

NEE TASTES.

[From the London Saturday Review.] It was the opinion of our forefathers that when a youth was singularly deficient both in mind and body he was "only fit to be a parson."

Somewhat on the same principle, a weak and lazy lad in our own days is usually said to have "nice tastes." Show us a boy who, while idle and useless, has not the strength and energy to be vicious, and we will show you a boy whose female relatives will declare that he has nice tastes.

A delicate lad is taken away from school. This is often the foundation of a wasted life. An evil spirit being thus raised, employment has to be provided for him. The very cause of his absence from school implies insufficiency of strength for boisterous amusements.

His is encouraged to occupy his time with the study of botany, geology, chemistry, or drawing. When he has learned a few technical names out of the most elementary of hand-books, and worn out his clothes or ruined the furniture in the pursuit of his science, he is discovered by his family to be a genius. Foolish remarks about his abilities are made within his hearing, and the seed which shall surely grow into the perfect prig is sown in the fertile soil of his own ignorance.

Yet he is actually wasting his time in that which is worse than absolute idleness. If the boy were given a task to perform, were it ever so light, in the study of any science or art, and judiciously punished if he failed to perform it, the result might be highly satisfactory; but unfortunately in such studies the pupil is frequently his own master; or even if he is under a preceptor, such exerted labors are conventionally supposed to be utterly beyond the pale of discipline.

And the young Ruffian soon becomes dissatisfied with his master's style, either dispenses entirely with the services of an instructor, or demands a fresh one. Mozart II. discovers that his teacher thumps or that he plays without the least feeling—Kona locuta et; the dismissal of the master is sealed. What should we think of an urchin of the same age desiring a change of school because he doubted his tutor's rendering of a passage in Homer?

One of the most striking traits in the character of the embryo dilettante is the versatility of his genius. He has scarcely begun botany when he plunges into entomology; wearied of the latter science, and emarking in mineralogy, he is seized with a craze for music; but believing that after all science is his true forte, he rushes into chemistry. Yet he has only destroyed one carpet and thrice nearly succeeded in burning the house down, when we find him engaged on a great work of art, surrounded by various pigments and brushes and a medium of pigment and nauseating odors. If he happens to take up physiology and anatomy, the frogs in his immediate neighborhood have a bad time of it. He reads of some interesting experiments which may be performed in live frogs. Dear boy, he has such nice tastes. Surely such dispositions ought to be encouraged.

Other boys may be engaged in giving each other black eyes, or blaspheming or committing any of the other iniquities enumerated by Dr. Watts; but our pattern child is walking steadily in the straight and narrow way of his esthetic pursuits. As his mamma says, the sweetest point in his character is that he is "so pure." There is perhaps a slight drawback to the parents' satisfaction in the matter of religion; for as he passes through the latter half of his teens the young student probably dips into the neologic works of a certain school of scientific men of the present day. If this be the case, it will be lucky if he contents himself with tracing his descent to the wiggled worthies whose portraits adorn his father's walls, and does not claim his ancestry among apes, jelly-fish, or molecules. Nay, it is far from impossible that he may astonish his parents by observing that "paper is an absurdity, as there is no God having any personal sympathy with us." He prefers worshipping the "unknowable" in the temple of nature, with the firmness as its roof, the scent of flowers as its incense, and the winged songsters as its choir, to accompany the rest of his family to the parish church, which, as he very truly remarks, is "made with hands." Here the British matron, makes a stand; but there are some glorious exceptions who consider their sons' hearts so sincere, and their ideas so beautiful, that, while regretting their eccentricities, they yield to their vagaries. The exclusive use of a room for the experiments, and to contain the collections and apparatus of the young genius, is of course a necessity, and a museum situated on a picturesque spot in the pleasure-grounds is a nice thing for him. In London it is very desirable that a coach house should be fitted up as his studio or laboratory.

his mental capabilities scarcely fit him to undergo the studies necessary to enable him to pass the examinations requisite for either profession. Traveling is a sine qua non for the gratification of his tastes. Armed with Murray, Kugler, and Mrs. Jamieson, Child Harold starts on his pilgrimage, and having made himself a nuisance at the tables-d'hoite of the principal cities of Europe, he returns to his home an even greater prig than he left it. His unhappy friends have to endure hearing him "talk abroad," until some of them in their hearts devoutly wish that he had never returned to his native land. He now considers that he has seen so much of life, of men and of manners, that he probably takes up politics and social economy, though, needless to say, in the most superficial way. Likely enough he appears at meetings of various associations, including the Social Science Congress. If he has been to any far distant country he soon becomes a member of the Geographical Society, or if he is a "stay-at-home," he is a member of an Archaeological Society.

In due course the esthetic young man meets the esthetic young woman. We have not space at present to treat of the latter. Sufficient be it to say that she is severally looking, but rather pretty, that she wears her waist at a different elevation from the rest of womankind, and that she generally carries a pair of spectacles in her pocket, which she puts on to examine works of art. We will pass over the love-making of the intellectual-terribles. If they can make a romance and difficulty, when no opposition is raised to their marriage, they will do so. The great advantage of married life to the man of nice tastes is the opportunity of displaying them which is afforded by the necessity of furnishing a house. Happy the artistic couple whose tastes lie in the same "period." Woo them if the masculine affection be for Gothic furniture and the feminine for Renaissance—if Mr. be Louis Quatorze, while Mrs. is Queen Anne, Henry is the drain on the parental purse-strings. Artistic furniture is not to be had for nothing. And, talking of expensiveness, our friend has a habit of "picking up" things, which acts much in the same manner as a hole in the pocket. He likes the principal picture and claims a dealer to come up and speak to him at Christie and Manson's. Now their friendship has to be purchased with solid gold. Sometimes men with nice tastes regard the purchase of works of art as an investment. This investment does not invariably turn out an El Dorado, for the amateur usually buys that which is the most fashionable thing, instead of that which probably will become fashionable. So, when he has gone on investing and picking up until the esthetic purse has run low, a realization becoming necessary, he is astonished to find that his valentines not only fail to pay any interest, but even to restore the very capital itself. If the sale is apparently a good one, it has probably been entrusted to the hands of a distinguished dealer, when the nature of the arrangement that he makes diverts the lion's share of the profits from the pockets of the vendor. In a financial point of view, the old-fashioned "clever man" who 'kept up his classics' had an advantage over the man of nice tastes. The former did not cost much, whilst the latter frequently laid, directly or indirectly, to ruin. In our forefathers times the sedentary man, as a rule, laid by substantial savings. If he did waste any money, it was either in electioneering or the purchase of rare old editions of books; but for the study of his classics a small room with ugly mahogany furniture and leather-covered armchair was all that he required.

Before youth begins to verge on middle age the professor of nice tastes generally shows signs of failing health. Want of exercise and ennui make life burdensome to him. The most celebrated physicians in vain prescribe tonics and amusement. The patient rapidly becomes that most troublesome of all invalids, an esthetic hypochondriac. The least thing frets and worries him. If a cretonne fades, he is not content until it is renewed. A crack in the varnish of a picture drives him wild. He is in a fever until he possesses a specimen of the works of all the most eminent masters of his favorite school. Nothing is more wholesome than the honest study of an art or science. But more discipline is necessary in the schools of art and science than in any others. To succeed thoroughly in either, the work must be hard. This is good. On the other hand, to take up art or science as play, the work need not be hard. This also is good. But woe to him who mistakes play for work. An extravagant demand for artistic produce has always been a sign of a nation verging on decay. Of course this great demand may call forth many real artists who would otherwise be engaged in some other employment, and thus may beautiful things be the result, which would otherwise never have existed. But this does not alter the fact that when art becomes a mere luxury and an amusement for idleness, it produces an enervating and most pernicious effect. Real genius, and wholesome art of science ought ever to be encouraged, but a sensual and lazy love of either should be stamped out as the rinderpest.

Our student seems such pursuits as mercantile business and the law. He is too orthodox to be a proper candidate for holy orders, and too feeble in body for the army, while

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