

EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHY.

Hail! tolerant teachers of the race, whose dower
Of spirit-wealth outweighs the monarchs might,
Blest be your holy mission! may it shower
Blessings like rain, and bring by human right
To all our hearts and hearths, love, liberty, and light.

WE propose to devote a portion of our columns from time to time, to a series of Biographical Sketches of Eminent Teachers and Educators, who in different ages and countries, and under widely varying circumstances of religion and government, have labored faithfully and successfully in different allotments of the great field of human culture. We hope to do something in this way to rescue from unmerited neglect and oblivion the names and services of many excellent men and women, who have proved themselves benefactors of their race by shedding light into the dark recesses of ignorance and by pre-occupying the soil, which would otherwise have been covered with the rank growth of vice and crime, with a harvest of those virtues which bless, adorn, and purify society. Such men have existed in every civilized state in past times. "Such men," remarks Lord Brougham, "men deserving the glorious title of teachers of mankind, I have found laboring conscientiously, though perhaps obscurely, in their blessed vocation, wherever I have gone. I have found them, and shared their fellowship, among the daring, the ambitious, the ardent, the indomitably active French; I have found them among the persevering, resolute, industrious Swiss; I have found them among the laborious, the warm-hearted, the enthusiastic Germans; I have found them among the high-minded but enslaved Italians; and in our own country, God be thanked, their numbers every where abound, and are every day increasing. Their calling is high and holy; their fame is the property of nations; their renown fill the earth in after ages, in proportion as it sounds not far off in their own times. Each one of these great teachers of the world, possessing his soul in peace, performs his appointed course, awaits in patience the fulfillment of the promises, resting from his labors, bequeathes his memory to the generation whom his works have blessed, and sleeps under the humble, but not inglorious epitaph, commemorating 'one in whom mankind lost a friend, and no man got rid of an enemy!'"

We cannot estimate too highly the services rendered to the civilization of New England, by her early teachers, and especially the teachers of her Town Grammar Schools. Among these teachers we must include many of her best educated clergymen, who, in towns where there was no endowed Free or Grammar School, fitted young men of piety and talent for college, and for higher usefulness in church and state. To her professional teachers and clergy it is due, that schools of even an elementary grade were established and maintained. But for them the fires of classical learning, brought here from the Public Schools and Universities of England, would have died out, the class-rooms of her infant colleges would have been deserted, her parishes would have ceased to claim a scholar for their minister, the management of affairs in town and state would have fallen into incompetent hands, and a darkness deeper than that of the surrounding forests would have gathered about the homes of the people. In view of the barbarism into which the second and third generations of new colonies seem destined to fall, "where schools are not vigorously encouraged," we may exclaim with the Rev. Dr. Mather—

"Tis Corlet's pains, and Cheever's, we must own,
That thou New England, are not Scythia grown."

Let us then hasten to do even tardy justice to these master builders and workmen of our popular civilization. In the language of President Quincy, when about to review the History of Harvard College for a period of two centuries—"While passing down the series of succeeding years, as through the interior of some ancient temple, which displays on either hand the statues of distinguished friends and benefactors, we should stay for a moment in the presence of each, doing justice to the humble, illustrating the obscure, placing in a true light the modest, and noting rapidly the moral and intellectual traits which time has spared; to the end that ingratitude the proverbial sin of republics, may not attach to the republic of letters; and that, whoever feeds the lamp of science, however obscurely, however scantily, may know, that sooner or later, his name and virtues shall be made conspicuous by its light, and throughout all time accompany its lustre."

We commence our Educational Biography—as we propose to designate the series—with a Sketch, such as we have been able to draw up from scanty materials, gleaned from torn and almost illegible records of town, and church, and from scattered items in the publications, pamphlets, and manuscripts of Historical Societies, Antiquarians, and Genealogists—of Ezekiel Cheever, the Father of Connecticut School-masters, the Pioneer, and Patriarch of elementary classical culture in New England.