

CANADIAN ESSAYS.

EDUCATION.—(Continued.)

BY JOSEPH K. FORAN.

STEP by step we ascend the hill of life; now toiling along a rugged slope, now clinging to a shattered branch, panting, and breathless with the gaze ever fixed upon the distant and cloud-capped summit, we step from rock to rock, from height to height. The young persons in Canada "walking out of life's mystical ways," pass from the influence of the home circle into that little world where begins the mimic battle of life—the College. To-day we step into the pretty parlor of some one of these institutions; we say good-bye to our parents and turn our eyes towards the director or superior of the house; the door closes behind us and we find our retreat at once cut off and our new life, of eight or ten years spreading out before us. We come, let us suppose clad in that armor of home influence of which in the last essay we spoke. A mighty work now commences. As the sculptor for a moment stands before the white block of marble and traces in his mind every line, and calculates every stroke of the chisel and perceives every touch necessary to transform that polished surface into an angel, a giant or a babe; so does the director who has from experience a knowledge of youth, its changes and mouldings, study before hand every word, every idea, every means to be employed in order to shape that fresh and pliable mind and form, and, to impart vigor and solidity and power to that union of mental and physical faculties now placed under his care.

Let us ever keep before our minds that distinction first made between *Instruction* and *Education*. That is the great point around which revolved all those splendid ideas and grand writings of France's first authority upon that all important subject—the much lamented author and prelate, Monseigneur Dupanloup. And although he wrote volumes upon the question of education, we can from one end to the other perceive that idea developed and continued. Then with this distinction before us, we will

venture a step more and touch lightly upon College life and upon the manner of instructing and educating in Canada and above all in Lower Canada.

There are two grand branches, each of equal importance. Neither of those branches can be neglected without thereby causing great injury to the other. They are—firstly mental and secondly physical education. They should from the beginning, from the first hour that a child (for in our age a person is then only a child) enters the walls of a College be taken equally into consideration. To neglect the physical education, the physical development would be as wrong and as sinful as to permit the choice faculties of the mind to rest and decay. For, every man, howsoever small his quota of knowledge may be, is bound by his duties towards society, and his obligations towards his fellow men to place at their disposal the gifts which the good God gave him. And how can a man fulfil such obligations when he possesses not that physical strength and energy necessary for their accomplishment? In proportion, then, as the faculties of the mind are cultivated and exercised so should those of the body be developed and strengthened.

For the present we will confine our few remarks to the first and perhaps most important of these two branches—the mental education. As in our last essay we will again cite from that author of universal knowledge and undying energy, Thomas Davis. In an essay upon "self-education" he tells us that: "upon schools much has been written. Yet almost all private schools in this country are bad. They merely cram the memories of pupils with facts or words, without developing their judgment, taste, or invention, or teaching them the *application* of any knowledge. Besides the things taught are commonly those least worth learning. This is especially true of the middle and richer classes. Instead of being taught the nature, products and history, first of their own, and then of other countries, they are buried in classical frivolities, languages, which they cannot appreciate. Instead of being disciplined to think exactly, to speak and write accurately, they are crammed with rules, and taught to repeat forms by rote."