

THE  
WORKS  
OF  
JOHN LOCKE.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

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*IN TEN VOLUMES.*

VOL. IX.

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# C O N T E N T S

OF THE

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**SOME**  
**THOUGHTS**  
**CONCERNING**  
**EDUCATION.**

TO

EDWARD CLARKE, OF CHIPLEY, ESQ.

SIR,

THESE Thoughts concerning Education, which now come abroad into the world, do of right belong to you, being written several years since for your sake, and are no other than what you have already by you in my letters. I have so little varied any thing, but only the order of what was sent you at different times, and on several occasions, that the reader will easily find, in the familiarity and fashion of the style, that they were rather the private conversation of two friends than a discourse designed for public view.

The importunity of friends is the common apology for publications men are afraid to own themselves forward to. But you know I can truly say, that if some, who having heard of these papers of mine, had not pressed to see them, and afterwards to have them printed, they had lain dormant still in that privacy they were designed for. But those whose judgment I defer much to, telling me, that they were persuaded, that this rough draught of mine might be of some use, if made more public, touched upon what will always be very prevalent with me. For I think it every man's indispensable duty, to do all the service he can to his country; and I see not what difference he puts between himself and his cattle, who lives without that thought. This subject is of so great concernment, and a right way of education is of so general advantage, that did I find my abilities answer my wishes, I should not have needed exhortations or importunities from others. However, the meanness of these papers, and my just distrust of them, shall not keep me, by

the shame of doing so little, from contributing my mite, where there is no more required of me than my throwing it into the public receptacle. And if there be any more of their size and notions, who liked them so well that they thought them worth printing, I may flatter myself they will not be lost labour to every body.

I myself have been consulted of late by so many, who profess themselves at a loss how to breed their children, and the early corruption of youth is now become so general a complaint, that he cannot be thought wholly impertinent who brings the consideration of this matter on the stage, and offers something, if it be but to excite others, or afford matter of correction. For errors in education should be less indulged than any: these, like faults in the first concoction, that are never mended in the second or third, carry their afterwards-incorrigible taint with them through all the parts and stations of life.

I am so far from being conceited of any thing I have here offered, that I should not be sorry, even for your sake, if some one abler and fitter for such a task would, in a just treatise of education, suited to our English gentry, rectify the mistakes I have made in this: it being much more desirable to me, that young gentlemen should be put into (that which every one ought to be solicitous about) the best way of being formed and instructed than that my opinion should be received concerning it. You will, however, in the mean time bear me witness, that the method here proposed has had no ordinary effects upon a gentleman's son it was not designed for. I will not say the good temper of the child did not very much contribute to it, but this I think you and the parents are satisfied of, that a contrary usage, according to the ordinary disciplining of children, would not have mended that temper, nor have brought him to be in love with his book; to take a pleasure in learning, and to desire, as he does, to be taught more than those about him think fit always to teach him.

But my business is not to recommend this treatise to you, whose opinion of it I know already; nor it to the world, either by your opinion or patronage. The well educating of their children is so much the duty and concern of parents, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation so much depends on it, that I would have every one lay it seriously to heart; and after having well examined and distinguished what fancy, custom, or reason advises in the case, set his helping hand to promote every where that way of training up youth, with regard to their several conditions, which is the easiest, shortest, and likeliest to produce virtuous, useful, and able men in their distinct callings: though that most to be taken care of is the gentleman's calling. For if those of that rank are by their education once set right, they will quickly bring all the rest into order.

I know not whether I have done more than shown my good wishes towards it in this short discourse; such as it is, the world now has it; and if there be any thing in it worth their acceptance, they owe their thanks to you for it. My affection to you gave the first rise to it, and I am pleased, that I can leave to posterity this mark of the friendship has been between us. For I know no greater pleasure in this life, nor a better remembrance to be left behind one, than a long continued friendship, with an honest, useful, and worthy man, and lover of his country.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble

And most faithful servant,

JOHN LOCKE.

March 7, 1690.

SOME

**THOUGHTS**

CONCERNING

**EDUCATION.**

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§ 1. A SOUND mind in a sound body, is a short but full description of a happy state in this world: he that has these two, has little more to wish for; and he that wants either of them, will be but little the better for any thing else. Men's happiness or misery is most part of their own making. He whose mind directs not wisely, will never take the right way; and he whose body is crazy and feeble, will never be able to advance in it. I confess, there are some men's constitutions of body and mind so vigorous, and well framed by nature, that they need not much assistance from others; but, by the strength of their natural genius, they are, from their cradles, carried towards what is excellent; and, by the privilege of their happy constitutions, are able to do wonders. But examples of this kind are but few; and I think I may say, that, of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. It is that which makes the great difference in

mankind. The little, or almost insensible, impressions on our tender infancies, have very important and lasting consequences: and there it is, as in the fountains of some rivers, where a gentle application of the hand turns the flexible waters into channels, that make them take quite contrary courses; and by this little direction, given them at first, in the source, they receive different tendencies, and arrive at last at very remote and distant places.

§ 2. I imagine the minds of children as easily turned, this or that way, as water itself; and though this be the principal part, and our main care should be about the inside, yet the clay cottage is not to be neglected. I shall therefore begin with the case, and consider first the health of the body, as that which perhaps you may rather expect, from that study I have been thought more peculiarly to have applied myself to; and that also which will be soonest despatched, as lying, if I guess not amiss, in a very little compass.

Health.

§ 3. How necessary health is to our business and happiness, and how requisite a strong constitution, able to endure hardships and fatigue, is to one that will make any figure in the world, is too obvious to need any proof.

§ 4. The consideration I shall here have, of health, shall be, not what a physician ought to do, with a sick or crazy child; but what the parents, without the help of physic, should do for the preservation and improvement of an healthy, or, at least, not sickly constitution, in their children: and this perhaps might be all despatched in this one short rule, viz. that gentlemen should use their children as the honest farmers and substantial yeomen do theirs. But because the mothers, possibly, may think this a little too hard, and the fathers, too short, I shall explain myself more particularly; only laying down this, as a general and certain observation for the women to consider, viz. that most children's constitutions are either spoiled, or at least harmed, by cockering and tenderness.

Tenderness.

§ 5. The first thing to be taken care of is, that children be not too warmly clad or

Warmth.

covered, winter or summer. The face, when we are born, is no less tender than any other part of the body: it is use alone hardens it, and makes it more able to endure the cold. And therefore the Scythian philosopher gave a very significant answer to the Athenian, who wondered how he could go naked in frost and snow: "How," said the Scythian, "can you endure your face exposed to the sharp winter air?" "My face is used to it," said the Athenian. "Think me all face," replied the Scythian. Our bodies will endure any thing, that from the beginning they are accustomed to.

An eminent instance of this, though in the contrary excess of heat, being to our present purpose, to show what use can do, I shall set down in the author's words, as I met with it in a late ingenious voyage\*: "The heats," says he, "are more violent in Malta than in any part of Europe: they exceed those of Rome itself, and are perfectly stifling; and so much the more, because there are seldom any cooling breezes here. This makes the common people as black as gypsies: but yet the peasants defy the sun: they work on, in the hottest part of the day, without intermission, or sheltering themselves from his scorching rays. This has convinced me that nature can bring itself to many things which seem impossible, provided we accustom ourselves from our infancy. The Maltese do so, who harden the bodies of their children, and reconcile them to the heat, by making them go stark naked, without shirt, drawers, or any thing on their head, from their cradles, till they are ten years old."

Give me leave, therefore, to advise you not to fence too carefully against the cold of this our climate: there are those in England, who wear the same clothes winter and summer, and that without any inconvenience, or more sense of cold than others find. But if the mother will needs have an allowance for frost and snow, for fear of harm, and the father, for fear of censure, be sure let not his winter-clothing be too warm; and amongst other things remember, that when nature has

\* Nouveau Voyage du Levant, 1<sup>er</sup> 3<sup>e</sup>.

so well covered his head with hair, and strengthened it with a year or two's age, that he can run about by day without a cap, it is best that by night a child should also lie without one; there being nothing that more exposes to head-ach, colds, catarrhs, coughs, and several other diseases, than keeping the head warm.

§ 6. I have said [he] here, because the principal aim of my discourse is, how a young gentleman should be brought up from his infancy, which in all things will not so perfectly suit the education of daughters; though, where the difference of sex requires different treatment, it will be no hard matter to distinguish.

§ 7. I would also advise his feet to be Feet.  
washed every day in cold water; and to have his shoes so thin, that they might leak and let in water, whenever he comes near it. Here, I fear, I shall have the mistress, and maids too, against me. One will think it too filthy; and the other, perhaps, too much pains to make clean his stockings. But yet truth will have it, that his health is much more worth than all such considerations, and ten times as much more. And he that considers how mischievous and mortal a thing taking wet in the feet is, to those who have been bred nicely, will wish he had, with the poor people's children, gone barefoot; who, by that means, come to be so reconciled by custom, to wet their feet, that they take no more cold or harm by it than if they were wet in their hands. And what is it, I pray, that makes this great difference between the hands and the feet in others, but only custom? I doubt not, but if a man from his cradle had been always used to go barefoot, whilst his hands were constantly wrapped up in warm mittens, and covered with handshoes, as the Dutch call gloves; I doubt not, I say, but such a custom would make taking wet in his hands as dangerous to him, as now taking wet in their feet is to a great many others. The way to prevent this, is to have his shoes made so as to leak water, and his feet washed constantly every day in cold water. It is recommendable for its cleanliness: but that, which I aim at in it, is health. And therefore I limit it not precisely to

any time of the day. I have known it used every night with very good success, and that all the winter, without the omitting it so much as one night, in extreme cold weather : when thick ice covered the water, the child bathed his legs and feet in it ; though he was of an age not big enough to rub and wipe them himself ; and when he began this custom, was puling and very tender. But the great end being to harden those parts, by a frequent and familiar use of cold water, and thereby to prevent the mischiefs that usually attend accidental taking wet in the feet, in those who are bred otherwise ; I think it may be left to the prudence and convenience of the parents, to choose either night or morning. The time I deem indifferent, so the thing be effectually done. The health and hardiness procured by it would be a good purchase at a much dearer rate. To which if I add the preventing of corns, that to some men would be a very valuable consideration. But begin first in the spring with lukewarm, and so colder and colder every time, till in a few days you come to perfectly cold water, and then continue it so, winter and summer. For it is to be observed in this, Alterations. as in all other alterations from our ordinary way of living, the changes must be made by gentle and insensible degrees ; and so we may bring our bodies to any thing, without pain, and without danger.

How fond mothers are like to receive this doctrine, is not hard to foresee. What can it be less than to murder their tender babes, to use them thus ? What ! put their feet in cold water in frost and snow, when all one can do is little enough to keep them warm ! A little to remove their fears by examples, without which the plainest reason is seldom hearkened to ; Seneca tells us of himself, ep. 53 and 83, that he used to bathe himself in cold spring-water in the midst of winter. This, if he had not thought it not only tolerable, but healthy too, he would scarce have done, in an exuberant fortune, that could well have borne the expense of a warm bath ; and in an age (for he was then old) that would have excused greater indulgence. If we think his

stoical principles led him to this severity ; let it be so, that this sect reconciled cold water to his sufferance : what made it agreeable to his health ? for that was not impaired by this hard usage. But what shall we say to Horace, who armed not himself with the reputation of any sect, and least of all affected stoical austerities ? yet he assures us, he was wont in the winter season to bathe himself in cold water. But perhaps Italy will be thought much warmer than England, and the chilness of their waters not to come near ours in winter. If the rivers of Italy are warmer, those of Germany and Poland are much colder, than any in this our country ; and yet in these the Jews, both men and women, bathe all over, at all seasons of the year, without any prejudice to their health. And every one is not apt to believe it is a miracle, or any peculiar virtue of St. Winifred's well, that makes the cold waters of that famous spring do no harm to the tender bodies that bathe in it. Every one is now full of the miracles done, by cold baths, on decayed and weak constitutions, for the recovery of health and strength ; and therefore they cannot be impracticable, or intolerable, for the improving and hardening the bodies of those who are in better circumstances.

If these examples of grown men be not thought yet to reach the case of children, but that they may be judged still to be too tender and unable to bear such usage ; let them examine what the Germans of old, and the Irish now do to them ; and they will find that infants too, as tender as they are thought, may, without any danger, endure bathing, not only of their feet, but of their whole bodies in cold water. And there are, at this day, ladies in the Highlands of Scotland, who use this discipline to their children, in the midst of winter ; and find that cold water does them no harm, even when there is ice in it.

§ 8. I shall not need here to mention Swimming. swimming, when he is of an age able to learn, and has any one to teach him. It is that saves many a man's life : and the Romans thought it so necessary, that they ranked it with letters ; and it was the common phrase to mark one ill-educated, and good for



nothing, that he had neither learned to read nor to swim: "Nec literas didicit, nec natare." But besides the gaining a skill, which may serve him at need; the advantages to health, by often bathing in cold water, during the heat of summer, are so many, that I think nothing need to be said to encourage it; provided this one caution be used, that he never go into the water when exercise has at all warmed him, or left any emotion in his blood or pulse.

Air. § 9. Another thing, that is of great advantage to every one's health, but especially children's, is to be much in the open air, and very little, as may be, by the fire, even in winter. By this he will accustom himself also to heat and cold, shine and rain; all which if a man's body will not endure, it will serve him to very little purpose in this world; and when he is grown up, it is too late to begin to use him to it: it must be got early and by degrees. Thus the body may be brought to bear almost any thing. If I should advise him to play in the wind and sun without a hat, I doubt whether it could be borne. There would a thousand objections be made against it, which at last would amount to no more, in truth, than being sunburnt. And if my young master be to be kept always in the shade, and never exposed to the sun and wind, for fear of his complexion, it may be a good way to make him a beau, but not a man of business. And although greater regard be to be had to beauty in the daughters, yet I will take the liberty to say, that the more they are in the air, without prejudice to their faces, the stronger and healthier they will be; and the nearer they come to the hardships of their brothers in their education, the greater advantage will they receive from it, all the remaining part of their lives.

§ 10. Playing in the open air has but this one danger in it, that I know: and that is, that when he is hot with running up and down, he should sit or lie down on the cold or moist earth. This, I grant, and drinking cold drink, when they are hot with labour or exercise, brings more people to the grave, or to the brink of it, by fevers, and other diseases, than any thing I know.

These mischiefs are easily enough prevented, whilst he is little, being then seldom out of sight. And if during his childhood he be constantly and rigorously kept from sitting on the ground, or drinking any cold liquor, whilst he is hot, the custom of forbearing, grown into a habit, will help much to preserve him, when he is no longer under his maid's or tutor's eye. This is all I think can be done in the case. For, as years increase, liberty must come with them; and, in a great many things, he must be trusted to his own conduct, since there cannot always be a guard upon him; except what you put into his own mind, by good principles and established habits, which is the best and surest, and therefore most to be taken care of. For, from repeated cautions and rules, ever so often inculcated, you are not to expect any thing, either in this or any other case, farther than practice has established them into habit.

§ 11. One thing the mention of the girls brings into my mind, which must not be forgot; and that is, that your son's clothes be never made strait, especially about the breast. Let nature have scope to fashion the body as she thinks best. She works of herself a great deal better and exacter than we can direct her. And if women were themselves to frame the bodies of their children in their wombs, as they often endeavour to mend their shapes when they are out, we should as certainly have no perfect children born, as we have few well-shaped, that are strait-laced, or much tampered with. This consideration should methinks keep busy people (I will not say ignorant nurses and boddice-makers) from meddling in a matter they understand not; and they should be afraid to put nature out of her way, in fashioning the parts, when they know not how the least and meanest is made. And yet I have seen so many instances of children receiving great harm from strait lacing, that I cannot but conclude, there are other creatures, as well as monkeys, who, little wiser than they, destroy their young ones by senseless fondness, and too much embracing.

§ 12. Narrow breasts, short and stinking breath, ill

























































the examples of others, whom they esteem and think above themselves. And if the things which they observe others to do, be ordered so that they insinuate themselves into them, as the privilege of an age or condition above theirs ; then ambition, and the desire still to get forward, and higher, and to be like those above them, will set them on work, and make them go on with vigour and pleasure ; pleasure in what they have begun by their own desire. In which way the enjoyment of their dearly beloved freedom will be no small encouragement to them. To all which, if there be added the satisfaction of credit and reputation, I am apt to think there will need no other spur to excite their application and assiduity, as much as is necessary. I confess, there needs patience and skill, gentleness and attention, and a prudent conduct, to attain this at first. But why have you a tutor, if there needed no pains ? But when this is once established, all the rest will follow more easily than in any more severe and imperious discipline. And I think it no hard matter to gain this point ; I am sure it will not be, where children have no ill examples set before them. The great danger therefore I apprehend is only from servants, and other ill-ordered children, or such other vicious or foolish people, who spoil children, both by the ill pattern they set before them in their own ill manners, and by giving them together the two things they should never have at once ; I mean, vicious pleasures and commendation.

Chiding. § 77. As children should very seldom be corrected by blows ; so, I think, frequent, and especially passionate chiding, of almost as ill consequence. It lessens the authority of the parents, and the respect of the child : for I bid you still remember, they distinguish early betwixt passion and reason : and as they cannot but have a reverence for what comes from the latter, so they quickly grow into a contempt of the former ; or if it causes a present terror, yet it soon wears off ; and natural inclination will easily learn to slight such scarecrows, which make a noise, but are not animated by reason. Children being to be restrained by the parents only in vicious (which, in their

tender years, are only a few) things, a look or nod only ought to correct them, when they do amiss ; or, if words are sometimes to be used, they ought to be grave, kind, and sober, representing the ill, or unbecomingness of the faults, rather than a hasty rating of the child for it, which makes him not sufficiently distinguish whether your dislike be not more directed to him than his fault. Passionate chiding usually carries rough and ill language with it, which has this further ill effect, that it teaches and justifies it in children : and the names that their parents or preceptors give them they will not be ashamed or backward to bestow on others, having so good authority for the use of them.

§ 78. I foresee here it will be objected to me : what then, will you have children never beaten, nor chid, for any fault ? this will be to let loose the reins to all kind of disorder. Not so much as is imagined, if a right course has been taken in the first seasoning of their minds, and implanting that awe of their parents above-mentioned. For beating, by constant observation, is found to do little good, where the smart of it is all the punishment is feared or felt in it ; for the influence of that quickly wears out with the memory of it. But yet there is one, and but one fault, for which, I think, children should be beaten ; and that is obstinacy or rebellion. And in this too I would have it ordered so, if it can be, that the shame of the whipping, and not the pain, should be the greatest part of the punishment. Shame of doing amiss, and deserving chastisement, is the only true restraint belonging to virtue. The smart of the rod, if shame accompanies it not, soon ceases, and is forgotten, and will quickly, by use, lose its terror. I have known the children of a person of quality kept in awe, by the fear of having their shoes pulled off, as much as others by apprehensions of a rod hanging over them. Some such punishment I think better than beating ; for it is shame of the fault, and the disgrace that attends it, that they should stand in fear of, rather than pain, if you would have them have a temper truly ingenuous. But stubbornness, and an obstinate disobedience, must



















































































































































































































































































































































































































































































