

**PRACTICAL REMARKS ON
INFANT EDUCATION,
FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS
AND PRIVATE FAMILIES**

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Practical Remarks on Infant Education, for the Use of Schools and Private Families by Charles Mayo & Elizabeth Mayo

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BY

THE REV. DR. MAYO, AND MISS MAYO.



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P R E F A C E.

THE Committee of the Home and Colonial Infant School Society earnestly hope the following pages, for which they are greatly indebted to the Rev. Dr. Mayo and his Sister, will prove useful not only to teachers in Infant Schools, but to parents and governesses engaged in early education. They are particularly recommended to the study of the members of Infant Schools' Committees: many such, though anxiously desirous of superintending and benefiting the institutions under their patronage, and possessing minds far more highly cultivated than the teachers they employ, are yet so wholly unacquainted with *infant education*, both in its principles and details, that they feel themselves quite at a loss; they see that their schools are not producing the fruits they desire, but are unable to discover the cause of the defect, or to

suggest the remedy. It is anticipated that this little work will supply to such what they so much need, assisting them to point out errors, and to introduce valuable improvements.

One happy feature in the present melancholy aspect of the times, is the increasing desire of furnishing the poorer classes with sound moral and religious instruction: in this there is much cause for thankfulness, but the Committee fear a narrow view of the subject is also gaining ground. From the abuse of knowledge, many zealous Christians are alarmed at the mention of intellectual culture. Is it, however, just reasoning to condemn a practice from its abuse? What has not been abused in the hands of man? Seeing that God has given to all ranks the same organs of sense, the same blessings of reason and judgment; and considering that every gift he has bestowed ought to be improved, the Committee feel it incumbent on those who provide an education for the Infant Children of the poorer classes to aim at the *development* of their bodily, mental, and moral powers, by bringing them into exercise upon fit subjects, and carefully watching that each receives its due proportion of attention; also to form habits of correct observation and right judgment, because whilst they prove invaluable in after-life to the man of science.

and learning, they equally contribute to make an intelligent gardener, an ingenious mechanic, a useful domestic servant. With respect to the *acquisition of knowledge*, that is the work of a later period of education, when the instruction of the various classes of society necessarily takes a very different course.

The Committee are satisfied that the jealous fear which exists on the subject of early mental culture has arisen from a wrong view of the objects proposed, and it has no doubt been increased by the ridiculous attempts made in some Infant Schools to teach children scraps of science, and to load their memories with hard words and technical phrases. What they are desirous of seeing in every Infant School, is—

First. A simple course of religious instruction, in which the great aim should be, to teach the elementary truths of the Gospel, and to cultivate religious feelings and impressions.

Secondly. A careful moral training on the standard of the Word of God : Christ set forth as our Saviour and our example ; and the Holy Spirit earnestly sought as the only and all-sufficient help.

Thirdly. The cultivation of habits of accurate observation, correct description, and right judgment upon the things of nature and art.

Lastly. The improvement of the bodily organs and health by varied exercise.

These objects are attainable, but not so easily as many imagine. The Teachers who undertake the task must not only be "apt to teach," but must themselves be taught; their own powers must be developed, and their attention earnestly directed to the subject; hence the Institution for training Teachers, which the Committee have established, has become necessary, and hence its claim to the decided support of all who are interested in the moral and religious education of the rising generation.