

WORKS  
OF  
FISHER AMES.

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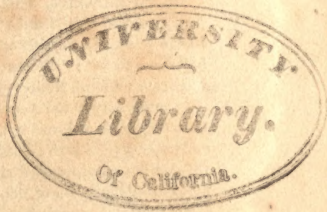
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COMPILED BY A NUMBER OF HIS FRIENDS.

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TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,



NOTICES  
OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

NIHIL TETIGIT QUOD NON ORNAVIT.

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BOSTON :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY T. B. WAIT & Co.  
COURT-STREET.

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1809.

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G. Stuart Pinx:

D. Edwin Scud.

Fisher Ames.



## SCHOOL BOOKS.

*First published in the Palladium, January, 1801.*

**I**T has been the custom, of late years, to put a number of little books into the hands of children, containing fables and moral lessons. This is very well, because it is right first to raise curiosity, and then to guide it. Many books for children are, however, injudiciously compiled: the language is too much raised above the ideas of that tender age; the moral is drawn from the fable, they know not why; and when they gain wisdom from experience, they will see the restrictions and exceptions which are necessary to the rules of conduct laid down in their books, but which such books do not give. Some of the most admired works of this kind abound with a frothy sort of *sentiment*, as the readers of novels are pleased to call it, the chief merit of which consists in shedding tears, and giving away money. Is it right, or agreeable to good sense, to try to make the tender age more tender? Pity and generosity, though amiable impulses, are blind ones, and, as we grow older, are to be managed by rules, and restrained by wisdom.

It is not clear, that the heart, at thirty, is any the softer for weeping, at ten, over one of Berquin's fables, the point of which turns on a beggar boy's being ragged, and a rich man's son being well clad. Some persons, indeed, appear to have shed all their tears of sympathy before they reach the period of mature age. Most young hearts are tender, and tender enough; the object of education is rather to direct these emotions, however amiable, than to augment them.

**WHY** then, if these books for children must be retained, as they will be, should not the bible regain the place it once held as a school book? Its morals are pure, its examples captivating and noble. The reverence for the sacred book,

that is thus early impressed, lasts long ; and, probably, if not impressed in infancy, never takes firm hold of the mind. One consideration more is important. In no book is there so good English, so pure and so elegant ; and by teaching all the *same* book, they will speak alike, and the bible will justly remain the standard of language as well as of faith. A barbarous provincial jargon will be banished, and taste, corrupted by pompous Johnsonian affectation, will be restored.