

THE POSSIBILITIES IN INTERMEDIATE WORK.

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IT must at once be stated that the aim of this paper is not to present the attractions of the kindergarten, nor to advocate the charms of the Quincy method of manual instruction, but to consider the possibilities of intermediate work as laid down in the graded system, with the hope of seeing what there is in it of stimulus and profit. As has been noticed by educators, the younger children have generous attention paid their needs, whereas the older boys and girls who reach the dull shades of arithmetic, grammar, geography, and the rest of the well-known list, are left to plod on drearily with little to increase their happiness in study or implant that lifelong safeguard, a delight in mental improvement. A weak point in our present educational system, says Sir John Lubbock in *The Fortnightly Review*, "is that it does not awaken interest sufficiently to enable children generally to continue their education after leaving school." Therefore, it would seem that if ever our young people needed a wide-awake school-room, all genial and inspiring influence, it is just at the time when they are beginning to realize that they are indeed "Little Women" and "Little Men," and may be even laying plans for a definite place in the world's work.

Our graded system confronts us with its precise limitations, so much to be accomplished within a given time. One's first thought is a feeling of utter helplessness, but, upon calmer reflection, are these restrictions necessarily a drawback?

It is readily admitted that every art has its limitations, and triumphs by reason of them. Sculpture can

deal with nothing save living forms, preëminently human forms. To it, colour and language cannot lend their charm. The painter, even with his colours, can present one moment, one aspect only, and the poet also feels the restrictions of certain inflexible rules. Yet in each case does the artist become "master of his craft by turning his own limitations into victory." Mr. Palgrave adds: "This presence of necessity, though perhaps little noticed, is felt in all really fine art."

If such be true, no educator can complain of that which places him among so goodly a company, and the teacher of intermediate work may be inspired to "turn his necessity to glorious gain," and find in the apparently narrow limits of arithmetic, grammar, geography, and the rest, a field so suggestive, a liberty so unfettered, as to expand the mental faculties of both pupil and teacher.

Arithmetic, itself, as taught by most of us now, has proven one of the most stimulating exercises of the day. The direct handling of slates and crayon gives a sense of tangibility gratifying to most children. Could we impart a still more practical character to the lesson, its value would be vastly enhanced. Objects are at all times prized: an actual yard before them, the squares of a surface actually counted, measurements made before their eyes, give a definiteness and reasonableness to methods which are of infinite assistance to the teacher. Why deal with abstractions when we can see with our eyes and handle with our hands? "How many steps of two feet six inches each will a man take in walk-