

Influence of previous education to choose his religion, (if he intends to profess any) or to select the moral rules and branches of science which he wishes to study for his guidance through life? One can hardly believe that a doctrine so destructive to man's peace and happiness could have found advocates. None but the ministers of the fallen angels would wish to deprive man of the grateful sensations he feels through life, towards the tender mother, the affectionate father, or kind master, who impressed on his infant mind, both by precept and example, the principles of religion, morality, virtue, and honor: principles on the practice of which, his purest enjoyments in this life, and his hopes in the world to come, are founded; principles which if not inculcated with the first dawning of his understanding, can never be attained. Were man left to seek for first principles, after his mind was filled with the cares and pleasures of the world; it requires little judgment to conclude, that at that period those important rules would find but little room for a permanent foundation in the human breast, and that the man who laboured under the influence of such an education, would be the slave of his passions, and the ready perpetrator of every species of wickedness.

THE General Assembly, in a former Session, finding that the apparent neglect in the execution of the Province Laws, arose more from a want of knowledge of the Law, than a disregard on the part of the people, wisely resolved, that a new Edition of the Statute Law should be published. The wishes of the General Assembly having been expressed to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, he was pleased to order the Attorney and Solicitor Generals to execute this necessary work. The private affairs of the Solicitor General requiring his attendance in England, I was deprived of his able assistance, and was obliged to proceed alone. The first step I took was thoroughly to examine the Statutes that had already been published, from which I was convinced that I was not safe in conducting the present work to depend on any thing in print: I therefore determined to have recourse to the original Acts, and, having carefully examined the Journals of the House of Assembly, and formed a schedule of every Bill which had passed into a Law, from the first settlement of the Province, to the present time; and, having compared the same with the Laws themselves, as preserved in the records of the Secretary's Office, I felt much satisfaction to find that all the original Laws were extant, one only excepted, which is of little importance, as it respected the sitting of the Country Courts, which is provided for by subsequent Statutes. Having collected the Statutes which from time to time had been printed, and carefully compared them with the Records, I have every reason to flatter myself with the hope that there will be found no material omission in the present work. I considered it unnecessary to publish more than the titles of the Acts which have been repealed, executed, or expired. All the other Acts are printed at large, in succession, as they have been assented to, beginning with the first Session of General Assembly, which commenced the 2d day of October, 1758, and ending with the last Session, which commenced on the 21st day of June, 1804. The Acts of each Session are distinguished from the succeeding one, and the names of the Governor, and principal Officers belonging to the Legislative Branches, are published in the title page of each Session; marginal notes are affixed to each Act, referring to all subsequent Acts which have been made in amendment or addition thereto. Finding that an Edition of the Acts of the Province up to the sixth year of His present Majesty's reign, was published by the late Chief Justice BELCHER, with notes of Law Cases and marginal references to British Acts of Parliament, I considered it proper to re-publish the same notes and references in this work; not only as a mark of respect to the high and learned character of Mr. BELCHER, who was the first Chief Justice of the Province, but also as affording to the people of the Province a convincing proof, that our predecessors anxiously endeavored, as nearly as local circumstances would permit, to copy the Laws of the Mother Country, and to form our establishments agreeably to the British Constitution. I at first designed to continue the late Chief Justice's notes down to the present period, by adding thereto the subsequent decisions of the British Courts of Law, with marginal references