

The Teacher of Manual Training.

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Very early in the history of manual training in all countries where the subject has been taken up thoroughly and systematically, the question of the training and qualifications of the teachers of it had to be considered. In England, it is now just ten years since manual training by means of work in wood and metal became a part of the elementary education system, receiving recognition by the education department as a school subject. Grants were allotted by Parliament in its estimates, and regulations and suggestions published in the official "Code" in 1890; and in consequence, the subject was taken up by several of the larger cities almost immediately. Three or four years before that, however, a little band of pioneers had been at work in London, under the leadership of Sir Philip Magnus, of the City and Guilds of London Institute for the advancement of technical education, and so well known for his work in connection with it. That body had, annually, for several years in their reports called attention to the necessity for manual training and its importance as a school discipline. The school board for London, ever to the front in modern developments, started two schools as an experiment, one north and one south of the Thames. Much interest was shown in them; but as the education department had not then "recognized" the subject, the Board was somewhat abruptly checked by the government auditor's decision, that the cost of the classes was not a legitimate charge on the public money. One of London's wealthy city companies (the survivors of the mediæval Trade Guilds), the Drapers' Company, now came to the rescue, and through the City and Guilds Institute donated a thousand pounds to enable the classes to be continued for another year. This was done on an increased scale, and the classes, under the direction of a joint committee of the school board, the Drapers' Company and the Guilds Institute attracted an enormous amount of attention from educationists and the public generally. The £1,000 was continued as a grant from year to year, supplemented by a sum of £250 from the Guilds Institute, so satisfactory was the new phase of the school work deemed. By this time, the slow-moving department of education had been convinced of the value of the work, and in 1900, as mentioned above, the subject was officially recognized and school boards enabled to spend the public funds upon this branch of school work. This, of course, gave it a great impetus and at once the demand arose for teachers with practical training in the use of tools, able and qualified to

give the necessary instruction. The fact that carpenters' tools and wood were chiefly used, led to the employment in many instances, of craftsmen only; but as the aims and methods of the new education came to be more clearly understood, it was seen that the teacher of the subject must not only be skilled in the use of tools, but must be trained in the methods of pedagogy, the understanding of child life, and the aims and ideals of educators of our future men and women. Some course of instruction was clearly necessary to enable teachers to become acquainted with the new development; and when in 1891 the City and Guilds Institute issued a syllabus, chiefly drawn up by Sir P. Magnus and Prof. Unwin, for a training course for teachers of woodwork in elementary schools, classes were started in various parts of the country.

At the first examination held at the end of the winter session of 1891-2, 615 candidates presented themselves for the first year's certificate, and the following year the majority of the successful ones completed the final course and became duly qualified teachers. The instruction was generally given on Saturdays in convenient centres, county councils and other authorities assisting by paying for the instructor's services and making travelling and other allowances to the teacher students who attended. This system has been continued with good results ever since, close on 3,000 teachers having obtained the full certificate of competency to teach woodwork as manual training. Metal work is also taught along the same lines, but as yet has only a limited application, wood being for many reasons the best medium for educational handwork. The examinations have been kept up to a high standard, and the certificates are valued accordingly. A paper on the theory and practice of teaching, a stiff drawing examination, and a practical test in bench work are set, and a pass in each insisted on; and in addition the student must have taken the two years' training beforehand. The importance of this training cannot be over-estimated; for a high degree of technical skill on the teacher's part is an absolute necessity, if successful results are to be attained. Reference has been made to the fact that, while skilled craftsmen were at first employed as special teachers of manual training, it has gradually come to be recognized that the instructor should be a *teacher* first and a skilled worker afterwards. While, however, this is true, it cannot be too strongly impressed on teachers who may think of undertaking manual instruction, that a light and superficial knowledge of the technical side is not sufficient. A teacher should, in his pupils' eyes, be a person to be looked up to as an embodiment of wisdom and knowledge, and in this case,