

who had himself before played with hearts, and laughed the smiles and wiles of beauty to scorn, had been conquered by a frank, common-sense girl.

SYLVESTER.

(to be continued.)

A FALSE IDEA OF EDUCATION.

It is held by some that education consists of a symmetrical development of the mental faculties, produced by a prescribed course of study in all the various departments of knowledge. They seem to regard man's intellectual condition as at first deformed, and to believe that the mental powers must all be developed in even proportions, as nearly as possible.

We reject this definition as false, and based upon partial observation; for, were it true, education would be an injury to many persons. It would be a direct warfare upon a law which God has deeply impressed upon the Universe—that of variety. It would seek to train up all persons alike, regardless of their natural gifts. It would endeavor to suppress one talent where it does exist, and to create another where such talent is denied.

Could such an end be realized, its antagonism to the law of variety in mental gifts would be apparent even to the superficial observer; its practical working is therefore injurious. A natural gift, which, if allowed to develop as it ought, will lead its possessor on to distinction, is suppressed in a futile attempt to equalize the mental powers. In this attempt time is spent upon studies, which, when not injurious, are at least of questionable advantage. This unnatural attempt at uniformity, it is said, is necessary, for education must be symmetrical, and it requires a proper balance!

Now it is not true that any person may be equally expert in every department of investigation; such an attainment is impossible. Each person has some leading natural gift; if he exercise this gift, he may rise to great distinction, if not to a

distinction beyond all competitors. It is only when all exercise their individual specialties that human knowledge assumes its symmetrical appearance.

The attempt to secure this uniformity is a frequent and glaring fault in our systems of education. For an illustration the ordinary college course is sufficient. Too often it is but another form of the bed of Procrustes; a rigid line of study in all the branches of knowledge, and admitting of but few variations to the student, or none at all. It is usually arranged very much in accordance with the idea of uniformity before alluded to. Many of the honors and benefits gained by the completion of a college course are denied to the student, unless he conform to the requirements, take the "regular course," and, in so doing, study much that is often repulsive to him, if not lacking in actual benefit.

The law of variety prevails among students, as among all others. One class of them, it is true, have the faculties somewhat evenly distributed, and find no very special objection to the course of study. But others, while proficient in one branch, show a decided repugnance to another. To them, taking a college course is similar to dining at a Chinese table and being compelled to partake of all the viands thereon, the character of which it is presumed the reader is aware.

The advocates of uniformity tell us that the study of mathematics is necessary to secure a proper balance of the mind. So the student is obliged, whether proficient in mathematics or not, to delve in the intricacies of algebra, geometry and physics. If not proficient, yet he may, by dint of great labor and expenditure of time, attain to a fair understanding of them, but the benefits are seldom in proportion to the attention bestowed. If he cannot well master them, his labor is a positive injury to himself. Many eminent men have received no disciplinary benefit from the study of mathematics; some have even gone so far as to question