

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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LETTERS ON EDUCATION.

No. V.

Mr. Editor—In pursuing the education of a child's mind, I think the best method is, to cultivate the different faculties as they successively develop themselves; first, by suitable exercises; and secondly, by supplying appropriate materials for them to work upon; and thus lay a good foundation of first principles to direct and order the operations of the intellect. By which means correct habits of comprehending, memorising, thinking and reflecting will be best formed. It is of vast importance to provide, not only that the matter be just and right, but also that the manner of imparting it be good and fitted to the capacity of the pupil. Not less important is the character and skill of the person by whom they are imparted. Some writer has defined man to be an imitative animal; and this imitative disposition of children leads them to copy the habits, thoughts and notions of those with whom they converse, especially their teachers. They will adopt their vices sooner than their virtues. An unprincipled teacher is a kind of vampyre, who feeds on the vital powers of infant minds; and like sulphuric acid unto steel, a corroder of early virtue. Next in authority to the example of a parent stands that of the teacher. The remarks I before made respecting nurses and domestics influencing children's manners may be applied with equal force to the preceptor. He is too commonly regarded, to the detriment of his incumbent duties, as a *doited wight*—a nothing in the momentum of human life—an old-fashioned body, antiquated in opinions and dress—as too good-natured to detect imposition—too benevolent to resent injuries—too dull to feel the stings of ridicule—too impotent to be feared—too indigent to be respected—and too fat-witted to perceive the low estimation in which others hold him—finally, as a kind of *Domine Sampson*, cleverly intended by Heaven to fill up a void in the romance of childhood. Parents should be cautious how they speak of teachers; for instinct will make the young echo the words of the old.

This imitative faculty is the first which nature awakes in the infant, and it is easy to make it avail for instruction, by always acting before the child as we would have it to act. The next that appears is perception; it is worthy of particular culture, and highly influential in after life. There is a very beautiful illustration of its effects in one of the elegant and simple tales of the "Evenings at home," one of the best books for children that was ever written. It is entitled *Eyes and no Eyes*. Two youths are represented taking the same country ramble, the one evidently following the steps of the other at short intervals of time and space. The one complains of the dullness of the walk, and the other speaks in youthful rapture of its beauty—scenery, neat farms and buildings, and so rich in objects interesting to the naturalist and philosopher—whence he amasses a store of information for future inquiry and reflection. This perceptive power depends more on the taste than on the mental activity of the child. A separate nar-

ative of the circumstances of any remarkable event witnessed by different boys, will easily exemplify their several talents for perception and observation. One will portray the most minute circumstances with fidelity and interest; another will tell it in few words, carelessly strung together, without order or truth, and as a thing scarce worthy of notice. The superior perception of boys is often shewn by their quickness in detecting the slight difference of words in spelling, pronunciation and meaning, &c.

Parents and teachers are often negligent in cultivating this faculty of youth. It is nothing more than attention to present objects; it is the reverse of absence of mind; and its utility in the business of life needs not to be stated. It is of great service in the acquiring of languages and indispensable in scientific pursuits. I know no better method of improving this faculty than by pointing out, or causing others to point out, the omissions and superficial haste of the defaulter, and praising the successful observer. Sometimes ingeniously contriving that the parties shall be gainers or losers by their performance; at other times awaking their curiosity and calling in their pride or cupidity to assist their mental activity, are methods which may be successfully used to exercise the perceptive talents. Instances of rudeness from excessive inquisitiveness are not wanting. For as Plato observed of his pupils, some require the bridle, some the spur.

A superabundance of this inquisitive spirit, when degraded to the base pursuit of lucre, may merit the reproachful opprobrium of *Yankeeism*, with justice; but when it is guided by reason in its proper channel, it leads to the greatest discoveries of genius and inventions of art. Newton observed an apple fall, and discovered the grand moving principle of the Universe. A child perceived that objects looked larger through two pieces of glass, and the microscope and telescope were invented.

The various striking objects of nature, animals, plants and minerals, with the costume and manners of different nations, remarkable events, all that is eminently grand or beautifully minute, seem to be objects likely to engage the perceptive and inquisitive powers of childhood, and to excite admiration and wonder.

AN OLD FIELD TEACHER.

Mr. Editor—Will you be so good as to accept from a youthful friend, and insert in your very much esteemed paper, a conundrum, which reads as follows:

I am a word of 13 letters. My 11th, 3rd, 9th, 12th, 8th, 2nd, and 8th is a very sweet fluid. My 6th, 12th, 11th, 8th, 10th, and 1st is a young girl. My 3rd, 4th, 10th, 5th, 6th, and 12th is a Lake in some of the northern States. My 9th, 2nd, 8th, 1st, 5th, and 10th was a Scotch chemist. My 11th, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, and 13th is a day in the week. My 1st, 10th, 11th, 3rd, 4th, and 8th is a West India fruit. My 11th, 7th, and 13th, is a month in the year. And my whole is a distinguished young gentleman in North Carolina.

Good.—The following toast was lately given at Detroit:

The Boston Tea Party.—Unlike most tea parties, little was said, but a good deal done.

THE SCOLD'S VOCABULARY.

The copiousness of the English language, perhaps was never more apparent than in the following, by a lady, of her husband. None other than a perpetual propagator of parrotisms could ever have perpetrated so perfect a paraphrase of pungent adjectives:

"He is," says she, "an abhorred, barbarous, capricious, detestable, envious, hard-hearted, illiberal, ill-natured, jealous, keen, loathsome, malevolent, nauseous, obstinate, passionate, quarrelsome, raging, saucy, tantalizing, uncomfortable, vexatious, abominable, bitter, captious, disagreeable, execrable, fierce, grating, gross, hasty, malicious, nefarious, obstreperous, peevish, restless, savage, tart, unpleasant, violent, waspish, worrying, acrimonious, blustering, discontented, sly, fretful, growling, hateful, inattentive, malignant, noisy, odious, perverse, rigid, severe, teasing, unsuitable, angry, boisterous, choleric, disgusting, offensive, sneaking, awkward, boorish, brutal, crabbed, currish, outrageous, stupid, sulky, sullen, treacherous, tyrannical, virulent, yelping dog in a manger."

A Keen One.—The Baltimore Transcript states that one merchant in that city having received information that another would fail on the following day, proceeded to his house in the evening, and requested payment of \$800, which was due. The debtor drew a check for the amount, and the creditor presented it at the bank as soon as it was opened the next morning. The check was dishonored, on the ground that the drawer had not that amount in disposite. The merchant inquired how much was wanting, and was told \$150. He then handed the cashier \$150, requesting that it should be put to the credit of the drawer. This done the check was presented and paid, of course. This is a little the keenest practice we ever heard of, and the operation must have been a yankee.

A GOOD WIFE.

She loves her home, believing with Milton that

"The wife where danger and dishonor lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

The place of women is eminently at the fire side. It is at home you must see her to know what she is. It is less material what she is abroad; but what she is in the family circle is all important. It is bad merchandise in any department of trade to pay a premium for other men's opinions. In matrimony, he who selects a wife for the applause or wonder of his neighbours, is in a fair way toward domestic bankruptcy. Having got a wife there is but one rule—*HONOR AND LOVE HER*. Seek to improve her understanding and her heart. Strive to make her more and more such a one as you can cordially respect. Shame on the brute in man's shape, who can affront or vex, not to say neglect, the woman who has embarked with him for life, "for better, for worse," and whose happiness, if severed from his smiles, must be unnatural and monstrous. In fine, I am proud of nothing in America so much as our American wives.

A respectable lady of Hartford, Conn. has been sued for a breach of promise of marriage, and the gentleman has laid his damages at \$30,000.