

without which, the greatest genius and the most versatile talents would labor fruitlessly to equal or even approximate.

To a landsman, who has lived all his days in some rural retreat, far from the city's din, or the roar of the surf-beaten shore, how wonderful is the agility of the gallant sailor, who springs from rope to rope, and runs along the rigging of the lofty ship! Filled with awe, he regards the rough denizen of old ocean as a being of a different order, and utterly refuses to credit the tale, that the same agility might have been his had he been subjected to the same training. He essays to climb the rope-made ladder, to test his powers, but his ascent is slow and tedious, and his trembling hand with difficulty retains in its nervous grasp, the frail hempen fabric which bears him aloft, and saves him from destruction. Short space has he mounted ere his longing eye is cast earthward to measure the distance passed, and to his affrighted imagination it seems magnified tenfold above the reality; downward he lies, with quivering muscles and trembling limbs, and when once again, his foot has firmly pressed the deck of the stately vessel, his heart bounds with joy at the danger passed, and he inwardly resolves never, never more to attempt the dangerous experiment.

Let us step into a counting house in some large city, see that pale man with the lofty brow, seated at his desk; before him are long columns of figures, on which he is intently engaged. Mark how his eye glances up the page with almost the rapidity of lightning, and his pen jots down, with eager haste, the results of the computation, page after page is turned, and still the same untiring assiduity, the same astonishing speed. In one short hour he has computed more, he has added more pounds, shillings, and pence into one grand result, than you, who have been observing him, could accomplish in a day. Whence is this? how is it, that he, who in boyhood's days, seated at the same desk with yourself, was fain to seek your aid in these very calculations, is now possessed of almost superhuman speed? Oh, the answer is not difficult, he has spent year after year in these calculations, until they have been inwoven with his very nature, until calculation is to him no labor at all,—it is second nature.

Do we need to multiply examples? Look at the orator, who, during a long life has been engaged in almost daily appeals to the reason of his fellows; with what ease he speaks, how fluently the words roll from his lips, how natural his gestures, how clear his reasoning, how apposite his illustrations, how convincing his argument! He holds you rapt for many hours, and yet he scarcely spent as many minutes in preparing that splendid oration, he needed no preparation. And why? Go back fifty years, and look at the same man just beginning his career, he is about to essay his maiden speech; for months he has been closely engaged in its preparation, he has written it throughout, and imprinted it thoroughly on his memory; yet, his lips tremble and his countenance is pale as marble while the heavy perspiration hangs in beads from his brow. With trembling step he ascends the platform to make that effort upon which so much depends; and which he dreads, O, how much! What is the difference between the finished orator and the raw stripling, who so awkwardly makes his first trial of oratory, and after a few tremulous sentences, pauses, becomes bewildered, and ultimately shrinks from the platform, covered with shame, and followed by the groans and hoots of the thoughtless and unfeeling, and by the compassion of those who cherish for him a kindly re-

gard? It is practice, long continued practice; he nerved himself for future exertions, and that success which always attends perseverance, at length crowned his labours and raised him to eminence.

Is the picture overdrawn? Many a man who now trends on the high places of the earth, and who is honored for his talents as a public speaker, can attest its truthfulness.

If then, the benefits of long continued practice at one single occupation are so great, and if the power to labor is so vastly increased by rigid concentration of effort, how important that we should take advantage of this in the arrangement of schools! How ridiculous, that the teacher must be occupied, now at the duties of the abedarian, or with a class in the elements of reading or arithmetic, anon, with some advanced pupil in higher algebra or mathematics, or mayhap Homer or Virgil; or, what is far worse, but too common nevertheless, in attending to two or more of these duties at once. As well might we require an individual to manufacture his five thousand pins per day, while his utmost exertions were requisite to produce fifty, as expect the teacher to perform his duties to the best advantage while he is encumbered with pupils at such different stages of advancement, and engaged in such an endless variety of studies.

It is true, that in a new country, men are forced to adapt themselves to the circumstances in which they are placed,—and while in some of the most thinly peopled districts of the province, it may still be necessary for the farmer to be his own blacksmith and shoemaker, surely, where no such necessity exists, he must be a madman who engages in such a variety of occupations. Let us therefore, while we acknowledge and lament the necessity which in some country districts still forces the teacher to forego this high vantage ground, see to it, that, wherever it is practicable, a proper gradation of schools shall be made, each teacher having pupils at, as near as possible, the same stage of advancement. Thus the valuable time and talents of the teachers of our land will no longer be frittered away in an endless diversity of employments.

In connexion with this branch of our subject we may add that the attainment of a thorough gradation in schools is by no means so difficult as many imagine. In most of our country villages two or three teachers are already engaged; in some, a much greater number. In such places nothing but indifference can prevent the successful grading of the schools.

And even in the rural districts of the province, a proper appreciation of the benefits resulting from a systematic division of labor might work wonders. The great obstacle is the unwise desire to subdivide the districts, until each half dozen families have a school for themselves. So long as this continues, it will be impossible to obtain any very general advantages from gradation. Let each school district be six miles in diameter, with a properly built and equipped school-house in the centre, and three, or at least two qualified teachers employed, and a new impetus will be given to the cause of education which will be felt and acknowledged through the length and breadth of the land.

Another great result of this movement would be a lessening of the cost of education, for, while one individual cannot do justice to a school of twenty pupils, at all different stages of advancement, three can, with all ease, do thorough justice to ten times that number, when graded into primary, intermediate, and high departments, each grade pursuing simultaneously the studies adapted to its stage of advancement. This