

It seems to me, then, that the complaints commonly brought against our system of school discipline are wrong, either in their principle or as to the truth of the fact. The complaint against all corporal punishments as degrading and improper, goes, I think, upon a false and mischievous principle; the complaint against governing boys by fear, and mere authority, without any appeal to their moral feelings, is perfectly just in the abstract, but perfectly inapplicable to the actual state of established schools.

AMERICAN ESTIMATE OF SCHOOLS IN PARIS.

In a Letter from Paris.

I brought my children with me to Paris, under the belief that I should find for them superior advantages of education to what exist in the United States. As I shared this opinion with many others, it may not be amiss to give the results of my experience, for the consideration of those who desire to educate American youth in France.

Having a son and daughter I was prompted to examine into the system pursued toward sexes.

For a girl, the choice was only between an entirely home education or boarding schools of the most exclusive kind. The former is the course in general pursued by the best families. It renders education much more expensive than in the United States. But by it the evils attending the latter are avoided.

Boys are sent to the boarding schools or the seminaries under the supervision of government, where the discipline is rigid and the exclusion of external influences as complete as stone walls and watchful guardians can render it. Teachers sleep with them, watch them at table, are with them during their play hours, and they are never allowed to leave the walls of their seminaries without their presence; in short they make themselves the pupils shadows. The rule is never to leave them alone on any occasion, and the strictest watch is held over the servants and porters, lest they should connive at procuring forbidden indulgences from outside the walls. If the tutors were of irreproachable morals, this system would work better than it does; but when it is considered that frequently in what is called a fashionable school, they receive salaries of not over \$100 per annum, no very lofty qualifications of either character or attainments should be expected. They are as likely to be the accomplices as the preventives of the pupils in their attempts at mischief or depravity. The American system undoubtedly allows too much latitude to youth, particularly in not subjecting them to wholesome discipline, but it preserves them from systematic hypocrisy and fixed habits of falsehood.

If education were simply the acquisition of general knowledge, the sciences classics, or accomplishments, the American parent would find the institutions of France unexcelled by those of any other country. In the solid and ornamental branches they furnish for both sexes every desirable advantage. Intellectual knowledge is, however, but one part of education. Without principle it becomes the worst foe of society; with principle its best ally. I do not mean to be understood as implying that the morals are neglected. On the contrary they are rigidly cared for after the French standard. After an attentive examination into their system of education for youth, I am decidedly of opinion that if American parents wish to rear a generation of American children, they by far had better intrust them, both for their morals and the principles which are to be their guide in civil life, to the public schools of their own country, rather than to the highest seminaries of France. I have seen the results of this nurture in too lamentable shapes to come to any other conclusion than, that, while it rarely is calculated to make an American successful abroad, it is quite sure to destroy his capacity for patriotism at home. Dissatisfied with the genius of his native country as being adverse to his acquired taste, he finds himself, as it were, expatriated, without the solace of being nationalized elsewhere.

Corporeal punishment being entirely done away with, French teachers are at a loss for a substitute to preserve discipline. They resort to a multitude of penances, the most efficacious of which is perhaps imprisonment; but their general aim is to create shame or mortification. They seek to arouse emulation by a graduated system of rewards, which results in the early development of a passion for prizes and decorations. This is pushed to such an extent that the bauble often becomes the substitute for the principle, and the vanity of display takes the place of love of knowledge. These "rewards of merit" are coveted with an eagerness by all classes that to their graver neighbors savors of childishness. Hence, through every department of society they are distributed with a profusion that elsewhere would destroy their value.

Boys who are not yet emancipated from frocks are to be seen with decorations attached to their breasts, treading in the footsteps of the Legionaries of Honor, whose ribbons, crosses, and grand crosses are to be met at every step in the street. The acquisition of a ribbon of

a medal would be a penance to a Frenchman, if he could not display it. If this innocent vanity be a spur to worthy actions, it is undoubtedly to be cherished in default of a better motive. The Legion of Honor already numbers upward of 50,000 members, and scarcely a day passes without additions to its ranks. A recent calculation gives a decoration to one individual in every ten in France.

The history of French exhibitions of manufactures and arts shews to what an extent the distribution of prizes is pursued. In 1798, of the one hundred and ten exhibitions in the Champ de Mars only twenty three, or a little more than a fifth, had prizes. In 1801, there was distributed one prize to every three exhibitors. The succeeding year it rose to one to every two. In 1823 the proportions were two prizes to every three persons. Each succeeding exhibition followed the same policy, until the prizes have nearly caught up with the exhibitors, the last on record being 3253 prizes to 3960 exhibitors. Much complaint ensued at the awards of the Commissioners of the London Exhibition in 1851, although France received sixty recom-pences for every one hundred exhibitors, while England was only in the ratio of twenty-nine to every one hundred, and all other nations but eighteen.

Such is the effect of substituting in infancy the desire of artificial distinctions, for the more solid principle of action from the simple sense of duty. It was with difficulty I could prevent one of the most simple-hearted and conscientious of professors from bribing any children to learn their lessons. The perpetual argument is, "Do this, and you shall have that."

Some one, with more severity than truth, has said that all children are by nature liars. The teacher of one of the best conducted boarding schools of Paris, who had several American children under his charge, remarked that they were the only boys in his establishment on whose word he could rely. Where appearances are the chief aim of life there must exist a corresponding amount of deception. The material lie readiily becomes the moral lie. Truth is not placed upon its right foundation in the young. How can it be when there is no reliance put in their good faith? The education of the children prepares the way for those lies of convenience or etiquette so prevalent among the adults.

The simple English yes or no has no weight in France. To induce belief adjuations are added, or a sort of sliding scale of expressions, by which you are made to comprehend with what degree of certainty you may rely on any promise or assertion. I shall never forget the expression of surprise with which a young American girl, to whom falsehood was an unknown tongue, explained to me that her teacher required her to swear to keep a promise; and on another occasion, with mingled indignation and astonishment, exclaiming, "My teacher tells lies." She had detected some of those petty larcenies of truth which here would not be called by so harsh a name.

Children are no casuists. They should be taught by precept and example, the plain rule, to tell the truth under all circumstances, and leave the consequences to take care of themselves. The French habit arises not so much from evil design as from a desire either to convey pleasure or to avoid giving pain. A physician deceives his patient to convey encouragement; the tradesman promises, to secure patronage; gallantry is proverbial for its falsehoods, and vanity must be fed upon lies. The domestic is more ingenious in evasions than a Cretan; and your friend will never be frank at the expense of wounding your amour propre. Suspicion is so disguised in the finesse of courtesy, that its sting is scarcely felt; while deception treads so lightly as barely to leave a trail. Wherever manners and morals have their source in the head, and not in the heart, this condition of things will exist. Yet it is impossible not to admire that exquisite tact, which, in seeking a favor, seemingly confers an obligation,

GREAT MEN SELF EDUCATED.

Benjamin Franklin was a self-educated man. So was Benjamin West. The one among the most distinguished philosophers, the other among the best painters the world ever saw. Each had a good teacher because he taught himself. Both had a better teacher daily, because both were advancing daily in knowledge and in the art of acquiring it.

Baron Cuvier was also a self-made man. He was at all times under a good teacher, because he was always taught by Baron Cuvier. He, more than any other man, perhaps than all other men before him, brought to light the hidden treasures of the earth. He not only examined and arranged the mineral productions of our globe, but ascertained that hundreds, and even thousands of different species of animals, once living, moving in the waters and upon the land, now form rocks, ledges, and even mountains. Cuvier thought, however, that he owed a constant debt of gratitude to his mother for his knowledge, because when a small child, she encouraged him in Linear Drawing, which was of the utmost service in his pursuits. To the same encouragement the world is, of course, indebted for the knowledge, diffused by Cuvier among all nations.

Sir Humphrey Davy, by "self instruction," made more brilliant