

**FIVE PAPERS ON THE PAST PROCEEDINGS AND
EXPERIENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS: IN
CONNEXION WITH THE EDUCATION OF
YOUTH: READ AT THE MEETINGS OF THE
FRIENDS' EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY, AT
ACKWORTH, IN THE YEARS 1838-1842**

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Five Papers on the past Proceedings and Experience of the Society of Friends: In Connexion with the Education of Youth: Read at the Meetings of the Friends' Educational Society, at Ackworth, in the Years 1838-1842 by Friends Educational Society

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FRIENDS EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

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AT ACKWORTH, IN THE YEARS 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842.

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ON THE PAST PROCEEDINGS AND EXPERIENCE
OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
IN CONNEXION WITH
THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

Part I.

Read at the Friends' Educational Meeting at Ackworth, in 1838.

IF it be desirable to ascertain the result of recent experiments in regard to education from those who are at present engaged in that important work, it must also be desirable to inquire into the proceedings of past times—to examine the plans and systems, which were acted upon in former days, in connexion with the training of our youth, and to trace the influence of principles and circumstances in the modification of human character. If the materials were sufficient for such a history of our educational proceedings, it cannot be doubted that it would furnish answers to many speculative inquiries, and serve as a guide or a warning to those who are at present practically engaged in supplying the furniture, and cultivating the powers, of the mind.

It is to be regretted that the records of these proceedings are very scanty, and that, consequently, the history of them must be very imperfect; but though we cannot trace the

course of experiments, and their results, with the accuracy we should desire, it has been thought that such a review of them as circumstances permit to be taken, might not be altogether uninteresting, and that it would form an appropriate part of the transactions of this Educational Association.

We propose, therefore, to inquire—1st. How far, and in what manner the Society, in early times, exerted itself for the right training of youth, with reference to their religious, moral, and literary character. 2nd. In what way the peculiar principles and practices of the Society influenced its educational proceedings, or modified the character of its members. 3rd. Whether it made any, and what experiments in regard to the training of mind. And 4th. What appear to have been the results of any general efforts, or particular experiments, made by the Society, on the character of its members.

With these leading objects before us, but without attempting to treat them entirely apart from each other, we proceed to our task—premising, however, a few general observations as to the care which is required in endeavouring to determine the direct influence of any educational proceedings.

If in physical experiments, agricultural ones for instance, we have often very opposite results where the same means appear to have been employed, owing to the varying unascertained circumstances of seed, soil, atmosphere, &c.; how much more difficult must it be to determine the influence and value of all the circumstances operating upon so complicated a subject as man—man considered with reference to his bodily and his mental powers—considered too, with reference to those eternal as well as temporal interests, which can never be rightly separated, in our consideration of the education of a human being. In the consideration of particular experiments, it is always to be borne in mind, that failure may have occur-