

pose a volume of rare interest, reflecting credit alike on its author, and the illustrious name which he has first effectually rescued from obloquy, misconception and forgetfulness.

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ART. VI. — *Richard Lovell Edgeworth.*

*Practical Education.* By MARIA EDGEWORTH and RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH. New York. 1835.

THE reprint in this country of this useful and popular work, affords us an opportunity to say something of Mr. Edgeworth, the father of the celebrated writer. This is the description by which he is generally known. This of itself is no small distinction, to have aided in forming a mind to which the world has been so much indebted; and not only so, but to have borne a part in those efforts by which her fame is established; for an age that ascribes to education almost unbounded power, must allow that the success of the scholar affords strong presumptive evidence in favor of the teacher and his system. If there were any doubt as to his agency in this respect, it is removed by the express testimony of his daughter, who is too sagacious to claim for him more than he could rightfully demand. She evidently considers herself under obligation to her father, not only for the formation of those intellectual habits which have led to her brilliant success, but for a large and efficient share in the compositions of her best works. She is a good, if not impartial witness; if there were no other proofs of his merits, this alone would to our minds be clear and convincing.

But however plain it may be that a teacher has a right to be honored for the ability and success of the scholar whom it has been the business of his life to form, such honor is not apt to be given, we mean by public applause, though private gratitude be ever so warm in its acknowledgment. It is always found that an illustrious name eclipses other distinguished names beside it; instead of shining in its brightness, they are exceedingly apt to be lost in its light. In ordinary associations there is no help for this unequal distribution of favor; and the secondary party must bear neglect as he may; but in a case like this before us, a father may be supposed, so far from lamenting this circumstance, to take as much pride and de

light in the reputation of his daughter, as if it were his own ; in fact to regard it as his own. This Mr. Edgeworth appears to have done. Without any anxiety to establish his own claims, his whole ambition was to advance his daughter's success, by lending counsel and aid to make her works as perfect as possible. Such manly and self-denying affection was honorable to his name.

The result has been, that all the literary reputation has been carried away by the daughter, or rather given to the daughter ; for she certainly has not been ambitious to claim more than is fairly her own. Mr. Edgeworth is little known in this country as a literary man ; it is not even known that his tastes inclined decidedly in that direction ; it is commonly thought that the aid which he furnished her was of the kind, which in intellectual matters, would be called mechanical ; such for example, as supplying subjects and materials ; suggesting improvements, and occasionally throwing in some of those sagacious and practical maxims in which her writings abound. Assistance of this kind, though very important to the intellectual laborer, is not estimated by the public, who concern themselves with what has been accomplished, and care little how, or by whose aid it was done. So that Mr. Edgeworth, though his name has been so often associated with his daughter's, as on the title-page of the work before us, has been little known as a literary man. He is generally considered as a man who possessed a remarkable inventive talent with which he amused his idle hours ; constructing engines of various kinds, which were better calculated to exercise his ingenuity than to increase the comfort and convenience of life. There is of course nothing wrong in this playful employment of a mechanical genius, nor is this a disparaging view of an able man, living apart from society, and requiring amusement as a relief from various labors ; still it is plain, upon examining his life and writings, that amusement was not his object ; his desire was to be useful ; and to this purpose he devoted talent, time and money, for which, like too many others, he received no other reward than the consciousness of doing good.

It is much to his honor that he did not, like too many who profess to make utility their object, profane and abridge the meaning of the word. One would suppose from the language of many on this subject, that man had nothing but a body to provide for ; they account nothing useful but that which tends

to increase the comfort and supply the wants of the present existence; but to those who have hearts and souls, and who feel that the well-being of the moral and spiritual nature is a thing to be regarded, such a view of the subject and such language on the subject, seems untrue as it is unworthy. They think that there are things of the moral kind, quite as essential in domestic life as cooking-stoves; and that railroads, convenient as they are, are not the only things that deserve the name of public improvements. Every suggestion that throws light on the subject of education, and shows us how to bring the means and agencies of improvement to bear upon our children, every discussion that tends to make men aware of their rights and responsibilities, every philosophical investigation that teaches us the mystery of our own nature, and even all those efforts of taste and imagination which raise us above the bondage of the senses, are useful in the highest acceptation of the word, and he is a stranger to himself and his duty, who does not receive the word utility with all this breadth of meaning. Mr. Edgeworth saw the subject in this light; and after he had retired from social life, in which he bore an enviable part, to the seclusion of his own estate, he devoted much of his time, not only to what are called improvements, but to the cultivation of the minds of his children. Those of his daughter's productions in which he took most interest, were those in which education was the prominent object; probably it was the strong direction of his mind to the subject, which turned her attention to the intellectual paths in which she has travelled with so much fame.

Mr. Edgeworth had the opportunity of learning what good education is from his mother, whose early lessons he well remembered. She became, by some mismanagement in sickness, a cripple for life: and being suddenly thrown upon her own resources, devoted her time to the education of her children. By her calm and judicious firmness she acquired remarkable influence over them. Never following the usual course of parental discipline which varies between severity and indulgence, she took favorable moments to make impressions upon them, teaching them the necessity of putting restraints upon themselves. His temper was naturally fiery and ungovernable, but she taught him that unless his own good sense restrained it, it would be his ruin. Her suggestions and warnings were remembered; and his daughter bears witness to the fact, that in his

later years, though he had many things to try the goodness of his disposition, he never gave way to anger or any passion, but always kept himself under firm and resolute control.

She also taught him to take correct views of all subjects without being misled by feeling. The manner in which the character receives its bent is shown by some examples in his own history ; particularly by the case of a young man of fortune, who married an inferior woman, and filling up his house with her relations led a life of riot and sensuality. The natural consequences of self-indulgence came, and he was confined by sickness to his own apartment. Here he was regaled by crusts of bread, which were cast away as refuse by those who were feasting at his expense below. He was so wounded by this treatment that he sunk away and died. Mr. Edgeworth, in his childhood, having this case before him, became sceptical as to the gratitude of mankind. But before he could form permanent habits of jealousy and suspicion, his mother came to his aid, and showed him the subject in its proper light. This timely aid saved him from that distrust approaching to misanthropy, by which so many are unfitted for social life and its duties. He remarks in his sketch of his own life, that he is convinced, that more ingratitude arises from the unjudicious conduct of benefactors, than from the want of proper feeling in those whom they have obliged.

Mr. Edgeworth was able to remember the manner in which his mind was determined to engage in those experiments and inventions in which he afterwards delighted. His mother had received some strangers with hospitality, and in return for her kindness, the gentleman whom she had laid under obligation, brought her an electrical machine, hoping that it might restore the use of her limbs. It was tried with some beneficial results ; but on one occasion, the shock was not given, and the operator was at a loss to account for it. Mr. Edgeworth, then very young, observed that the wire used as a conductor touched a hinge of the table, and asked if that might not be the reason of the failure. It was the cause, as he suspected ; and the operator was so much pleased with this instance of observation, in a child, that he paid him the utmost attention, and took pleasure in exhibiting to him his philosophical instruments, and teaching him their uses. This encouragement confirmed his taste for mechanical constructions ; and thus by an early association he acquired his decided interest in the business of inventions.

Examples of this kind show how tastes of any kind may be formed and encouraged, and how the mind may be set at work in any pursuit, by watching, and drawing out those marks of early intelligence on which the formation of character so much depends.

His mother was particularly attentive to his moral education. We refer here not only to religious principle but to rules of action, such as the young need for the conduct of life, and which they are commonly left to learn by their own experience, which is the best way certainly, if its lessons are not too costly and do not come too late. Observing his peculiar tendencies, she took pains to show him the necessity of quick and decided action. She pointed out examples in which that easiness of temper which finds it hard to say *no*, leads to fatal indulgences, and at last to absolute ruin, while by exciting in others expectations that cannot be answered, it brings unusual anger and reproach on those who would, if it were in their power, do favors to all mankind. Good nature too often appears in the form of a fault; having no power to resist importunities, the easy tempered man is always at the mercy of others; he does not gratify them by his compliances, since what he does for one he does for all; meantime he feels all the misery of a dependent spirit, and goes through life like a drifting vessel entirely at the mercy of the waves and storms. Happy are they who have a parent who has judgment to discern and power to control the early elements of character, and who does not leave to accidental influences that which parental instruction is bound to do.

As Mr. Edgeworth passed from childhood to that age when he became more his own master, he felt the benefit of this early instruction. When he was fourteen, being at an entertainment at Pakenham Hall, Lord Longford put five guineas in his hands and desired him to try his fortune; he won with it in the course of the evening a hundred guineas. The next evening he lost it all, and his lordship offered to lend him more; but he steadily declined and did not again sit down at the table. He was then congratulated by his mother on his self-command, which would secure him from the vice of gambling. The nobleman was rather a perilous moralist, and the experiment might in many cases have led to most injurious results; in this instance however the effect was happy, and he never was tempted to engage in such amusements again.

He never seems to have been deficient in energetic decision. While he was at Oxford he was present in the courts when a prisoner was on trial for a felony, and observed that the foreman of the jury was completely inattentive to the testimony. While the judge was engaged, the foreman, having observed that Mr. Edgeworth was interested in the trial, asked him what verdict he ought to give. Mr. Edgeworth rose and requested permission to speak. The judge ordered him to sit down; he remained standing, and was threatened by the judge, but still he persevered. He at length obtained a hearing, and stated to the court the manner in which the juror was trifling with his obligations. For this he received the thanks of the court, expressed in terms of strong approbation of the course which he had pursued.

He was still young though a married man, when he lost this parent to whom he was indebted for such judicious instructions. He describes her as a woman of fine understanding, who had read much and thought more on the subject of education, and had applied the results of her thought and study to practice, not fettering herself by servile adherence to any system, but watching carefully the young minds under her control, and giving each the restraint or encouragement, the counsel and warning which it happened to need. She set to her children the example of unpretending piety, and generous benevolence; and enforced all her lessons by the commanding authority of a clear and cultivated mind, which inspires confidence even in children, though they know not why, by producing that consistency of feeling and action, which is always sure to be respected.

The taste for mechanical inventions, which seems to have been natural, or, what perhaps is the same thing, early inspired in Mr. Edgeworth, was never lost in the domestic and social cares and interests of later years. Before he had entered upon professional business, he employed himself in making under unfavorable circumstances, and with indifferent tools, a wooden orrery which required accurate calculation and ingenious contrivance. Though no one cared for his pursuits or sympathized with his success, he kept up his interest in the employment, devoting most of his time to scientific researches. He regretted that his wife had so little regard to his favorite indulgences; but she fortunately had domestic qualifications which were of more importance to his welfare, and by her prudence and good

management, he was able to live in this manner without a very ample income. When he went to London to keep term at the Temple, he became acquainted with some persons of note who are described at large in his memoirs. Among these was Sir Francis Delaval, one of those men of genius whose ability is admired perhaps more than it deserves, in consequence of the indifference with which it is regarded by its possessor.

Sir Francis Delaval was a man of similar taste in some respects with Mr. Edgeworth. We do not refer to moral tastes in which the baronet was not the best example; but he had never failing resources of invention, which were employed in various wild pranks which served to amuse an idle hour. He often aided his friends with suggestions which saved them from the consequences of foolish wagers, a kind of child's play, which was then as now very common among those who neglected the serious business of life. Mr. Edgeworth, though he had no sympathy with these follies, was interested in Sir Francis as a man of talent, and it was this association which led to the first construction of a telegraph, by which the name of a winning horse at Newmarket was to be transmitted to London some hours before the intelligence could be carried by express.

Mr. Edgeworth's claim to the invention of a telegraph, which was used on this occasion, has exposed him to much abuse, which, as in many other cases, loses its power to injure by reason of the malice with which it is given. He said that he had read the work of Wilkins, and had seen in Stooke's works some suggestion of such communication. Every one knows that such things were in use in ancient times. What he claimed was to have revived this invention; and this claim is evidently made in reference to the French experiments which were many years subsequent to his own. Now that Mr. Edgeworth did construct and use a telegraph in 1767, cannot well be denied; nor is there any question that the French invention was made public many years after; and these facts, so far as we can discover, go to the full extent of his claim. As to his originating the idea of a telegraph in modern times, he does not even pretend it; he expressly says that he took the suggestion from Wilkins and Stooke. It is not easy to state his claims in a more modest and inoffensive form. But a certain journal, notorious for its base and narrow prejudices, made

a venomous attack upon his veracity in reviewing his memoirs, and founded its charge upon this very invention. Mr. Perrot, Mr. Edgeworth said, was witness to his experiments, and assisted him; and he procured Mr. Perrot's letter, in which he testifies that he had conversations with Mr. Edgeworth on the subject, and recollected the experiments which were made. Now says this amiable journal, Mr. Edgeworth implies that Mr. Perrot gave *practical* assistance, and his letter proves that he did not. It is evident enough to all who can read that Mr. Edgeworth neither says nor implies any such thing. All the assistance implied is such as would be given by suggestions in conversation upon the subject in connexion with his own experiments. This same poor spirit of criticism can deprive Fulton and every other man of genius of the honor of his acknowledged inventions, since nothing is so new under the sun as never to have been suggested before.

When Sir Francis Delaval was dying, he expressed to Mr. Edgeworth his bitter regret that he had wasted the resources of his inventive genius in trifles, and strongly exhorted his young friend, if he wished to escape remorse in his closing scene, to make himself useful to mankind. Mr. Edgeworth does not seem to have needed this advice; it was always his ambition to turn his powers to this account. Beside the many inventions by which he increased the comfort of his household, and others which seem like playful suggestions of an active and original mind, he acted the part of a good citizen, and gave his country or rather offered his country the benefit of his services, and at a critical moment attempted to revive the plan of transmitting intelligence by means of his telegraphic signals. In 1794, the apprehension of a French invasion was general in Ireland, and rumors of the landing of hostile armies kept the country in constant agitation. Mr. Edgeworth asked of the government nothing more than the privilege of putting up a telegraph at his own expense, or in any way that the public authorities might approve. After establishing the practicability of his plan, he submitted a memorial to the government on the subject, which was approved and encouraged so far as to leave no doubt in his mind that his offer would be accepted, but after he had spent several hundred pounds, and given much of his time to the subject, he was informed that nothing would be done. Whether it was that the government had changed its mind, or that it never intended to engage in

the undertaking, does not appear. He himself always ascribed it to the fetters which statesmen and leaders of parties are compelled to wear. Men in power are apt to be men under authority; and while all are envying their high station of command, they are themselves compelled to submit to the dictation of some unseen masters. Shortly after the rejection of his telegraph, the French were on the coasts. Without taking exception at his former treatment, he renewed his offers; but they were accepted in form, and declined in reality, as before. It is much to his credit that this kind of experience never overcame his good nature, nor abated his zeal for the welfare and honor of his country.

As to the extent to which the government was pledged to him, there can be no doubt that it encouraged him to go on with his experiments, and it was not till he had incurred considerable expense that he was informed that the plan would not be adopted. If it were a case between two individuals, there can be no doubt as to the obligation of the party which thus encouraged the other; although there was no positive promise, there was an equitable claim created, which could not honorably be disregarded. Mr. Edgeworth published a letter to the Earl of Charlemont, containing a temperate statement of all the circumstances; the tone in which it is written is philosophical and high-minded.

At a much later period of his life, Mr. Edgeworth published a work on Roads and Wheel-carriages, describing the results of many intelligent experiments. These were of various kinds; among other things, he pointed out the benefit of springs in carriages to the animals that draw them. It was well known, that the person conveyed was benefited by the springs of the vehicle, but it was not suspected that the horses were also laid under obligations; in fact, the contrary was taken for granted. By these and many other suggestions, of great value, but not ostentatiously proclaimed, he lent efficient aid in preparing the way for the great improvements of modern times. He even struck out the idea of a railway, and applied it on his own estate, to the transportation of materials from one part of it to another. In reclaiming the bogs of Ireland, he proposed to employ wooden railways shod with iron; these were supported on piles driven into the bog; not permanently attached to them, but so constructed that the rail and its support could be removed at pleasure, to any line in which it was necessary for the cars to go. After having

tested the value of this invention, by using it to convey limestone over his farm, he undertook to apply it on a great scale to public works, and entered upon an engagement with the proprietors of extensive iron-works, to carry all their materials and productions upon railways of this description. Finding however, that the company was not prosperous, he never carried the plan into effect; but his successful experiments on his own estate, showed that the conveyance could be employed to advantage; and as to the honor of the invention, what great public improvement was ever carried to perfection or applied to all its purposes by a single hand?

But we pass from subjects of this kind to consider what Mr. Edgeworth did in the great cause of education, which now inspires so general an interest, that we can hardly conceive how little it was regarded thirty years ago. He always had the highest views of its importance. At some times, he seemed inclined to ascribe to it all the moral and intellectual varieties which are found in the civilized world; but he appeared at last to settle down in the conviction, that while there were certain original differences in minds, by far the greatest differences are those which arise from education. Regarding the subject in this light, he felt how great was the obligation which rested on parents, on teachers, and on statesmen also, who can do more to influence the destinies of their respective nations by giving or withholding encouragement to instruction, than by any other means or measures in their power.

Mr. Edgeworth undertook to educate his eldest son, according to the system of Rousseau, which was then new to the world, and from the novelty of the subject and the method of treating it, made a great impression upon enlightened minds. It was not then known that the fervent pleader of the claims of childhood on parental care, was in the habit of sending his own children to be educated in the Foundling Hospital, where he might never hear of them again. It is curious to observe the enthusiasm with which Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, speaks of Rousseau, as the greatest and best of men. Mr. Edgeworth was not a slave to the system, and he was soon convinced by the results of his experiment that the system was unsound. So far as physical education went, there was nothing to desire; the boy was active, hardy and strong; but the spirit of independence which had been systematically encouraged in him, outgrew all control. Having no taste for

study, and being somewhat unsettled in his disposition, he went to sea, and afterwards came to South Carolina, where he died in 1776. It is not easy to tell how far the system or the manner of applying it produces such results. Let the course be shaped as direct as possible, there will always be sidewinds and under-currents against which no human wisdom can guard. Mr. Edgeworth was still more painfully disappointed in a daughter by his second wife. She was always an object of inspiring hope; her personal beauty and intellectual accomplishments attracted the admiration of all. Upon her he tried his favorite theory, which maintained that by cultivating the habit of attention, a new direction could be given to the youthful mind. She was deliberate and exact. He wished to awaken an interest in literature, particularly such as excites the imagination. By reading to her, according to his practice in his family, passages from poems and works of fancy, and pointing out their beauties, he effected the desired change, and gave her a decided literary taste. But while she promised to reward his affectionate care, she became the victim of hereditary consumption, and died at the age of fifteen.

It is quite possible to write and reason well on the subject of education without much practical ability; neither is success in a few cases always to be regarded as a test of the merit of the system. But Mr. Edgeworth was in general, very happy in his laborious attempts to educate his children, and in one instance he has given the world ample assurance of his power. In the works of his celebrated daughter, there is a union of talents which do not often exist together, of clear sagacity with brilliant invention; the imagination was evidently the gift of nature, while the just discernment was the result of education. This was according to his theory, which maintained that the resources should be carefully drawn out by attentive care, so as to balance one against another; to remove that which is excessive, and supply that which is wanting. So important did this process appear, that he recommended to parents to keep a private journal in which the peculiarities of the child's character, as they manifested themselves, should be noted down. In short, his opinion was, that parents should make it a serious object to educate their children, and always keep it before them, as an indispensable and sacred duty; not leaving young minds and hearts at the mercy of chance and time; but doing the work which Providence assigns them when it places the children under their care.

The work which is now republished on the subject of *Practical Education*, has been more than thirty years before the public, and many of our readers are well acquainted with it; still we have thought the appearance of a new edition an occasion not unsuitable for giving to the author the credit which he deserves. We say the author, for, although it was published in connexion with his daughter, she describes the principles and suggestions as his, and herself as bearing a part only in the execution. The suggestions must have proceeded from one who had thought much on the subject, and corrected his theories by patient and attentive observation. It is full of illustrations, which show that no partiality for systems interfered with his penetrating discernment of truth. In fact, in the latter part of his life he became an observer by profession, devoting much of his time to his family, and steadily following the advice given by his penitent companion, formerly alluded to, to be useful to the very last.

In the works published in conjunction with his daughter, the public, knowing her ability better than his, may have assigned her more than her share of credit; but in 1808 he published a work on *Professional Education*, which was entirely his own. It is not very generally known in this country; but those who have read it, will agree in pronouncing it one of the best, as well as most interesting works upon the subject. The prevailing idea on which his system is founded, that natural differences can be greatly modified by devoting the attention for the purpose, seems to us judicious and true. But even those who care nothing for the subject, will find entertainment and instruction in the intellectual character of the work, which abounds with sagacious remark and shrewd observation, such as implies extensive knowledge of the mind and heart.

We have made these few remarks upon the literary character and services of Mr. Edgeworth, because justice has not yet been done to his memory, in this country; those who feel the warmest interest in the works and reputation of the daughter, have, unintentionally "done her sire some wrong." But those who read his writings, will see that he was an intellectual man of high order, and though in the early part of his life, he made rather a sportive use of his great mechanical genius, afterwards, in maturer years, he discharged the duties of a father, a friend, and a patriot, with such exemplary fidelity, that his greatest enemies allowed him the praise of a useful man; which, properly

understood, is the highest praise that ambition can covet, or the world bestow. And those who read, (as who does not?) the works of his daughter, will remember, that he was the diligent former of her mind, both in youth and maturity, so that we are in part indebted to him for the admirable works with which she has favored the world.

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ART. VII. — *The Linwoods.*

*The Linwoods ; or Sixty Years since in America.* By the AUTHOR of HOPE LESLIE, &c. 2 vols. 12mo. New York. 1835.

WE think this work the most agreeable that Miss Sedgwick has yet published. It is written throughout with the same good taste and quiet unpretending power, which characterize all her productions, and is superior to most of them in the variety of the characters brought into action and the interest of the fable. It also possesses the great additional attraction, that it carries us back to the period of the revolutionary war, the heroic age of our country, which, although only sixty years distant, begins already to wear in the eyes of the degenerate money-making men of the present times, a poetical, we had almost said fabulous aspect, and consequently offers the finest scenes and materials for romance.

The fair and unaffectedly modest author disclaims in the preface any competition which might seem to be suggested by the title with the "sixty years since" of the great Scottish enchanter ; but it is nevertheless certain that the plan has something of the same general character, and the work, though executed with less power, possesses in part the same charm. It spreads before us a map of New York, the young emporium of our western world, now rivalling in wealth, population, splendor and luxury, the proudest capitals of Europe ; as she was in her day of small things, a few Dutch-built streets interspersed with gardens and grouped round the battery. We visit the encampment of Washington, nor has our author shrunk from the somewhat hazardous attempt to introduce into her group of characters the grand figure of the hero himself. In this enterprise, she has on the whole acquitted herself with success.