

politicians and manufacturers of the province chiefly affected going to do in the present predicament of the woolen trade?

The want of technical education in any person or nation will ever stand as a bar to progress; English people as a rule are unwillingly enough forced to recognize the fact that other nations, more especially Germany and the United States, are ahead of them in the race of life in this respect. Our supremacy in trade is being gradually wrested from us not in one but in many branches; and though we have, bulldog like, fought a hard battle we are now realizing at length the cause of our errors. No amount of character of however high a standard, will supply the place of knowledge; and the technical schools that are being too slowly erected in Great Britain, had been better placed there years ago. It is a striking proof of the necessity of technical education, that in all centres where such have already been placed, a new vitality seems to be imparted to the community resulting in a higher intellectual standard being adopted, as well as greater individual success being achieved. The writer has in mind a simple colleen, bright, adaptive, but as bare of education as her own native mountains of Kerry, who came to live in Boston, Mass. Her young mind drank in knowledge with avidity; and she developed a latent talent for textile design which by the technical school authorities was recognized and fostered. In about five years from the time she left the "old country," the simple Irish girl was earning enough money to keep her parents in undreamt of plenty!

In the larger industrial centres of England, Scotland and Ireland the necessity and blessing of technical schools has been recognized, and the results achieved by them may assist in enabling our Empire to regain her commercial supremacy. It seems not unreasonable to hope that Canada whose natural resources have contributed so largely if not entirely to her recognized position among the daughters of the Empire, should before it is too late, still further secure her place by providing her sons and daughters with that technical knowledge which will enable them to be more than mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and assist them to take and hold their own among the brain workers of the new world.

### THE LINEN TRADE.

The world's acreage of flax—that is of flax grown specially for fibre and not for seed—has been growing less and less, though the price of linen goods is well maintained, and the demand strong. In spite of the scarcity of raw material, there does not seem to be any tendency among agriculturists to go largely into flax raising. The superstition that flax is exhausting to the soil should not stand before the investigations of scientists, who have shown that the farmer only requires to know how to treat his land and to know what constituents are to be returned to the soil in order to make flax an easy crop for the farmer to raise continually. The last annual report of the Belfast Linen Merchants' Association, shows that the acreage under flax in Ire-

land in 1900 was 47,327 acres, which, though showing an increase over the two previous years, was much below what it was from 1886 to 1896, when it averaged about 100,000 acres. The secretary, speaking of the stimulus given to flax cultivation, said what their trade was suffering primarily from at present was the very diminished quantity of flax on hand or in sight, besides the inferior quality of much of the foreign growths. Since the end of December, the raw material had further advanced, so much so that the prices paid latterly for coarse flax had amounted to fully 100 per cent. advance over the lowest prevailing about two years ago. The manufacturer, therefore, had to face a serious dilemma. If he was to keep his looms running he must get a corresponding price for his cloth. The year that was past could scarcely be called so prosperous for their staple trade as the preceding one. The high prices which prevailed lessened sales to a considerable extent. On the other hand, there had been a falling off in production, owing to the fact that a great many of their mills and factories wisely decided to go on short time; consequently, that day he was safe in saying that there were no stocks of any account. Shipments also had fallen off in quantity, and from this they might infer that those markets to which they sent their products were in the same condition as they were in regard to stocks of linen goods. He thought he might safely assume that a reaction in demand was in progress.

The president, in his annual address, said the general trade of Belfast was fairly satisfactory during 1900. The linen industry had been for 60 years, and still was, the staple trade of Belfast. Fifty years ago, the number of spindles employed in spinning linen yarn was: In England, 365,000; in Scotland, 303,000; and in Ireland, 326,000. To-day flax-spinning spindles had almost ceased to be in England; they had notably decreased in Scotland, whereas in Ireland, they had largely increased, and numbered 828,000. As Mr. Wyndham, the chief secretary, said the other day, Belfast was the last stronghold of the linen industry. Perhaps it did not now get credit for all it had been worth to the town. Undoubtedly, it was the chief factor in the development of the town in bygone days, and it still went on, amid many difficulties, to maintain its position, and distribute in Belfast and the neighboring counties over £50,000 per week in wages, whether trade were bad or good. Among the difficulties which the linen trade had to contend with were the diminishing quantity of flax fibre grown in Ireland, a limited demand for linen goods due to their relatively high price, to the encroachment of cotton frequently under the fraudulent guise of linen, and to the common, but unproven, assumption that linen was unsuitable for wearing next the skin. The linen industry had shown fairly profitable results in the past year. It should, however, be remembered that these profits were to some extent due to mills and factories having laid in raw material at cheap rates before the