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EDUCATION AND MANNERS.

IN the morning of life, when youth are first engaged in worldly pursuits and expectations, in the warmth of their hearts: they find every thing around them in the right place.

All they see is beautiful, all they hear is delightful; the society they mix with is the most agreeable, the country they were born in is the first in the world; its government and manners the most perfect.—As they advance in their progress, experience draws back the veil that blinded them, and shews them the defects of all those things they once admired. When they have reached the top of the hill, they stand still and reslect upon them; they

compare things past with the present, and look forward to the future with doubt and suspicion; but in this state they are most likely to judge truly and impartially.

As they descend the hill, they grow more diffatisfied and querulous; they grow partial to the time of their youth, when their passions were most awakened, and their enjoyments the most lively and engaging.

Thus the young and the old throw contempt upon each other, and each of them have enough to fay in justification of their own opinions. The affected wifdom and garrulity of age, is a constant subject of ridicule to youth; and serves them as a touchstone to sharpen their wit upon.

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[&]quot;My grand-mother told me, what her grand-mother told her,

The times grow worfer child, as they grow older."

"Oh, God-a-mercy times!—If this were true,

What would another century dwindle to?

" I dare maintain this time as good as any,

"In fpite of whiners, grumblers, or my granny."

Epilogue to a Dramatic Caricature, called, Tafte and Feeling.

This is the constant language of ignorance, pertness, and folly; but to the many it may seem like wit, poetry, and even truth. This false idea is the source of a thousand errors and vices. If things stand still, and grow neither better nor worse, why should we give ourselves any concern about times or manners?

A fecond inference is, that if all things are right, they can have nothing to reform; we are then as good as we need to be, and it is only peevish, melancholy, and querulous people who find fault; because it gives vent to their spleen and ill-nature. Neither times nor people want any amendment, and we resolve neither to amend the times, nor ourselves.

But

But let us listen to the man of reason and restection, who stands at the top of the hill, and attend to his observations and inferences:

" Let me not live," (fays he,).

" After my flame lacks oil, to be the fnuff.

" Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive sense

"All but new things disdain:—whose judgments

"Mere fathers of their garments, - whose constancies

" Expire before their fashions."

SHAKESPEARE.

Let us examine into the truth of these opinions respectively. History and experience inform us that all sublunary things are in an eternal rotation: states and kingdoms, arts and sciences, languages and manners, all are subject to perpetual vicissitudes. Who dares affirm that any thing stands still, when the world itself, and all that it contains, are in continual motion?

When a nation is in a state of civiliza-

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tion, there is a gradation by which it afcends to the highest degree of cultivation; when the language and manners, arts and sciences, are in the greatest perfection—refinement upon these succeeds; refinement becomes fastidious, wanton, effeminate. False taste and affectation succeed telaxation in manners and discipline; all these descend and decline, till in process of time, they return to ignorance and barbarism.

It is worthy of observation, that the manners and the language of a people have generally kept in the same state of strength and weakness. When the arts and sciences have attained their highest summit; when the manners were polished and yet virtuous; the language also has been in the highest perfection. As the manners became corrupt and esseminate, the language also degenerated, and both sunk together.

Education

Education is the source from whence manners proceed; when this is simple and virtuous, the effects are seen plainly; when the sountain is poisoned, the streams are polluted, and all who drank of them are distempered and infected.

Nothing is of equal consequence to the health of a state, as the education of youth. When the manners are chasse and virtuous, we cannot doubt that education was so; when there is a general relaxation of manners and discipline, there must be great defects in the methods of education.

Philosophers set themselves to work to investigate the causes of this declension; they frame new systems of education.—
They are like old Thales, the Milesian, who, while he was gazing at the stars, over-looked the pit that was under his feet; he stumbled and fell into it.

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In order to understand clearly the object of our research, we must throw aside all abstract reasoning, and metaphysical subtleties; we must simplify every thing, and bring back our ideas to nature, truth, and right reason.

Let us then enquire into one great point, upon which all our reasoning must depend.—Ought children to be governed by discipline, or lest to educate themselves?—Are they to be restrained very strongly,—very gently,—or not at all?—I am not going to set up for a systemmaker, I shall only remark upon the systems of others, according to my own judgment. — In the first place I shall enquire what were the opinions of the ancients, upon the subject of education.

I will begin this enquiry with the Sacred Writings, as they ought to have the greatest

greatest weight with us who profess to believe them.

Solomon was highly celebrated for his wisdom; he advises that children should be restrained very strongly, as appears by the following extracts from the Proverbs, ascribed to him:

- "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, and the rod of correction must drive it out.
- He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.
- 66 Chasten thy fon while there is hope, and let not thy foul spare for his crying.
- ** Correct thy fon and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.
- The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his parents to shame."

There are many other Proverbs to the fame effect, but these may suffice for the present purpose.

The fon of Sirach, in his admirable work, which is justly called Wisdom; has this remarkable passage:

44 Hast thou children?—Instruct them, and bow down their necks from their youth.

44 Hast thou daughters?—Have a care of their bodies, and shew not thyself chearful towards them.

I will presume to paraphrase these sentences, as they may at the first view appear too harsh and severe.

Hast thou sons?—Subject them to frict discipline, and keep them in due subjection to their parents and preceptors.

Hast thou daughters?—Watch over their behaviour with unremitting care and strict attention; and do not accustom thyself to be too familiar with them, lest they lose the respect that they owe thee as their parent.

Thus much is sufficient to shew the opinions of the Jews on this head.

I cannot forbear citing a passage of St. Paul, which strongly corroborates those above recited.

for what fon is he whom his father chasteneth not-

He supposes that no parent can love his child, unless he correct him; and also that this was a generally received truth.

The

The ancient Persians educated their youth with great strictness, and even severity; the young nobility were inured to all kinds of hardships and fatigues; hunting and military exercises were their constant use.

They were taught to despise danger and death for the love of their country, and to avoid all those pleasures that emasculate the mind, and enervate the body. They were taught to obey their teachers implicitly, in order to qualify them to command.

The Greeks made the education of their youth a principal part of their politys all the different states kept their youth in strict subjection; but the severity of the Spartan discipline is well known to have exceeded all others.

The ancient Romans had an absolute power over the lives of their children;

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they kept them at the greatest distance, and by slow degrees admitted them to familiarity with themselves.

A celebrated Greek writer observes, that there were more undutiful children among his countrymen, than among the Romans; because with the former, the power over their children expired when they came of age; and with the latter, it remained in full force afterwards.

It is worthy of our particular observation; that when the Romans declined from the virtues and simplicity of their ancestors, they likewise relaxed in the severity of their education; by degrees they grew negligent of this important duty, the formations of the minds and manners of their youth.

When they were at the meridian of their power, riches, and luxury; they be-

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came folicitous to educate them to polite literature and manners; but in regard to great and manly virtues they grew careless and indifferent.

While the Roman youth were learning the language and eloquence of the Grecian fophists, Cato the Censor earnestly declaimed against them; he advised the Senate to send them back to their own country: "Lest our youth," said he, "should learn to prefer the glory of speaking to that of acting well."

Cato foretold the consequences that actually followed the study of eloquence, which afterwards became the first ambition of the young nobility.

The Roman History informs us what kind of citizens these men were who were thus educated; they degenerated by degrees, and lest a standing lesson to aftertimes, of the consequences of preferring

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learning to virtue, and politeness to morality.

From this brief review of ancient education and manners, it appears, what were the opinions of the ancients. That all wife and well regulated states, understood that nature had need to be instructed by cultivation, and rectified by discipline; and that they agreed in bringing them up in strict subjection to their parents and teachers.

We may observe likewise, that a relaxation in education and discipline leads to a general corruption of manners.

Here ends my first Essay upon this subject; it is an introduction to what follows;
if it should be tedious to your ladyship,
I can abridge the rest, but I wish you to
read the substance of them before you
come to my Plans, for they are sounded
upon

upon my reasonings and comparing that of others, and drawing inferences from the whole.

Your obliged and obedient fervant,

FRANCES DARNFORD.