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INTRODUCTION.

“It is good to repeat old thoughts in the
“newest books, because the old works in
“which they stand are not read.”

With these words does Richter justify himself for presenting to the world his “Theory of Education,” and the same thought gave birth to the present form of his work.

Even Germans find that Richter’s highly metaphorical style makes heavy demands on their attention ; and for that reason, although several English translations exist, it is not strange to find the “Levana” somewhat neglected by our own Educationists, although prescribed to be read for the “Teacher’s Diploma” in 1886 by the University of London.

(It has been the present translator’s object to gather out some of the pregnant sayings with which the book abounds, and to thread

them together in such a way as to exhibit the current of the author's ideas, whilst avoiding his numerous digressions.) The work lends itself readily to such treatment, for Richter himself in the Preface impresses upon his readers the vastness of the subject and the necessarily fragmentary character of any contributions to it. In fact, he calls the subdivisions of his book "Fragments"; and in these fragments no one topic is treated exhaustively, but the thoughts of the author are expressed like Pascal's "Pensées," in the form of aphorisms, which, being the utterances of a true philosopher and poet, illuminate as with a lightning-flash the intricate problems of education and of life.

In the seventeenth century Pascal's dictum was that: "L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête; "et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange "fait la bête." A century later Richter proclaimed as his belief that "Each generation "starts afresh from Paradise."

Others were at work in the same field. His own birth (in 1763) took place a year

after the publication of Rousseau's "Emile"; his death (1825) preceded by two years the death of Pestalozzi, who was just beginning his work at Yverdon at the time that Richter was writing his "Levana," which was printed in 1806. School-instruction in Germany was as yet in the swaddling-bands of tradition, for although Frederic the Great had done somewhat to improve the inspection of schools in Prussia, and had made them nominally institutions of the State, yet the great reforms of Falk were still in the future, and the first kindergarten was not opened until 1840. Whether the thorough organization of instruction in Germany during the last fifteen years, together with the development of Froebel's system, would have modified Richter's views, or any part of his treatise, it is impossible to say. But unquestionably his work, dealing as it does with education in its widest sense, can never lose its value.

The subject of education was evidently much in his mind. In several of his romances teachers are the heroes, and scattered

throughout his works are statements and aphorisms that may be claimed by pedagogic science. He came of a stock of schoolmasters. His grandfather was Rector (Head Master) of a public school, and his father, during a few years, assistant in one. He, himself, twice in his early manhood, undertook work as a tutor. The failure of his efforts in the first attempt and the success of the second period spent in teaching (1790–94), both left their mark on himself; and “*Levana*” owes its conception to those years, though it was not written until after he had become a father, and, as he himself tells us, “gained in maturity through his own children.”

Of his work as an author in general, it would be out of place to speak, and the chief events of his life are well known; a short account of his experiences as a teacher may, however, be interesting in this connection. At the time when he was vainly striving to find a publisher for his early books, and struggling with the direst poverty under

his widowed mother's roof, he accepted the post of private tutor to a younger brother of his friend, Adam von Oerthel. He found, however, his pupil dull and unreceptive, both of intellectual and moral culture, and the father of the boy purse-proud and uncongenial. He left this post on the death of his friend, at the end of two years. The second experience was of a very different kind. After refusing several offers of similar work, Richter at last consented to take charge of the children of a friend at Schwachenbach, whom he was to educate with those of some other families in that town. For four or five years he worked with these seven pupils, whose ages varied from six to fifteen.

His biographer Spazier says of him: "The
"individuality, depth, and greatness of a true
"poet-nature has never been exemplified so
"plainly as by Jean Paul's direction and
"organization of this little school, and by
"its reaction on his own being. What to an
"ordinary man, even the most talented, is a
"fettering, or even a deadening occupation,—

“the daily instruction of little children in
“the very first elements of knowledge,—this
“occupation opened to him all the sources
“of elevated and great thoughts, hastened
“and completed the development of his survey
“of the universe, fanned his sensitive and
“active fancy into clear flames, and supplied
“it at the same time with its first artistic
“material.

“He could not help considering and treat-
“ing his pupils as living forms of a poetic
“world. He felt obliged to pour forth to
“them all that he had gathered as the result
“of his meditations, and the suggestions of
“the inspired moments of his poet-soul, con-
“cerning man, the world, his own life and
“heart,—to implant all this in the children’s
“souls, receptive as wax of every impression.
“The gain to himself was incalculable, and
“so was the ever-increasing enjoyment with
“which he performed his work in this ap-
“parently heterodox way. If anything shows
“the unusual greatness of his poetic talents,
“it is that he was able to use such a relation-