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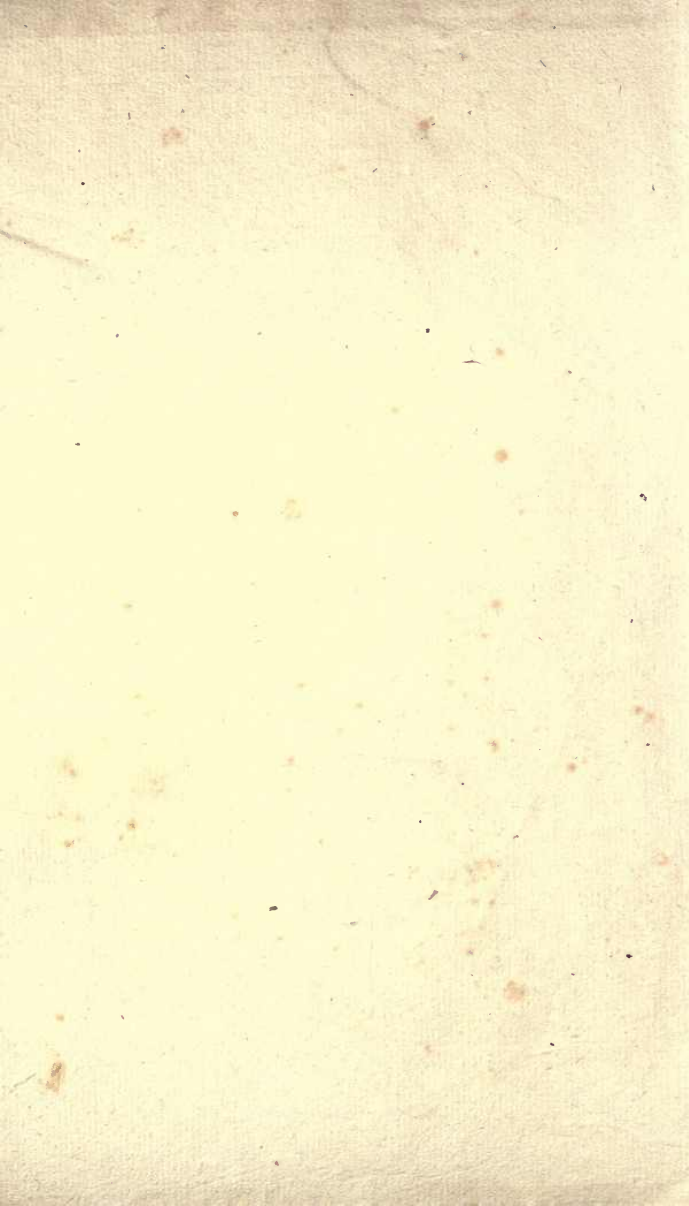


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# AN EXPOSURE

OF THE

## Fallacy

OF THE

# HAMILTONIAN SYSTEM.

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BY JOHN HOOPER HARTNOLL.

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“ All his own confessions, Squibb!”

“ Little did I think, that a man of my mild and peaceable disposition, that would not hurt a cat, should be forced out to battle.”

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1823.

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THE EXPOSURE

OF THE

WORK

AND THE  
RESULTS  
OF THE  
EXPOSURE  
TO THE  
RAYS  
OF THE  
SUN  
AND  
THE  
EARTH

BY  
J. PLUMMER  
AND  
OTHERS

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J. Plummer, Printer, 51, Little Eastcheap.

## AN EXPOSURE, &c.

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AS it is probable that this pamphlet will reach the hands of many persons who were present at Mr. Hamilton's Lecture, at the City of London Tavern, on Monday, the 12th Instant, it is perhaps unnecessary to offer any apology for troubling them with a relation of certain circumstances which led to the occurrences of that evening. It is well known that for the last five or six months, the London papers have been inundated with the advertisements of Mr. Hamilton, who professes to teach the French, Latin, German, and other languages, on a system peculiarly his own. He says, every pupil will acquire "a perfect knowledge of the French language, so as to pronounce with the propriety of a native of France, to translate any book in the language with an accuracy unknown on any other system, and to write and speak it with grammatical purity in forty-eight lessons." He professes to teach

ten thousand words, or the whole of the Gospel of St. John in that language, in ten lessons of one hour each. He asserts, "it is verily believed that the Hamiltonian school, is the most perfect model of what a school ought to be, now in existence." And he declares, that "we ought not to be surprised that his system should produce effects which, when compared to the effects of the vicious systems of the schools, *may have the appearance of a miracle.*"

Struck with the boldness of this man's pretensions, I attended his lecture at the City of London Tavern, on March 13th, for the purpose of ascertaining how far his system deserved the high encomiums he had passed upon it, and whether or not there was any thing in it beyond the mere quackery which is so frequently presented to John Bull for his patronage. At the time appointed, Mr. Hamilton entered the lecture-room with all the apparent self-satisfaction and bustling importance of a man who was about to communicate some marvellous information. He commenced an address to the Meeting by stating, that he had lately come from America; where, if we may believe his assertions, he worked miracles so truly extraordinary, that Prince Hohenloe's dwindle into mere ordinary occurrences. He made the most unjustifiable attacks upon our academic institutions, and endeavoured, by a series of false and illiberal



representations, to depreciate the talents and characters of our teachers. He expatiated upon his own attainments and energies; and dwelt upon the ignorance and inability of others. And he descanted on the origin and progress of grammar, and on the perfection of language at the beginning of the world, in a manner that admirably illustrated the words of Seneca, "*plus sonat, quam valet.*"

He then proceeded to develop his plan of tuition, and to give the persons present a lesson on his system. This I considered exceedingly fair, as it would enable the company to judge whether or not he could, as he had professed, teach a thousand words in an hour. But mark the result! At the expiration of the lesson, which lasted above half an hour, instead of having taught *five hundred words*, he had only read, and caused to be repeated, the diminutive number of—*forty*. There was something so barefaced in this proceeding, and the greater part of the meeting seemed so insensible of it, that I rose at the conclusion of the lecture for the purpose of endeavouring to remove so confirmed a mental ophthalmia. Mr. H. endeavoured to oppose my being heard, but the resolution of a great majority of the company, overcame his opposition. My address was brief, as my sole intention in rising was to excite a spirit of enquiry in the good-natured people present. I

thought it charitable to do so; for it was rather distressing to behold five or six hundred persons applauding a man whose talents were evidently of a very ordinary kind, and who had decidedly failed in the purpose for which he had called them together. I wished merely to convince them that in what they had heard that evening, there was something for reflection, and that notwithstanding the applause they had bestowed upon Mr. Hamilton, it was possible on re-consideration they would perceive the fallacy and absurdity of his representations.

On the 29th of March, he gave a Lecture at the Green Man, on Blackheath, which I likewise attended for the purpose of exposing his insufferable arrogance, and of cautioning the Meeting against the pretensions of a man whose effrontery was a veil to the impuissance of his intellect.

I was however pleasingly surprised to find there was little necessity for carrying my intentions into effect, as Mr. Corney, a gentleman of very considerable information, presented himself to the notice of the Meeting at an early part of the evening, and exposed the deceptive nature of a certain part of Mr. Hamilton's proceedings. A very warm discussion ensued, in which several gentlemen joined, and for which they were honored by Mr. Hamilton with the appellation of fools, and other equally gentlemanly terms, the very essence of the learned linguist's technical vocabulary.

A silence at length ensued, as deep as that which followed the memorable combat between the valiant Jan Risingh and the renowned Peter Stuyvesant,—Mr. Hamilton became less feverish and proceeded with his lecture. At its conclusion, Mr. Corney made a very forcible and eloquent appeal to the Meeting on the subject of Mr. Hamilton's pretensions. He charged him “ I. With holding forth deceptive promises as to the acquisition of languages. II. With gross injustice towards those engaged in the instruction of youth. And, III. With having but a superficial knowledge of the principles of composition.”

I fully intended to second this appeal, but was prevented from doing so by a claim upon my attentions from a party whom it was far more agreeable to me to wait upon, than to remain and expose the absurdities of a person, who I had the satisfaction of knowing, was already in the care of a gentleman quite capable of giving him every requisite attention.

It may be supposed from what I have just stated, that I am naturally a very peaceable individual; that I am as easily forced by circumstances out of a tumult as I am forced by them into it. Quite the contrary; I am in most cases absolutely inflexible: hard words or hard blows have no terrors for me: but who, I ask, could have resisted the circumstances which drew me from the Green Man on the evening in question?

I defy Barlow himself, to devise means for counteracting such a powerful local attraction.

After the occurrences of this memorable evening, the world sailed on in its orbit pretty quietly until the evening of the 12th instant, when Mr. Hamilton again gave a Lecture at the City of London Tavern, and at which I was *again* present. He commenced with the grossest invectives against me; he termed me "a person of no education, an ignorant fellow, and no gentleman;" and he stated, that having heard it was my intention to address the persons assembled to hear him that evening, he had provided against such an accident by securing the attendance of the police. This was certainly rather a novel proceeding in a London Lecture.

It is, I am sure, quite unnecessary to make any remarks on Mr. Hamilton's silly vituperation; it is vain to talk of vindicating myself against the aspersions of a man who does not himself possess the attributes in which he says I am deficient; who has not, I believe, the slightest knowledge of who, or what I am; and who, I am confident, would equally calumniate any man in existence who might venture to oppose him. To acquit myself of the charge of ignorance is an attempt which I cannot be expected to make; and to endeavour to remove the imputation of being devoid of the feelings of a gentleman is needless, as I have very cogent reasons for believing Mr.

Hamilton has no notion of the meaning of the word.

At the conclusion of Mr. Hamilton's Lecture I rose to address the Meeting; and the support which I received from nearly the whole of the persons present; was such as must, and would have, obtained for me a hearing, had it not been for the interposition of the police. And I am confident, from the strong desire expressed by hundreds around me that I should still proceed to address them, that if I had chosen to remain in the room, the official power brought against me would have availed nothing. But perceiving that a determination to remain, would probably create a riot, and endanger the property of the house, I consented, ultimately to leave the Meeting. The public, however, will know how to appreciate the integrity, and estimate the intentions of a man, who is obliged to trust to the arm of power for the support of his statements.

I understand, that as soon as I had quitted the room, Mr. H. rose to re-address the company, and that he ventured to renew his invectives against me.—The burst of disapprobation which I am told followed, must have convinced him, that in England an individual's character is a part of the property of the nation, and that every true Englishman feels it a duty to arrest the progress of the spoiler. A few more such evenings,



and Mr. Hamilton's name and occupation will have vanished "like the baseless fabric of a vision."

Having shewn *how* I have opposed Mr. Hamilton, it is now time to state *why* I have opposed him. I had heard him scoff at those institutions in which have been nurtured the finest spirits of the age: I had heard him calumniate a class of men among whom are some of the brightest ornaments of society: I had heard him ridicule the systems of education to which this country is so much indebted for its literature and science: and I had heard him sacrificing the character of a nation for the purpose of establishing his own. It was high time, I thought, for some one to place himself between Mr. Hamilton and the public—I have taken the position, and it will be no easy matter to drive me from it.

When I read the first of Mr. Hamilton's advertisements, I considered it one of the many ephemeral puffs which we so frequently meet with on the subject of education. Little did I then suppose, that the writer of it would ultimately swell and puff himself to a tangible magnitude. Little did I imagine that the time would come, when he would be seen roaming about "like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." But advertisement after advertisement flashed before us, like those awful lights which herald forth the spirit of the storm; men stared at each other in

silent astonishment; the world stood still in expectation of some direful event; and at length, out came Mr. Hamilton's printed statement of himself and his system; and this brings me to the marrow of my subject.

Mr. H. commences this notable statement by telling us,

“ He submits with deference the following facts, upon the authenticity and correctness of which he is willing to rest his fame as a teacher, and his honour as a man.”

There is certainly nothing connected with Mr. Hamilton's statements which can enable us to decide upon their authenticity; and from his allusion to the *correctness* of his *facts*, I should be almost led to conclude that he knows something relative to *incorrect facts*.

“ Tracing the steps of none of their predecessors, Mr. H. and his family have, during eight years, taught in above forty cities and towns in the United States and Canada, the learned and most of the modern languages, but principally the French, with a degree of success as to the number and respectability of their pupils, the facility of forming classes, and the high price (comparatively with other teachers) paid for their instructions, which he believes no other teacher in any age or country can boast.”

The most remarkable circumstance connected with this paragraph is, that he speaks of his success, *only* as respects the number of his pupils, the facility of getting them, and the high price they paid for their instruction; whereas, one would expect that he should rather have dwelt upon their proficiency whilst under his tuition.

Let it also be carefully remarked, that in eight years, he wandered through above forty cities and towns, that is, five in each year, or one in about every two months. Now, I do not think it at all unreasonable to infer, that if Mr. Hamilton travelled with the velocity of one of Munchausen's eagles, and if his prospectuses were printed and distributed with a facility equal to that with which he professes to teach, it would still have taken at least a month to form the numerous classes of which he speaks; leaving him another *clear month* in which to perfect his pupils in "the learned and most of the modern languages." He must surely have carried his languages about with him bottled up for use, as German doctors do their nervous cordials—the wonder is, that he could find so many persons ready to swallow them. If we seriously consider the time and attention essential to the acquirement of a language, it will require very little skill in numerical calculation, to perceive the absurdity of Mr. Hamilton's statement. I desire no other proof of the value which was attached to his services in America, of the opinion which men held of his system, and of the extent to which that system was carried into effect, than his own declaration that, on an average, he quitted each city and town after a residence in it of two months.—This at least speaks well for Jonathan's sagacity.

“The result was every where and always the same; whether the class was a private one of 10 or 12 persons, or a public one of 60 or 100, as in Union, Yale, Princeton, Vermont, and Middlebury Universities (where Mr. Hamilton counted not only the students, but the presidents and professors of these institutions among his pupils) every member who attended the class and gave it a moderate share of attention, without regard to previous instruction, without regard to age, *sex*, or *intellect*, farther than to be possessed of common sense, and to know how to read English, arrived invariably at the same stage of proficiency, in the same period of time which had been foretold and promised by the teacher at the outset, as the infallible result, not of his talent nor the genius of the pupil, but of the plain and simple mechanism of the system on which he was taught.”

The presidents and professors of the Universities among his pupils!! Blessings on their wisdom!!! Is it possible that the Universities in America are in so degraded a state as to require the assistance of an itinerant language-master? If such really be the case, I would seriously recommend Mr. Hamilton to re-cross the Atlantic as speedily as possible: we have certainly less occasion for his services than the good people he has turned his back upon.

I know not, why Mr. Hamilton thinks proper to state as a remarkable feature in the success of his system that his pupils arrived at the same stage of proficiency without regard to *sex*. Locke, Priestly, Reid, and other writers on the human mind, never made any discovery that led them to conclude the understanding of woman was inferior to that of man; and I am sorry to find that Mr. Hamilton has ever had occasion to hold an opinion so discordant with the belief of his brother philosophers on the subject.

The same stage of proficiency he likewise states was attained without regard to *intellect*.—Here I think Mr. H's. metaphysical sagacity entirely left him.—It is not so much on the *intellect*, as on the *memory*, that the pupil depends for the acquirement of a language; a man may be a sound logician and a profound mathematician, and yet be deficient in the capacity to keep in remembrance a number of arbitrary terms, without the most indefatigable labour. There is no power of the mind so capricious and inconstant as the memory, and nothing in which men differ so much as in their powers of retention; it is therefore vain for Mr. Hamilton to endeavour to make us believe, that he has discovered a system by whose mechanism he can equalize *that* which in different individuals comprehends extremes so immensely distant.

“Ladies and gentlemen of sixty and upwards, and children of eight years, and even younger, the parent and the child seated in Mr. Hamilton's classes on the same bench, found the instruction equally fitted to the age and capacity of each.”

Ladies and Gentlemen of sixty and upwards, that is, of course, seventy and eighty! Can any one contemplate so interesting a scene without supposing it must have been some such, that the poet had in his imagination when he exclaimed—

“delightful task!

To teach the *young* idea how to shoot.”



Far be it from me to speak irreverently of the aged; I venerate the furrowed cheek and silver locks of man in his declining years: but to be told that persons, for whom the grave is opening, formed themselves into classes, for the purpose of jabbering French and Latin, disturbs the sanctity of one's heart, and calls forth an expression of levity, instead of exciting the kindly feelings of reverence.

“The amount of the proficiency thus attained by all Mr. Hamilton's pupils, without disgusting labour or painful application, without getting any thing by rote, or the previous study or knowledge of the grammar of their own or of any other language, is, to be able to pronounce with propriety, to read and translate, and to have *actually read* and translated the whole of the Gospel of St. John in French, (comprehending, with the inflexions of the verbs, not less than ten thousand different words) in ten lessons of one hour each, with a *correctness of grammatical analysis and a precision of meaning and construction wholly unknown*, or at least never attempted in the Schools; to be able to read, and to have *actually read* in the same way, and in the same perfection, the Fables of Perrin, 85 octavo pages in 10 lessons more; and to be able to read and understand any book in the French language, and to have *actually read several* with the same facility as English; to have a correct idea of the conjugations of the verbs, and to designate nominally and instantaneously the mood, tense, and person of every verb whatever that may occur in the course of reading, in *thirty* lessons; in short, to write and speak the language with grammatical correctness and a just pronunciation, with a fluency and facility proportioned to the diligence which the pupil may have used (in the latter part of the course especially), and to the greater or less degree of confidence or timidity with which he may use this talent, in 48 Lessons, or the whole Course.”

We are told, three times, in this paragraph, that Mr. Hamilton's pupils were “able to read,” and “*actually* had read.” This is the mathema-

tician's genuine *quod erat demonstrandum*. We should perhaps have doubted their capability if he had not given us some such proof; at the same time, I must hint to Mr. Hamilton, that in his future statements, it will be quite unnecessary to tell us, that his pupils are *able to do* what they *actually have done*. The public will make the deduction for themselves. What the "correctness of grammatical analysis," and the "precision of meaning and construction wholly unknown" can be, I am at a loss to divine; it appears to be in some measure connected with his singular declaration that every word in one language can be translated by a corresponding part of speech in another. I grant that some such mechanical translation of the French language may be performed, but will Mr. Hamilton pretend to transfuse the spirit of the Greek and Roman languages into our own upon any such principle? or will he deny that even in the French language, a periphrastic translation is frequently necessary? Let him answer these things if he can.

In the latter part of the paragraph it is stated that the proficiency of the pupil is proportioned to his diligence; this must be rather mortifying to his scholars, who I am inclined to believe form a class of persons, who have hitherto been too lazy to attempt, or too dull to be able, to learn languages by any other method, and who now

fancy, it is only to stand a given number of hours in Mr. Hamilton's class, and "*presto*," they will be as clever as Mr. Hamilton himself. Forty-eight lessons, it is stated, comprehend the whole course; and each lesson, let it be remembered, occupies an hour. Now, I have known men, who in certain situations, studied hard for 16 hours a day, but I will call on Mr. H's. pupils to do no such thing; let them devote 12 hours to his instructions, that is, let them receive 12 lessons a day; then, by beginning any Monday morning they please, on the Thursday evening following they will be perfect masters of the French language!! This is distinctly Mr. Hamilton's statement, since he makes no provision for the learner's assiduity in his own closet, but positively asserts, "you have hitherto been told to learn, my system is different, the burthen should be on the teacher, I *teach* you every thing."

In the next paragraph Mr. Hamilton states, that grammar is taught with the first word of the language; but I ask those who have heard his Lectures, whether he has not continually deprecated the supposition that languages are taught with the assistance of grammar. I appeal to them, whether he has not frequently scoffed at, and ridiculed, the present system of teaching languages by the aid of a grammar. It matters not to me, whether it be grammar or a *grammar* by which we are taught; the effect is the same—

but if there be any logical distinction, let him have the benefit of it.

“The present system of tuition in the primary schools throughout the civilized world, is so essentially vicious, that whatever be the talent and integrity of the teacher, (and no profession can boast a greater mass of either), very little instruction is, or can be communicated in them.”

Cunning, oily rogue! Where can be the talent and integrity of the teacher, if the system which he pursues is so essentially vicious?

The declaration that very little instruction can be communicated in our primary schools, is the superlative of impudence.—Let the mention of our great statesmen, classics, mathematicians, and philosophers be the reply to it.

“The trash, which, under the name of grammar, occupies several of our most precious years, to the utter exclusion of all useful knowledge, is never known by the pupil, and generally totally misunderstood by the master.”

I will stake the retail price of this pamphlet against its actual value, which is an immense odds, that nobody guesses the remark I am about to make upon the last passage. If Mr. Hamilton had substituted the word *frequently* for generally, I would have confessed, that as far as the teacher's knowledge is concerned, he is right.

It is a lamentable fact, that in the neighbourhood of London, teaching is a complete system of quackery. Let any man, howsoever mean his capacity and information, put himself to the expense of a few advertisements, and he will be

sure, from the folly of some parents, and the stupidity of others, to gain as many pupils as he desires. Let him put on an additional bait and run out a little more line, and he has ten to one in his favour of catching the parents themselves.

“ There are at this moment 500,000 boys and girls from 7 to 13 studying grammar in these united kingdoms, and no one would be able to parse or analyse many of the most simple phrases of their mother tongue.

On this passage, I have a far more important argument to offer than my last. A gentleman has informed me that he will produce a boy, who shall parse any sentence in the English language with Mr. Hamilton for fifty guineas; and knowing, as I do, the talents of that gentleman, and having the most perfect confidence in his pupils, if Mr. H. will allow me to second the challenge, he shall have any additional terms he pleases.

I have now gone through two pages of Mr. Hamilton's printed statement, my remarks upon which, I think will shew how far he has a right from his own talents to depreciate those of others. It will likewise shew the impossibility of his teaching the French language in the time he professes; this is important, as the rapidity of teaching is professed to be one of the leading characteristics of his system.

It may be urged against me—has not Mr. Hamilton produced certificates from his pupils? Has he not offered to refer you to the pupils



themselves? Yes, he has printed the following certificate,

“WE, the undersigned, Pupils of Mr. Hamilton, have no hesitation in declaring our entire satisfaction with the manner in which he has fulfilled his engagement in teaching us the first Section of his Course of French.”

“Signed by every Individual of the Class.”

Who these individuals may be, I know not: but it appears to me, that they have done little more than express their *entire satisfaction* with themselves. I do not call in question the good feeling which dictated this certificate; I have no doubt the subscribers to it, were acting in a manner which they considered would do an “obscure and unknown individual,” a service. Setting aside then, the improbability that these gentlemen would speak ill of their own talents and proficiency, I am sure it is highly probable that their sympathy would induce them *not* to under-rate Mr. Hamilton’s services.

But it is not the proficiency of a few individuals, nor the declaration of that proficiency as expressed by the individuals themselves, that we are to appeal to, in evidence of the peculiar merits of a system of education. There should be something in it so decidedly obvious, its plan should be so simple and demonstrable, and whether considered in the aggregate, or in its several divisions, it should be so plain and convincing as to set at defiance the wranglings of the captious,

or the arguments of the learned, the obstinacy of the prejudiced, or the cavils of the interested. Is it so with Mr. Hamilton's system? I answer, No. It is "vulnerable in a thousand places." Of what avail is it to tell us, it *can* produce certain effects, and that it *has produced* those effects, when the simplest calculation will demonstrate the impossibility of any such results.

I shall now proceed to shew, first, that there is no originality in the "Hamiltonian System," and secondly, that it is inferior to those methods of teaching languages which have been hitherto practised in this country.

In order to disprove Mr. Hamilton's claim to originality in his system, I cannot do better than quote a passage from Mr. Corney's admirable little pamphlet on the subject. He says

"Mr. Locke, in § 167 of his "Thoughts concerning Education," first published in 1690, but written several years earlier, recommended the method of learning Latin by a literal interlineary translation of *Æsop*, &c.; M. du Marsais, a grammarian of celebrity, recommended the same method; M. l'Abbé d'Olivet, well known as the editor of Cicero, had seen it practised in this country, and published his "Pensées de Cicéron" with a view to promote it; and above all it was developed with remarkable neatness and plausibility by M. l'Abbé de Radonvilliers, a member of the French Academy, in a small volume printed

at Paris in 1768, entitled “De la manière d’ap-  
prendre les Langues.” As this volume is perhaps  
inaccessible to many of those to whom I address  
myself, I shall transcribe a specimen from it, and  
compare it with a *Hamiltonian* specimen.

“M. de Radonvilliers takes his first example  
from Tacitus: “*Urbem Romam a principio reges  
habuere;*” but transposes it. He then gives, I.  
A literal version, and II. A version of the sense:

## EXAMPLE.

Text.	A principio reges habuere urbem Romam.
Lit. vers.	<i>Au commencement des rois eurent la ville de Rome.</i>
Sense.	<i>Au commencement la ville de Rome eut des Rois.”</i>

In addition to this may be mentioned the system of Dufief, between which and Mr. Hamilton’s there is a very evident connection. Mr. H. states that “grammar is the result of *observations* upon the writings of our literati.” Dufief says, “languages were made first, and grammar afterwards; and hence the rules of grammar, or the particular principles of a language, are only a *collection of observations* upon custom.” From which, each would infer, that grammar is not necessary to the acquirement of a language, and that its rules should not be taught until the pupil has a perfect acquaintance with the major part of the words of that language. Locke says, “if grammar ought to be taught at any time, it must be to one that can speak the language already: how else can he be taught the grammar of it.”

How far all these opinions are correct will presently be considered.

In the following passage Mr. Hamilton appears to have made a wonderful discovery.

“It will be evident to every man who witnesses the first Lecture or Lesson, that, if the object of study be to obtain the knowledge of words and their meaning, that mode which presents these words, with their meaning affixed, to the Eye of the Pupil, at the same moment that he *hears* them distinctly *pronounced*, must impress them on his memory, in a manner immeasurably superior to the fugitive and uncertain idea of its meaning or pronunciation which he could derive from a Dictionary, while, at the same time, he escapes the disgusting and unavailing drudgery of it.”

But is not this precisely what Condillac says in the following sentence, which is translated from his *Cours d'Etude*. “Could any one know a language, if the brain did not acquire habits answering to those of the ears to hear it, to those of the lips to speak it, and to those of the eyes to read it? The recollection of a language is not, therefore, solely in the habits of the brain; it is besides in the habits of the organs of hearing, of speech, and of sight.”

The next consideration is the propriety of the method of teaching which Mr. Hamilton has adopted; and this method I apprehend consists in a literal interlineary translation, and in the rejection of a grammar. Rollin, who was principal of the University at Paris, and whose opinion ought to be of some weight, says, “interlineary interpretations should never be allowed, they are of no other use than to accustom the mind to in-

dolence and neglect;" and he distinctly recommends that the pupil should begin by learning the declensions, conjugations, and most common rules in syntax. I have not the least hesitation in placing this in opposition to the opinion of Locke; for surely a man who was engaged for a considerable period of his life in the practice of education must have had a much better knowledge of the subject than one whose mind was chiefly devoted to abstruse enquiries and metaphysical speculations. No man can discover many valuable truths on the subject of education who has not been himself a teacher. The theories of the closet are ill adapted to the practice of the school-room.

That a language may be acquired without rules is evident from the method pursued in teaching Latin to Montaigne; but then it must be recollected that he learnt this, previous to his native tongue, and precisely in the same manner in which a first language is always taught to children. This however is a method which Mr. Hamilton cannot pursue. It likewise frequently happens that persons who visit a strange country, and remain in it for a considerable time, acquire the language of that country by simply listening to, and conversing with, its inhabitants. The distinction then, I apprehend rests thus, that language acquired by conversation may be, and is, learnt *without* the assistance of rules; whilst the ac-



quirement of a language from the instruction of one individual, by the means of books, solely depends *upon* rules. To proceed otherwise is to act like the man who collected the whole of the materials of a house upon the ground on which it was to be built, and then found he could not proceed from having omitted to lay a foundation. Where is the architect who does not lay the first stone upon some principle that has reference to the future edifice? Every additional portion of matter is supported on that which was arranged before it, and in its turn becomes the support of what is to follow. So is it with languages; and much as Mr. Hamilton may ridicule the grammar which directs us in the proper arrangement of words, or the materials of language, I defy him or any other man to proceed without it. Can it be deemed otherwise than a trick to depreciate the printed grammar in the severest terms, and then to convey its rules to the pupil orally, as though they were something distinct from what is to be found in the book which is so much abused? Yet this is precisely Mr. Hamilton's method.

There are certain declensions, in the French language, of the article, noun, and pronoun, and certain conjugations of the verb, which must be taught some time, the pupil cannot acquire them intuitively; and as they continually occur from the very outset of his labours, it will certainly

save him much perplexity to teach him the nature of these variations as early as possible. The exercises in which these rules would be illustrated, would effect quite as much with respect to teaching the words of the language, as they could have effected if the rules themselves had not been considered.

I think then, I have shewn the necessity of teaching a language by the assistance of grammar, and that its rules should be taught at the same time with the words. This has been the method pursued in all our colleges and schools, and in defiance of Mr. Hamilton's impudent declaration, that we have hitherto been taught nothing, I venture to assert, that there are thousands at this moment, who have cause to admire, and do admire, the simplicity of the plans of education on which they received their instruction, and who remember with pleasure the active talents and sterling integrity of their teachers.

Mr. Hamilton professes to teach ten thousand words of the French language in ten hours. I have written to him requesting a reference to some person who has received such instruction from him; but what inference am I, or the public, to draw from the fact of his not having attended to so simple a request. Can he not do so? Is he afraid of any exposition to which such a reference might lead? I must hope that his refusal proceeded from the warmth of feeling

expressed in my letter to him;—a warmth that was perfectly justifiable after the violent attack he made upon my character at the City of London Tavern. Did he not apply epithets to me, whose classic elegance might vie with the purity of a Billingsgate oration?

“ Think of that Master Brook—a man of my kidney.”

As I cannot then examine one of his pupils, my only alternative is to examine the statement itself. To teach one thousand words in an hour, implies that the corresponding words of the learner's own language must be repeated in the same time, making two thousand words to be read and retained in the memory, in the space of sixty minutes; and as ten persons are in each class, and each person has to repeat the lesson, it follows that the number of words to be repeated in one hour, exclusive of any necessary remarks by the teacher and his own repetition, will be twenty thousand, or about three hundred and thirty-three each minute! Wonderful system! Admirable invention!

I have before endeavoured to shew the want of originality in Mr. Hamilton's system, I shall now shew the want of originality even in his advertisements. He says, in an advertisement which appeared in the Times, of Feb. 8th,

“ Is the pupil fond of ease? The teacher works for him. Is his mind occupied by other business, dull of apprehension? The instruction is repeated to satiety. Is he unable to give more time to

this study than the hour which his class occupies? Is he afraid of being obliged occasionally to miss his lesson?—Of taking a journey in the middle of his section?—Of not knowing it at the end? Let him enter the private classes. He is ensured against all these.”

This is evidently copied from an advertisement which appeared in the Daily Advertiser, June 29th, 1752.

“ A Frenchman, a man of learning, is arrived at London from Paris, in order to teach the French Language, Fables, Poetry, Heraldry, French Philosophy, and the Latin Tongue, without exacting any study from his scholars, *all study being an obstacle to his method. If there be any constitutions too weak to bear contradiction, any characters too lively to be capable of attention, any persons too far advanced in life to apply themselves to study,* and who are willing to learn any of the above sciences, by a simple method, and one shorter, as well as more solid than any which hath been hitherto practised, they are desired to enquire at Mr. Bezancon’s, Snuff Shop, in Little Earl Street, the Black Boy, by the Seven Dials.”

The simple method pursued by each of these gentlemen, must certainly be akin to that practised by the professors of Laputa, who wrote their geometrical propositions with a volatile tincture upon a thin wafer, which the pupil swallowed; and as the wafer was digested, the tincture rose into the brain—and the demonstration along with it.

It is a generally received opinion that one of the great difficulties a pupil has to contend with in acquiring the French language is its pronunciation; but Mr. Hamilton declares that upon *his* system this obstacle is entirely removed. Though the pupil, he says, “ utters not a word, yet his pronunciation is still precisely the same;” and at his Lectures his general remark to those persons who repeat his lessons, is, you now pronounce French as well as any Frenchman in existence. But mark the cunning of the man! He invariably attaches a codicil to this information, stating that *the difficulty lies in the accent*. With us, the word accent means, a stress upon some letter or syllable, but in France, the word accent means, that particular intonation of the voice and vernacular expression, which we call pronunciation. I ask then, if Mr. Hamilton’s statement is not a gross deception, a specimen of impudent quackery; and yet he innocently exclaims at his Lectures, as though he had been most iniquitously calumniated, “ I am a man they call a QUACK.”

“ I thank thee Jew, for teaching me that word.”

It is distinctly stated by Mr. Hamilton that the pupil is not, upon his system, requested to *learn*; he is *taught*,—the teacher does every thing for him. What then is the service of the printed key to the lesson? “ Oh,” said Mr. H. at his lesson



at the Green Man, "the key will enable you to discover the meaning of a word, if you should forget it after I leave you;" and so it will a dozen words, a hundred, a thousand, and the whole ten thousand. Here I thought the mystery began to peep out. The fact then is, that Mr. Hamilton simply *reads* the lesson to his pupils, they *repeat* it, and then, "good easy souls," they go home and *learn* it. This is "letting the cat out of the bag, with a vengeance.

Mr. Hamilton says, the chief advantage from foreign languages is, that it enables the pupil to understand the grammar of his own. Will Mr. H. permit me to refer him on this subject to Sheridan's Rhetorical Grammar? Sheridan, who may be supposed to know something of these matters, says, "it is notorious that many who have acquired an accurate skill in writing Latin, make but a very poor figure in their English style. Nay, it has been lately proved by a learned prelate, in a short essay upon our grammar, that some of our most celebrated writers, and such as have hitherto passed for our English classics, have been guilty of great solecisms, inaccuracies, and even grammatical improprieties, in many of their most finished works."

In recurring to Mr. Hamilton's profession of teaching, by his system, a thousand words in an hour, I would tell him that he was born at least a century too late for attaining the success, from

such a representation, which he may have calculated on, men are now too well acquainted with the nature of time and number to be cheated into any such belief; the powers of the mind are now too well ascertained to admit of much uncertainty as to the nature of their exercise. This is an age of invention and improvement, it is an age of mental activity, but it is not an age of wonders; unless, therefore, Mr. Hamilton can supersede his own energies by a forcing pump or a steam engine, he will never drive words into the memory at the rate of thirty-three a minute; and even then, it would be necessary to communicate to the mind some magnetical power, by which it might be enabled to retain the words so impressed upon it.

Mr. Hamilton has triumphantly asked, "why, if I have not performed all that I have promised, have not some of the many individuals who have been under my instruction, come forward and exposed the deceit which I have practised upon them?" On this I have only to observe that Dr. Eady, and other great rivals of Mr. H. in the struggle for popularity, may with equal confidence appeal to the *silence* of those whom it is possible they may have failed to benefit.

It is time to bring these remarks to a conclusion; enough, I hope, has been said to convince the public of the necessity of receiving with caution, the statements of a man who has placed

his own interests in direct opposition to the interests of society. I shall keep a watchful eye upon him, and he may depend upon my services *pro re nata*.

Should any one conceive that there is a want of due gravity in this pamphlet, that I have not treated the subject which it comprehends, in a manner sufficiently serious; I must beg to inform him or her, that I consider very little argument to be necessary in laying bare the absurdities of the "HAMILTONIAN SYSTEM:" besides, arguments would have very little effect upon Mr. Hamilton; *his* comprehension is too much like that of Jacob Van Twiller, who always took so broad a view of a question, that he had not room in his head to turn it over and look at both sides of it.

GREENWICH,

April, 1824.







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