

EDUCATION IN ICELAND.

The correspondent of a Swiss journal thus writes as to this subject: "One would certainly have no trouble in finding among the corps of teachers some men of great merit, even erudite, whose obscure and modest science is devoted to study, and to the good of their country, without care for renown or the reward of this world. I once asked a young Icelander who undertook the instruction of children who, from the distance of their dwellings or the poverty of their parents, could not attend school. 'At the age of seven years,' he replied, 'all our children know how to read, write, and cipher, among the poorest fishermen of the coast, there is not one who has not received what may be called a good primary education. Our mothers are our teachers, the *boer* (Iceland house) our school-room. The nearest pastor has an oversight of the progress of the children, and that one who does not furnish the proof of a sufficient education would not be admitted to confirmation. An Icelandic mother would not survive the chagrin of seeing her children refused by the pastor, and not a single example is known of it.' Ask the first child you meet who it was that taught him or her the history and geography of their country, the names of the birds and flowers, and the invariable reply will be *Modremi*, my mother. Touching in its simplicity and grandeur, and revealing truly the character of this sympathetic people! At twenty-five the young man is profoundly religious, chaste, gentle, and honest as on the day when at his mother's knee he was spelling out his first lesson. Can one be astonished after this that in Iceland there are neither soldiers nor cannon; that the art of robbing one's neighbor of his purse or his land is unknown; that one sees there no police nor prison; and that for centuries one has lost the memory of every kind of crime?"

METHOD AND DISCIPLINE.

The Rev. C. D. Du Port (Her Majesty's inspector) opened a discussion on this subject by a very interesting and amusing address. His lively manner kept his audience in full expectancy, and his witty sallies were received with peals of laughter. He began by saying that he had much praise to award, and very little blame to remember, of the general discipline of the schools with which he was connected. He spoke not only of the Church schools, but of all the other elementary schools which he visited side by side with them. When he spoke of discipline he did not mean mere absence of disorder, or merely enforced order. He meant this kind of thing (quoting the note to Article 109 in the Code). He was not an advocate for the total abolition of corporal punishment, for one reason, because it was a safeguard against passionate correction. He hated the promiscuous box on the ear, he detested the passionate blow; he valued, in its proper place, the good old-fashioned cane. Let it be honored as the "Court of final judicial appeal," for "familiarity bred contempt." Every time it was used, as Mr. Mundella said, an entry should be made in the log-book. Teachers should not be afraid of the clause in Mr. Mundella's little bill. It only asked them to give the cane judicial dignity as a last appeal, and that its deeds might be emblazoned in future history. Having pointed out that there were other punishments besides the cane, he said that discipline must be more than punitive if it was to create what the Code had expounded as an honorable and earnest school. There must be more than faults checked and punished; there must be training—virtues raised up and developed. Let them aim at the discipline of influence. The very instant the punitive terror was removed, the boy would be over the traces if there

was no other influence at work to prevent a reaction. They must work upon child will, child spirit, child self-respect, child *esprit de corps*, and child gratitude. They must not kill or deaden the boy's spirit, but guide, train, and use it. Their discipline must be a friend to the children—they must play with them, work with them, and work for them; and then they would work with them and for them. Let the children fear, but not them (the masters and mistresses.) Let them fear conflict with them, which was a very different thing. Now as to "method." His opinion was that they now had too much method by half. The danger was lest technical methods learned by training should usurp the place of methodical work—lest method, technically so called, should supersede teaching. Common sense and human sympathy were the two grand methods which never failed. Without them all technical methods were dry and profitless; but, if they worked upon those double lines, their technical methods would prove a vast help. Having cleverly held up to ridicule what he called the "A, B, C," the "form and color," and the "model lessons" mania, he said they ought to feel as free as possible in the use of their technical methods. Let them try to get fun out of the lesson, and correct the children by banter rather than scolding; let them try to forget all their technicalities in zeal, and give their enthusiasm the fullest play. Economy of time was the best method after all. In the question of home lessons he hoped they would show some human sympathy and kindness. Let the children take home their reading-book, and master the sense of a chapter; and let them come in the morning, not perfectly acquainted with it, but ripe to ask questions, and so bring teaching from the teacher. Let the technical methods of their work be their slaves, and not they slaves of them. They should see that the wider methods of life were in full working order. Let their zeal bring into play common-sense plans of every available and varied kind. Let their ambition be to become the successful human trainers of human growth; let them ever remember all that goes to make up human childhood, its instincts, its weakness, its cravings, its ambitions; so should they by sensible, and sympathetic work be, through human children, of lasting benefit to human society.—*School Guardian*.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

The perennial demand for "practical" education in the public schools is just now exceptionally strenuous. At a recent conference of teachers and school committees this question was discussed: "How shall we educate our pupils so as to fit them for the practical duties of life, such as farming and the various industrial pursuits?" This is a fair statement of the problem; as it is urged in many quarters.

In trying to solve it, everything depends on the meaning of that short word "fit." If by "fitting" pupils for farming and other industrial pursuits is meant giving them technical instruction in agriculture and the various handicrafts, then it is doubtful whether the public schools can attempt it. It is true that, in some parts of Austria, small "school-gardens" have been established in connection with many of the public schools, in which most of the common grains and other plants of the country are cultivated, the names of which are taught to the children, thus giving them object-lessons in botany, by which they become somewhat familiar with the flora of their own neighborhood and learn something also of the structure and habits of plants. As much as this might be done in connection with many of our suburban and country schools. But this would go but a little way toward fitting boys to be farmers. In the public schools of Boston girls are taught sewing, and this branch of