

1788
Education
: Sheridan
Plan

A

6

S H O R T S K E T C H
O F A
P L A N
F O R T H E
I M P R O V E M E N T O F E D U C A T I O N
I N T H I S C O U N T R Y.
M O S T H U M B L Y S U B M I T T E D T O T H E C O N S I D E R A T I O N O F
P A R L I A M E N T.
B Y T H O M A S S H E R I D A N , A . M .

D U B L I N :

P R I N T E D B Y M . M I L L S , N O . 3 6 , D O R S E T - S T R E E T .

M D C C L X X X V I I I .

REPORT
OF A
COMMISSION
ON THE
IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION
IN THIS COUNTRY.
SENT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
BY PARLIAMENT.
BY THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M.
DUBLIN:
PRINTED BY M. SMITH, NO. 55, ROBERTS STREET.
1844.

A

SHORT SKETCH, &c.

AS the very comprehensive plan for the improvement of education in this country, laid before the House of Commons, towards the latter end of last session, by Mr. Orde, may probably meet with many difficulties and delays in the execution, both on account of the much to be lamented absence of it's author, and the vastness of the design itself; Mr. Sheridan, in the mean time, with all humility, begs leave to propose another, upon a smaller scale, which may be carried with ease into immediate effect; and which, at all events, will be fundamentally and essentially necessary to promote any benefits that may be proposed from the establishment of the

B

more

more enlarged plan, or any other that may hereafter be offered for the improvement of education.

Nor will it, he hopes, be thought presumptuous in him, to step forth with offers of his service on this occasion, when it is known that Mr. Orde, previous to his leaving the kingdom, declared his intention of placing Mr. Sheridan at the head of the direction of the whole of his plan, whenever it should be ripe for execution. And, as a farther plea, he may, without the imputation of vanity, be allowed to say, that he is not altogether unqualified for the task; as he has made the improvement of education in these countries, the chief object of his life; has formed a new system for the purpose, and with indefatigable pains, and the labour of many years, has prepared all the materials necessary to carry that system into execution.

In a late publication, entitled "A View of the State of School Education in Ireland," Mr. Sheridan has laid open the true source of the many defects and errors of the present system, arising from the omission of two fundamental articles, which
are

are—the regular study of our own language, and the Art of Speaking.

If what he has advanced there, and in his other publications upon that subject be true (and he has reason to think, from the concurrent judgment of many of the ablest heads in both kingdoms, that it is incontrovertibly so) there can not be an object of greater importance to the inhabitants of this country, than the introduction of those new studies, so as to form the basis of education in the early part of life, and to be continued afterward throughout the whole course: as he has clearly proved, that thro' the omission of these, most of the other branches of literature now taught, are either rendered useless, or for the most part nugatory; neither contributing to the benefit, nor even to the ornament, of a great majority of the persons so instructed, during the rest of their lives.

On the other hand, he has shewn, that by making these studies the fundamental parts of early institution, and carrying them on afterwards to their most perfect state, the youth, so trained, may not only

arrive, with more certainty, and in a shorter space of time at the ends proposed by the present course, but may attain such perfection in other articles, (hitherto totally neglected, and therefore unknown,) as will afterwards be of the greatest utility as well as ornament to them, in whatever rank or situation of life they may be placed.

But to what purpose are the most conclusive arguments laid down, if they be not examined? What avails the voice of the charmer, *charm he never so wisely*, if addressed to deaf or unattending ears? Never had any writer such general, such rooted prejudices to encounter, as Mr. Sheridan, in all that he has published on this subject. He has been employed in the arduous task of endeavouring to erase impressions stamped on the mind from earliest youth, increasing with increasing years, and grown inveterate by time; and to substitute in their place those of an opposite nature, contrary to the most generally established opinions. He has been the only champion since the revival of letters, who has stood forth in the cause
of

of the *Living Speech*, shewn it's vast superiority over the dead *Written Language*, and pointed out the many great advantages that would result to the whole community, from restoring it to it's due rank of priority, and reducing the other to it's subordinate state.

This is a doctrine hard to be digested by those who have devoted their whole lives to the culture of the one, without ever entering into the smallest examination of the other: who have been always accustomed to consider *Letters* as the chief glory of man, and that there is nothing wanting to the perfection of the human mind which may not amply be supplied by those. It would not be easy to persuade such bigots, that they are utterly ignorant, or entertain the most erroneous ideas of another species of language of a far nobler kind, vested by nature herself, when duly cultivated, with such powers, as alone can produce, and bring forward to a state of perfection, all the faculties of the human mind, whether of the intellect, the imagination, or the heart; and without which, most of them must either remain dormant

in their embryo-state, or come forth the weak and sickly offspring of the brain, produced by the feeble efforts of the powerless written language.

As the bulk of mankind have been bred to letters only, this prejudice has become almost universal: it will be therefore necessary, before any hopes can be entertained that the proposals hereafter to be made should gain attention, that this prepossession should, if possible, be removed: in order to which, it will be proper in the first place to take a comparative view of these two different kinds of language, and to point out the peculiar properties and uses of each, that the reader may be enabled to judge which of the two ought chiefly to be employed in the culture of man.

It is obvious to all the world that the instrument used to bring forward and improve all the faculties of the mind, is language; of which there are two kinds; the one, spoken; the other, written; the one manifested by the living voice; the other, by the dead letter.

The first, is the immediate gift of God; who has annexed to it, when cultivated and brought to perfection by man, powers almost

almost miraculous, and an energy nearly divine. He has given to it, tones to charm the ear, and penetrate the heart; he has joined to it action and looks to move the inmost soul. By that, attention is kept up without pain, and conviction carried to the mind with delight. Persuasion is ever its attendant, and the passions own it for a master. Great as is the force of it's powers, so unbounded is their extent: all mankind are capable of it's impressions; the ignorant, as well as the wise, the illiterate, as well as the learned.

The second, is the invention of man; a mere work of art, and therefore can contain no natural power. It's use is, to give stability to sound, and permanence to thought: to preserve words, that otherwise might perish as they are spoke; and to arrest ideas, that might vanish as they rise in the mind: to assist the memory in treasuring these up, and to convey knowledge at distance thro' the eye, where it could find no admission by the ear. The vast superiority of the former over the latter, is obvious enough from this view. There is not one power belonging to the latter,

latter, so far as a communication of what passes in the mind is concerned, which the former, wherever it's influence can be exerted, does not possess in a more eminent degree; whereas there are many powers belonging to the former, and those of the noblest kind, and of the highest importance to social beings, in which the latter has no share. Obvious as the difference is, yet has it been wholly unattended to by the moderns ever since the revival of letters. Bred up from early childhood to the knowledge and practice of the one, they are utterly ignorant of every thing that relates to the other, except what is necessary to carrying on the common intercourse of society. The only writer of the present times who seems to have a clear view of the difference between the two species, and the consequences attendant on the neglect of the spoken language, is the acute and clear-sighted Dr. Reid of Glasgow; one of the greatest philosophers that this, or any age has produced. Who, in his treatise on the human mind, has the following passage, in the chapter on hearing. After having divided language into *natural* and *artificial*,

artificial, he proceeds thus—"The elements of this natural language of mankind, may, I think, be reduced to these three kinds, modulation of the voice, gestures, and features.—It is by natural signs chiefly that we give force and energy to language; and the less language has of them, it is the less expressive and persuasive. Thus writing is less expressive than reading, and reading less expressive than speaking without book; speaking, without the proper and natural modulations, force, and variations of the voice, is a frigid and dead language, compared with that which is attended with them; it is still more expressive when we add the language of the eyes and features; and is then only in it's perfect and natural state, and attended with it's proper energy; when to all these we superadd the force of action *.

"Is it not pity that the refinements of a civilized life, instead of supplying the de-

* Of the truth of this we have daily proofs, in the different effects produced from the dull reading of their sermons by the clergy of the established Church, and the more animated delivery without book by the methodist preachers.

fects of natural language, should root it out, and plant in it's stead dull and lifeless articulations of unmeaning sounds, or the scrawling of insignificant characters? The perfection of language is commonly thought to be, to express human thoughts and sentiments distinctly by these dull signs; but if this is the perfection of artificial language, it is surely the corruption of the natural.

“ Artificial signs signify, but they do not express; they speak to the understanding as algebraical characters may do, but the passions, the affections, and the will, hear them not: these continue dormant and inactive, till we speak to them in the language of nature, to which they are all attention and obedience.

“ It were easy to show, that the fine arts of the musician, the painter, the actor, and the orator, so far as they are expressive; altho' the knowledge of them requires in us a delicate taste, a nice judgment, and much study and practice; yet they are nothing else but the language of nature, which we brought into the world with us, but have unlearned by disuse,
and

and so find the greatest difficulty in recovering it."

Thus far we see that by the total neglect of the living speech, we lose the use of some of the noblest faculties belonging to man, and some of the highest delights that our nature is capable of receiving, attendant on their exertion. But upon farther enquiry we shall find that whatever is most useful or necessary to social communication from mind to mind, is either wanting, or in so corrupt a state, as to be ill calculated to answer it's end, on account of the irregularities and barbarisms of common speech. In comparing the general utility of these two different modes of communication, by speech or writing; when we consider that every human being has occasion to use the former, each day and hour of his life; and that a clear, correct, and pleasing utterance would be highly useful, as well as ornamental, in all social intercourse; on the contrary, that few ever have occasion for writing, except on matters of business, or epistolary correspondence; and that not one in ten thousand ever arrives at such perfection in literary

rary composition, as to derive either fame or profit from it: when we reflect also, that every improvement made in the living speech, will of course be communicated to the written language, as surely as the shadow follows the substance; and, on the other hand, that the utmost perfection of composition by the pen, can never meliorate the tongue, or at all improve the faculties of speech; it being a common observation, that the most bookish men are frequently remarkable for taciturnity, or a bad delivery—Surely! surely! we have begun at the wrong end, and acted in direct opposition to reason and common sense. What have we then to do, but to desert the erroneous course in which we set out, and go back to that which nature herself has pointed out to us? To bestow our chief pains upon the culture of the living tongue, the archetype; and consider the written language, its type, in a subordinate light.

But how is this to be effected? By retreading the dark intricate path, in which we have so long wandered, and opening a new way to the regions of light. Never,
never

never—can the power and beauty of the *Living Speech* be known, or brought into act, till the present erroneous method of teaching the Art of Reading be extirpated, root and branch, and a true one be established in it's place. To shew this in a clear light, let us take a view of the present state of that art as it is now taught.

In this mode of teaching, the eye language is the only object in view ; to make the pupils *spell*, not *pronounce* properly. For the former, they have patterns to follow ; for the latter, neither rules nor method : and each master can only give such pronunciation as he has himself, which probably is vicious in a high degree. In general these poor drudges who pretend to teach the first rudiments of speech (a province which often falls to the lot of old women) know nothing of the nature of articulate sounds, or the mechanism of their formation, so as to give a distinct articulation to the first simple elements ; (a point of such consequence, that Quintilian does not hesitate to say, that unless the foundation be firmly laid in these, whatever superstructure you may attempt to

to raise on it, must fall to the ground); nor can they cure any faulty habits, such as fluttering, mumbling, lisping, thickness of speech, &c. Their sole end is to enable the pupil to spell and pronounce words at sight, no matter in what manner, in order to prepare them for the grammar-school, whither they are sent *with all their imperfections on their heads*. The master there, neither knows how, nor thinks it part of his province, to remedy this evil. Thus, all bad habits of utterance, contracted in early years, grow inveterate by time, and become incurable. Of the fundamental principles of a just delivery, such as a right use of Accent, due proportion of Emphasis and Pauses, Pitch and Management of the voice, &c. these teachers have not the smallest idea; and instead of that endless variety, and nice discrimination of tones, which nature has annexed to all the emotions of the mind, exertions of the fancy, and feelings of the heart; they substitute in their place, artificial reading tones, consisting of a uniform elevation and depression of the voice, in all sentences alike, disgusting to the ear, sub-

versive

versive of the sense, and destructive of the spirit. Thus after the labour of many years, all that is obtained, is, to utter words at sight, for the most part falsely as to pronunciation, in unnatural tones, abuse of emphasis, wrong stops, and false cadences; by which means the faculties of speech are cramped and distorted; and all the powers of the mind, closely connected with them, partake of the infection*.

Nor is the mischief confined to the act of reading only; the bad habits thence acquired, force their way into the senate-house, the bar, and all other public places where the powers of speech are called forth. The speakers, in general, deliver themselves as if they were reading, or as a book would do could it be supposed to speak. Some, like automaton, devoid of life or motion, in a monotone, or in a uniform tiresome

* The famous Dr. Berkley seems to have had some glimpse of this matter, when, in a pamphlet called the Querist, he puts the following question—"Whether half the learning and study of these kingdoms, is not useless, for want of a proper delivery and pronunciation being taught in our schools and colleges?"—But as this is the only place in all his works that he has touched upon the subject, he seems not to have dived deep into it, and to have been under the same general prejudice in favour of letters, with the rest of his literary brethren.

cant. Others, who attempt any thing like animation, and endeavour to use the language of emotions, deliver their words in such false discordant tones, and accompany them with such aukward unmeaning gesture, and grimace of countenance, as would render them objects of disgust or ridicule, to more enlightened auditors. But all defects of this kind, are so general, that they are little perceived, or easily passed over.

Defendit numerus—veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.

When it is considered that we have the same opportunities of displaying the powers of elocution, both in the senate and at the bar, that the ancients had; and have the same motives, those of acquiring power, fame and fortune, by excelling in that way, to incite us to it: When we reflect what a wide field for oratory is opened to us, utterly unknown to Greece or Rome, which pervades the whole British dominions, by the institution of preaching; and that the number of the priesthood, who cannot discharge properly any part of their office without the cultivated powers of speech,

speech, is greater than the whole number of the citizens of Athens, at any given period : when it is farther considered that all the police and business of the nation, in the several boards, bodies corporate, grand juries, petty juries, down to parish vestries, are discussed and settled by speech alone ; it is wonderful to reflect, that in countries so circumstanced, there never should have been any attempt made towards improving and exercising those faculties, on which the good order, and proper support of their several institutions so much depend.

Suppose, therefore, a new method of teaching the art of reading with propriety and grace, by masters duly qualified were opened to us—let us see what consequences must necessarily follow. The first great distinction between the two kinds of language, arises from the difference between the two organs by which they are conveyed to the mind, those of hearing, and sight. Words delivered thro' the former sense, when well modulated in due proportion of sound, give pleasure to the ear ; but the same words presented to the eye in the

C

dead

dead letter, can afford none to that organ. Here then in the very nature of things is a fundamental difference established between the two kinds of language; as the whole progress in the one may be attended with continued and increasing pleasure; while the constant concomitant of the other, is a perfect apathy. To the living speech, when brought to perfection, are annexed some of the highest delights that our nature is capable of receiving, even with regard to sensual gratification. No music can be more charming to the ear than a well-proportioned and harmonious delivery. To arrive at this, it will be necessary, that in early age, the as yet uncorrupted ear should be formed by skilful masters, in the same way as in music; so as to be able to distinguish all the nice discriminations of sound employed in speech, at a time when the flexible organs of the voice, may easily be bent to all the various corresponding modulations, whereof it is susceptible. Taught in this way, the pupils, hearing their own well-proportioned notes, in their very nature pleasing, and doubly so as coming from them selves, will, from
the

the beginning, take delight in reading aloud and reciting : but afterwards, when the pleasure which this will afford to the intellectual powers of the mind also shall be taken in, they will advance with renovated ardour ; for, upon a sufficient progress made in that art, they will find it impossible to read with propriety, without perfectly understanding what they read. This will of course introduce an enquiry into the signification of words, and of their true meaning and import, when combined in sentences. Thus, every advance in reading will be an equal advance in knowledge ; and the pupils will be encouraged to proceed, from the double gratification this will afford, both to the ear and the understanding. When at last they come to works of a more refined and elegant sort, produced from a lively imagination, or a feeling heart, they will find that these can never be delivered with due grace and energy, unless adorned and enforced by all the various modulations of voice which they require, and in which indeed their very essence consists. Thus the rhetorical art will be restored to life,

as among the ancients: no longer imprisoned in books, and swathed like an Egyptian mummy, powdered over with hieroglyphics, but moving gracefully abroad, to charm the senses and captivate the hearts of all beholders. Among the moderns, all the treatises on that subject refer wholly to written language not to speech; by which means, it's nature is altogether changed; as it's very name, derived from the Greek, implies the art of speaking; and the lectures of the present Rhetoricians, resemble those of a surgeon anatomizing a corpse, and leaving nothing but a skeleton behind*.

* This practice has been well ridiculed by the author of Hudibras, where he says—

For, all our Rhetoricians rules,
But teach us how to name their tools.

And Mr. Locke, to the same effect, speaking of the manner in which our youth are instructed in that art justly remarks—"They have been taught rhetoric, but yet never taught how to express themselves handsomely with their tongues and pens, in the language they are always to use; as if the names of the figures that embellish the discourse of those who understand the art of speaking, were the very art and skill of speaking well. This, as all other things of practice, is to be learned, not by a few or a great many rules given, but by exercise and application according to good rules, or rather patterns, till habits are got, and a facility of doing it well."

In

In the last stage of reading, when they come to a recital of our poetic compositions, what a new field of delight will be here opened to them? Having obtained a complete knowledge of our prosody, by being first instructed in the theory of our numbers, now enveloped in utter darkness; and afterwards well exercised in the practical part, now in the most deplorable state of perversion; they will be able to display to the delighted ears of their auditors, all the charms of poetic composition, arising, from the melody, variety, and expression of the numbers. They will then give the poet's song, in all its due proportion of time and tone; whereas, at present, each reader sets his own tune to the poet's numbers; and however false or discordant that may be, he can never be convinced of his error, as he is perfectly satisfied with his own performance. *Non cuiquam injucundum quod cantat ipse.*—No man's song is unpleasing to his own ear. The vanity of human nature is not more conspicuous in any one instance than in this; for tho' every one is pleased with his own chant,

he readily finds fault and is disgusted with that of others.

Thus in their progress to perfection in this art, would the youth, so trained, attain a thorough knowledge of their own language, in both it's component parts of sense and sound. Then would they be able to write exercises in pure and correct English, and arrange their words, both in poetry and prose, in such a way, as to render their meaning clear to the understanding, and their sound charming to the ear. As these exercises, should all be publicly repeated by their several writers, what a different sense of delight must they have in exhibiting the offspring of their brain all alive in their full beauty, to their admiring school-fellows; instead of submitting them, in the dead letter, to the cold and solitary eye of a (perhaps) tasteless and rigid master! and what an emulation must this not excite among their youthful hearers, to excel both in composition and delivery! By the constant exercise of the organs of speech in this just and forcible manner, all that they read would be deeply stamped on the mind by the vivid powers of
the

the living voice; while the most part of that which finds entrance only through the eye, is as evanescent as successive shadows shewn by a *camera obscura*. Thus would they obtain a command of words and fluency of expression; and when they entered into life, finding themselves at all times supplied with a sufficient quantity of ready cash, in the intellectual commerce of mankind, they would seek out company, and take delight in society, in order to display the wealth of their minds to view. Their social passions, being thus constantly exercised, would become predominant, and in time revive that public spirit, without which no free state can long subsist, now almost annihilated by that vile spirit of selfishness which pervades the whole land. Nothing has contributed more to the propagation of this fordid passion, the bane of every great and good principle, than the ascendancy which the written language has obtained over the spoken. In consequence of which, the powers of speech in private, and of elocution in public, are so contracted or distorted, that few can reap either pleasure or profit from them. Men therefore,

fore, in general, have recourse to books, both for instruction and entertainment. This sort of entertainment is in it's own nature a selfish one, as the exercise is performed alone, and the reader has no one to participate of his satisfaction. Nor is there a greater enemy to facility of utterance, than a habit of silent reading; or which more disqualifies persons from making a figure in conversation. Hence the bookish man, finding that he cannot express himself before company, in a manner pleasing to them, or satisfactory to himself, avoids society, and retires to his study; where he indulges himself in thinking, to the utter starving of all his other faculties. Though in this way he may lay in a large fund of knowledge, yet it is locked up in his own brain, as a miser's hoard in his chest; for his neighbours can be no farther benefited by it, than as he is able to manifest it in discourse.

Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter. And to whatever degree the understanding may be thus improved, yet, though it be the first, as it is not the only part of the mind, since the imagination
and

and the passions occupy a large portion of it; the proper exercise and regulation of these are of the utmost importance to society; not only with regard to all the most refined and constant pleasures, which our nature is capable of enjoying, but also with respect to morals. For, had men the power at all times of furnishing to themselves and others, the exquisite pleasures arising from the elegant exertions of fancy, and from the humane and generous sensibilities of the heart; pleasures, which, far from cloying, always increase by enjoyment, and which are ever attended with the delightful sense of self-approbation; men would not waste so much of their time in brutal and sensual gratifications; which in the enjoyment are ever unsatisfactory, are reflected on with disgust, and often with remorse.

All the highest delights, arising from the exercise of man's nobler faculties, are comprised in the single article of a forcible and graceful elocution: and all the powers of the fancy, all the feelings of the heart, as well as the most animated efforts of the understanding, are to be exercised, so as to attain their full strength, and shaped, so as to

to obtain their perfect beauty, by that alone; and thus strengthened and adorned, are to be manifested to others only in that way. Of the truth of this I shall produce but one pregnant proof. Who is the first object of universal admiration to the natives of these islands? the united voice of three kingdoms will answer—*The Siddons*. And to what does she owe this? Certainly to nothing but the wonderful perfection to which she has brought the art of elocution. Is there any one of the least sensibility who has seen her, that will not acknowledge the pre-eminence of that art over all others, in it's power of captivating the senses, charming the fancy, and moving the inmost soul? Is there any one who will now deny the wonderful impressions made on the mind of man by the language of nature, unsophisticated by the tricks of art, and stripped of the fantastic ornaments and false-colouring laid on by the pencil of fancy? O ye of judgment and feeling, who have been her auditors!—I call upon you to say, whether, in the whole round of other arts, invented for the amusement of man, you ever experienced such a home-felt delight, as from the performance

formance of this one woman. Has she not in their turns, like an enchantress, roused every passion of the soul? Has she not quelled your hearts with grateful terror, or melted them down into soft pity? Who among you, returning from these pathetic lectures, have not found yourselves more humanized, more inclined to do actions of kindness and charity. Good God! if our clergy were but masters of this art, if they could thus sway the affections of their congregations, how might they spread the chief precept, and main object of our holy religion, Christian charity and brotherly love, throughout the land! How might they bring about a general reformation, by thus checking the progress of that sordid principle, selfishness, the nourisher of every vice; and giving vigour to that noble one, benevolence, the source of every virtue.

All

* Have we not at this day, in this very city, a striking instance of the powerful effects which might be produced from the orators of the pulpit, only by substituting the natural language, in the place of the artificial? Is there not now a preacher who attracts as crowded audiences as ever were drawn together to the theatre by the best performer? And will any one say that this is owing to any superior excellence either in the matter or style of his discourses?

All men of candour and understanding, who have turned their thoughts to this subject, are ready to allow that nothing could contribute more to the improvement of education, than the introduction and establishment of these studies upon a solid foundation; and that if a way were opened for the attainment of a perfect knowledge of the English language, both in it's grammatical and rhetorical parts, there is no parent who would not gladly embrace the opportunity of giving their children such useful and ornamental accomplishments;

courses? Nay will any competent judge say that it is owing even to any distinguished powers of elocution? Has he a melodious voice to charm the ear? A dignity of person to command respect? A countenance at once engaging and expressive to touch the heart; and such a command of forcible and graceful action as to stamp the effects of all these with deep impression on the mind? None but his blindest admirers will allow that he has any of these requisites in any great degree. To what then is his extraordinary power of attraction owing? It is that he delivers his discourses without book, and being thus freed from the artificial mode of reading, and attention to the written words, he is at liberty to indulge his feelings, which find for themselves the true natural expression of voice, countenance, and gesture, by which alone they can be manifested and communicated to others. This is consonant to the doctrine before-mentioned as laid down by Dr. Reid, where he says—"Artificial signs signify, but they do not express; they speak to the understanding, but the passions, the affections, and the will, hear them not: these continue dormant and inactive, 'till we speak to them in the language of nature, to which they are all attention and obedience."

but

but among the bulk of mankind a general doubt has arisen about the practicability of such a plan. From the universality of the corruption, people are reconciled to it's deformity, or look upon it as a necessary evil which must be submitted to; and that all the different natives of the different provinces of the British empire, must be content with the different dialects prevailing in the several places of their nativity. And that all inhabitants of these realms, of whatever rank or condition, must retain, thro' life, every imperfection of speech, contracted from early bad habits, and all the faults of a vicious delivery, deeply inculcated by false instruction; for all which no remedy has yet been found.

Nay, so strong has been the prejudice of those who have applied themselves solely to the study of the written language, that they think it impossible that elocution should be taught as an art by any regular system; and this has been gravely maintained by many sages, though conversant with ancient authors; in some of the most celebrated of whom, particularly Cicero and Quintilian, they may find it set down,
that

that it was the most favourite art both at Athens and Rome ; in which all the liberal youth of those two famous cities were constantly instructed from their earliest years, by able Rhetoricians ; whose profession was held in the highest estimation, and whose rewards far exceeded those bestowed on all other masters put together. *What has been may be.* But this matter is now put beyond all possibility of doubt. In his several works upon that subject, Mr. Sheridan has laid open the whole mystery of the art, from the first simple elements of speech, to their most extended combinations ; and has laid down a method of teaching it, upon as sure grounds, and with equal certainty of success, as any other art is now taught. This being granted, the next step is to point out the means by which it may be the most speedily and effectually established and propagated.

To the introduction of any new art into a country, two things are essentially necessary ; and these are—Method—and Masters. No masters can give instruction upon any sure grounds, without method ; and no method can be of much avail without

out the assistance of masters; particularly in arts which have sounds for their basis, such as music and elocution; where the voice of the master is absolutely necessary to illustrate precept, and his example wanted to direct just practice. The method, as has been shewn, is ready to our hands; and masters will not be wanting, upon due encouragement given. For this purpose, let a Public School be opened, under the sanction of Parliament, for the instruction of youth from the first rudiments of speech, to the utmost extent of a school education. The first necessary step will be to procure a sufficient number of preceptors, capable of teaching according to the new method. There can be no doubt but that under such public sanction, attended for a time with some sure emoluments, but that many candidates will offer themselves, for the employment, out of whom may be selected those whose natural talents may best qualify them for it, to be afterwards instructed in the method of teaching it, by the inventor of the art. The principal object of this school will be to teach the whole of the English language,

guage, both in it's living, and dead state. In doing this let the living speech be restored to it's due rank, as being the original; and the written language, reduced to it's subordinate state, as being only the copy. For this purpose let the first care be to give a clear and distinct articulation to letters and syllables of which words are composed; and afterwards a just pronunciation of the words themselves. So essentially necessary are the utmost care and precision in this elementary part, that whatever fault or imperfection may remain there, will infect the whole of speech ever after. From a conviction of this truth Mr. Sheridan has formed a new primer for the use of children, even from the beginning of their *a b c*—in which he has also pointed out to masters the way of teaching according to this new method. Where this method is exactly followed, all the usual imperfections of speech, such as indistinctness, mumbling, lisping, stammering, stuttering, &c. will be prevented or cured. A distinct articulation, and just pronunciation of words being thus secured, as the basis of a good delivery, the next step is to
read

read sentences with propriety. Here the pupils are to be instructed in the nature and use of accents, of emphasis, stops or pauses, in the various inflections and management of the voice, according to the method laid down in his *Art of Reading*.

This mode of learning to read will be peculiarly useful to the natives of this country. In the first place, they will be taught the right pronunciation of all English words according to the practice of the more polished natives there, and no longer be distinguished from them by their peculiar dialect. In the next, they will get rid of that disgusting tone, called the Irish brogue, which pervades every sentence they utter, and renders them a perpetual subject of ridicule to all English hearers. For it would be impossible to arrive at any perfection in the true art of reading, without first banishing all unmeaning adventitious tones, to introduce in their room only such notes and changes of the voice, as the sense and sentiments in the passages so read require. And when a right habit of reading is obtained in this way, and the ear of the learner made sensible of the disagreeable-

D

ness

ness of the adventitious tones belonging to the brogue, he will avoid the latter, and introduce the former only into his common discourse.

During their progress in this, let them be taught to write; and when they are able to read sentences fluently, and to copy them in a plain legible hand, then let them enter upon English Grammar; which should be their only study till they have rendered themselves complete masters of all its fundamental and essential parts. During this time their daily exercises should be, reading aloud, copying certain passages from the books they are reading, and reciting these from memory. In this way the two species of language will be carried on together, and afford mutual light and assistance to each other. Then let them proceed to study English writers, beginning with the easiest, such as are adapted to their raw understandings, and advancing by degrees, in proportion to the growth and improvement of their several capacities, to those of a superior and more refined sort. During their whole progress let Mr. Sheridan's Dictionary be constantly

constantly in their hands, to be consulted by them wherever a word occurs, of whose right pronunciation they are not sure, and whose meaning they do not comprehend. In order to keep alive in their memories all they have learned of grammar, let a portion of each day's lesson be selected, which they shall be obliged to parse, in the same way now practiced in Latin; that is, to resolve each sentence into it's constituent parts of speech, and shew their mutual relation to each other. In this whole course it should be the office of the master to point out any grammatical errors, improprieties, or inaccuracies, that may occur in the authors they are reading, and which abound in many of those esteemed good writers, and from which even our most celebrated are not entirely free*.

To the age of nine, their reading should be confined wholly to prose, and then they may be taught the elements of prosody, and the rules of versification; that the ear, as yet uncorrupt, may be trained so as to discern the due proportion both of time

* Many instances of this are to be found in Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar, and Blair's Lectures.

and tone : and the flexible organs of speech be tuned to a true modulation of poetic numbers. Here then in addition to the exercise of declaiming in prose, may be introduced sometimes that of reciting select pieces of poetic composition, such as may suit the capacities of the several learners.

Thus prepared, at the age of ten, let them enter upon Latin. Already preinstructed in the principles and rules of general grammar, in their mother tongue, they will be saved an infinite deal of trouble in learning these in an unknown language, according to the present most absurd method of teaching, that of—*ignotum per ignotius*. All that is necessary here will be only to point out those articles in which the Latin differs from the English grammar ; and this may be done in so narrow a compass, that they may acquire, in the space of two months only, all that is useful or necessary to be known, previous to their entering upon the study of the Roman authors ; whereas in the present way a year at least is employed for that purpose.

Afterwards,

Afterwards, four or five years more are taken up, in a tedious circuitous method of instruction, the chief end of which is to enable the pupils to write Latin exercises in prose and verse; and this is the cause of the immense waste of time ever after in teaching that language. And yet, can any thing be conceived more absurd, than to take great pains to cultivate a talent in their pupils, which they are never to exercise as long as they live, and which, therefore, can be of no future benefit to them, either in point of use or ornament? and all this, at the expence of so much time during the most important season of life, never afterwards to be recovered, and which might be so much more beneficially employed, in acquisitions of the utmost moment to their future welfare.

In the present state of things, the only possible use of Latin and Greek, is, to be able to read the Classics in the original, so as to understand them clearly, and taste their peculiar beauties; and this may effectually be accomplished by a new compendious method of teaching those languages, in one-half of the time now fruit-

D 3

lessly

lessly employed, neither to answer that end, nor any good purpose whatsoever.

Nothing can be more clearly demonstrable than that it is impossible either to understand the ancient authors well, or to have a just preception of their beauties, without first being acquainted and familiarized with authors of similar talents and writings of a similar style in our own language. For it is through the medium of their own, that all the writings in foreign languages are viewed by learners, as they can not possibly understand them without translating them into their own. Now it is evident, that the translation will be either good or bad, in proportion to the knowledge and command each has of his own language, in order to select the properest expressions, and adopt a correspondent phraseology to the peculiar idioms of that language. What is the method now taken with our young Tyros to enable them to perform this task? Why, as they came to the grammar school utterly unprepared in their own tongue, and provided with no other words but what are in common use, they can employ no other in their attempts to translate;

translate ; but, for this, the master has a resource, in obliging them to have recourse to a dictionary, where opposite to the foreign word they find one set down as correspondent to it in English. This English word the boy probably has never heard of before, and understands it's meaning as little as that of the Latin ; but he is sure to commit it to memory, and whenever the one word occurs, translate it into the other ; and as the manner of teaching this way of translation, which is called construing, requires only that the pupil should be able to render each foreign word by an English one, such as he finds in his dictionary, without the least enquiry whether he understands the passages so construed, this may be done effectually by the assistance of memory alone. And thus he may have read several books, and pass for a good Latin scholar, without having rightly understood any one passage throughout. But in this mode of verbal translation, whatever knowledge may be obtained of the literal meaning, the whole spirit of an author must evaporate, and all the beauties of an elegant and figurative style be lost.

It

It was for this reason that so much time has been allotted for the study of English previous to the commencement of Latin. But still the same principle which established this as a fundamental point, should continue to operate throughout the whole course afterwards. For this purpose, let the best translations of the classics always accompany the originals, and both be equally studied by the learners. This will not only be a vast saving of time and labour, but will make their progress in the acquisition of an unknown language, more easy and delightful. For, however well prepared, for that season of life, they might be, by the previous study of English, and however qualified to translate themselves tolerably well from their own fund, yet there could be no sort of comparison between their juvenile and extemporaneous efforts, and the productions of a man of talents, advanced in life, who has employed much time and pains, to convey the meaning of his author in the best selection of words and phrases, and in transfusing the spirit of the original into the copy. Such writers may be considered
in

in the light of opticians; and their translations, like glasses applied to the mental eye, by which the dim or short-sighted may not only see every thing in a clearer light, but discover many objects before invisible. In this way they will acquire a knowledge of Latin with ease and pleasure; at the same time they will get a clearer insight into the whole constitution of their own language, by constant comparison of the specific differences between the two; they will daily be adding to their stores of English expressions, so as to have a ready command of the *copia verborum*, without which no one can make any distinguished figure in extemporaneous speaking. And as that is the highest point of perfection to which elocution can arrive, and the most wanted in places of public debate, particularly in the two houses of parliament, it may not be improper here to expatiate a little upon the methods to be pursued, in order to attain this end.

In the first place, as soon as boys shew that they perfectly know the grammatical part, the parts of speech in their several variations, and their connection with, and dependance

dependance on each other in syntax, let the custom of construing *verbatim* cease. Let the whole sentence be read, and it's meaning expounded in a liberal manner. This will necessarily demand a constant attention to the sense, and an equal exertion of the invention to find out suitable expressions to convey that sense. When a facility of doing this is obtained, let two or more sentences be joined together, and at last, according to the advances made, whole pages be read, and the substance of what they contain delivered in the same way. This will bring on a more vigorous exertion of the memory, the understanding, and the invention. Of the memory, in retaining the order of so many successive sentences. Of the understanding, in not only perceiving the sense of each distinct passage, but also in observing the concatenation of the whole. And of the invention, in finding out proper expressions for those passages, whose distance has rendered the ideas contained in them more obscure, and therefore not so easy to be explained. In this way, the activity of the mind will be constantly employed in finding out and selecting

lecting suitable words and expressions ; and practice in this, as in all other cases, will render it so easy, as to produce on all occasions a ready utterance, and fluency of speech. In aid of this extemporaneous mode of translating, where greater latitude is to be indulged, that they may acquire a habit of correctness also in style, let their written exercises be translations of their own, from some Latin books, which are not the immediate object of their studies, and in which they should not be permitted to make use of any translation by other hands. In this way of studying Latin, they will have read more authors, and to much better purpose, in the space of two years only, than they can accomplish now in six, according to the present method. When they are sufficiently versed in that language, let them begin Greek ; wherein, by pursuing the same method, they may make an equal proficiency, to the saving of much time and labour. Here a new field will be opened for comparing the three languages with each other, in regard to their constitutional differences ; and thus a more distinct view will be obtained of

of the several perfections and imperfections in each, and a foundation laid for a more accurate and critical skill in them all, during their future progress.

While they are thus employed about the ancient, the two modern languages in most repute, the French and Italian, should by no means be neglected. It is in the prime of life, when the waxen mind most easily receives the deepest impressions, that the elementary parts of all such things as depend much upon memory, should be first inculcated. A certain portion of time should therefore be allotted, first to the French, and afterwards to the Italian master. A just pronunciation will be then most easily communicated, and all the grammatical part safely stowed in the memory, ready at all times to be called forth for use. As to be able to converse in those living tongues, will be both useful and ornamental through life, that should be the chief object of the master in teaching, by making the pupils constantly converse with each other in French or Italian, while he is present with them, and correcting them where they commit any mistakes.

From

From the great saving of time by the proposed method of teaching the two dead languages, there will be ample leisure for attaining these two modern ones.

In the two last years, and not before, their written exercises should be of their own invention. Previously prepared as they have been, by storing their memories with abundance of clear ideas, and a command of suitable expressions culled from the best authors; habitually accustomed to give vent to these by the tongue, they will find no difficulty in committing them to paper by the pen. For whatever any one can say, he can certainly set down in writing. And when all the materials are thus ready at hand, great part of the labour of invention will be saved, now employed in a painful search after the materials themselves, as her principal task will be, only to select and arrange them. One of the weekly exercises should be an epistolary correspondence with such of their school-fellows, and upon such subjects, as they shall think proper; though critical remarks upon the several authors they are reading, may

may be sometimes recommended. But no exercises in verse should be compulsory upon those who have no talents for it. Wherever the seeds of poetry are sown by the hand of nature in the mind, they will spring up of course, as indigenous to the soil, and produce beautiful crops; but all attempts to force their growth in a soil not congenial to them, must end in disappointment. The best of these exercises should be selected, and on a fixed day in the week, be publicly delivered from the rostrum by their several writers, in presence of their relations and friends invited for that purpose. This early practice of speaking before numerous and mixed assemblies will prevent that *mauvaise honte*, which has tied up the tongues of perhaps some of the wisest men of the times, and deprived the community of many of its ablest counselors*.

In order to promote still farther a facility of extemporaneous speech, during the last year, the practice of debating should be introduced. For this purpose problematical

* Of this the celebrated Addison was a remarkable example.

questions should be started upon subjects with which they were previously well acquainted, and timely notice given to the appointed disputants to prepare themselves, one for attack, the other for defence. After some time, those who have made the best figure in this way, may be allowed to pitch upon what subject they please, and to post up a thesis, in the old form of the schools,—*Quibuslibet opponentibus*. On such occasions premiums should be adjudged to the victors. Frequent practice in this way will not only give a ready command of words, but will bring forward, invigorate, and regulate the reasoning powers, so as to enable them to argue with perspicuity and force. There is no other species of exercise whatever, which will excite such an emulation in the youth, or such an ardour for conquest, as there is none in which all the nobler faculties of man, can at once be displayed to such advantage.

Such is the outline of a school proposed to be established on different principles, and pursuing very different ends from those, which, persisting uniformly in the same erroneous course, have, for centuries, misconducted

misconducted each successive generation, and rendered them unqualified for all the nobler, as well as more useful pursuits of life. There are many other articles of less importance to be taken into this scheme; but as this is merely a sketch of the principal parts, it will not be necessary to point them out, till the whole plan be presented to view, with the outline filled up. It will then appear, that the course of studies above proposed, may be gone through before the young pupils shall have attained their fifteenth, or, at the utmost their sixteenth year.

Here I am tempted to finish this part with a passage from Milton, who in his plan of education, founded upon similar principles, concludes thus.—“I doubt not but you shall have more ado to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our stocks and stubs, from the infinite desire of such a happy nurture, than we have now, to hale and drag our choicest and hopefulest wits to that asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles, which is commonly set before them, as all the food and entertainment, for their tenderest and most docible age.”

The

The whole object of the school-master is to prepare the boys for entering the college; and when they can stand a stated examination by the senior lecturer for that purpose, they are accordingly sent thither. And in what does this examination consist? It is expected that they should be able to construe such passages of some of the Roman and Greek Classics, as they have learned at school. The works of Horace, the bucolicks and georgicks of Virgil, with the first six books of the *Æneid*, are all that are requisite in Latin; and the dialogues of Lucian with the first six books of Homer's *Iliad*, in the Greek. Now though they are able (which however is not always the case) to construe such passages as have been imprinted on their memories by frequent repetitions at school, yet so far are they from having any general or comprehensive knowledge of those languages, that if you open to them a passage in any author which they had not before studied, or any part of the same author which they had not before read, as for instance, in the last six books of the *Æneid*, or the last

E eighteen

eighteen of Homer's Iliad, they are utterly at a loss.

Thus, after the drudgery of so many years, goaded on by the dread of punishment, in a constant course of disagreeable labour, without any degree of pleasure to soften it, or hope of seeing an end to it; all that the young scholars have attained, is, a poor smattering in the two dead languages. Of their own they know nothing but what is picked up by chance. They can neither speak nor write it with any degree of propriety or accuracy. As to speech whatever imperfections or bad habits they may have contracted in utterance, must remain uncorrected, probably to the end of their lives. Originally corrupted by the vile method of teaching the art of reading, and afterwards confirmed in it by constant practice in the same erroneous way, they can neither read aloud, nor deliver any passages from books with propriety, much less with grace. On the contrary, they are in general uttered with such discordant tones, wrong emphases, and false cadences, as must be highly disgusting to the hearers, were not the general ear, (equally corrupted)

rupted) so familiarised to them, as to render their deformity imperceptible. And as to the written language, they are so little practised in their own, that they cannot even write a common letter so as to give pleasure to a correspondent; and with respect to their Latin exercises, whether in poetry or prose, they are, for the most part, puerile in the thoughts, and bald in the style. Or if here and there, something more correct or elegant should be seen, they are evidently borrowed from the authors they have read.

*Purpureus late qui splendeat unus & alter
Assuitur pannus.*

Now let the course, as here described, be compared with that previously proposed, and let common sense decide, which of the two is best adapted to prepare the youth for the farther pursuit of their studies in the college; or to furnish them with such qualifications as may afterwards be of the greatest use and ornament to them when they enter into the world, in whatever station or profession they may be placed.—

The determination of this question, is a point of as great national importance, as ever was offered to the consideration of the public. Fortunately this country is in possession of one part of education, during a very important period of life, superior perhaps to any in the known world. I mean the four first years passed in the college, from the time of entrance to that of taking a bachelor's degree. During which space, whether we regard the course of studies to be pursued there, or the means of enforcing a close attention to that course, we shall find no parallel to it in any seminary of learning throughout Europe. None, where such a quantity of knowledge is to be obtained in an equal space of time; none, where the emulation of youth is so stimulated, by a most judicious distribution of rewards; or idleness discouraged, by such just and efficacious punishments. Honour is the sure attendant on the former, and disgrace on the latter. Nay so admirably framed is the plan of the public quarterly examinations, that it is impossible any one can get forward from class to class, so as to take a degree, without

without answering at least tolerably well at those several examinations; as from certain bad judgments given, on account of evident marks of idleness, they may either be stopped from mounting into a higher, or turned down into a lower class. In order to give due efficacy to these admirable institutions, it is evident that nothing can be of greater moment than that the previous part of school education should be exactly suited to that which is to follow, and so linked to the other, that the chain may be found complete. But the reverse of this is at present the case, and much of the time lost that might be more beneficially employed in academic studies, from the necessity the tutors are under of taking upon themselves the office of school-masters, in order to give their pupils such a competent knowledge of Latin and Greek as they ought to have brought with them from school, and certainly might by such a method of training there as has been proposed. Nothing could so effectually promote a close application to the several scientific branches of the college course, as a continuation there of the new studies previously

viouſly carried on in the ſchools. A maſtery of their own language would not only render their progreſs in philoſophy infinitely more clear, certain, and conſequently eaſy, but their avidity of all ſorts of knowledge would increaſe, in proportion to their ability of diſplaying it at all times, and upon all occaſions, to the beſt advantage. Nor would the introduction of the art of elocution interfere in the leaſt, or encroach upon the time neceſſary to the other branches of academic ſtudies; as the ſtudents, well grounded from their early years in the principles and practice of that art, would ſtill continue their application to it as the amuſement of their leiſure hours, from the very delight attending every advance they ſhould make in that moſt noble and pleaſing of all exerciſes; and which would not ſuffer them to quit the purſuit, till they ſhould have attained the utmoſt degree of perfection, which their natural talents would enable them to reach. To the pleaſure attendant on the practice of this art, Cicero has borne a ſtrong teſtimony, where he ſays—*Dicendi autem me non tam fructus & gloria quam ſtudium*

dium ipsum, exercitatioque delectat. That is —“ Not all the fruit and glory derived from elocution, give me such delight, as the study and exercise of the art itself.” All the encouragement necessary to be given at the college towards forwarding the perfection of this art, would be, to appoint stated times for the public recitation of such pieces of composition, whether in poetry or prose, as should be selected for that purpose; and for public disputations upon interesting subjects, with a few honorary rewards, upon the more solemn occasions, distributed to the victors. It is hard to conceive, that in any other species of exercise whatsoever, the youth should be so emulous to excel, as when contending for pre-eminence in an art, wherein all the nobler powers of the mind, and all the gracefulness and dignity of the human form, are at once to be displayed before the eyes of admiring spectators. Surely there is no other situation in the world, where human nature is exhibited in so exalted a point of view.

The generous youth, thus trained, when they enter into the world, will find themselves

selves qualified to make a figure in whatever line of life they may be placed. When those of a higher order should be called upon, (as Milton on a similar occasion expresses himself) "to speak in parliament, or council, honour and attention would be waiting on their lips. There would then also appear in pulpits, other visages, other gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought, than what we now sit under, oft-times to as great a trial of our patience, as any other that they preach to us."

However obvious it may be to the most common understanding, that the greatest benefits would arise both to the community at large, and numberless individuals, from carrying the above proposed plan into execution, yet the author of it is far from thinking that it will make its way by virtue of its own intrinsic merit. He knows that there is no subject whatever which has such rooted and inveterate prejudices to encounter. He knows that the bulk of those who are advanced in life, thinking themselves too old to learn, will set their shoulders against any innovation, by which they expect to reap no benefit; and who,

with

with regard to the advantages which might thence result to the rising and future generations, may probably be of the same opinion with the Oxford fellow; who, upon some proposal made for the good of posterity, said, he would fain know first what had posterity done for us. And above all, he knows that establishments made at a very distant period, and suffered to remain unaltered by all the successive legislative bodies since that period, can never be effectually changed or new modeled by any power but that of the legislature alone. It was therefore with infinite satisfaction that he found this most interesting subject had at last, and for the first time, been laid before the Commons of Ireland, and that too by order of his Majesty, to his eternal honour, and glory of his reign. Under such auspices, the author of this little tract, began to hope that the execution of a plan, which had been the chief object of his life, and in his preparations for which he had employed many of his best years, might now be found practicable. He therefore quitted all other pursuits, and returned to offer his service to his native country. From which, though he had
 been

been driven by a most outrageous act of violence and cruelty, that in one night deprived him of the fruits of ten years incessant toil, to accomplish a point which he fondly hoped would have been of lasting benefit to the city of Dublin, and which he had just then almost brought to maturity; yet as he considered this act to be only the effect of the frenzy of party, whereof they soon repented, and have had ever since just cause to repent, it has never diminished in him that *amor patriæ*, which ought to glow in the breast of every good citizen. For this country did he originally form his plan, and in this country does he wish to execute it. He is willing to devote the few remaining years, which in the course of nature he may expect to live, to the accomplishment of this great work; and he hopes no time will be lost in making a commencement, as he well knows, that unless executed under his own immediate direction, it will never be carried on to any effectual purpose. If his plan should meet with due encouragement; if, after investigation it should obtain the sanction of the legislature, he will then have no doubt

doubt of it's success; and will lay before the public a more particular view of the measures to be taken in order to establish it on a solid and durable foundation, so as to spread, in no long space of time, the benefits to be derived from it throughout the realm. And he will be bold to say, that if such an establishment should take place, it would commence a new æra in the Parliamentary Annals of this kingdom, and throw a lustre round the present sessions, that will make it shine beyond all others, to future ages. You will have the honour of being the first legislative body in these realms, who took into consideration the most important of all subjects, the state of Education: In consequence of which, you will have it in your power to establish the most perfect system, hitherto known either in these Islands, or in any country in Europe. You will have the satisfaction of seeing the immediate benefits resulting from this to the present race, and the pleasing prospect of still increasing improvement to your posterity. You will have the glory of rescuing the English language from it's present rude, obscure, and irregular

lar state; of drawing forth it's hitherto concealed perfections; of correcting it's Errours, supplying it's defects; of reducing the whole to such order and regularity, as to render it easily attainable by all natives, as well as foreigners; and of establishing it in this state to perpetuity, by a fixed and immoveable standard.

A P P E N D I X.

THAT Mr. Orde had fully adopted Mr. Sheridan's ideas relative to the English language, may be seen by the following extracts from his Plan, p. 50, 51.

“ I would strongly recommend an attention beyond what is usually given to the study of our own language. English grammar and English composition of all sorts, and English declamation, should be most favourite exercises for the children, and they should receive the greatest encouragement to acquire a proficiency and excellence in them. . . . I am persuaded that no objection ought to be made to it, upon an idea that too much time and assiduity would be devoted to a thorough foundation

foundation of knowledge in our native language; or that an attention to what are called the learned languages, would thereby be delayed to a more advanced age than usual; because there is good reason to suppose that the more rapid as well as efficient progress afterwards in Latin and Greek, might bring the period of classical education, within the usual compass."

And again, p. 71—

"It is not my province or pretension, nor is it indeed within my ability to dictate the particular exercises or courses of study, which would most profitably in succession engage the attention of the youthful student; but I cannot refrain even in this part of my subject, confined as it should be to the consideration of the best classical instruction, from repeating my opinion, that even for that purpose, more attention than usual might be given, and more time devoted to improvement in our own language. It should certainly be learned and practised thoroughly by rule and exercise, as the very best foundation for any super-
structure

structure whatever ; but of infinite use towards the attainment of such knowledge of the dead languages, as may be carried to most account in the progress of life. Let me therefore add, that in this view, the correct translation of either Greek or Latin into English, would be the most useful lesson, and should attract the strictest attention, and most effectual encouragement. By such means the student may be enabled to form an intimate acquaintance with the peculiarities, excellencies, or defects of the original author, and thus his thoughts will be at once multiplied and invigorated."

Of the general benefit which would accrue to all the different classes and ranks of men, whereof the community at large is composed, from the establishment of such seminaries as have been sketched out in the above plan.

All that has hitherto been offered on that subject, regards chiefly persons of the higher order in society, consisting of men of independent

independent fortune, or such as are bred to any of the liberal professions. But all subordinate classes, down to the lowest, will be proportionally benefited by institutions equally useful and necessary to all. To begin then with the mercantile part, in which are included shopkeepers, and all persons concerned in trade.

Unfortunately this class of men, upon whom the prosperity and flourishing state of a trading nation so much depend, have never had any other course of education opened to them, but what was calculated for the higher order. Classical learning at the grammar-school is the only species of instruction open to them. Here during the space of five or six years, they are employed in a drudgery equal to that of a galley-slave, and in which the sons of freemen are too often compelled to proceed, by the same cruel means as are used towards the slaves in our colonies, and all this to attain—What? why, at best, a poor smattering in a dead language or two, which never can be of the least use or entertainment to them during the rest of their lives. Thus are so many of the most important years of a
man's

man's life, the feeding time, irrecoverably lost, and nothing but chaff sown, which can never produce grain. Nor is the entire loss of the time, the worst evil that attends this method. From the misery they endured in pursuit of this unprofitable learning, the youth acquire an aversion to reading. A latin book they are sure never to look into, after they have left school; and if they attempt to read English, which they have never been taught, such books as are capable of improving them, are as unintelligible to them as if they were written in a foreign tongue. Thus they either give up reading entirely, or, if they read at all, it is only such books as are adapted to their slender knowledge of their own language, which are more likely to corrupt, than improve their minds,

On the other hand, supposing there were a number of such schools opened as have been before described, for the regular teaching of the English language, let us see what progress might be made by young minds in an equal space of time. They might become such masters of that tongue, which they are always to use, as to write

F

it,

it, and speak it fluently and correctly. They might study our best authors, with the aid of instruction, so as to understand them perfectly, and discern their beauties from their faults. They might obtain a general knowledge of history, and of geography. They might be made acquainted with all that is necessary to be known of the history of England, and their own country. The nature of our constitution might be explained to them, in such a way, as to make them know the blessings they enjoy under it, and prize them accordingly. They might be made to understand perfectly the principles of morality, and all the social duties; and, as the grand support of these, they might have such a view given them of our pure religion, as would make them love it; which alone can influence men's conduct, in conforming to it's rules and wise precepts. They might be made thorough masters of arithmetic and book-keeping. And all this might with ease be effected, in a space of time not much exceeding that which is now thrown away, in pursuit of a point evidently of no manner of use; to the truth
of

of which, I believe there is no one who has gone thro' that course, that is not ready to bear testimony.

Now let us see what consequences might naturally be expected from young men's entering upon their apprenticeships thus prepared; their understandings enlightened by useful knowledge, and invigorated by constant exercise. They would bring stronger and more active minds to their several callings, and would more speedily and easily make themselves masters of them. In their leisure hours from business, they would not waste their time in idleness or dissolute courses, but their chief delight would be to make still farther advances in the several kinds of knowledge, wherein they had made such a progress, as would not fail to excite a desire of proceeding still farther. In all their pursuits of this kind, the pleasure arising from their skill in the true art of reading would smooth the way before them, and render their whole progress, not only easy, but delightful. When they should become their own masters, and enter into business,

business, it would be needless to mention how much better qualified they would be, both with regard to the conduct of their affairs in the hours of business, or for enjoying the sweets of rational society, in the hours of leisure.

To this class may be added all that are destined to the lower civil employments, and clerkships in the several offices; together with the sons of the better sort of land-holders. The bulk of the most useful part of the community are contained in these several classes; and I would defy the utmost stretch of ingenuity, to point out any benefit which can accrue to any of these, from such knowledge of Latin and Greek as it is possible for them to acquire.

T H E E N D.