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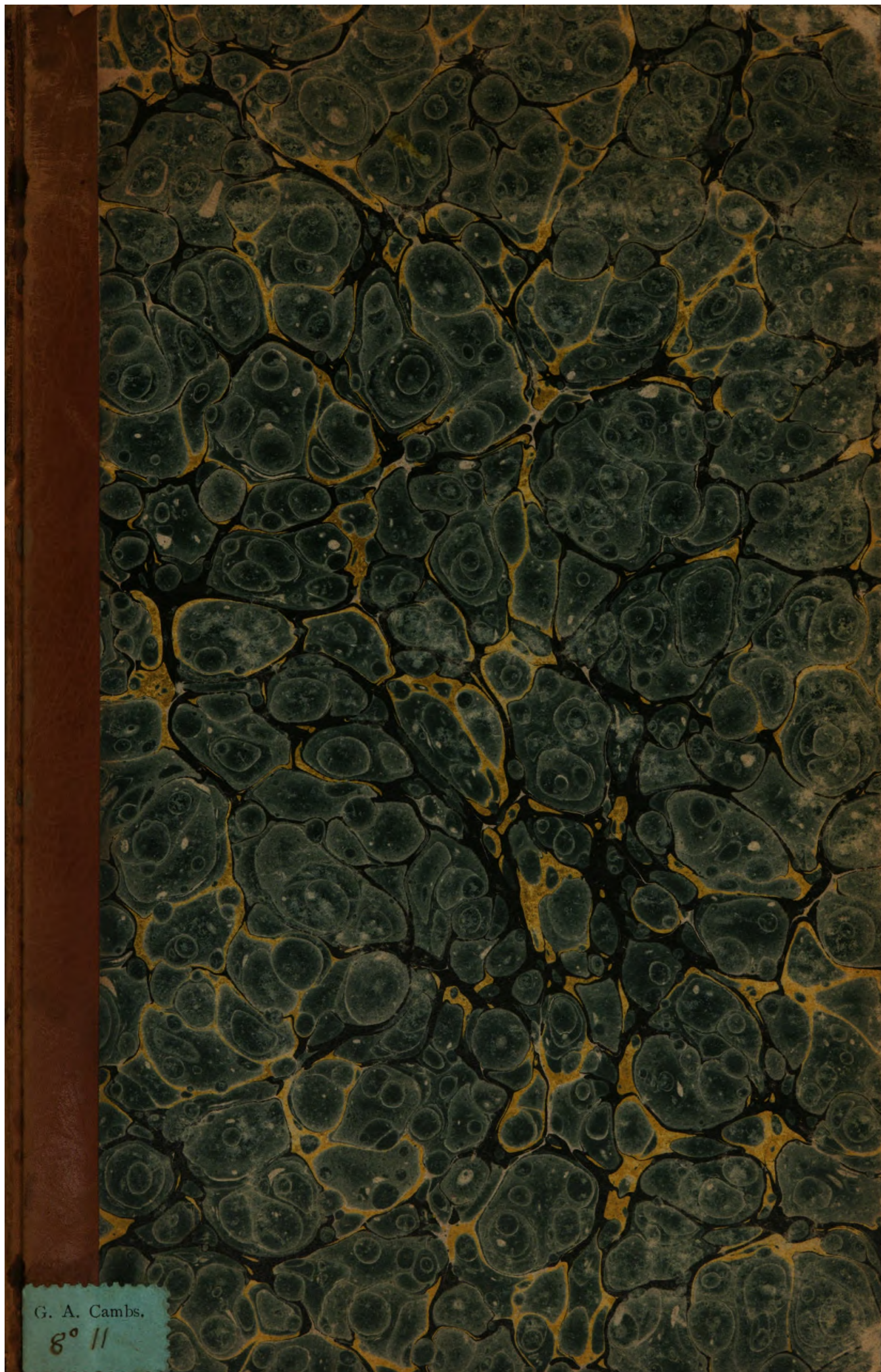
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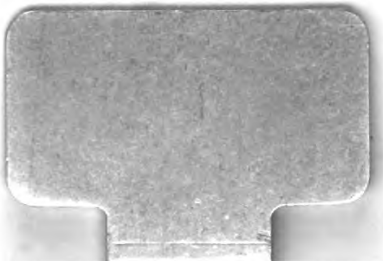


G. A. Cambs.

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Cambridge 8 11



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STRICTURES ON GRANTA;
OR,
A GLIMPSE AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

BY A GRADUATE.

"Sus Minervam docet."

ROMAN PROVERB.

"———Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice."

OTHELLO,

LONDON:

THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON,
172, FLEET STREET ; 9, CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN ; AND DERBY.

1848.

Gough, Add. Cambridge.
8.11



PREFACE.

WE have been often told that the parental eye of legislation was *about* to be directed to the "SEATS OF LEARNING," our Universities; in the midst, however, of graver matters of state, in the giddy clamour of financial details, Irish insubordination, and Jewish disabilities, a fitting season has never intervened for academical digression, and thus Cambridge and Oxford remain *in statu quo*. In the present age of enquiry, it has occurred to me, that a "Glimpse at a career at Granta," would not be unacceptable; I have, therefore, collected my retrospective reminiscences, and embodied them in the present form. The motto I have assumed, "to nothing extenuate, or set down aught in malice," I trust I have fulfilled to the letter. I deliver my own impressions from *facts* occurring under my own personal observation. Allowing, as I do, our Universities to be the great intellectual granaries of our empire, I nevertheless consider them to be susceptible of *very great* improvement, more especially in the minor branches of their development. The foundation is noble and solid, I only protest against the flimsy superstructure. I would wish to see the *spirit*, and not the *letter*, of the founders carried into effect.

I do not endorse the doctrine of Lord Chesterfield; Cambridge, in my judgment, is not an "illiberal academy." I only regret that so much alloy should debase the true metal—so much leaven contaminate what was sound and healthy. My "strictures" mostly apply to the smaller colleges, in many of which there exist moral enormities, which demand the uncompromising hand of progressive reformation. In the nineteenth century, evils are soon eradicated; it is only necessary to call attention to their existence.

In conclusion, I only wish some more weighty hand had taken up this subject; to quote, however, the words of our noble bard, "in the absence of the regular physician, a country practitioner may, in cases of absolute necessity, be allowed to prescribe his nostrum, provided there be no quackery in his treatment of the malady." On this principle the ensuing pages were penned, and are now hereby propounded,

BY A GRADUATE.

London, January, 1848.

STRICTURES ON GRANTA;
OR,
A GLIMPSE AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

“ Dans tous le pays, la force cède aux qualités civiles, les baïonnettes se baissent devant l’homme qui parle au nom du ciel, et qui en impose par son autorité.”—*Speech of Napoleon.*

Ἄρχη Πολιτείας ἀπάσης, νεῶν τροφή.—Diog: Laert.

I AM not about to enter into a preliminary discussion to *prove* a self-evident proposition—viz., “that without sound seminaries, we cannot have literary proficiency.” No one will doubt that we require a firm ministry to maintain the consistency of the constitution,—able judges to administer the laws; and, on the same broad principle, well-ordered universities and colleges to give a tone and character to the attainments of the age. We proceed to enquire how far this end is carried out in the educational department of Granta.

The house of a private tutor is a very general winding up or *réunion* of all the subordinate channels of education. The dashing tyro from classic Etona, pluming himself on his knowledge of life and the fit-

ness of things, of high ideas and glorious aspirations, “*omnia magna loquens*,” finds himself on neutral ground with young “Hopeful,” dismissed from the soft vigilance of the maternal eye, and the tender care of a domesticated “Dominie Sampson.” Here, too, is the lanky stripling of a private academy, with all its narrow ideas and petty prejudices, lately consigned to a dreary dormitory at the virtuous hour of eight o’clock, thus heralding in the summer months the sun to his slumbers. Now, presuming, as we have ever done, that there are three separate and distinct causes why parents and guardians, in due course of time, send their sons to these *derniers ressorts* of education, to be as it were *veneered* in literature by that doctrinal, though somewhat abortive, midwife,—the private tutor. One class of these fondly suppose that the secluded mansion of a pedagogue holds forth such a glorious opportunity for the prosecution of study—such ample scope for the enlargement of ideas, and the mature investigation of undeveloped science. There are others, again, who imagine that a year or more of tranquil pupilage is one of the *sine quâ nons* of education: they compare this residence to the finishing strokes of the painter, unadorned by which the canvass would be considered a graceless daub, without symmetry, without perfection. A third party argue, that their sons are too big for school, too riotous and noisy to be retained at home, yet, at the same time, scarcely old enough for the grave responsibility of college; for, in our days, the birch is left behind at Eton, and modern Miltons are not obnoxious to professorial flogging. However

wise and good these considerations may be, either singly or collectively, it is very certain that the different geniuses who subside into the *otium cum doctrinâ* of a private tutor's mansion, become at once amalgamated and reconciled, and, as it were, suffer fusion. Like passengers on a long voyage, they find it conduces more to their interest to pull well together, than to pursue a different course. "Misfortune," they say, "produces strange bedfellows;" and so does a private tutor's establishment.

The process of pupilage may be described as a sort of educational waiting-room, in which *voyageurs* on their way to the university dance attendance for a given period, and perform a species of quarantine, without, however, suffering any great inconvenience. To speak more plainly, it is a sort of conventional threshold, through which aspirants in literature usually pass before they are enrolled among the sons of *Alma Mater*. It is at this establishment that young votaries of Granta dissipate their pristine and rustic ideas of a university; they are here weaned from their juvenile fears and pious forebodings. Accustomed to regard their future college as a stern duenna, they are enlightened as to the true state of the case; a reaction from such sombre and precocious anticipations succeeds, and they conceive unbounded dreams of pleasure from the indulgence of so *kind a mother*.

These famous seats of learning have the fame and *prestige* of antiquity; they are distinguished by certain ceremonious observances, characterised by peculiar laws, regulated by distinct institutions; their

votaries are segregated from ordinary mortals by a collegiate toggery, their very vernacular is *sui generis*. We con the pages of the 'Cambridge Calendar' with feelings akin to awe; we survey with admiring eyes the goodly list of marshalled wranglers, the well-known technicalities of *wooden spoons*, *apostles*, and *elegant extracts*; their professors are not of the every-day world, — there is, as it were, a cloistral solemnity attached to them, preceded as they are when in the exercise of power, by subordinates carrying *fascies* and silver rods: what wonder if they should excite feelings of respect, and strike the vulgar with a basilisk degree of fascination? Not to speak of the imposing pageantry of an installation, which brilliant *réunions*, like the visits ascribed by poets to the angelic choir, are "few and far between," but to descend to minor details, everything bears the impress of originality. In all there is a charming air of regularity, a marvellous degree of importance, a tinge of the sublime and beautiful,—a halo, or rather an undefined outline, presents itself to the gazer; he looks on from the distance, he understands not the ordinances, he comprehends not the internal economy, yet still he feels a conviction that it is admirable, that there is no room for improvement. He looks on with wonder and delight, as on a scenic illustration dressed in all the beauties of perspective, and finished with all the skill of the *artiste*. The panorama presented to his view is perfect; the programme reads as if it had been composed by (the late) George Robins's novelist. Alas! what a pity it is that the admiring gazer should wander from the dress circle to the stage;

those figures, so tastefully arranged for a distant *coup-d'œil*, disenchant him with the ungracefulness of distorted abortions and uncouth daubs; the ideal paradise, celebrated by the novelist, tempts the silly house-hunter to risk his limbs on the Eastern Counties; on arriving, he finds a *barren* plain in lieu of a lovely *parterre*, a few stunted pines in the place of the promised acacia groves! And thus it happens, that a too close proximity on the educational, as on the mimic, stage produces but too often disappointment and vexation. The machinery of literature is ingeniously refined; the exterior symmetry is elaborate,—the wheels, however, are unfortunately apt to counter-irritate each other, and impede their own progress. We write on a subject on which all are at liberty to propound their own views, and give expression to their own sentiments. Were this, however, not the case, we have heard of masonic brethren whispering to their better halves the mysterious secret of their inauguration. Some treacherous tradesman, by the kind mendacity of hints, insinuates the craft of his calling; nay, in higher life (*mirabile dictu*!) cabinet secrets have been known to find their way through the guarded avenues of the secret council chamber; so true is it

“ Quodcunque ad Galli cantum facit ipse secundi,
Proximus ante diem caupo sciet, audiet et quæ,
Finxerunt pariter librarius archimagiri,
Carptores, &c.”

And what is still more wonderful, none will own the soft impeachment; bless our ignorance, it fell like the dew *ούρανοθεν* or was found like the young brotherhood

of the nursery some fine morning among the patrimonial cabbages—the spontaneous fruit of the earth. We, as being of the initiated, approach with solemn reverence the collegiate Eleusis ; we string together a few random sketches of the University Green Room.

* * * * *

Whether for good or evil, the mythic mist which hung round many of our Institutions, is being gradually dispelled ; we estimate the land by the corn it produces—we judge of the tree by its fruits, ocular demonstration usurps the place of ideal *prestige*, circuitous ambiguity vanishes like a nursery fable before the development of the mind : our only care, is lest by a too great revulsion, we underrate what we used to extol.

Turn we our attention to Collegiate Life ; we hear much of ‘ Chapel ’ being performed twice a-day in *verbatim* adherence to rubrical laws. But how comes it that the place of Collegiate worship is merely a species of National Gallery, or Louvre, open at stated hours for the voluntary attendance of the public ? Are Lectures merely *duets* or *solos* for the educational diversion of one or two ? Is the Lecture-room of a College merely a *lounge*, in which one may draw caricatures, or indite pasquinades ? Seriously, if performance be not insisted on, routine arrangements amount to a mere abortive farce—a simple pantomimic exhibition. What is the use of the Code of a very Solon, if there is no civil magistrate to interpret, no executive to *enforce* attention ? And yet we have Lectures announced and paid for,

we never go to them, our absence is winked at,—it gives the Professor less trouble, we have a Chapel a mere form*—Colleges mere mummeries. A school has been often called a “world in miniature;” a University may be denominated a sort of isolated world—a different planet which entertains but small sympathy for its neighbours, the habits, thoughts, and associations, are quite estranged from the ordinary routine of Society,—a College has been termed by a late member, the “last remains of the monastic element;” it is a community of young and old to a certain degree guided by similar ordinances, and subservient to certain fundamental Laws. A Society of the young, just dismissed from leading strings—of the middle aged, who have graduated and settled down to calm repose and irreproachable celibacy; content with the aldermanic cheer of the high table, year after year they quaff from golden goblets, “in piam memoriam conditoris;” term after term they spend their mornings in *deshabillé* dressing-gowns, and easy slippers; day after day, they march from St. John’s to Granchester, and from Granchester to St. John’s; diurnally they dine at four o’clock, and drink tea at nine: thus methodically

* With a laudable design of curtailing as much as possible the monotonous process of college prayers, attendance is excused before the end of the psalms in the smaller colleges; up to this time there is *congregation* in the Ante-chapel, bets are made, and cigars finished. If a member takes his seat before the first lesson commences, his end is answered, that is to say, his presence is duly certified on the slate of the porter.

monotonous, they creep from "manhood to the grave;" and as regards the world at large, they vanish as a vision which leaves not a "trace behind." In their early days they read hard—they solved ingenious problems—imaginative theorems propounded by their seniors,—they carried off the palm of glory—attained to the rank of "honours." That goal being won, in due time they were elected Fellows; the golden spurs were buckled on; a large investment made in white neckcloths,—a process very satisfactory to the College Laundress, who invariably approves of that species of clerical raiment. They now subside into easy chairs; they are sharers in posthumous advantages—co-heirs of extraordinary wills and moribund phantasies!—Their life is one of unmitigated ease and tranquil enjoyment. And these are the "Dons of Colleges."

Apart and distinguished from these, are the Birds of Passage, so to speak, or the "men" who reside the required portion of the collegiate course, and then vanish to be no more seen. Occasionally, however, in about three years, wishing to renew their acquaintance with Granta, and to unite themselves by a closer bond with "Alma Mater," they repair, cheque-book in hand, and for and in consideration of certain fees and disbursements, they are allowed to append the letters patent, M.A., to their *style*. Once endowed by this alphabetic *sobriquet*, the course is finished, and they are accomplished "Masters of Arts."

And hundreds there are abroad on society—denizens of St. John's in its "palmy days," who justly

eulogize the intrinsic merits of a University education. We may imagine the venerable paternity of a large family pointing with honest pride to the goodly array of Cambridge Calendars, those convenient specimens of the University *Hansard*, which speak of the process of his contemporaries in the lists of mathematical science.

The collegiate enthusiast casts his eyes round the stage of society: on one side is the Divine pouring from his venerable lips the words of wisdom, exhausting the stores of a refined intelligence, scattering abroad his talents for the edification of others; and *he* was of my boon companions, our common room was wont to ring with his jests, the idol of his associates—the glory of the whist table!

Another—a second Blackstone, analyzing the laws of his country—a benefactor to his generation by his broad views of Right and Justice derived from the critical acumen of cultivated talents. I remember *him* an ardent admirer of the turf, investing crowns with a precocious sagacity—the nucleus of our *réunions* at Newmarket, and a profound connoisseur in the then rising art of boat-racing. Another, a leading personage in the cabinet, convincing with his eloquence, deducing sage arguments from the wisdom of the ancients, and remodelling their crude theories to the purest exigencies of society. *He*, too, was a rollicking reveller at our supper parties—a rapturous shouter of roundelays and ingenious parodies of his own composition, and a not ignoble speaker at that gymnasium of infant oratory, the “Union.”—So raves the said enthusiast!

There is something striking in the epithets we apply to our Universities, they have been designated "the seats of learning." Literally translating the somewhat poetic paraphrase, we imagine that wisdom here sets up her throne and maketh her abiding place. Science resides perched on the weather-cock of every spire; art smilingly peers from every culminating window sill. We suppose that every one we meet is a professor—a walking dictionary of learning, whose very recreation is a ruminating process—a mental re-consideration of theories propounded in the cabinet. Mathematics infect the very air we breathe like a Malaria; triangles, squares, and polygons are the substances which compose the symmetrical edifices. Their motto is "Otium cum doctrina," and calculations and commons go hand in hand. Such are the thoughts which occur to the inexperienced mind as the leading features of a University; the maiden aunt, the country squire, the placid matron, the working barrister, carve out in their respective brains a Utopia similar to, or quite as inconsistent as, the one I have described. They either forget, or were originally ignorant of the three grand divisions of the educational part of a man's life, commencing from the early years, subject, as a matter of course and of necessity, to the dry details of rules and elementary hypotheses, all reduced to the careful *surveillance* of a pedagogue, who, like Dionysius of old, wields his rod *in terrorem*, and excites his pupils by the keen incentive of emulation. Next comes the age of private pupilage, the grand step of juvenile promotion; released from the minute observance of petty rules, the

youth now walks alone, comparatively speaking, under his own guidance. No longer bound down to his books by a constrained compulsion, improvement is a matter of choice. She is no longer a stern duenna, but a mistress to be wooed and won; the tutor is the priest who presides at her shrine, and smooths the way for the access of willing votaries. He is, however, no stern censor of sacrilegious licence; to those who prefer the strains of Byron to the choruses of the Eumenides, or the meanderings of the stream, *à la* Isaak Walton, to the mazes of mathematics, he interposes no grave and insurmountable difficulties; content with a calm objection, a mild remonstrance, he philosophically argues that the "wilful man must have his own way;" his conscience, by reason of long use, is satisfied by this delightful apology, and thus he turns to the votaries of science, and assists their tottering footsteps on the arduous ladder to perfection. In the mixed society of the six or seven who compose the *quorum* of the private tutor's establishment, of course a variety of tastes, opinions, and occupations, are confluent. The example of the one has some influence, however small, on the conduct of the other; at the age of sixteen or seventeen the habits are by no means indelibly fixed, nor have the springs of application and diligence a very deep root. A year or more of such pupilage (as we have before said) is the preparatory step to college; it is a sort of intellectual Rubicon—a species of educational Avernus, the pilot of which is a gentle, and by no means an obdurate Charon. Thus, then, the elementary School—the private Tutor—the University, are the

Trois Etats of education ; between them, however, there is a great gap, each is to the other “longo sed proximus intervallo.” The first is protected and fringed around with an infinity of rules and observances carefully provided and peremptorily acted on ; punishment follows disobedience as certainly as the report follows the ignition of the cannon. The University is also hampered with a multiplicity of statutes, a complex code of rules and regulations ; but there is this remarkable difference : in the latter case obedience is a *dead letter*, ordinances come under the comprehensive clause of what Paley calls *Inconvenience*, they are, therefore, virtually nullified and suffer absorption in the Augæan detail of their own numbers ; bad and good are thus merged in the same chaos neglected and despised. Proctorial authority is set at nought by members *in statu pupillari* ; these are content so that they do not, with a sacrilegious licence, “play marbles against the College walls,” or attend the College Hall in the scarlet toggery of *Nimrod*. A common code of laws sanctions the election of an official Police, and enters into a minute detail of school-boy observances ; thus disregard follows such complex statutes, more especially when absurdity is gravely incorporated with wisdom, and folly and foresight go hand in hand. In the case of the private Tutor there is much licence, but still there is a decent semblance of authority, a not altogether exploded veneration for the due adherence to conventional forms and the well regulated and necessary ordinances of society ; the soul indeed of discipline has departed, but its ghost is restless and still lingers

round old scenes and past recollections; purgatory is not satisfied, and still the unappeased shade drags its clanking chain back to the body from which it is emancipated, and occasionally lights the skeleton form with the fire and vigour of ancient days. Such is the preparation for the University; we shake our tutor by the hand and part with mutual good wishes; *he* to receive new Tyroes to polish, *we* to enter the open arena of the University.

After all, we perhaps cannot better describe the Private Tutor's mansion than as the reverse of the *Do-the-Boy's* Hall system; the readers of Charles Dickens are aware that at the Yorkshire Seminary the boys are *done* with the cruel collusion of their parents; we merely shift the *rôle* on arriving at our Private Tutor's, and in our turn *do* the fathers on the filial system of *Lex talionis*. In general, a Private Tutor's Establishment is a *Do-the-Governor* Castle, grand, airy, imposing!

We are not arrived at the Age described by the Poet—

“Imberbis juvenis tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibusque et aprici gramine campi.”

There is something perhaps startling in this declaration; people at a distance are apt to imagine that a College is a more extended system of the Juvenile Academy: all that has been said and written on this subject, has been scarcely sufficient to open their unwilling eyes to this palpably absurd theory; these credulous persons seem to consider every M. A. in the light of a watchful Dominie Sampson—one of the component links of so excellent an Institution. They

blindly fancy that their hopeful offspring are subject to a system of *espionnage* as insupportable as that inflicted on the French citizens. Fond Mothers and indulgent Aunts conceive that Young Hopeful can scarcely go wrong, when supported by such a mountain-pile of Authority—so many moral Atlases—such an infinity of the Cerberus genus. But are you sure, dear Reader, that the Mountain—the venerated Atlas, should not dwindle to a Mole-hill—though all your Cerberuses should have three heads, and *par conséquence*, a triple share of brains, are you still convinced that all their *eyes* are open? What if the Edifice which groaned with so great an Incubus, should at length be delivered of the poor mouse in the fable? What a falling off if the embryo Senior Wrangler of home-sick aspiration, comes out with a low place in the degenerate Pol? What if the Don, the Tutor, who ought to have acted *en maître, en père*, should be as indifferent to mental culture, as a Yorkshire *Squeers* to corporeal comfort? Euripides describes a certain sea, particularly dangerous to mariners, as “*Μητρὺς νηών.*” Are we quite clear that “Alma Mater” does not prove occasionally, instead of the gentle mother, the harsh *Μητρὺς νεών*? And small indeed is the interest many of these dignitaries take in their respective charges; they are content with fulfilling the “Letter of the Law”—the bare routine of their function; they entertain a strong aversion to all superfluous labour, and attach no kind of importance to works of supererogation; looking back with complacent eyes on their own academic course, they consider that others can succeed as well as they

have done; a certain goal is before all—a snug fellowship—a good dinner—plenty of port and whist in the Combination-room, await the successful candidate. Under such circumstances, the politics of these gentlemen are decidedly *conservative* in the strongest sense of the word; their only wish is to let things “well, alone,”—the smallest insinuation, the mildest suggestion of Reform, is met by an uncompromising opposition; they cannot distinguish between the Apostles of true advancement, and the mischievous aim of the Demagogue. Their love, their sole wish, is to be behind the age; figuratively speaking, while ordinary mortals travel by the Great Western, they advocate the ancient system of “posters.” Pioneers in mathematical science, they are tardy Pilgrims in the every-day world—they would effectually clog the wheels of every description of progress. In the mean time, what care they for the violation of existing rules, provided the evasion be not too notorious—the transgression too barefaced? Of what concern to these “comfortable Dons” are the artifices of tradesmen? their motto is decidedly philanthropic, “Live and let Live.” And why should they scrutinize charges which an inexperienced eye fails to detect? why advert to that palpable form of extortion, “bill delivered?”—Tutors—so many doctrinal Gallios—care for none of these things. What have these to do with the rapacities of College servants—the Gyps—those human vultures, who have a peculiar weakness in favour of stray provisions—wine, corn, oil, and all the fatness of the land? The Tutor takes ample care of his own,—“Every one for

himself, and God for us all,"—thus runs the adage, each in his proper turn; the Tutor knows he was fleeced once, and why should not others submit to a similar infliction? There is an old story of a hunter who leapt over a precipice, and being himself uninjured, calmly watched and beheld his comrades going in the same track; without giving them the slightest warning of their danger, he stood smilingly by, and then condoled with his partners in affliction; and such is the conduct of the collegiate pedagogue—he watches his juniors plunging in the mire and restrains them not—and thus they cannot laugh at him afterwards, being in one and the same boat. Cast your eyes on the gorgeous entertainments—the plate—the wines (*horresco referens*)—the turtle, the delight of aldermen—the costly banquet—the noisy revellers—the port which was never beyond the dining sound of Great St. Mary's—the maudlin gooseberry, labelled exquisite champagne, *première qualité*, 106s. the dozen!—martyred vinegar, coaxed into claret—brandy and cider rejoicing in the misnomer of sherry, all at proportional prices. If an Undergraduate chooses to entertain his friends, what has the Tutor to do with it? What is he supposed to know of his means or expectations? He is ignorant whether his Sire be an aristocrat of acres—a sturdy Game Protectionist—the *beau idéal* of a more polished Western—or a village Primrose, with a limited income and several small children. Let only the college bills be discharged, and the tradesmen content with their security—if this be the case, the law of expediency is fulfilled. Long credit must have

long prices. Lord Byron has immortalized the length of tailors' bills—what might he not have said to the extortion of college cooks? In all these affairs too, there exists an unnatural anomaly; we read and we find as a general rule, that “*Les bons comptes font les bons amis*,” at Granta the exception is the rule—our memories are often treacherous, and a long-standing account renders an error on the right side for the creditor very easy, and at the same time difficult to be rectified. A few words on the said Cambridge Tradesmen—they are doubtless (if there is *any* truth in their reiterated asseverations) a misused and miserable race—money *is* a thing so hard to get at—Undergraduates are such slippery individuals—they have such a profusion of “bad debts,” and yet, in the face of all these objections, they willingly woo the evil they complain of; are they not, as it were, cutting their own throats? Do they not throng in giddy haste the rooms of a new member? Do they not thrust, *nolens volens*, their vile but costly articles upon him? Do they not din his ears with the consoling creed, that “payment is a matter of no consequence,” and that the purchaser’s convenience alone is to be consulted? What a delightful state of personal recklessness! What a charming species of disinterestedness! Perchance it is not a fact generally known, that the tradesmen of Cambridge, at the commencement of every October term, call and convene a general meeting among themselves; at this said meeting, the names, means, and expectations of their several creditors are duly canvassed and considered—the probable chances of payment reckoned by the

practical theory of combinations—the various *amount* of bills are compared; on the strength of this annual and orthodox *Jewish* Council, measures and plans are concocted, either to push, *toute de suite*, for the total of items, urged in the comprehensive clause of “bill delivered,” or to allow the same to remain torpid, in order that some few years after they may be resuscitated with the additional charms of Compound Interest. And yet, with all these pecuniary grievances, there is no place that I know of, where a man can so well dispense with that *sine quâ non* of social life in an iron age, to wit *money*, as at Cambridge. I mean, of course, *for a certain time*. A definite interlude is allowed before the hounds are let loose! All mundane necessities, not to say luxuries, are supplied with a most commendable recklessness; obsequious Mercuries are ever on the wing, conveying with them, not messages from the gods, but merchandise from the traders. A man may get on a whole term, and never draw his purse strings. Sovereigns are of no more use than they were in the “Happy Valley,” or in Robinson Crusoe’s Island! Whoso wanteth a dinner, entereth in and feasteth, and cometh forth without even a sixpenny disbursement to the waiter! Commons go to the College Bill. Toggery and trinkets are enrolled in the bulky ledger. His horse is fed on faith at the livery-stable; his wherry is housed by the waterman; in a word, all the nameless amenities of luxurious existence—all the most *recherché* appliances of civilization, are provided without the owner being forced to produce a shilling. Nay, even (thanks to Rowland Hill) his

billets doux are forwarded, *pre-paid*, by the collegiate porter ! At the same time, I would not for one minute be guilty of any undue degree of harshness towards these adventurous traders, but I would recommend to their supreme notice the good old maxim, that Honesty is the best policy ; I would remind them that language was given them, as to all others, not for the purpose of concealing their thoughts, but rather to give an expression to their honest meaning ; I would urge them to deal in truth, and not indulge in a crafty spirit of conventional cringing. And thus let us part with mutual good wishes.*

* * * * * * *

The Academic course, as every one knows, involves a residence of somewhat more than three years *in statu pupillari*, he who proposes to himself to become in due season a B.A., must be shown to have gone through his ordeal ; no amount of talent, no habits of industry, can dispense with this stated necessity. Rank indeed and “Royal Extraction,” (often indeed very hazy and remote,) softened the obdurate hearts of the callous founders ; but for the impoverished aspirant to Curate Dignity—the zealot who plods on from morning to night, there is no

* This is by no means a sweeping clause against all and every tradesman in Granta—it is, however, too true of the greater portion of them ; there are some, on the other hand, as fair dealing and honest, as in any other city of England. Those, however, who consider the “cap” to fit, may wear it ; all may, if they please, class themselves in the *exception*.

alternative but that of spending somewhat more than three years in these “unprofitable studies.” Nor must we fondly suppose, that of the 500 young men (more or less) who arrive at Granta during her annual Equinox in October, all are *Wranglers*. Believe me, all these are not dignified with distinguishing honours—are not *distingué* in the Cambridge Calendar. To divest Majesty of its externals, to compare our Universities with corresponding Institutions, do we find that all, or even the greater part, have achieved the purpose of their residence? But deprive the mantle of the gaudy fringe which surrounds it, and conceals the real texture from the eyes of those who gaze from a distance, and merely skim the surface. A truce to ceremonious observances; let them be partially suspended—let the Dons and Doctors stand forth as men—not buoyed up with normal ceremonies, not arrayed in the fascinating garb of their order. Let us investigate the examination papers—let us compare the theories treating of what they are pleased to denominate *pure Mathematics*, with the puerile catechisms proposed to a Candidate for an ordinary degree. The one class involve calculations of the greatest depth and abstruseness—lunar influences,—planetary theorems, equations to the Sun, *et hoc genus omne*. Lucubrations of the most consummate intricacy—aberrations of the greatest variety. How great a decadence is there in this to the science of the Pol! Saturn sustains another fall from Olympus. Dædalus finds his waxen wings will not support him, and thus he ignominiously sinks in the bathos beneath! In the

latter class, questions which would be sneered at by a well-informed School-boy at the age of 12 or 13. We will except the mathematical subject, rejoicing in the somewhat grandiloquent title of “Mechanics and Hydrostatics,”—a subject which, simplified and abbreviated as it is, might be deemed rather out of the routine of scholastic education; waiving this, there is positively nothing that may not be acquired in three or four weeks. I take for granted, that every classic dunce knows the perfect tense of *capio*, and the genitive case of *anceps*, and yet questions such as these, nay even more simple interrogations form a no insignificant portion of grave scrutiny. The Apostle tells us that when he “became a man, he thought as a man, and put away childish things;” reversing this wholesome rule at a University Examination, puerilities are resuscitated, and simple absurdities investigated with all the gravity of legitimate and orthodox enquiry. Moreover, as I have before observed, for this degree a residence of ten terms is required: a man is compelled to eat the college bread and butter for no less a period than forty months (with the exception of vacations) in order to obtain this *honour*, which many are competent to obtain almost at first sight, before even they say farewell to their preparatory school,—I mean, of course, with the above said exception; *ergo*, we have three whole years, and an additional term, to master this little book, which is wisely called *Natural Philosophy*, containing perhaps ninety pages, and about seventy problems, most of which are so easy as to require nothing more than a mere perusal and the

simple light of nature to disentangle their meaning. But in this brief review I was nearly guilty of the grievous sin of omission; I had nearly forgot that, midway between the arrival in October, A. D. 1836, and commencement day in January, A. D. 1840, there is a species of turnpike to pass—a delicate barrier, offering no very formidable obstacles, but still a *sine quâ non* to be surmounted by all wayfarers on the collegiate highroad. The surveyors, after long supineness, began to consider that there was a tedious gap unoccupied; wiseheads proposed the scheme of a traveller's quarantine,—in other words, the previous examination, which cantabs in facetious conventionality term the “Little Go.” And, certainly, the name bears no unequal ratio to the difficulty of the ordeal. A smattering—and a *very small* smattering—of classics, no mathematics, a partial knowledge of Paley's “Evidences,” form the staple articles of this scrutiny; to make the incomplete *podrida* quite perfect, of late years a knowledge of Scripture History has been deemed expedient; and to such a subject of course no one could have the smallest objection, save and except the natural one, that it might be judged futile to betake one's self to the university to learn the genealogy of Noah, and the principal events in the biography of Abraham. Perceptions such as these are generally imbibed with our earliest associations, and form the basis of nursery instruction; at all events, they are sufficiently well known to the rising geniuses of Sunday Schools, and are in their place proper food for their minds. To all that I have written on this subject, and on the

facility of college mental discipline, I am aware that it may be replied, that many fail entirely even on these minute stumbling-blocks; that still more surmount them with considerable difficulty: in fact, that the major portion who are found equal to mastering these, would sink beneath more arduous impediments and more recondite speculations. But how comes it that they put off all idea of preparation till the eleventh hour, and then, in the course of a few weeks, struggle to master what has been proposed as the occupation of years? For this end they have recourse to that *habitué* of Granta, a so-called private tutor,—a man who panders to idleness by *cramming* his pupils at the last minute with all sorts of heterogeneous knowledge, unconnected scraps of no future benefit, similar to the discipline which a Norfolk turkey undergoes a week previous to Christmas; the poulterer forces down corporeal sustenance,—the sacerdotal *crammer* substitutes mental expediences, to be reproduced on scribbling paper. The reference of students to a collegiate *crammer* may be compared to the conduct of sailors *in extremis*; when all hope save by an absolute miracle is over, when a watery death appears inevitable, they betake themselves with sudden zeal to *Aves* and *Pater Nosters*, while the more desperate turn their attention to the brandy bottle; the shipwrecked cantab, who has forgotten what he once knew at school, patronizes a private pedagogue, and, thanks to the mildness of the ordeal, is usually successful. The desperadoes get plucked as a matter of course. And thus, by the sacrifice of six weeks' pleasure, the uncontrolled

Saturnalia of thirty-six months is superseded and neutralized.

“Macte tua virtute, puer, sic itur ad astra!”

A university may justly be termed a theatre of contending influences. Pleasure and profit are weights acting on different sides of the fulcrum, striving for the mastery. It is past midnight, and as old Virgil tells us,

“Nox erat in terris, sylvæque et sæva quierant
Æquora,”—

Cast your eyes round yon quadrangle. On one side is the faint beam emanating from the small chamber of the student; enter in, and you may mark him poring over his books with the zeal of a martyr; the hours gliding by unheeded, while he is following his abstruse speculations,—ever occupied, snatching but small time for repose, but incessantly engaged in a brain-distracting course of study.

On another side, regard those brilliant lights, hark at the noise and mirth of the “rollicking revellers” within; let us approach, an uninvited guest; behold the table groaning under the remains of all sorts of viands, wine bottles and decanters strewed around in glorious confusion—the apartment shaking beneath the applause following each inharmonious glee—glasses fractured, and wanton destruction ruling paramount around: the air literally infected with tobacco smoke, everything disarranged, caps and gowns piled in chaotic confusion, and books, like the sailors in Virgil’s shipwreck,

“Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.”

Pass we on to another apartment, it is occupied by six or seven inmates; brightly burn the lamps around, and vividly flash on the excited visages of the card players around the table, youths engaged in the intensity, the agony of play, with all the corroding appetite of the gamester, save that these are not sufficiently experienced to mask their feelings, which find vent in words and coarse anathemas on the caprice of fortune, instead of *bleeding inwardly*, and exhibiting no external wound. Your true gamester wins or loses without the discomposure of a muscle,

“As mute a fox, 'mid mangling hounds!”

Pass we on to return some few hours later: we find the same anxious occupants, the winners clamouring for more luck, the losers invoking the faithless goddess to retrieve their losses; day breaks at length, and the first beam of light finds its way through the half closed curtains, the young rays of morning flash on the *débris* of the supper table, half emptied glasses, fractured plates, cigars still fuming, forms of men like ogres, pale and careworn, still surround the Loo table; the hours lead on, the matin bells are ringing, it is chapel time—the game at length is over, some go forth in the surplice, emblematic symbol of collegiate purity, to pay their devotions. Others creep to bed to forget themselves in their diurnal repose, to slumber through the grateful hours of sunshine; for these Phoebus brings no joy, his rays no delight, their nights of card playing fill up the measure of existence, the pursuits of daylight are forgotten and uncared for.

And what are lectures and "various games of this sort?" a truce to the mild remonstrance of the tutor, and soon these almost inaudible whispers die away; good man, he has done his duty, his advice has been unheeded, it has fallen on contumelious ears, he cannot disturb the even tenour of his life, by such lacerating and ungrateful cares; poor man, how he is vexed and annoyed! but, alas, nothing—no, not even the redeeming grace of quarter-day, that soft panacea, the cruise which faileth not—is wholly without alloy; as such he makes the best of it, makes the holy oil soften as well as he can the rigour of his wounds, strives to be content, and does not look the "gift horse in the mouth." I shall be, perhaps, excused, for thus briefly touching on the pursuits of non-readin g cantabs, candidates for no honours or the pol. It were, however, useless that I should advert to the system of the smaller Colleges which are happily (!) fettered with but a small semblance of discipline. I need not speak of the great rapidity with which the raw freshman becomes a precocious genius in the act of evading discipline. I pass over the *sang froid* with which he hears the spiritual thunder of the Deans, the mumbled complaints of the Lecturer, and the *piano* hints of the tutor. Suffice it to say, that on his arrival at the University, suppose him to be a denizen of a small college, he is courteously informed that Mr. Jones will deliver a lecture at eight o'clock every morning; if he be, however, gifted with an average quantum of common sense, he will soon arrive at the satisfactory conclusion that Mr. Jones is not a very terrible personage—on the contrary, he is all

urbanity and smiles; he soon finds that it makes little or no difference to Mr. Jones whether one, three, or ten members occupy the collegiate benches: happily he is no egotist, and is fortunately content with hearing himself speak, and does not therefore repine at the paucity of his hearers.

"Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res."

And Mr. Jones lectured in the same strain to Mr. Seedbag the sizar, who invariably went, as when he harangued a large conclave the first week of our freshman's term.

* * * * *

Let us draw, however, near the end of this eventful history: it is grand commencement day—the examinations are over, the thrilling excitement which feeds upon itself is passed, the lists are given forth, and there stand in marshalled order the Candidates according to their merits, first in ‘pride of place’ the wranglers—men who, beset with temptations, have toiled on diligently to the appointed goal, and gained the prize for which they have contended; their education is over, they go forth to seek their fortunes on the broad arena of life; next after these come a string of inferior honours, and then the ignoble “Pol.” It is grand commencement day—arrayed in the new badge of their order, in hoods and bands and full academical attire, are assembled the candidates who have succeeded; the Senate House is full of Dons and Doctors; raised on lofty seats youth and beauty sit admiring the pageantry of Granta; the proud Vice-chancellor who, by virtue of his office,

consummates the University career—the bells are ringing, and one by one come forth the smiling youths, each a veritable Bachelor of Arts, each on the same footing of equality ; the extremes have met, the senior wrangler, the wooden spoon, and the so called last of the Apostles, each enjoy the same standard, none is superior to the other, each has assumed the toga—the very same, identical sheepskin ! The years of probation are passed, the toils, the dissipations, the studies of the Academy are over ; the last beacon is at a distance, the extreme outposts are left behind, then comes the last *réunion* of the Bachelor's Ball, the breaking up of old friendships, the departure—with the dazzling *prestige* of a University Education.



