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MODERN SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION AND THEIR FOUNDERS.

THE REVEREND ANDREW BELL, D. D. BORN, 1753. DIED, 1832.
ÆTAS 79 YEARS.

No. V.

Andrew, the son of Alexander and Margaret Bell, was born in the city of St. Andrews, on the 27th of March, 1753. His father was a barber in that city—a personage of more importance in the age of periwigs, and when considered as a surgeon of the lowest class, than in these times. He had been educated for a better station, but was thus reduced by a complication of misfortunes brought upon him, his son says, in early life by his inexperience and credulity. He was a man of extraordinary abilities; and having acquired no inconsiderable degree of mechanical and practical science, added to his original trade, that of clock and watchmaker; regulated, by observations, the timepiece in the public library of the university, and assisted Dr. Walker, the Professor of Natural Philosophy, in preparing his experiments. His habits and appearances were singular, yet not so as to lessen the respect in which he was held for his talents, probity, and strength of character. Persons are still living who remember him hastening through the street, with a professor's wig, ready dressed, in each hand; his arms at full stretch to prevent their collision. After trimming one professor, he would sit down and breakfast with him, and then away to trim and breakfast with another; his appetite, like his mouth, (and his mind also,) being of remarkable and well-known capacity. He was at one time bailie of the city; and once by his personal influence, after all other means had failed, he quelled what is called a "meal-mob"—riots upon that score being then so frequent as to obtain this specific denomination. The house in which he lived, and which was his own, stood in South street, on the east side of the town or parish church, and adjoining it. It consisted of two stories, with an outer staircase, supported by wooden pillars, and a wooden projection into the street. This served for his shop, and there he enjoyed his afternoon lounge. This style of building was formerly common in old Scotch towns; particularly in Edinburgh, Kircaldy, and St. Andrew's. It has now become rare in Scotland; and the specimens of it which were common in the North of England a generation ago, have almost all been replaced in a manner which,

if it be as much more commodious as it is less picturesque, must be considered a great improvement. Bailie Bell was a proficient at draughts, backgammon, and chess. Such of the students, and of the professors also, as were fond of these games, used to meet at his house, and Andrew, while a mere child, acquired such singular skill in all of them, that the best players were fond of engaging with him. A more remarkable instance of the bailie's versatile talents is, that he engaged with Mr. Wilson, afterwards professor of astronomy at Glasgow, in a scheme for casting types upon some plan of their own. They were employed upon this, his son said, day and night, night and day, in a garret; and though they did not succeed, yet, after the professor's removal to Glasgow, the well-known printers, Robert and Andrew Foulis, are said to have been beholden to him for the beauty of their typography. Bailie Bell, having saved a little property, retired from business a short time before the close of his life. Dr. Bell was the second son of the bailie. His first school-experiences are curious, not only as giving indications of his future course in life, but as recording a system which the world has happily now outgrown. He never spoke of the discipline, or rather tyranny, which he witnessed and endured in those years of his life, without indignation. "Oh, it was terrible!" he said, "the remains of feudal severity! I never went to school without trembling. I could not tell whether I should be flogged or not." His father, he used to say, had been driven from the grammar-school by cruelties that would now hardly be believed; yet neither his father nor he were wanting in capacity or diligence. Schools were everywhere conducted in those days upon a system of brutal severity, which never ought to have existed, except where the master happened to be a man of singular humanity. In proof, however, that the severity of Scotch parents was then little less in degree, Dr. Bell instanced the case of a little boy, who, on his return from school, after a merciless flogging, was observed to sit very uneasily; the father examined him, and though he saw that a great wound had been made, he merely observed, there was room for more! "But mind," Dr. Bell added, "he did not forget to remonstrate with the master." Between the fear of punishment, and the earnest desire of improvement, his thoughts were so wholly engrossed by his lessons, that the family often said, it was a wonder Andrew did not go east instead of west when he went out of the door; and, indeed, though he did not lose the way, yet when he was going to any particular place, he generally overpassed it, being lost in thought as he went along. What he knew, he knew well, and never forgot; but a want of verbal memory rendered that which, for common capacities, is, however unattractive, the easiest of their tasks at school, to him the most difficult. According to his own account, he never could correctly get by heart a single rule of the Latin syntax, though he perfectly understood the meaning, and was at no loss to apply it. My old master, Dr. Vincent, used to say, "Give me a reason, boy! I would always rather you should give me a reason than a rule." But under a more Busbeian system than that of Westminster had become in my days, and a less reasonable master, this natural defect or peculiarity sufficiently accounts for the fear with which Andrew took his way to school. Notwithstanding this, he made good progress in Latin; Greek, in this country, was seldom or never taught at that time in such schools. "I do not suppose," he said, "the master could have taught it; so we began our Greek alphabet when we went to the university." The inclination which led him to scientific studies was manifested