

John Rogers, Bowling-Green

Education of Children

The City of Washington

Extract from a military discourse

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Children

FROM THOMAS'S MASSACHUSETTS SPY.

THE NEIGHBOUR.

"For much it boots which way you train your boy."

AMONG the many directions and rules which have been liberally prescribed for the well educating of children and youth, none has been oftener repeated, or more strongly inculcated than this, That they should be carefully guarded from bad examples, and encouraged and led on in the right way by those that are good. Children are prone to imitation, and form themselves by means of it. They immediately adopt the language they hear uttered, and the actions they see performed. Hence, in all treatises, in all methods, in all schools, of genteel education, it is an invariable maxim, to keep children, as much as possible, out of the company of low and mean people, and especially of servants, lest their manners and sentiments should be tainted with any thing that is low, vulgar and mean. The wisdom of this rule has been universally acknowledged, and the advantage of it invariably experienced, wherever regarded. But by some observations I have made of late, I have been led to conclude, that the rule is pretty much laid aside, in some of those states, families and classes, that ought to know and observe the rules of good breeding and politeness; or, that the tables are now turned; that language and actions, which none but the *baser sort* were supposed capable of, may be now learned of some who call themselves the *better sort*; and that those things which heretofore were looked upon as degrading and scandalous, and against which children and youth were carefully warned and guarded, are now considered as manly and genteel.

I have a little son whom I have wished to be brought up both genteelly and virtuously, and always supposed that these were perfectly consistent; nay, that virtue was essential to the character of a gentleman; and that, to be well bred, he must neither be vulgar nor vicious. I therefore cautiously restrained him from mixing with persons of a mean education, and with those whose occupation was low and servile, whose language is apt to be scurrilous and profane, and whose manner of speaking and behaviour would be degrading and contemptible in a gentleman.

With a view to the improvement of my boy, as well as my own gratification, I made several excursions with him the last year and the last season, through the most populous counties in this state, and through some of the neighbouring states, exciting his ambition to observe and imitate the manners and language of those who appeared to be fashionable and genteel, not doubting but such guides would be safe, considering their education and advantages, and that they would lead him in the way in which he should go. But before I got home from my last journey, I found to my mortification, that, through my ignorance of modern improvements in the fashionable world, I had carried my son to a wrong school, if I meant to preserve the purity of his language, ideas and morals. For he began to show high spirit and resentment at small provocations; to bluster and storm at the servants; to swear when in a passion, and sometimes in good humour; he would *blackguard* to display his wit, and play mischievous pranks to show his fun. When I reproved him for his indecent and ungentlemanlike behaviour, he replied that he had carefully followed my directions; that he had learned nothing of the lower sort of people; that he had spoken and done nothing but what he had heard and seen in those families into which I had introduced him. I was confounded and silenced, knowing that he spoke the truth, having been myself eye and ear witness to the same. In some families the master would seldom speak to the servants, especially when he was out of temper, without oaths, taunts, and reproaches. The sons would do the same, and often intermix their cheerful talk with unnatural and dreadful profanity. I heard of a man in the neighbourhood of my lodgings who was engaged in an important undertaking, which required skill and abilities, as well as fidelity. I had the curiosity to see him while in the execution of his trust. I judged that every man who was employed, by persons of the first character, in matters of great and extensive consequence to the public, if he was equal to the undertaking, must have manners and address equal to his station, and to his skill in his employment; and that his attendants, being awed by his manly deportment, would behave, at least, with decency. But what was my surprize when he replied to some of my modest inquiries in the roughest language, and nothing was to be heard among his attendants but the foulest oaths! I soon made my escape from such company, and hurried with my son to my lodgings. When I returned to the inn, I found a number of people collected, staring and grinning, round a handsome carriage; and soon heard passionate expressions and profane oaths delivered in a haughty tone. Upon inquiry I was told that the well dressed man who was raving and swearing at the driver, for some trivial accident, or failure, was ——— I will not tell who he was; but I should not have been more astonished, if I had heard imprecations and scurrility from the mouth of a Judge, or even a Member of Congress. It immediately brought to my mind an expression which I heard from a chaplain of the Castle when I was a boy—"What honour can there be in belching out oaths, when the meanest scoundrel can do the same?"

FROM THE MARYLAND JOURNAL, &c.

THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, in the district of Columbia, intended for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States, being now begun, a concise description of the situation, and present state of that metropolis, may not be altogether uninteresting to those at a distance.

The seat of the city stands at the junction of the rivers Patowmac and the Eastern-Branch, extending nearly four miles up each, including a tract of territory, exceeded in point of convenience, salubrity, and beauty, by none in America, if any in the world.—For, although the land is apparently level, yet, by gentle and gradual swellings, a variety of elegant prospects are produced; while there is sufficient descent to convey off the water occasioned by rain.—Within the limits of the city, are a great many excellent springs, and by digging wells, water of the best quality may readily be had; besides, the never-failing streams, that now run through that territory, are also to be collected for the use of the city.

The Eastern-Branch is one of the safest and most commodious harbors in America, being sufficiently deep for the largest ships, for about four miles above its mouth; while the channel lies close along the edge of the city, and is abundantly capacious. The Patowmac, although only navigable for small-vessels, for a considerable distance from its banks adjoining the city (excepting about half a mile above the junction of the rivers) will nevertheless afford a capacious summer-harbor; as an immense number of ships may ride in the great channel, opposite to, and below, the city.

This metropolis, being situated upon the great post-road, ex-

actly equidistant from the northern and southern extremities of the Union, and nearly so from the Atlantic to Fort-Pitt, upon the best navigation, and in the midst of the richest commercial territory in America, commanding the most extensive internal resources, is by far the most eligible situation for the residence of Congress; and as there is no doubt of its being pressed forward, by the public-spirited enterprise of the people of these United States, and by foreigners, it will grow up with a degree of rapidity hitherto unparalleled in the annals of cities, and will soon become the admiration and delight of the world.

The plan of this city, agreeably to the directions of the President of the United States, was designed, and drawn, by the celebrated MAJOR L'ENFANT; and is an inconceivable improvement upon all other cities in the world, combining not only convenience, regularity, elegance of prospect, and a free circulation of air, but every thing grand and beautiful, that can possibly be introduced into a city.—As the plan of this elegant city will be published early in next month, a particular description of it here, would neither be possible nor necessary: A few sentences, on that subject, must therefore suffice.

The streets, in general, run due north and south, and east and west, forming rectangular squares.—The area for the CONGRESS-HOUSE, is situated upon the most beautiful eminence, little more than a mile from the Eastern-Branch, and not much more from the Patowmac; commanding a full and complete view of every part of the city, as well as a considerable extent of the country around.—The PRESIDENT'S HOUSE will stand upon a rising ground, not far from the banks of the Patowmac, possessing a delightful water prospect, together with a commanding view of the Congress-House, and most of the material parts of the city. The Houses for the great Departments of State, the Supreme Court-House and Judiciary-Offices, the National Bank, the General Exchange, and the several Market-Houses, with a variety of other public buildings, are all arranged with equal propriety, judgment and taste, in such situations as, in practice, will be found the most convenient and proper.—Due south from the President's House, and due west from the Congress House, run two great Pleasure-Parks, or Mall, which intersect and terminate upon the banks of the Patowmac, and are ornamented at the sides with a variety of public gardens and elegant buildings, &c.—Regularly interspersed through the city, where the most material streets cross, in the most important situations, are a variety of open areas, formed in various regular figures, which in great cities are extremely useful and ornamental.—Fifteen of the best of these areas may be appropriated to the different States composing the Union, not only to bear their respective names, but as proper places for them to erect statues, obelisks or columns, to the memory of their favorite heroes or statesmen; providing they contribute towards the improvement of the lots around these areas, in such manner as may be agreed upon.—From the Congress-House, the President's House, and some of the other important areas in the city, run transverse avenues, or diagonal streets, from one material object to another, which not only produce a variety of charming prospects, and facilitate the communication through the city, but remove that insipid sameness, that renders Philadelphia and Charleston unpleasing.—These great leading streets are all 160 feet wide, including a brick pavement of 10 feet, and a gravel walk of 30 feet planted with trees, on each side; which will leave 80 feet of paved street for carriages.—The rest of the streets, are in general, 130 and 110 feet wide, and are now mostly run out upon true principles, from celestial observations, by the Geographer-General of the United States, whose astronomical knowledge, and scientific talents, are so universally known and admired.

The founding of this city, in such an eligible situation, upon such a liberal and elegant plan, will, by future generations, be considered as one of the most important transactions of the present President of the United States; while its name will keep fresh in mind, to the end of time, the many important services he has rendered his country.

Among the many fortunate circumstances which have attended this country, during the present administration in government, the residence of Major L'Enfant in America, at this time, may be considered as one of the most material.—The plan he has now produced, and which is happily adopted, exhibits such striking proofs of an exalted genius, elegance of taste, extensive imagination and comprehension, as will not only produce amazement in Europe, but meet the admiration of all future ages; having therein so happily combined the beauties of situation with general convenience, and, at the same time, effectually guarded against those inconveniences which arise in other great cities.

The public buildings, now planned by this great engineer and architect, and carrying on under his direction, will be superb and elegant, and such as will do honor to the capital of a great and prosperous empire; while, fortunately, it is not in the power of Congress to interfere with the funds obtained for those public works; the whole being from private grants of individual States and citizens.

It must, no doubt, be admitted, that Congress have power, even at their next session, to repeal the present law, by which they are obliged to remove to the city of WASHINGTON, at the time therein mentioned; but they have no power to say that, from the present funds, certain houses shall not be erected, or that the proprietors shall not proceed in building the city: Hence, therefore, it will remain, at any future period, with Congress, to choose their permanent residence, in the most central situation. Here it may be proper to observe, that, agreeably to the new constitution of the Union, the States of Virginia and Maryland surrendered a district of territory, which Congress have, by law, accepted of.—That, agreeably to the same law of Congress, these two States have made a grant of money, for the public buildings, part of which is now actually paid and expended.—That, in consequence of the same law, a large tract of land is granted, by a number of individuals; which land is now cut up into a city, and, before the meeting of Congress, will, in part, be sold to a variety of people throughout the Union.—The repeal of a law, therefore, so grossly to violate public and private faith, would not be mentioned in a Congress of fiends met in Pandemonium; far less in the general legislature of these United States, whose tenacious adherence to public faith prevented their altering the funding-law last session when proposed.

With regard to the sufficiency of the funds, now obtained, for the public purposes of this new city, it will, in a great measure, depend upon the management of the sale of the lots ceded to the public. If they are sold off gradually, as money may be wanted, to those who will actually improve them in a reasonable time, the fund will be productive, far exceeding the most sanguine calculations that have been made upon it.—For the lots remaining on hand will rise in value, in proportion to the growth and natural advantages of the city, as is evident in the most thriving town and village in America.

A SPECTATOR.

PARIS, July 30.

THE eighty articles which have been for some time past preparing by the Committee of Constitution for the Royal acceptance, and which are to form the basis of the new constitution, are to be laid before the Assembly on Monday next.—There is no doubt but that they will extend the King's prerogative much wider than it was at first intended; for the majority of the kingdom seems to be of opinion, that it is impossible, from the nature of circumstances, to carry on the government without giving a strong arm to the executive power, and the nation is unanimous in being governed by a king.

It is certain that the magistrates of the Swiss Cantons are the most inveterate enemies of all the people in Europe against the French constitution.

A creditor of Monsieur, the King's brother, went yesterday to Brumoi, the Prince's country-house, accompanied by an officer (bailiff) and seized as much of his goods as were worth 30,000 livres, the amount of the demand which he had upon him.

M. de Noailles, ambassador at the Imperial Court, it is assured, is returning home, so that a rupture is inevitable.

Aug. 1. In the session of the 28th, they read an address from the department of the Drome, requesting that 290 individuals, who had signed a protest against the decrees of the National Assembly, of which they themselves are members, might be proceeded against and tried for perjury and treason.

An address was also read, signed by a great number of citizens of Clermont Ferrand, exclaiming against the suspension of Electoral Assemblies, and terminating as follows: "It is time for the people to exercise their sovereignty, and to make known their wishes; and as the country is in immediate danger, we declare to you that if in a fortnight your decree is not revoked, we will employ the means with which the law has furnished a free people to exercise their rights."

The detachment of the National Parisian guards, which was encamped in the plain of Grenelle, set off for the frontiers last night; they are to be replaced directly by the city militia of the districts of St. Dennis, and of Bourg la Reine, which will shortly proceed to the same place of destination.

LONDON, August 4.

The King of Sweden has dismantled all the fortifications erected during the war, on the frontiers of Russian Finland; a measure which indicates an early and permanent pacification in the North, and may by some politicians be supposed to look favorable to that Confederacy against France, which has so long been spoken of.

The present combination of Kings against the liberty of France plainly shews that their Majesties want wisdom. If they were possessed of much penetration, they would know that it was the interference of the French in the affairs of America that first made them pant for freedom, and that the soldiers of the German, Spanish, and other Princes, by now interfering in the affairs of France, may learn that they were not born to be slaves.

The putting a stop to the press is an indication, that the establishment of peace is in a promising train, but the continuance of the bounties to seamen shews, that it is not yet accomplished.

The Paris letters of Friday do not even anticipate any thing with respect to the decision of the Assembly on the great question respecting the flight of the Royal Family. The only rumour with respect to the latter is, that as soon as the decrees on the constitution are completed, a digest of them is to be made up and offered to the King. The Monarch, on this occasion, is to be allowed to remove to one of his country palaces, and there to frame his decision with all possible freedom. If he assents he is to be restored under certain provisions; if not, the sovereignty devolves instantly to the Dauphin.

A gentleman who had lately occasion to visit the country, gives a most favorable account of the appearance of harvest. The highly seasonable and beneficial influence of the late rains has been most happily felt, and the barley and oats are in excellent condition.

August 6. Oran has been relieved, and the Moors have received a complete overthrow. The