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PHYSICAL TRAINING IN SCHOOLS. GYMNASTIC EXERCISES. No. I.

In the official "Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada,"—by the Chief Superintendent of Schools, (Second edition, printed by order of the House of Assembly, pp. 58-60.) are the following remarks on *Physical Training* in our Schools:

On the development of the *physical powers* I need say but a few words. A system of instruction making no provision for those exercises which contribute to health and vigour of body, and to agreeableness of manners, must necessarily be imperfect. The active pursuits of most of those pupils who attend the public Schools, require the exercise necessary to bodily health; but the gymnastics regularly taught as a recreation, and with a view to the future pursuits of the pupil, and to which so much importance is attached in the best British Schools and in the Schools of Germany and France, are advantageous in various respects,—promote not only physical health and vigour, but social cheerfulness, active, easy and graceful movements. They strengthen and give the pupil a perfect command over all the members of his body. Like the art of writing, they proceed from the simplest movement, to the most complex and difficult exercises, imparting a bodily activity and skill scarcely credible to those who have not witnessed them.

To the culture and command of all the faculties of the mind, a corresponding exercise and control of all the members of the body is next in importance. It was young men thus trained that com-

posed the vanguard of Blucher's army; and much of the activity enthusiasm and energy which distinguished them, was attributed to their gymnastic training at school. A training which gives superiority in one department of active life, must be beneficial in another. It is well known, as has been observed by physiologists, that "the muscles of any part of the body when worked by exercise, draw additional nourishment from the blood, and by the repetition of the stimulus, if it be not exercise, increase in size, strength and freedom of action. The regular action of the muscles promotes and preserves the uniform circulation of the blood, which is the prime condition of health. The strength of a body or of a limb depends upon the strength of the muscular system, or of the muscles of the limb; and as the constitutional muscular endowment of most people is tolerably good, the diversities of muscular power observable amongst men is chiefly attributable to exercise." The Youth of Canada are designed for active, and most of them for laborious occupations; exercises which strengthen not one class of muscles, or the muscles of certain members only, but which develop the whole physical system, cannot fail to be beneficial.

The application of these remarks to common day schools must be very limited. They are designed to apply chiefly to boarding and training, to Industrial and Grammar Schools,—to those schools to the masters of which the prolonged and thorough educational instruction of youth is entrusted.

To physical education great importance has been attached by the best educators in all ages and countries. Plato gave as many as a thousand precepts respecting it. It formed a prominent feature in the best parts of the education of the Greeks and Romans. It has been largely insisted upon by the most distinguished educational writers in Europe, from Charon and Montaigne, down to numerous living authors in France and Germany, England and America. It occupies a conspicuous place in the codes of School Regulations in France and Switzerland, and in many places in Germany. The celebrated Pestalozzi and DeFellenberg incorporated it as an essential part of their systems of instruction, and even as necessary to their success; and experienced American writers and physiologists attribute the want of physical development and strength, and even health, in a disproportionally large number of educated Americans, to the absence of proper provisions and encouragements in respect to appropriate physical exercises in the Schools, Academies and Colleges of the United States.

In "The English Journal of Education" for January, and the succeeding months, we find a large space occupied, and numerous wood cuts given, in illustration of this subject. From these cuts we have had wood engravings made for the pages of this Journal. We therefore lay them before our readers, with extracts from the preliminary and accompanying remarks of our English contemporaries: