

**THE CONTRAST: OR,
MODES OF
EDUCATION**

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The Contrast: Or, Modes of Education by Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee

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HANNAH FARNHAM SAWYER LEE

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THE CONTRAST :

OR

MODES OF EDUCATION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THREE EXPERIMENTS OF LIVING,'
'ELINOR FULFON,' AND 'RICH ENOUGH.'

'O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion;
What airs in dress an' gait wou'd lea's us.'

BURNS.

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1837.

MODES OF EDUCATION.

PART I.

WE REAP AS WE SOW.

'Do you say there are few such characters? So much the better; but there is a great consumption of the raw material, for making them.'
Conversations on Family.

'COME, Eudora,' said Mrs. Stanley to her daughter, 'come and practise upon the piano.'

'I have been practising two whole hours,' replied she, sullenly.

'Very well, my dear; but if you expect to excel, you must practise all the time that you are not learning other lessons.'

'I hate the very sight of the piano,' said the young lady.

'You hate it now; but I wonder whether you will hate it when every body is crowding

round to hear your performance? You must remember, Eudora, that nothing is gained without labor. If you mean to perform better than any one else, you must give your time and your mind to it.'

'I don't know what good it will do.'

'No, you don't know just now; but you will see, when your education is completed. Is it nothing to be distinguished in all societies as the most accomplished young lady present? Is it nothing to hear people say, that Miss Stanley understands Italian, French, Spanish, painting and music perfectly?'

Eudora sat pouting, but made no reply.

'I must say,' continued Mrs. Stanley, 'that you make a most ungrateful return for all the expense I am lavishing upon your education. I pay enormous sums every year; and I only ask you to *learn*.'

'I should think I had learnt enough,' said Eudora. 'I am sure I can play better than any girl of my acquaintance, and I overheard Monsieur Le Franc telling you, that I spoke Italian and French as well as a native. I don't see why my education, that you talk so much about, cannot be finished *now*.'

‘The time will soon arrive. There is only one year more, and you will be eighteen years of age; then you will *come out*. I suppose you have no objection to that. You will like very well to go to parties, and balls, and the theatre, and wherever you appear, to be remarked upon for beauty and accomplishment?’

Eudora’s sullen brow assumed a more placid expression. ‘To be sure I should.’

‘Well, to obtain all this,’ replied the mother, ‘you have only one motto to bear in mind,—“Improve your time.” Depend upon it, Eudora, it will be your own fault, if you are not distinguished. One short year! Only think how soon that will pass away, and then you will go into company with me, and I shall have the pride of seeing my daughter first in every circle. Nor will it end there;—an elegant, accomplished young lady may expect to marry *well*. I detest the *mis*-alliances that are constantly taking place in our country.’

‘*Mis*-alliances,’ repeated Eudora, with a scornful laugh, ‘You should say *mês*alliances, mamma. You do pronounce French words so droll, that I can’t help tittering.’

Mrs. Stanley rose up angrily, and took her shawl.

‘Now, where are you going?’ asked Eudora, in a whining tone.

‘To the theatre,’ replied Mrs. Stanley.

‘I should think I might go, too; you promised me I should, the next time you went,’ said she, in the same whining tone.

‘Not to-night. I am engaged with a party; besides, you know what I told you; you must get your lessons. I cannot permit such a waste of time. Don’t tip your chair back in that way; it is a very improper method of sitting.’

Eudora replaced the chair, seated herself upon it, but bent forward, till she was nearly double, drumming on the keys of the piano with both hands.

‘A very pretty figure you make, truly,’ said Mrs. Stanley. ‘You look more like a monkey, than a young lady that is to complete her education in one year. I hear the carriage, and must go. Well, good night, darling,’ said she, as she shut the door, ‘and remember my motto, *improve your time.*’

‘One would think,’ said Eudora, ‘that no-

body had a right to waste time but mamma. Well, there is one thing that I know,—I will make up for it after I have got my education, and waste as much time as I please.'

Mrs. Stanley was a widow, and Eudora was her only child. This child was a beauty, and her mother determined she should be a belle.

There are few human beings on whom Heaven has not bestowed reasoning powers. The use of these powers, their direction and results, make the virtue and vice of mankind.

Mrs. Stanley had various methods of reasoning. In the first place, she was fond of reading novels, plays, &c., and therefore she reasoned, that she was a literary woman. She headed the list of various subscription papers; therefore she reasoned, that she was a benevolent woman. She attended church, when it was fair weather, every Sunday morning; therefore she reasoned, that she was a religious woman. She violated no laws, within the pale of legal administration; therefore she reasoned, that she was a moral woman. But the crown and glory of her virtue she considered as resting on her maternal character. She spared no

expense for the education of her daughter; and therefore she reasoned, that she was the most exemplary and the best of mothers, and upon the same principle, that Eudora was the best educated of daughters. Added to all this, as she was a beauty, she reasoned, that she must be a belle, and captivate all hearts.

Mrs. Stanley was a very decided woman; and decided women are extremely apt to alienate their friends. By her reasoning powers and her decision, she had contrived to meet with very little opposition. Many people were ill-natured enough to say, that during her married life, she decided her husband out of all his household comforts, and finally reasoned him into an early grave. But those who made such observations could not have known the stand she meant to take in the world, which was that of a *remarkably fine woman*.

This term has long been a most convenient one, as all attach to it their own meaning. Some confer it on intellectual, others on external properties. Whatever others might consider, Mrs. Stanley was of opinion, that she constituted in herself all that is meant by the comprehensive term, a *fine woman*.