with that of the Supreme Being. Whatever we perceive by our senses is matter of the properties and relations of matter. These originate the whole circle of our knowledge, and on

them are founded the multiplicity of human arts & sciences. I shall not now delineate all the varied branches and twigs of the arts and sciences which sprout from these two solid roots, much less describe the beautiful and variegated foliage which adorns its top with verdant and many-colored tints. On the vast field of human enterprise each inquisitive spirit will pursue its separate, chosen path; education respects the great public roads only which young and inexperienced travellers must pursue at first. To enable a child to walk in the way in which he should go, his steps must be guided from earliest infancy. "*Chi ben comincia, ha le metu dell'opra.*"—The beginning is half the work. The influence of mothers and nurses on the first ideas and notions of a child is almost unlimited, and from it arise many of the greatest defects of youth. The evils of temperament and many other bad habits may be traced to the same cause. The fretful impatience of the nurse will often re-appear in the nursling, and the mother's follies revive in the child's dissipation. The selection of domestics to have charge of children may be of little importance to the parent, but it is of vital interest to the child. The first passions aroused are apt to be the predominant ones in after life. Even Phrenologists acknowledge this truth when they confess that habit may correct the defects of nature or alter the effect of temperament. The first lessons in literature are likely to be the pattern for successive ones. The practice of learning correctly, thoroughly, and understandingly cannot be acquired too early. The vast importance of a good beginning is very strongly and aptly recommended in the prospectus of our University. "If parents desire that their sons and wards shall attain to good scholarship, they must look well to the foundation on which the superstructure is to be reared. If this duty be neglected, let it be remembered, that on them rests the responsibility." If children form a taste for virtue and learning in their early years, that taste will accompany them in the fall of age. "*Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur,*" &c.—is a trite adage but a true one.

AN OLD FIELD TEACHER.  
(To be continued.)

FOR THE MICROCOSM.

## ON THE DISSOLUTION OF ALL THINGS.

Every thing of earth is dissoluble. There is nothing in the wide world, beneath the throne of God, that is not subject to mutation—to decay. The "everlasting hills," as they are called, are gradually wasting away, and filling up the vallies at their base. The solid granite of the mountain wastes away under the ravages of time. Where magnificent cities in one age obtrude their splendors upon the gaze of an astonished people, in the next, perhaps naught is seen but a wide spread waste of ruins. We look out upon the world, and here and there see the relics of splendid empires—the chiseled fragments of proud columns—triumphal arches—the remains of magnificent temples—the ruins of ancient mausoleums—and upon every fragment of things that *were* we see inscribed by the hand of time "passing away."

Suppose we go in fancy and gaze upon ancient Babylon, in all her strength and beauty. See her towering aerial gardens—her grand and finished temples, surmounted with

spiral minarets and glittering cupalos. View her massive walls and impregnable towers, and ask, can this city, which in the Book of God is called the "beauty of the Chaldean's excellency," and "the glory of kingdoms," ask, can it ever be laid waste? The prophet's eye, piercing the dizzy vista of intervening years, looked on until the present. He saw it a pile of ruins, without an inhabitant, except beasts of prey and the most loathsome of animals. Go, now, with the grave antiquarian, and search for its site; and as you stand at the lonesome hour of midnight and listen to the startling scream of the "deformed night prowling" hyena, the savage yell of the jackall, or the menacing roar of the lion, do you not feel that all things on earth are dissoluble—hastening to decay? Go in fancy and contemplate the splendid remains of the proud Parthenon and Acropolis of Athens; and as you gaze upon their tottering columns and upon the scattered fragments of her ruined capitals and polished friezes—tell me if earthly grandeur is not evanescent.—Transport yourself in thought to the far-famed Coliseum of Rome; and as you trace upon its pillars the ravages of time and hear the winds wailing the dirge of its departed glory, among its lofty turrets and ruined battlements—say if all things are not subject to mutation. Where are Alexandria, Echatana, Persepolis, and hundred-gated Thebes of olden time? Balbec, of the desert, and Carthage, where? Past away and buried beneath the rubbish of succeeding generations.

Man himself hastens to decay. See the infant of days, rocked in the cradle, nurtured and caressed by the doting mother. Look again. He is treading the slippery paths of youth—and again, and we see him in all the vigor of manhood: but look again, and you see him with whitened lock, furrowed cheek, palsied hand, and decrepited step, treading along upon the farthest brink of time—bending over eternity. Gaze for a moment upon the loveliest object on earth, a young and beautiful female, with handsome mien and a step as buoyant as air; her cheek glows with a "mountain freshness," while vivacity and sprightliness sparkle in her eye. Can she ever die? Look, and you see her blasted by affliction—like the tender flower by autumnal frosts. The rosy hue has forsaken her cheek, and is followed by the paleness of death; her eye no longer burns with the fire of youth, but is covered with the film of death. She is dead—carried to the tomb. Look again: the withered grass waves mournfully over her slumbering form; autumnal leaves, sere and blasted, rustle down upon her grave, fit emblems of earthly beauty. "All flesh is as grass." "Seeing then that all these things shall be *dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness."

OMEGA.

Nov. 1838.

## THE POWER OF MUSIC.

We have picked up, from some of the papers, the following story; though we do not know that it is true. At all events, it is curious.

Sulton Amurath, a very cruel prince, having laid siege to the city of Bagdad and taken it, gave orders that 30,000 of the Persians, though they had submitted and laid down their arms, should be put to death.

Among these unfortunate victims was a mo-