

runs down a heathery hillside; and there is little temerity in our saying that his opinions, however, they may be disputed, were as honestly conceived, as were all his commercial transactions, however indiscreet some of them subsequently proved to be. It is needless to say that honest opinions are by no means sound arguments; and as, now-a-days at least, they can never become law without a thorough sifting, there is always an excuse for investigating the doctrines even of the most distinguished writers. Indeed there can be no presumption in the critic, if he only be honest.

The passage, which has been quoted, was written by the great novelist, while pointing out the defects of such a desultory system of study as that pursued by the young Edward Waverley. To divide it up into its component facts we may find in it an allusion, a gibe, and a permonition, none of which seem to the writer to stand the test of true critical examination. The allusion, for instance, to Tasso's infusion of honey into the child's medicine is surely an inapt illustration for the acquiring of knowledge, under ordinary circumstances. Even the knowledge that disciplines is sometimes to be viewed more in the light of the food that nourishes, than of the mental cathartic that purifies. Sometimes the manner in which food is given to children makes it as distasteful as medicine; and as with the body so with the mind. But generally speaking, the child takes delight in acquiring knowledge. The eye brightens when beholding things beautiful, the ear quickens when it drinks in the harmony of sounds, the whole body quivers with the excitement of joy, when some pleasant discovery is made by the child's sense of touch or taste or smell. If knowledge be bitter, it is being unnaturally acquired, it is being presented by one who does not fully understand the processes of nature; in a word, it is the sweetness of nature soured by an ignorance that does not know its own potency. "I know a stupid boy" says some one, "whose cup of knowledge it is impossible to sweeten." "And I know more than one" says another, "whose minds have had to be opened by a violent process, and a modicum of knowledge poured into them." But this, as the knowledge that disciplines, cannot be administered for any length of time with advantage, even to the stupidity that lingers at its work, and ought never to be admin-