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Errors in Education.

The generality of people are as ignorant of the *modus operandi* of educating children to make them useful citizens, as an Ojipawa chief is of Right Angled Spherical Triangles. An old gentleman who flourished as a philosopher many centuries ago, replied, when asked what he thought most proper for boys (I add girls) to learn, "that which they will practice when they become men."

Perhaps that expression alone ought to have immortalized his name and, if fully carried out would have been of lasting benefit to untold myriads of human beings. In our Common Schools, High Schools, Grammar Schools, Seminaries, Colleges and Universities the same routine is universally adopted for all grades and shades of mental capacities, and to graduate with honors, a student must attain a certain proficiency in the several branches, no matter how much he may be above mediocrity in all the rest, he must undergo the mortification of being "plucked." In graded Common Schools, I have seen bright and intelligent children fail of promotion, simply because they failed, or did not come up to the necessary standard of proficiency in some particular branch.

I have also seen this same thing occur in our higher institutions of learning, more especially in our Colleges and Universities. Now in my opinion this is radically wrong, and my object in discussing it is to prove my position true. Take for instance the children in any village, and all students that may graduate in our higher institutions of learning elsewhere. If a man intends to make a mechanic of his son, he should receive a mechanic's education, and thoroughly master those branches of education that are immediately connected with his future calling in life: for life in school is too short to squander time in obtaining a vague knowledge of branches that have no earthly utility, and are never thought of after a person begins the battle of life. What earthly benefit would botany be to a blacksmith, trigonometry to a tailor, conic sections to a cooper, quadratic equations to a tanner?

I do not say such men would be injured by a thorough knowledge of the entire circle of science; but what I do contend is this, that the time devoted to such studies, curtails their knowledge of those branches that are indispensably necessary in

their business transactions in life. To hear a man prating about the quadrature of the circle who murders the Queen's English every time he opens his mouth or commits his thoughts to writing, is enough to make a delicate old lady have convulsions. To hear a good looking young lady pounding broken backed music out of a second hand squeaking piano, or singing in public with a voice as untrained as a bawky mule, or the discordant strains of an old Hurly Gurdy, while ignorant of the functions of her own organism, is a sight too repulsive for ordinary mortals to bear. If a person's time is limited (and the children of people in ordinary circumstances are almost always limited) he ought to make himself master of reading, writing, arithmetic, in all its applications, English Grammar thoroughly, book-keeping, history, &c., and during his leisure hours, he can extend his studies as far as he chooses, even to the summit of the Hill of Science. Because, to my mind, it is a self-evident proposition, that so long as reason maintains its throne, we are continually learning; and if we were never to learn anything more than what we did in school, our education would indeed be very limited. Every person has the intellectual capacity of excelling in some one or more branches of learning; while few are capable of rising above mediocrity in all. To force a student to study branches for which he has neither taste nor capacity, is the merest folly in the world, especially when his calling in life cannot utilize them.

I have seen boys serve an apprenticeship to carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, &c., who in after life become ornaments in the learned professions, and shone forth as bright and shining stars, at the Bar, (not the whiskey bar) on the bench, in the rostrum, on the platform, and as mediators, &c. The undeveloped intellectual capacities of such men were not understood by their parents and teachers; and hence, they were forced to pursue a calling in life, for which nature never qualified them, or intended them to pursue. Hence, so much of their life was almost an entire blank. There is always some peculiar trait in the character and actions of a child which the keen, observing eye of the intelligent parent and teacher can, or at least ought to, detect, which clearly defines the adaptability of the future man for some particular calling in life. If you see a boy continually hammering and tinkering at some kind of machinery, and always has nails and a hammer, or other tools in his hands, depend upon it, mechanicism is his forte. When you see a child who has always some remedy for cat, sprains or bruise, rely upon it he is a natural physician. If a boy is caught doing anything wrong who will try and argue you out of your senses, to justify himself, or extenuate his fault, remember there is the making of a lawyer.

When you see a boy steadily gazing at Steam Engine, Printing Press, or the ponderous Machinery of a mill, &c., you know his calling in life. When your child is continually asking you the meaning of words, enquiring about the glorious wonders of the starry Heavens, the changes of seasons, the motions of the planets, &c., there is a linguist, astronomer and philosopher, in miniature. — I might follow these things to any length; I have in every instance found them to be the leading character of the man in after life. Every one of sound mind has his talent, and not a few have many; and certainly it is more rationally to cultivate those talents by education than it would be to have Education run counter to the gifts of nature.