

INTRODUCTION.

THE arts and sciences have become so extensive, that to facilitate their acquirement is of as much importance as to extend their boundaries. Illustration, if it does not shorten the time of study, will at least make it more agreeable. **THIS WORK** has a greater aim than mere illustration; we do not introduce colours for the purpose of entertainment, or to amuse *by certain combinations of tint and form*, but to assist the mind in its researches after truth, to increase the facilities of instruction, and to diffuse permanent knowledge. If we wanted authorities to prove the importance and usefulness of geometry, we might quote every philosopher since the days of **Plato**. Among the Greeks, in ancient, as in the school of **Pestalozzi** and others in recent times, geometry was adopted as the best gymnastic of the mind. In fact, Euclid's Elements have become, by common consent, the basis of mathematical science all over the civilized globe. But this will not appear extraordinary, if we consider that this sublime science is not only better calculated than any other to call forth the spirit of inquiry, to elevate the mind, and to strengthen the reasoning faculties, but also it forms the best introduction to most of the useful and important vocations of human life. Arithmetic, land-surveying, mensuration, engineering, navigation, mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, physical astronomy, &c. are all dependent on the propositions of geometry.



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Much however depends on the first communication of any science to a learner, though the best and most easy methods are seldom adopted. Propositions are placed before a student, who though having a sufficient understanding, is told just as much about them on entering at the very threshold of the science, as gives him a prepossession most unfavourable to his future study of this delightful subject; or "the formalities and paraphernalia of rigour are so ostentatiously put forward, as almost to hide the reality. Endless and perplexing repetitions, which do not confer greater exactitude on the reasoning, render the demonstrations involved and obscure, and conceal from the view of the student the consecution of evidence." Thus an aversion is created in the mind of the pupil, and a subject so calculated to improve the reasoning powers, and give the habit of close thinking, is degraded by a dry and rigid course of instruction into an uninteresting exercise of the memory. To raise the curiosity, and to awaken the listless and dormant powers of younger minds should be the aim of every teacher; but where examples of excellence are wanting, the attempts to attain it are but few, while eminence excites attention and produces imitation. The object of this Work is to introduce a method of teaching geometry, which has been much approved of by many scientific men in this country, as well as in France and America. The plan here adopted forcibly appeals to the eye, the most sensitive and the most comprehensive of our external organs, and its pre-eminence to imprint it subject on the mind is supported by the incontrovertible maxim expressed in the well known words of Horace:

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem

Quàm quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

A feeble impress through the ear is made,

Than what is by the faithful eye conveyed.

Much however depends on the first communication of any science to a learner, though the best and most easy methods are seldom adopted. Propositions are placed before a student, who though having a sufficient understanding, is told just as much about them on entering at the very threshold of the science, as gives him a prepossession most unfavourable to his future study of this delightful subject; or "the formalities and paraphernalia of rigour are so ostentatiously put forward, as almost to hide the reality. Endless and perplexing repetitions, which do not confer greater exactitude on the reasoning, render the demonstrations involved and obscure, and conceal from the view of the student the consecution of evidence." Thus an aversion is created in the mind of the pupil, and a subject so calculated to improve the reasoning powers, and give the habit of close thinking, is degraded by a dry and rigid course of instruction into an uninteresting exercise of the memory. To raise the curiosity, and to awaken the listless and dormant powers of younger minds should be the aim of every teacher; but where examples of excellence are wanting, the attempts to attain it are but few, while eminence excites attention and produces imitation. The object of this Work is to introduce a method of teaching geometry, which has been much approved of by many scientific men in this country, as well as in France and America. The plan here adopted forcibly appeals to the eye, the most sensitive and the most comprehensive of our external organs, and its pre-eminence to imprint it subject on the mind is supported by the incontrovertible maxim expressed in the well known words of Horace:—

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All language consists of representative signs, and those signs are the best which effect their purposes with the greatest precision and dispatch. Such for all common purposes are the audible signs called words, which are still considered as audible, whether addressed immediately to the ear, or through the medium of letters to the eye. Geometrical diagrams are not signs, but the materials of geometrical science, the object of which is to show the relative quantities of their parts by a process of reasoning called Demonstration. This reasoning has been generally carried on by words, letters, and black or uncoloured diagrams; but as the use of coloured symbols, signs, and diagrams in the linear arts and sciences, renders the process of reasoning more precise, and the attainment more expeditious, they have been in this instance accordingly adopted.

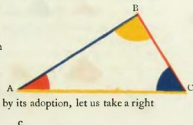
Such is the expedition of this enticing mode of communicating knowledge, that the Elements of Euclid can be acquired in less than one third the time usually employed, and the retention by the memory is much more permanent; these facts have been ascertained by numerous experiments made by the inventor, and several others who have adopted his plans. The particulars of which are few and obvious; the letters annexed to points, lines, or other parts of a diagram are in fact but arbitrary names, and represent them in the demonstration; instead of these, the parts being differently coloured, are made to name themselves, for their forms in corresponding colours represent them in the demonstration.



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In order to give a better idea of this system, and of the advantages gained by its adoption, let us take a right



for the letters must be traced one by one before the students arrange in their minds the particular magnitude referred to, which often occasions confusion and error, as well as loss of time. Also if the parts which are given as equal, have the same colours in any diagram, the mind will not wander from the object before it; that is, such an arrangement presents an ocular demonstration of the parts to be proved equal, and the learner retains the data throughout the whole of the reasoning. But whatever may be the advantages of the present plan, if it be not substituted for, it can always be made a powerful auxiliary to the other methods, for the purpose of introduction, or of a more speedy reminiscence, or of more permanent retention by the memory.

The experience of all who have formed systems to impress facts on the understanding, agree in proving that coloured representations, as pictures, cuts, diagrams, &c. are more easily fixed in the mind than mere sentences unmarked by any peculiarity. Curious as it may appear, poets seem to be aware of this fact more than mathematicians; many modern poets allude to this visible system of communicating knowledge, one of them has thus expressed himself:

Sounds which address the ear are lost and die

In one short hour, but these which strike the eye,

Live long upon the mind, the faithful fight

Engraves the knowledge with a beam of light.

This perhaps may be reckoned the only improvement which plain geometry has received since the days of Euclid, and if there were any geometers of note before that time, Euclid's success has quite eclipsed their memory, and even occasioned all good things of that kind to be assigned to him; like *Aesop* among the writers of Fables. It may also be worthy of remark, as tangible diagrams afford the only medium through which geometry and other linear

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