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THE CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL.

An Educational Journal devoted to Literature, Science, Art, and the advancement of the teaching profession in Canada.

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"THE teacher is of chief importance in a school. He is more essential than the desk, the book, the cupola, or the facade, to the training and well-being of the pupil." So says some one in an exchange. The words sound very like a truism, yet they contain a truth often overlooked in these days, but a truth which should never be forgotten. Fine buildings, good furniture, costly apparatus, are all very desirable, and a great help to the teacher. But it cannot be too deeply impressed upon the minds of taxpayers, and trustees, and all who have to do with educational matters, that far more important than any or all these things is the living presence and energy of the true teacher. Better, infinitely better, for the boy or girl, is the influence and inspiration of a cultivated, clear-headed, noble-hearted man or woman in a log hut, than the petty routine of a mercenary hireling in the grandest educational palace.

DR. DICKINSON, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, in a paper read at the late National Superintendents' Meeting in Washington, took strong ground against the introduction of manual training in the common schools. His

arguments are thus summarized by the *N. E. Journal of Education* :

"The use of tools is imitation, therefore of no educational value."

"Manual training has no value as a means of developing moral power."

"All the manual training necessary can be found in making apparatus to illustrate the teaching of physics."

Dr. Dickinson is, we believe, an educator of superior intelligence and ability. The above summary, though by no means exhaustive of the objections that may be brought against manual training in the schools, contains the gist of those most frequently urged from the purely educational point of view. Let us look at them for a moment.

In the first place, neither of the three propositions is self-evident. We doubt if either of them, as thus broadly stated, is true, or capable of proof. It is evident that by "educational value" is meant value for purely intellectual development. Even so, we should challenge the statement. The use of tools is by no means simple imitation. This may be seen by watching any two or more workmen handling the same tool, or manufacturing the same article. There are few trades in which mind force does not tell, or in which the man whose mind is constantly on the alert, with both perceptive and reflective faculties engaged, will not succeed where the mere imitator will fail. Again, there is scarcely a product of manual labor which does not afford, in its manufacture, a wide scope for the play of moral qualities. Producers of the same article are morally separated from each other by all the distance which divides conscientious work from "scamped" work. In the third proposition, the word "necessary" clearly begs the very question at issue. Necessary for what end?

LIKE most other objectors to the manual education movement, Dr. Dickinson tacitly assumes that mental and moral development *per se* are the sole ends to be sought in a system of public education. This theory is a great advance on that which it superseded, which made the impartation of a certain amount of knowledge of facts and of processes the sum and substance of the teacher's work. We have made great progress, but there is yet much room for growth in our educational theories. In the article in another column from the Boston, U. S., *Citizen*, the true relation of the State to education is very concisely put. The chief end of the State in providing free education is not to produce learned men and women, nor to fit a certain number for certain professions and pursuits in life; nor to store the minds of the rising generation with useful knowledge. These ends may be gained incidentally, with great advantage to individuals, but neither of them, nor all of them, would justify a system of free public schools. The State supports schools because it is its business and duty to fit