

## Special Papers.

THE QUESTION IN REGARD TO  
MANUAL TRAINING.

ALL arguments against the introduction of manual training in our schools resolve themselves into three. First, there is no time for it; second, the schools were not established for the purpose of teaching the trades; third, it does not promote human development as much as the present curriculum. The first argument is fallacious, for if it is the best thing for our schools, the curriculum should be changed so as to admit it. It is wrong to keep the best from the young, whenever it is possible to give it to them. The second argument is founded upon the supposition that somebody is trying to introduce the learning of the trades into our schools. We know of no one who is advocating such a departure. The question whether manual training promotes human development is just now under discussion. Many eminent teachers who have been experimenting for years declare that it does; others who have not experimented at all, or but little, and under unfavorable circumstances, declare that it does not. There are a few who emphatically say that education by doing is one of the great educational humbugs of this century, for they claim that thinking is not necessarily connected with doing, and it is thinking that educates. Here is the whole question of manual training in a nut shell.—*School Journal.*

## A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

JOSEPHINE walked along the sea-walls and came to the willows and dike, and looked into Richard Cable's garden. Thence she heard children's voices. She went to the bridge, crossed the water and entered the garden. She saw a ladder set against the side of the house, a short ladder, for the house was but one story high, and Richard Cable was above the ladder, on the roof, pruning the vine. As he chopped off a young shoot with leaves and tendrils he stooped with it to his little Mary, who sat just below her father's foot on a lower bar; and she stooped and handed the cluster of leaves to Effie, who sat a stage lower; Effie handed it to her twin sister, and Jane to Martha and she to Lettice, and she to Susie, and at the bottom sat Mrs. Cable with the baby, and insisted on the tiny hands receiving the cool, beautiful leaves from the little sister. The pretty children were thus on steps of the ladder one above the other, with the evening sun on their golden heads and white aprons and their smiling faces and dancing blue eyes.

Presently Cable called for some string and the baby was made to hold it to Susie who received and raised her arms over her head, when Lettice bowed and took the string and passed it in like manner above her head to Martha, who in similar style delivered the string to Jane, and so to Effie, and Effie to Mary, and Mary to her father. Josephine stood where she had crossed, looking at the picture of peaceful happiness. Soon she drew back thinking she was unobserved and sat thinking and contrasting her life with that of these children. She was startled to hear a step behind her. She looked round, Richard Cable was there. "As you did not come to us, I have come to you." "O, Mr. Cable! I did not like to interrupt you whilst you were pruning your vine."

"I was giving my pets a lesson he said." "A lesson! Of what sort?" "A double lesson—to take their several seats and sit there content; and to form a part of the great chain of life, each assisting and assisted by the other." "What! Delivering a moral picture to the infants?"

"No," he answered, "I said nothing to them; they take in these ideas naturally. Did you see how they were all of them, dear mites! on the ladder, and me at top, passing things up and down. It is not necessary for one to give a lecture on it. They would not understand it now if I did; but afterwards, when each takes her place in the social scale, she'll may be remember how she sat on the ladder, and will pass good things down to those below, and will also hand up what is due to those above. It is a picture of life, miss."

"You are a moralist, Mr. Cable." "I don't know that but I have time to think."

"In Autumn when the grapes are ripe, I shall be on the trellis again and all the children on the ladder. Then I shall pass down the bunches and they will go down untasted, I need not give a word of teaching about it, they learn of themselves that the strong and older, and those high up, must stoop to help the weak and the young and the lowly."

## HOW TO MAKE DULL BOYS READ.

THE sluggish circulation of books in our rural districts should be quickened in all ways, and especially through cheap editions of great authors. It appears to me one of the hopeful signs of the times that scientific primers are now being widely put into circulation. Of course there is no royal road to knowledge, but it is better that elementary instruction prepared in primers by experts, should be sunk into the minds of the population than, that the common people should go back even to the reverence which they had early in New England days for scholars speaking *ex cathedra*. We are a nation of smatterers, but hope to be something better in time. The fear of superficial learning through the distribution of science in an elementary form is not unnatural on the part of some; yet it should be remembered that these primers are usually written by experts, and that the names of several of the foremost men in science have been placed upon the title-pages of elementary works for the people. Let a boy have these and he will be incited by them to the study of greater works, which ought to be classics even in libraries intended for young people.

Make a dull boy feel that the dime novel is vulgar. I remember that, in *Telemachus*, Ulysses tried to convince a man who had become one of a herd of swine that it was shameful to be a pig; but he did not succeed. The flooding of the land with dime novels and with infamous periodicals of the cheaper and coarser kind acts like Circe's enchantment on wide circles of youth. No doubt it is a frequent incitement to crime, and, on the whole, is one of the most monstrous of the undisguised evils in the modern days of cheap printing. Let a boy learn that some publications are not fit to be handled with the tongs. Let parents exclude from the family mansion the frogs and vipers that swarm forth from the oozy marshes of the Satanic press. Let the dull boy make the acquaintance of Cooper, Scott, Defoe, and *Pilgrim's Progress*—a book by no means out-grown. Personally I must confess great indebtedness to the *Rollo* books, the *Jonas* books, and the *Young Christian*, by the late revered father of the editor of the *Christian Union*. Richter, in his *Titian*, represents one of his characters at the age of twenty-five as making a collection of all the books he had read while young, including the volumes he had studied at school as well as the fiction which had interested him in early days. Let a dull boy be incited by his parents, his school teachers, his Sunday-school instructors, and especially by his pastor, to dip deeply into the classics for youth. After the best works of historical fiction become fascinating to him, history will interest and biography will attract him. When a boy has once acquired a keen interest in biographical and historical reading, he cannot thereafter be wholly vulgar in his taste for literature.

As to the bright boy in the country, little need be said, for he will take care of himself. He will have the best books, or a few of them at least, and they will be his chief treasures. My impression is that such a boy ought not to think the city necessary for a thorough acquaintance with the masters of literature. There are only about one thousand really first-class books in the English language—certainly not over a thousand that deserve reading three times through. Of the greatest books there are not over a hundred in the mother-tongue in which any man is born. If teacher and parent will help the boys to select these, and make up a library for them out of the volumes that deserve to be absorbed, the taste of a bright boy will very soon guide itself. He cannot go amiss in the list of books which time has proved. My opinion is that the taste of youth should be formed by literature of standard reputation far more than by ephemeral novelties, however brilliant. We should early become thoroughly familiar with the hundred best books in our language, for these will be with us through life, and be the chief solace of our declin-

ing years. I can put into a book-case five feet square the volumes, which, in my opinion, contain the chief weight of English literature. We are to weigh books, not measure them, and I would do this even for youth.—*Joseph Cook, in the Educational Courant.*

## CONCERNING THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

THE study of history is generally the *bête-noir* of the school-boy and school-girl. We believe this is the fault, not of the pupil, but of the teacher and the text-book, and of the insane idea, prevalent both in and out of the school-room, that success in study is measured, not by the quality of knowledge acquired, but by the quantity of ground covered. Accordingly, the history of a country, sometimes a history of the whole world, is put into a single volume, and a pupil is expected to master it in a term, or at most in a year. He crams himself with an array of dates, names and events; while the realities which these symbolize he knows nothing about. He can tell you the date of the Magna Charta, but whether it was a document or an animal he hardly knows; and as to its relations to English history, what it grew out of, and what grew out of it, he knows nothing. He can, perhaps, give, without halting or hesitating, the line of the kings and queens of England; but what kind of a creature was King John, what kind of royalty was represented in even Henry the Eighth or Charles the First, he has little or no idea. As to history as the development of a national life, and the mental and moral evolution of society, and the successive processes by which it has emerged from barbarism and entered into civilization—of this he has not the faintest conception. Geography is studied in much the same way. When we were in the West, in a prairie country, where the highest known hill was the bluff along the river, a child in the public school who was studying about the Rocky Mountains, or the Andes, or the Alps, innocently asked her teacher whether a mountain was as high as the Congregational church steeple, that being the highest thing within her observation. It would seem to be self-evident that a child should learn what a mountain is before she should endeavor to learn where the mountains are and what their names; so she should learn the significance of the facts, and the character of the great historical personages, before she undertakes to learn the dates of these events, the birth and death of those personages, and the way in which they followed one another upon the stage. The fundamental principle in all science is that the specific precedes the generic. General principles and truths are deduced from specific illustrations. In order to know, we learn events first and laws afterward. But in our common methods of education we reverse this process, stuff our children's memories with laws that they cannot understand, and then expect them to proceed to the illustrations and events which from those laws have been deduced. We ought to reverse the process. We are beginning to put language first and grammar afterward, as the vernacular is always taught in the home. This is the natural method; so we ought to teach, in arithmetic, problems first, rules afterward; in science, experiments first, generalizations afterward; in geography, physical facts first, political divisions afterward; in history, geography first, history afterward.

Mr. Carlyle has stated that universal history is, at bottom, but the history of great men. "They certainly make and designate the epoch of national life," says Samuel Smiles. Let us, then, teach our children, first, who the great men are, and what great things they did, then weave these great events into a continuous history, and the story of the lives of these great men into the story of the life of humanity. No child can be expected to be interested in, because no child can be expected to comprehend, the history of the beginning of the English constitution, but any child may be interested in the romantic history of Alfred the Great. No child can be expected to comprehend feudalism, but any child may read with interest the life of William the Conqueror, and so learn what feudalism is before he has become conscious that he is studying it. The history of the Reformation can be nothing but a bewildering maze of dates, names, and hard words to a child, but the story of Luther,