

Defective Education.

The following extract, from a lecture recently read before the Mechanic's Institute, St. John, by H. W. Frith Esq., is to the point:—

I proceed now to notice some of the many props with which we shore up Empiricism: I mention first—Defective Education, producing Prejudice, or pre-judging, a very stronghold of Empiricism, the very bane of Truth.

By defective education I mean not merely lack of Latin and Greek, or shortcomings in reading, writing and arithmetic; not so much a want of the School-master abroad, as of a little philosophy at home. Education is not got by swallowing a Dictionary, or even a first rate classical library. There are wells full with water that cannot be used: eggs with meat that cannot be eaten. It is one thing to be learned, another to be wise. But parents and pedagogues think they are doing their utmost for children, by *stuffing*, when they ought to be *exercising*, their minds, by cramming in everything, and drawing out nothing; by giving such quantities to think about, that the poor creatures have no chance to think. Or, by another error, they cultivate and force one faculty at the expense of another; polish elaborately the mind and neglect the heart; or over stimulate the perceptive organs and deaden the reflective. In the first instance they produce, perchance, a very well got up *machine*—but only a machine. In the second—that, most horrible, because most unnatural of all things—*precocity*. In neither instance a *MAN*. In the former you will have propriety for independence of character, orthodoxy for reality, conservatism for self reliance, conventionality for originality; in the latter you will have cleverness for common sense; wit instead of reverence; selfishness for goodness; declamation for logic; success for virtue. In the one you get the fit subject for Empiricism.—In the other the Empiric. In neither case *TRUTH*.

A young man, half educated, as the first, accustomed to take his father's word for everything, and sedulously taught a few ancestral maxims as the very essence of truth, instead of being made to bring *all things* to the test of candid criticism, before ~~forming~~ his judgment—come out into the world to find his ideas ridiculed, his *authority* disputed, his dogmas shivered—the chances are he becomes either a recluse or a sceptic. It is a phenomenon often quoted, that the children of clergymen and the most straight-laced parents frequently turn out the worst. It is one easily accounted for. Habituated to have others think for them at home—when they enter the world the habit continues, and what they will be, depends mainly on the associates among whom they may be thrown.

A young man, half educated, as the second, comes early into the world intolerant, heady, impetuous. Ahead he must go; in some new course if possible, and his parts being unequally developed, he cannot go straight; so, fast and crooked, he soon runs off the track, and leaves room for a better man. Premature ripeness must result in premature decay.

Let those who would stay Empiricism and promote Truth, educate slowly; nature gives plenty of time. Educate fully—the heart as well as the mind; the