

FRAGMENTS AND FANCIES.

(By an Old Timer.)

"I will tell you the beginning, and, if it please. . . you may see the end; for the best is yet to do; and here . . . they are coming to perform it."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

1. How valuable a possession is an ideal in education! What a treasure does the student possess who has fixed his standard and is determined to work up to it! And consequently what can be more important than a judicious choice in so delicate and difficult a question. Were one a German or a Frenchman, there need be no embarrassment. In such case the choice would be already made. In Germany, students know what they want and decide, at an early age, the means necessary for its attainment. The national ideal in education is knowledge for its own sake. In the acquirement of knowledge the German student allows no obstacle to deter or overawe him. Health, wealth and time are sacrificed lavishly and without regret. The satisfaction of being a profound scholar outweighs every feeling of personal loss or discomfort. The French student has a somewhat different ideal set up for him. In his country culture is the object, that ease of manner, that grace of life, that charm of conversation which mark the educated Frenchman.

Of the English standard it might be almost truthfully said that it makes no account of knowledge, as such. What a shock to the professional pedagogue to hear the hero in "Tom Brown at Rugby" say of himself: "I went to school to get, among other things, enough Latin and Greek to take me through Oxford respectably." His father makes matters worse, for he declares: "I did not send him to school mainly to make

him a good scholar. Neither his mother nor I care a straw for the digamma or the Greek particles. If he will only turn out a brave, truth-telling Englishman and a gentleman, that's all I want." Nor can these views be singular, for the great French critic, Taine, says of them: "Remarkable words these, and well summarizing the ordinary sentiments of an English father and child." This opinion would seem to be supported by the weighty authority of Dr Arnold. "It is of no importance" he declared in the early days of his headmastership at Rugby "whether the students of this school number five hundred or fifty. But it is important that they be gentlemen." And every reader of "David Copperfield" will remember the parting advice of Betsy Trotwood to her young nephew, as she left him at Mr. Wickfield's, a pupil for Dr Strong: "Be a credit to yourself and to me, and heaven be with you. Never be mean in anything, never be false, never be cruel. Avoid these three vices and I can always be hopeful of you."

But the man who realizes the possibilities of his nature and the grandeur of his destiny will scarcely rest satisfied in any or all of these national standards. He will seek an ideal that will correspond to every need of his being, both physical, intellectual and spiritual. He will repeat without ceasing the prayer of Royal David: "Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge", and he will note that the order given by the Prophet marks the relative importance of the various parts of true education.