

**AN ESSAY ON THE
PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION,
PHYSIOLOGICALLY
CONSIDERED**

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An Essay on the Principles of Education, Physiologically Considered by Charles Collier

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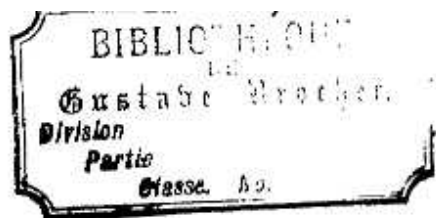
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"Développer chaque individu dans toute la perfection dont il est susceptible, voilà le but de l'éducation."—KANT.

AZ 1474

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1858.



PREFACE.

THE following remarks on Education are intended to be suggestive rather than didactic; to establish principles, that is, rather than lay down any particular system, or shew, by examples, the feasibility of any system. For as human beings are continually undergoing changes from within, and are influenced, from without, by the accidents of birth and fortune, it is obvious that no one system can be devised for all subjects or all conditions. But as Education, like medicine, is an universal requirement, and must be undertaken even when its accessory means are defective or ungenial, the purport of this inquiry is to

shew how best, under all circumstances, to make it conducive to the improvement of individuals and the welfare of society.

The first chapter of the Essay is devoted to the consideration of the natural endowments of human beings; and this preliminary inquiry, by indicating the faculties and propensities on which Education has to act, may tend to show the true basis on which it must rest. The second contains brief summaries of the systems of some of the most celebrated writers of ancient and modern times, which may well serve as commentaries upon our present systems and opinions. And the third is intended to explain the method, by which, under all circumstances, Education, in its fullest and truest sense, may be made to minister to the moral good and intellectual improvement of the individual.

AN ESSAY,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

The term Education, (1) in its strict sense, means *rearing* or *bringing up*, and, in its application, should imply rather the formation of the habits and manners of the young, than imparting instruction, which is its usual acceptance. It is, in fact, synonymous with training, and, as such, should signify the method to be adopted for inculcating an habitual inclination to what is truthful and good, and so ensuring, humanly speaking, the right

(1) See Notes at end.

employment of knowledge in after-life. And it would be well if the term were restricted to this sense and another term adopted for that other Education, the office of which is to impart what is called learning; since learning may be largely acquired, without any genial influence upon the heart or understanding. Owing to this want of precision in the employment of the terms, it is generally assumed that every one is well educated who is versed in literature or science, although the opinions and even the conduct may shew, in an undisciplined judgment and want of self-control, that the first Education or the training had been defective or neglected. It may then be maintained, since words will always influence opinions, that the Education, which forms the habits and disciplines the inclinations, ought to be distinguished from that which imparts learning, but which cannot, with the learning,

give also the capacity for its right employment. For as the end of all knowledge is to make us wiser and better, he only can be accounted well educated, who, by his habits and inclinations, knows how to render what he knows, be it much or little, conducive to his moral as well as his intellectual improvement.

Be the value of the term, however, what it may, the subject of Education cannot but engage the attention of every thoughtful mind, since its influences, for good or ill, (²) are more extensive and enduring than any which are derived from other sources. And yet, notwithstanding its own vast importance and the attention given to it by writers of every age, opinions are still unsettled, whether it should be public or private, theoretical or practical; and still more so, when the question is, how it shall be modified to meet the mani-

fold conditions of social life. For it may be said of the most carefully devised systems, that, by their costly requirements and protracted course of study, being applicable only to the affluent, they, virtually, lose sight of the many, who are, it might be urged, still more in need of direction.

As, however, the human being, rich or poor, is still the material upon which Education is to act, and as that being is endowed with faculties which are gradually developed, it may be assumed that every age and every condition of life may have its own particular system, which shall be applicable to its circumstances and sufficient for its wants. Thus, it behoves us, before proceeding further, to investigate the nature of those faculties, and trace the changes through which they pass in early life, since those changes, with the obvious differences of station and fortune, form