

afforded by the various workshops is a valuable reforming influence, as many of the discharged convicts are then enabled to earn an honest living, several instances of which have come under our observation lately in Toronto. But the great subdivision of labor necessary to make one of those workshops pay the contractor who hires convict labor, tends to prevent any one convict from learning the complete work of a trade; he usually masters but one department of it. And in the Report of the Inspector of Prisons in Ontario, in 1879, we find that out of 200 boys confined in the Provincial Reformatory, Penetanguishene, only 92 are employed as carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, at the turning-lathe, as bakers, and, curiously, only four on the farm; the remainder being engaged in work on the premises. In the Andrew Mercer Reformatory and Refuge, the Superintendent reports in favor of industrial employments, such as cane-seating, shoemaking, paper-box making, tailoring, and sewing of all kinds. Still, this is, in all these cases, industrial *employment*, rather than *education*, being carried on for the purpose of making money by sales, rather than for that of teaching a trade. And were the latter attempted, it may be doubtful whether society would not do better to begin a stage earlier, and supply a rudimentary industrial training to the classes of children who are *not* criminal. This might do something to thin the influx into our reformatories and prisons. It is plain enough that mere ordinary school education does not effect this. We find by the Report before us, that out of 567 prisoners in the Central Prison of Ontario in 1879, no less a number than 414 could read and write, while 85 could read, but not write; the remainder, 68 only, could neither read nor write! We contend that if, instead of the industrial teaching being given in the reformatory, it were given in the Public School, many a boy might be diverted to honest industry who now matriculates at the street corners, and graduates in prison.

And we contend that the need of industrial training is imperative, quite apart from consideration of "the bad boys" of society. As it is, boys and girls are educated on a uniform method, their thoughts directed into the same channels, little scope being given for that differentiation towards the various trades and employments which ought surely to precede the adoption of any life-long pursuit. A boy is left to take up a trade at hap-hazard, under the mere force of circumstances; without trying his power of manual dexterity, of skill, of constructiveness, in other directions, he strikes out, by accident, his vein metal, and is compelled to work at that one vein for a life-time.

What we contend for is, not that trades should be taught in the public schools, but that there should be a few such rudimentary workshops in connection with each large school as might test for each boy the kind of work best suited to his tastes and powers. At least, a carpenter's shop and turning lathes might be provided, the latter to be worked by a small steam engine, in the use and manipulation of which those whose tastes led them in the direction of mechanical engineering might be instructed. Governments in modern times have recognized the duty of providing free education of the best obtainable kind for the children of all classes—it is but a further development of the same principle, that it should also provide the children in the public schools with the means of test-

ing their abilities and tastes. Besides, in a country like ours, a young man should be able to turn his hand to many things. With us it is not as in England, where everything works in time-worn grooves, and each trade is a caste. How great an advantage that each boy should have some practical knowledge of carpentering, of house-building, of plastering, of the practical application of mathematics to land-surveying. A most excellent proposal is now under consideration for providing some means of instruction in scientific agriculture for our public schools through the counties, or perhaps still better in our County Model Schools. With regard to rudimentary industrial training, the experiment might be tried first in the city schools, the instructor to visit each in turn daily, and each workshop to be open for an hour. This would give a welcome break to the uniformity of purely mental study. With regard to girls, instruction in knitting and sewing is already given at our best schools. But this might well be done more systematically, and might extend to the different kinds of sewing, cutting out and tailoring; the aim being less to encourage showy fancy work, than to teach those useful acquirements which will be invaluable all through life.

THE HIGH SCHOOL GRANTS.

The New England *Journal of Education* for Sept. 10th contains an admirable leading article under the heading "Stand Up for the Children," directed against the anticipated attempt next winter, on the part of certain of the manufacturers and monied classes, to induce the New England Legislatures "to modify their beneficent system of laws" for the support of public education. Our contemporary is no doubt justified in the proud confidence which it fearlessly asserts that "the mass of level-headed working people in New England are the hearty friends of these laws, fully comprehend their scope, and will support the public men who stand between the children of the poor and their enemies." Indications are not wanting in the Province of Ontario of a similar feeling on the part of certain class interests against the grant given in aid of our High Schools. It will probably be urged that these schools exist for the benefit of a class who are well able to undertake their support. But to say this is to ignore the fact that the High School is an integral part of our public school system—providing a sphere of promotion for the purpose of higher education. The new blood there introduced by competition is of great benefit to those sons of the richer classes who form the staple of the High School, as the culture and better intellectual tone resulting from the High School work all over the Province is a benefit to those very persons whose short-sighted parsimony would oppose the comparatively small sums expended in attaining these results. But this hostility to the High School does not stand by itself. It is part of a dislike to our entire system of schools and public education, which has hardly the courage of its opinions, but shows its animus when it best can on such a point as the High School grant, or some other matter of detail in the working of the Ontario Education Department, in which class interests, local prejudices, and personal *amour propre* furnish ground for agitation and attack.