

Exercise should be general, not particular, unless for a particular defect. It may be asserted that athletic excellence, considered by itself, is of little use, that the occasions are few on which society requires us to leap over a five-barred gate, or to climb a pole. Though this be true, it is apparent to every one, that health is generally found in conjunction with strength, and that strength is without doubt increased by muscular exertion. Life and health walk hand in hand. Physical exercise will not under all circumstances be successful, but *ceteris paribus*, it will be in creating fine men—by which expression is not to be understood plump or fat men, for that fatness is the result of ease rather than of labour may be gathered from a visit to a cattle show. We have said before, exercise should be general. A game at ball known to the Greeks under the name of sphoeromachy, a game in which Nansicaa with her maidens was engaged when disturbed by Ulysses at the river-side, seems to have been admirably adapted for exercising almost the whole order of muscles in the human frame; and this game, we in the nineteenth century play, under the name of cricket—the national pastime in England, of which she is so justly proud. Those who regard physical education as one of the remedies for some of the “thousand ills that flesh is heir to,” must be gratified at the impetus given to cricket during the past two years. This delightful exercise is becoming the especial favourite of the young men on both sides of the line.—*Ottawa Times*.

V. Papers on Practical Education.

PROF. FAWCETT ON LOOSE EDUCATION.

It has been often asserted, that the tendency of modern education is in the direction of superficialism. What, it may be asked, granting for argument's sake that the charge is correct, is the cause of this? We are inclined to think, that at least, so far as British education is concerned, it is the lack of discrimination as to the student's ability. Of course, every scholar must be grounded in certain rudiments, without which he cannot pass into other and simple branches of study. But the remark of Pestalozzi to the effect, that it takes a wise man to teach a child, might with equal force be applied to the teachers of children of larger growth than those to whom the Swiss teacher referred. The student's particular bent and strength in this or that branch of study is seldom noted by a teacher, and still more seldom applied for his benefit. Such may, by college rules, be compelled to spend valuable time learning matter positively distasteful to him and utterly useless in after years, while losing opportunity of developing his strong points. The result of this is necessarily a general looseness and shallowness in the majority of cases. To this evil, which has been frequently noted by scholastic reformers of modern times, Professor Fawcett called attention in some very forcible remarks recently at the distribution of prizes for the local university examinations in England. He addressed himself especially to those students who, he observed, had taken eight or ten subjects for examination. It is easy to understand what would be the result of such a course upon the pupil's examination. In no course could he answer satisfactorily, and the advice given by the Professor is certainly of the wisest nature. “Excellence in a few subjects ought to be regarded as a much greater distinction, and is certain to prove of more permanent benefit than mediocrity or showy superficialism in various subjects. A little chemistry, a little physiology, a little political economy, a smattering of mathematics, Latin, Greek and the modern languages, may be no doubt served up to present a somewhat imposing array; but two or three subjects carefully thought out and thoroughly mastered will give a strength to the mind and a soundness to the judgment which cannot be looked for from a mental training less thorough and complete.” These words of Mr. Fawcett are well worthy of the consideration of all who teach. But he also, in the course of his remarks, approaches a subject very important, but so difficult, that it is, perhaps, fortunate it seldom attracts the attention of the occupants of scholastic positions. “Let,” said Mr. Fawcett, “the mind of the pupil, be as far as possible, actually gauged, and let him confine himself to those subjects in which he is likely chiefly to excel.” Very frequently a teacher himself has mistaken his own *forte*, and not thoroughly knowing himself, he cannot be a fair judge of others. It is in the earlier stages of education that this observation of faculty must be made, though it is, unfortunately, too rarely made. Some system of mental registration will have to be instituted, by which a judgment can be formed as to youthful tendencies before the “gauge” of Mr. Fawcett can be brought into practice. How is this to be done? The “wise man” of the observant Pestalozzi is not to be depended on, because all teachers do not answer to his description. Suppose again the case to stand in Toronto. There, the schools are so crowded that, it is said, the children almost have to sit in one another's laps. What

kind of opportunity would the teacher have of “gauging” a pupil's temperament, mental inclination and disposition in such a case? None whatever. The student would then enter the world with his heterogeneous smatterings, and possibly go before the occupants of University chairs, who, of course, can have little opportunity of “gauging,” and after much flourish enters the world half-educated.—*Leader*.

HOW TO STUDY LANGUAGES.

Scribner's has a word of encouragement for timid linguists. The writer does not believe that a boy can get a fair notion of Latin or Greek poetry by reading a translation, even though it be the work of a skilful and competent scholar. There are ideas in every language which can be understood but cannot be translated, and the beginner is compelled to partially think in the language he is studying. The translator undertakes to give the meaning of the author, and to do this exactly he violates the moods and alters the wording, leading the reader off on false scents and not helping him back. The case is fairly put by one who says “you might understand the original if it were not for the translation.” The strongest impressions of an author's sentiment are sometimes given while wading slowly and with difficulty through the page, by the constant aid of a dictionary. Students, directed by their teachers, often make a mistake by neglecting to get any good from a language till they have studied it for some years. Like Irving's Dutch tumbler who took a start of three miles to jump a hill, they want to be perfect in French grammar before they will look beyond an exercise book, whereas they might be deriving much entertainment from Dumas or Eugene Sue, or even from the Montreal newspapers. So with German, the boy who spends a year at straightening out “ich habe gehabt,” before he ventures to read Hackländer's “Letzte Bombardier,” makes a mistake and wastes precious time. The dictionary is worn out too soon by many students. Take a boy who is put through an ordinary High School course, preparatory to college. He has a few years of Latin and a year of Greek, before he begins the modern languages. There is no need for a boy so trained, if his eyes are open and his wits at work, to run to his dictionary two hundred times while he is acquiring the French language. The idioms he must of course study and translate. The resemblance to their Latin roots will give him the meaning of most French words, and the similarity to English derivatives will give many more, enough between these two sources to form a solid frame-work for the language. The sense and connection will show the meaning of the rest of the words, and the practice of translating a dozen novels and a daily newspaper will perfect his knowledge of the language. This mode of acquiring another language will doubtless be condemned by those scholars and teachers who are so devoted to the grammar as to have earned the title of “gerund-grinders.” Their knowledge cannot be depreciated, for it must be satisfactory to know that one belongs to the small army who can tell without guessing the difference between pluperfects and second aorists, but the study of the grammar alone, without any accompanying literary recreation, seems like a useless hardship for the student. Why can he not be allowed a glimpse of the beauties of the literature he is slowly and painfully approaching? It would cheer him through many difficulties to know by experience that there was something better to read than the fable of “the ass and the lion.” Returning to the same “word of encouragement” which suggested these thoughts, we find the lesson that many modern teachers become crazy about grammatical accuracy. They cannot appreciate English poetry, and they are not to be expected to take pleasure in Greek poetry, but they insist upon strict accuracy of translation according to the letter of grammatical law. The ridiculous effect of adherence to a cast-iron rule will be seen from the story of the old professor who was devoted to the notion that he had discovered the delicate shades of meaning in the particles. But let *Scribner's* tell the story:

Some association of particles he made us translate by the expression: “Then thereupon;” another by the expression: “If, then, for the matter of that.” A boy was musically reading the passage in the “Hecuba,” of Euripides in which the old Queen of Troy is beseeching of Ulysses the life of Polyxena, her only surviving child, whom he is leading to sacrifice on the tomb of Achilles. He came to the particles and skipped them, for which he was bantered and persecuted for the rest of the hour by the Professor. The instructor had on hand a stock of jokes which he had been making during some forty years, and which were really formidable from their quantity and the vocal volume with which they were announced. The silent youth bore all with a sort of impassive disdain, only remarking, when pushed by the Professor: “Hecuba is down upon the ground praying for her daughter's life; clasping the knees of Ulysses, and I don't think that a woman in such a position would be apt to say: ‘Then, thereupon;’ or, ‘If, then, for the matter of that.’”