

as are abstruse and not ornamental. Many have gone through all the forms of a learned education, and have assumed the appearance of learning, who possess not enough of it to render the possession valuable. Such persons bring learning into disgrace, since they discover the pride of it, and profess to have pursued it, yet are able to display no such fruits of it as are genuine and truly desirable.

We every day meet those who have been placed at great schools, and who are said to have received a classical education; but who, at the same time, not only exhibit no peculiar advantages resulting from it, but are also very ready to confess, that they have found it of little use. In all such cases I must observe, what I have before suggested, that, though they are said to have had a classical education, they really have not. It is true, that they have been placed at the schools where it might have been had; but they have not received it. Either they had no parts, or they were universally idle, or they were taken away too early. One of these circumstances will be applicable to all of those (and I believe, in the present age, there is a great number), who have been placed in the classical schools without receiving any advantage from the classical mode of education, and who endeavour to bring it into disrepute, by alledging their own examples of its inutility.

There are, I think, two kinds of education; one of them confined, the other enlarged; one which only tends to qualify for a particular sphere of action, for a profession, or an official employment; the other, which endeavours to improve the powers of understanding for their own sake; for the sake of exalting the endowments of human nature, and rendering it capable of sublime and refined contemplation. This last is a kind of education which it is the primary purpose of the subsequent pages to recommend. It constitutes a broad and a strong basis, on which any kind of superstructure may afterwards be raised. It furnishes a power of finding satisfactory amusement for those hours of solitude, which every man must sometimes know in the busiest walks of life: and it constitutes one of the best supports of old age, as well as the most graceful ornaments of manhood. Even in the commercial department it is greatly desirable; for besides that it gives a grace to the man in the active stage of life, and in the midst of his negotiations, it enables him to enjoy his retreat with elegance, when his industry has accumulated an ample fortune.

Supposing for a moment, that a truly

classical education were not the best preparation for every liberal pursuit, as well as the most efficacious means of exalting and refining the mind; yet, as the greater number are still trained in it, who would chuse to be totally a stranger to that kind of learning, in which almost every gentleman has been in some degree initiated? However great may be his natural parts, a man usually appears in some respect inferior in truly good company, if his mind is utterly destitute of that species and degree of liberality, which a tincture of the classics is found to bestow.

I will not, however, injure the truth by insisting on too much. There are cases in which classical education may be properly dispensed with; such is that of a very dull intellect, or a total want of parts; and such is that of the boy who is to be trained to a subordinate trade, or to some low and mechanical employment, in which a refined taste and a comprehensive knowledge would divert his attention from his daily occupation. It is certain that money may be acquired, though not liberally enjoyed without either taste or literary knowledge. And indeed the good of the community requires, that there should be grosser understandings to fill the illiberal and the servile stations in society. Some of us must be hewers of wood and drawers of water; and it were happy if those could be selected for the work, whose minds have been rendered by Nature less capable of ornament.

But, after all, if taste, which classical learning tends immediately to produce, has no influence in amending the heart, or in promoting virtuous affections; if it contributes not to render men more humane, and more likely to be disgusted with improper behaviour, as a deformed object, and pleased with rectitude of conduct, as beautiful in itself; if it is merely an ornamental appendage, it must be owned, that life is too short to admit of long attention to mere embellishment. But the truth is, that polite learning is found by experience to be friendly to all that is amiable and laudable in social intercourse: friendly to morality. It has a secret, but powerful, influence in softening and meliorating the disposition. True and correct taste directly tends to restrain the extravagancies of passion, by regulating that nurse of passion, a disordered imagination.

Indeed, however highly I estimate knowledge, and however I admire the works of a fine fancy; yet I will not cease to inculcate on the minds of studious youth, that goodness of heart is superior to intellectual excellence, and the possession of

innocence