

into the fire, and would undoubtedly do so could we afford to put up with the consequences. To begin and teach infants to sing by note is simple nonsense. Banish "Hullah" and "Wilheim" and all the rest of the "Doctors" out of your infant-school, and cultivate the ear. Leave the notes till they reach the boys or the girls' school. Try also and teach them to sing some of our old Irish airs. They are not so difficult, and after a short time the children will feel a pleasure in them which they never can feel in the greater number of the things they sing, which, by way of courtesy, are called music. Mr. Keenan, Chief of Inspection, has done a great deal to popularise the Irish airs in our schools, but the mistresses of the infants-school, and of the ordinary national schools can do a vast deal more, if they will but try. It is in the infant-school it must be begun—the task will be comparatively easy afterwards.

But we find that the matter of our paper has grown on us, and we must therefore hold over our hints on other subjects for another number.—*Irish Teachers' Journal.*

Physical Education.

It is a sad reflection, forced upon us by evidence too strong to be resisted, that the very progress of civilization is frequently purchased at the cost of evils only a trifle less grave than those which it removes. The most wholesome distrust in rose-colored views of the olden time cannot protect us from occasionally being rudely reminded that we are still a good way from the Golden Age, and that in this or that particular point our "benighted ancestors" had clearly the advantage of us.

In some lines of advancement modern science and co-operation have achieved such bewildering marvels, that sobering reflections of this sort are necessary to keep the slightly over-confident spirit of the present age in a modest frame of mind. Our triumphs are unquestionably immense. But we need to be reminded that our defeats and losses tend to be on a commensurate scale. In numberless trades and occupations, all having for their object the good of society at large, the lives, health, and happiness of the human beings who follow them are one steady, continued sacrifice for the benefit of others. And setting aside such essentially injurious trades, all the social body, it is beginning to be perceived, is paying a very considerable price for the mere convenience and rapidity of locomotion alone which it now enjoys, which is beyond question one of the greatest achievements of modern times. To this, in a very high degree, is owing that want of calmness and leisure, that high-pressure speed which makes life in the great centres of modern civilization more exhausting than old-fashioned campaigning. In former days, people who had to go long distances either walked or rode on horseback, and, even if they availed themselves of the new-fangled luxuries of the coach or the wagon, the whole proceeding was so slow and deliberate that it resembled rather a picnic than a journey, while the alternative was plenty of vigorous exercise and abundance of fresh air.

Travelling now is not exercise, but a process,—convenient and, with our modern requirements, indispensable no doubt, but as far as possible removed from exercise, and not necessarily connected with a mouthful of fresh air. Business or caprice causes us to resolve that this afternoon or to-morrow morning we will go 100, 200, 300 miles from our present position. No sooner thought than done. We are carried to the railway station, and then, after going through certain formalities, a process is commenced which rarely fails to deliver us at the spot we wish to appear at in the allotted time. Our energies have not been called forth, except, perhaps, for one brief momentary spasm of hurry, if we happened to be late at the ticket office. Not a muscle has been used and strengthened, not one deep draught of oxygen has been inhaled; we have had a nightmare vision of fields, trees, and earth-cuttings, broken occasionally by the sulphurous twilight of the tunnels, and having for a period wearied and blunted our eyes with attempting to read a book or a paper, we await, with cold feet or

dust-begrimed skins, according to the season, the moment of deliverance.

No one will suppose us ill-advised enough to be querulous over this; but the point which we wish to emphasise is that modern times, by the mere progress of discovery in locomotion, have lost one of the chief sources of health and strength. All animals get their sufficient exercise by the necessity they are under of moving about in search of food, and domestic animals are less vigorous and healthy than their wild congeners, simply because this exercise is curtailed by the services they receive from man. But, further, men are not only under the necessity of exercising their bodies much less, but by the conditions of modern life they are under the necessity of exercising their minds a great deal more than ever they did before. The battle of life has now to be fought with brains, and with brains too often lodged in flaccid and feeble bodies. No doubt there have been at all times persons who worked their minds and nerves too much and their muscles too little. But, by the nature of the case, they were the exceptions, not the rule. The misfortune of our day is, that what was the exception is becoming the rule. In proportion as people "get on," as it is called, in any walk or profession, are they, for the most part, introduced to a sedentary, nerve-exhausting form of life,—a part of life from which every conception of old-fashioned hardships or privations has been triumphantly excluded by modern science, but which now shows itself none the less dreadful and destructive. How to combat these destructive influences has long engaged the attention of thoughtful men, who have solved the problem as to how artificial evils could best be met by artificial remedies. The science of physical education professes, in a great measure, to supply the remedy required.

It is to be regretted that on this point many are by no means duly informed, and that a considerable mass of prejudice still reigns on the subject. People still exist who hold decided and hostile views to physical training pursued on a system. We do not allude to the feeble folk of former days, who considered delicacy genteel and poetical, and strength of body a coarse endowment,—"the pale, melancholy, and interesting school" who spoke by preference of a poet's "pale and fevered brow," and thought that if pretty women had good appetites, they at least should not indulge them before company. A well-known reaction was led against these persons some years ago, and they are comparatively rare and unimportant now.

There are very robust and healthy people who, having done without any particular attention to physical training themselves, rather inconsiderately condemn attention to it on the part of others. They have a rooted idea that all the reported good results of a physical training are "mere theory," and will compliment you on your faith, if you maintain that at any rate they are stubborn facts. They like exercise, and will take it themselves, provided it is of a natural kind. Field sports, cricket, and the like are unobjectionable. There is nothing new-fangled and theoretical about them; what they do, with their whole hearts, object to, is the silly illusion that wrenching the arms out of the sockets by means of pulleys and ropes can possibly do any body any good least of all any weak or young person. Was it ever contended, it is asked, that the children of respectable parents should swing by the arms and turn upside down like monkeys or acrobats? In a word, they have not patience with such nonsense.

However, all this is nothing more than might have been expected. The changed conditions of modern life demand a change of domestic habits and education, and it is no wonder if the latter change lags considerably behind the former. Moreover, no friend to physical education can have a moment's doubt concerning its ultimate, or rather its speedy triumph. The "mere theories" have already become so widely realized in concrete facts and healthy, vigorous bodies, to be met in all localities, preching more eloquently than any words what physical education has done for them, and what it does every day of their lives that it is impossible to feel otherwise than good-humored with