

It is admitted as an axiom in the United States, that the only chance they have of upholding their present institutions is by the education of the mass; that is to say, a people who would govern themselves must be enlightened. Convinced of this necessity, every pains has been taken by the Federal and State governments to provide the necessary means of education.* This is granted; but we now have to inquire into the nature of the education, and the advantages derived from such education as is received in the United States.

In the first place, what is education? Is teaching a boy to read and write education? If so, a large proportion of the American community may be said to be educated; but, if you supply a man with a chest of tools, does he therefore become a carpenter? You certainly give him the means of working at the trade, but instead of learning it, he may only cut his fingers. Reading and writing without the farther assistance necessary to guide people aright, is nothing more than a chest of tools.

Then, what is education? I consider that education commences before a child can walk: the first principle of education, the most important, and without which all subsequent are but as leather and prunella, is the lesson of obedience—of submitting to parental control—“*Honour thy father and thy mother!*”

Now, any one who has been in the United States must have perceived that there is little or no parental control. This has been remarked by most of the writers who have visited the country; indeed to an Englishman it is a most remarkable feature. How is it possible for a child to be brought up in the way that it should go, when he is not obedient to the will of his parents? I have often fallen into a melancholy sort of musing after witnessing such remarkable specimens of uncontrolled will in children; and as the father and mother both smiled at it, I have thought that they little knew what sorrow and vexation were probably in store for them, in consequence of their own injudicious treatment of their offspring. Imagine a child of three years old in England behaving thus:—

“Johnny, my dear, come here,” says his mamma.

“I won’t,” cries Johnny.

“You must, my love, you are all wet, and you’ll catch cold.”

“I won’t,” replies Johnny.

“Come, my sweet, and I’ve something for you.”

“I won’t.”

“Oh! Mr.—, do, pray make Johnny come in.”

“Come in, Johnny,” says the father.

“I won’t.”

“I tell you, come in directly, sir—do you hear?”

“I won’t,” replies the urchin taking to his heels.

“A sturdy republican, sir,” says his father to me, smiling at the boy’s resolute disobedience.

Be it recollected that I give this as one instance of a thousand which I witnessed during my sojourn in the country.

It may be inquired, how is it that such is the case at present, when the obedience to parents was so rigorously inculcated by the puritan fathers, that by the blue laws, the punishment of disobedience was death? Cap.

* Miss Martineau says: “Though, as a whole, the nation is probably better informed than any other entire nation, it cannot be denied, that their knowledge is far inferior to what their safety and their virtue require.”

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