

PHILOSOPHIC REFLECTIONS.

By Plato. Paper No XII.

Editor Star:

As I seat myself this evening to write my customary article for your little paper, many subjects present themselves, all worthy of type, but all with one common fault, and that is, they are much too long for the short space allowed in your little paper. I have selected from among them **MEMORY**, for this weeks discussion, hoping I may present my ideas upon it in a manner to meet the approval of your many readers and if so, I may be induced to continue it in another paper. Plato.

MEMORY.

The question has arisen, how far the power of memory may be regarded as a test of intellectual ability. The opinion has been somewhat prevalent, that a more than usual development of this faculty is likely to be attended with a corresponding deficiency in some other mental power, and especially that it is incompatible with a sound judgment. To this opinion I cannot subscribe. Doubtless it is true that many persons, deficient in the power of accurate discrimination, have possessed wonderful power of memory. The mind, in such cases, undisciplined, uncultivated, with little inventive and self-moving power, lies passive and open to the influences of every chance suggestion from without, as the lyre is put in vibration by the stray winds that sweep across its strings. Facts and incidents of no value, without number, and without order, are thrown into relief upon the confused background of the past, as sea-weed, sand and shells are heaped by the unmeaning waves upon the shore.

But if a weak mind may possess a good memory, it is

equally true, that a strong and well disciplined mind is seldom deficient in it. Men of most active and commanding intellect have been men also of tenacious and accurate memory. Napoleon was a remarkable instance of this. So also was the philosopher Leibnitz. While, then, we cannot regard the memory as a test of intellectual capacity, neither can it be considered incompatible with, or unfavorable to, mental strength. On the contrary, we can hardly look for any considerable degree of mental vigor and power where this faculty is essentially deficient.

It is remarked by Miss Edgeworth, and the remark is noticed with approval by Dugal Stewart, that the invention of printing, by placing books within the reach of all classes of people, has lowered the value of those extraordinary powers of memory which some of the learned were accustomed to display in former times. A man who had read, and could repeat, a few manuscripts, was then not merely a remarkable but a very useful man. It is quite otherwise now. There is no occasion now for any such exercise of memory. Hence instances of extraordinary memory are of unfrequent occurrence.

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PHILOSOPHIC
By Plato. **MEMORY.**

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