

## MANUAL TRAINING.

There is impending a revolution in Education more radical than the world has yet seen. It may be considered by those who have thought earnestly on the subject, that it has been long in coming, but after all, no great new departure can be a success before the world is awakened to it, and educated and ripe for it. In the present article we shall only discuss the subject in its broadest and most abstract aspect. Hereafter, we shall have more to say as to details.

"It is the bane of this time," says Mr. Charles H. Ham, writing in *Harper*, in February, 1886, "as of all previous ages, that education is regarded as a polite accomplishment merely having very little to do with the real business of life. This superficial view is an inheritance from the Greeks and Romans, the curriculum of whose schools consisted mainly of exercises in rhetoric and logic. The revival of learning four hundred years ago was the *renaissance* of classicism. In the schools, proficiency in the languages of peoples whose institutions had long since perished, was made the test of scholarship. The sciences were neglected, and the useful arts treated with platonic scorn." Bacon (followed by Locke and Rousseau) was the first to demonstrate the poverty of the old scholasticism as an educational force. Then Comenius, Pestalozzi and Froebel struggled to supplant abstractions by object teachings. To-day many eminent men, as well as the special organs of various collegiate and other educational institutions, join in deprecating the artificial and unnatural prestige of classics, the complexity and recalcitrant nature of examination questions, and the strain of pedantry on the brain of the young. There is in fact a general broadening of the educational outlook, and the question whether the old methods are of practical avail to smooth the road of future life is at last plainly set before us. Progress in the past has been retarded by the stubborn resistance of the schoolmaster. That resistance is now fast giving way before common sense. There is, we may here remark, a very singular point about the leavening of mankind by common sense. For centuries it lies dormant, and then, when it does flash out, it is but one great man or so of an age who receives illumination, and it is well if he be not set down as, in his day, and country, a wizard or a dreamer. The latter was the fate of the Marquis of Worcester, on whose really practical mind first dawned the capabilities of steam. Had he been contemporary with Bacon, that great mind might well have co-operated with him, and the world have been revolutionized two hundred years earlier. Peter the Great, one of the most extraordinarily practical men that ever lived, "cast aside his royal robes," and boldly handled the shipwright's tools. In like manner, the Great Czar educated himself into a finer General than Charles 12th of Sweden. Within the lines of strategy, tactics, and supply, all great Generals have been of the strict common sense. And why? Because their profession compelled them to technicality in every branch of it.

"From the dust of 300 years of neglect," says Mr. Ham, "M. Victor Della Vos has rescued Bacon's aphorism, 'Education is the cultivation of a legitimate familiarity betwixt the mind and things,' and, with a rare touch of inspiration, made it the vital principle of art culture in the curriculum of the Imperial Technical School of Moscow."

It is in this way that Manual Training as an Educational Agency, which has already made its advent in the schools of the United States, is now forcing its claims on the recognition of Canadian educationists. It has no quarrel with Greek and Latin, which are admirable as trainers of minds, conscious of powers and tendencies which may hereafter turn them to practical account. This is the question—What is practical? We hold the Definitions of Euclid to be of practical utility even to him whose turn of mind will never lead him to the higher mathematics, because they clear the mind and bind it over to distinctness and accuracy. We doubt if the boy on whom these definitions have impressed themselves, can ever be as prone to exaggeration of statement as he who is ignorant of them. For similar reasons we believe in a knowledge of Greek and Latin Grammar and Greek roots, even for those who may never find themselves capable of construing a line of Homer or Virgil. But unless a boy, so to speak, "takes to" the classics as a duck takes to water, we would press them no further. But the uses of Manual Training are infinitely more far-reaching. In the laboratory of carpentry, the pupil is led to the consideration of the natural history of certain trees—the qualities and adaptabilities of their woods. With the manipulations of iron and steel are allied all the great events of the world's history. He who can handle with dexterity the plane and the chisel—he who can forge a horse-shoe—has at his command not only the gratification of skill, but, in many circumstances of life the attainment of comfort; and appliances sometimes otherwise unprocurable, sometimes only attainable at the cost of money and delay. In any workmanship, in fact, in which he may have received technical training, he is in a position which all wholesome natures desire—that of being independent and self-sufficient. To most boys, if taken young enough, there is great fascination in manual arts. When they have grown older under the exclusive influence of other studies the attraction is much lessened. Exclusively mental training does not produce a symmetrical character, because it merely teaches the student how to think, and the essential complement of thought is action. But few Canadian youths can hope to make their living by mere intellectualism. The old system of education by subjective processes tends more or less to the promotion of selfishness. Manual training promotes altruism from the simple fact of its being objective.

There is sufficient evidence of the highest character that, even where a considerable portion of the day is devoted to it, academic work does not suffer, but compares well in quantity and quality with that of classes in schools where it is not practised.

Space (or the want of it) precludes our going further into this important

subject in this issue; but the Revolution is as certain of advent as the return of daylight, and we shall continue to illustrate it at an early period.

## THE SCOTTISH HOME RULE ASSOCIATION.

A communication received by the "St. Andrew's Society" of Ottawa, from Mr. McNaught, the Secretary of the "Scottish Home Rule Association" is not of a nature to recommend their grounds of advocacy to thoughtful persons. As we observed last week, the Imperial Parliament is so heavily embarrassed by the amount of small local business, that it cannot attend properly to both Imperial and local interests. The recently passed County Government Act will probably do something to ease the congestion, but we believe that Britain will find it best at no distant date to establish English, Scotch, and Irish Legislatures to attend to local affairs, leaving strictly Imperial matters for the Imperial Parliament, just as in Canada the conduct of affairs is divided between the Dominion and the Provincial Parliaments, and it is a matter of some pride to Canada to find herself in the position of an example looked up to in a question of Imperial organization.

We consider that Home Rule will be a blessing to all the three Mother Countries as soon as it can be established with a due regard to the solidity of the Empire; we sympathize, therefore, with both Scotland and Ireland in this aspiration, and it is fortunate that the former is unembarrassed by the questions and the feelings which unhappily stand in the way of those concessions to Ireland which, if she would frankly abandon unlawful terrorism, ought to be at once taken into friendly and generous consideration.

We are accustomed to recognize in Scotsmen all those sterling qualities which go to the making of the best stamp of citizen. It is disappointing, therefore, to find what we suppose we must call an accredited body for the promotion of a measure which we conceive few Englishmen, except fossil Conservatives, would feel any deep-seated reluctance to further, damaging their eminently reasonable cause by the kind of rant which has done so much to retard justice to Ireland, the chief characteristic of which is the appeal, by perversions of fact and history, to the passions of the ignorant.

It may fairly be assumed that, where one Scotchman may be found who desires the dismemberment of the Empire, a thousand would present themselves to fight for its unity. It seems, therefore, improbable that Mr. McNaught, on behalf of the Society he represents, furthers their contentions in accordance with the sentiments held by the majority of the nation.

Almost the opening of their statement indicates its essentially false tone, when it says "the assertion that the union of 1707 benefitted Scotland, is an utter fallacy." It goes on to affirm that the union "has been productive of untold evils to Scotland," and constitutes the clap net appeal to the pocket that "she is to day a joint obligant in an enormous debt of nearly £749,000,000, mainly caused by fighting the enemies of England, not Scotland, for the Scots were always a peaceful people, at war with no country but England, and that only in self-defence." Now, in the first place, it is absurd, and may be wicked, to endeavor to rouse popular passions on the doings of arbitrary and masterful sovereigns of feudal times—acts which have long since passed into the philosophical retrospect of history. In the next place Sir Walter Scott was a Scotsman whose patriotism will scarcely be impugned. Sir Walter has touched on the relations of Scotchmen to England in four or five of his novels, and the tendency of his illustrations is strongly confirmative of the generally received opinion that, even from the time of James the First, the benefits of the connection fell to Scotland in no scant measure, and the alacrity with which the Scottish volunteers sprang to arms at every alarm of a French invasion in Napoleon's time, savors but little of the idea that Scotland was fighting enemies who were not her own.

The utterly childish statement follows that the union was the main cause of the two rebellions of 1715 and 1745, a piece of nonsense, calling for no serious refutation. From exaggeration and mis-statement to direct falsehood is but a step, and we are next told that Scottish institutions have been assailed, and that the legislative neglect of Scotland "has been, and is, such as no other country in the world would have borne so long with patience." In the case of Ireland there is ground for such a charge, and England herself suffered from the congestion of local legislation; but it is well known that questions affecting Scotland are left almost entirely to Scottish members, and, if any have suffered neglect, the neglect has been from the same cause from which England herself has been inconvenienced.

The association is jealous of what has been done for Ireland, and goes into a mass of figures to prove that Scotland gets very inadequate returns for her contributions to the Imperial revenue. If there be any truth in the latter contention, confidence is again shaken by the ascription, to the fact of the seat of Government being in London, of all the misery and destitution in Scotland, from the Tweed to the Hebrides; and by the ludicrous complaints that "another serious drain to Scotland is the constant migration to London of her men of talent," and that "our country appears to have become the happy hunting ground of the English carpet bagger." If the former be true, Scotland seems to have suffered no depletion of brains from the alleged intellectual exodus; and with regard to the latter, most people have been in the habit of fancying that the shoe best fitted the other foot. The crude document closes with a feeble intimation that the rather unkind attacks on England and Ireland do not indicate any desire to impair the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and a vague implication of the Colonies, whose desire for Federation the association seems to think would be some aid to its cause. This is all very well, but if the Colonies enter into an Imperial Federation, the Scottish Association may be sure that it will not be in the narrow and captious spirit of its manifesto. We do not think that the statement either embodies the opinions of Scotchmen at large, or that it arouses in the Colonies any very keen sympathy with the association which it assumes to represent them.