

## II. Papers on Practical Education.

### 1. PERIODICAL EXHIBITION OF SCHOOL LABOUR.

By an "exhibition of School Labour" we do not mean a collection of the various books, apparatus, &c., used in the elementary school, but the periodical bringing together of the *bond fide* productions of the schoolroom; the unvarnished results of our ordinary, every day school labour; an exhibition of our writing, book-keeping, home-exercises, examination papers, drawings, needle-work, together with any other results which school procedure can furnish, calculated in any degree to supply matter for the educator's consideration and guidance.

As far as we are aware, no effort has hitherto been made in this direction, and yet in other departments we have long been familiar with such agencies, and know full well the immense advantages they have secured. Look, for example, at the periodical and permanent exhibitions of machinery and manufactures; at those of the horticultural and kindred societies; our galleries of paintings, and many others. All these tend to the same end, and, by the information they convey, the extensive comparisons they enable us to make, the valuable suggestions they supply, their constant stimulus to experiment—issuing in new inventions or improvements—the attention they arrest, the ardour they awaken in the pursuit of science and art, and the constant advancement they insure, all make their utility evident and their value to be acknowledged.

But it seems not to have occurred that an equally practical and powerful influence for good to the cause of education lies within the teacher's scope and reach in following a course precisely analogous, although it is not to be doubted that such periodic collections of school results, properly managed, would prove of the highest service in raising the standard of educational operations in thoroughness and utility. We cannot conceive of two, sincerely devoted to their work, bringing their school productions together for friendly comparison and criticism, without consequences of the highest practical importance to themselves and schools, much more were a number thus to co-operate. The differences—no less in the kind of productions, than in degree of attainment—which would be brought under notice, would be sure to awaken inquiries of the utmost value. The circumstances under which they were produced; the methods employed; time devoted to each or any particular branch; amount and kind of assistance; social character of the scholars, &c.; such would be the kind of inquiries set on foot, with a host of others springing out of these, until minor points bearing on the teacher's whole school-life and procedure would be arrived at. Nor can we imagine a richer treat to an earnest-minded teacher than to find himself and his work in contact with his brethren and their work—comparing, inquiring, gaining and giving hints for future guidance.

There would also be much of silent suggestion, as well as of rebuke, in such periodic collections. Surely a teacher, whose disinterested and conscientious discharge of duty had, in spite of untoward circumstances, secured greater results than another more advantageously placed, would read the latter a lesson far more eloquent than words, and one more likely to be permanently operative; and he ever frittering away the present in dreamy anticipation of the future of bettered circumstances, ere he can do his part in life's work, would be made much wiser by the fruits of one talent rightly employed. In short, much of character would be read, and such an exhibition would exert a powerful moral influence.

Not a little would be done to correct the bad taste evidenced in much of our school procedure. Take, for example, the subject of drawing. How much of what is opposed to good taste and sound progress prevails in our schools in relation to this branch of instruction? What indefinite procedure! What waste of time! What poor results! And could anything contribute more largely to rectify these evils than the comparisons which would here be made? Productions of acknowledged merit setting forth a procedure in harmony with true pedagogical principles, would be sure to influence the course of other schools, and the sound be placed in the best possible position to supplant the unsound. Information respecting the books studied by the teacher, or used by the scholar, would be sought for, the spirit of the educator's success would be caught, and the work of improvement thus proceed.

Teachers often complain that their meetings are tame, uninteresting, monotonous, and not without reason. Certainly the meetings of the various associations are not remarkable for their crowded attendance. This is readily accounted for, and such a step as is advocated would, we believe, go far to remedy this, whilst it would immensely add interest and value to such meetings. One can easily imagine a similar lack of interest in a meeting of manufacturers, to discuss the question of machinery, wollen and broadcloths, without the machines and fabrics before them; and how much more suggestive and profitable such a conversation would prove in the presence

of these to look at and handle. In the one case all would lack certainty and interest. In the latter there would be everything to awaken and sustain it—all to suggest and guide their deliberations, to give directness and certainty to their conclusions, to awaken inquiry, to incite to further investigation and experiment; and thus the results of laborious thought and patient effort would permeate every nook of the land, adding to national character, prosperity and wealth. Just so would it be in the work of education, were the results of our school labours brought periodically together in the way proposed.

The benefits arising from such operations are, perhaps, nowhere more strikingly seen than in the exhibitions and gatherings of the Agricultural Society. It is difficult to conceive how agricultural improvement could be effected without these. Not only is there brought into a focus the actual condition of agricultural science, but all that begets and stimulates the agriculturalist's reflection in considering methods of tillage and other operations, with regard to the nature of soil, the circumstances by which he is surrounded, the employment of capital, and the creation of wealth. And who expects to see the next Exhibition a mere repetition of the former? Will there not be change—improvement—totally new inventions—fresh questions to discuss and weigh? And the fact that such a court of presentation exists is sufficient guarantee that talent and skill will be ever enlisted to rear the standard still higher.—G. C. Drew, in the *English School and Teacher*.

### 2. MILITARY TRAINING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

We observe that a portion of the Annual Report of the American State Superintendents of Public Instruction is devoted to the question of the introduction into their public schools of a system of military training. The same question is exciting considerable attention elsewhere.

Governors Andrew, of Massachusetts, Curtin, of Pennsylvania, and Morgan of New York, have each recommended it for legislative consideration in their messages; and in different quarters it has been the subject of resolutions and inquiry by local educational boards. The Mayor of Bangor, Me., has already introduced the military drill in the schools of that city, under the authority of the Common Council, the educational authorities of Upper Canada have also introduced it into the Normal and Model schools, and in many private schools and academies in this State it is advertised as a rare and attractive inducement to parents who wish to combine physical with mental training for their children.

There could be nothing more healthful as a physical exercise, or more exhilarating as a recreation, than is presented in the school of the soldier. A gentleman who has paid much attention to this subject in England states that a practised drillmaster thinks pupils may be drilled as early as at the age of five years. The joints are then more supple and more capable of being properly trained than at the age of adolescence. Besides, what is learned in childhood is not only better learnt, but rarely ever forgotten in after life.

The N. Y. State Superintendent truly says that a few minutes taken each day from the hours of school, for the purpose of going through the simple evolutions of military practice and the manual of arms, beside affording needed exercise and recreation, would fix those habits of prompt and concerted action, that ease and facility of movement in combination and mass which would be the best possible preparation of a citizen soldiery for the sudden exigencies that have befallen us. If it be true that the child should learn that which he will have occasion to use when he becomes a man—and the proposition is too self-evident for denial—then, in view of the service which the citizen may be called to render in defence of his country, does that preparation which will make such service more effective, become an important consideration in the training of the child?

The Superintendent leaves to the Assembly to determine "how far such exercise may be profitably introduced into our smaller country schools;" but with a view to the demand which is likely to be made for teachers competent to instruct in this important branch of training, it has been introduced as a regular exercise in the Normal School. Legislative bodies, however, are invariably slow in the adoption of untried measures, and we do not look for favourable action upon this proposition at the present session.

We would therefore suggest that the principals of our public schools organize a class for their own instruction, and employ a competent tutor. In a fortnight's time they could acquire a sufficient knowledge of the art of military training to amply qualify them for the post of instructor in their respective schools. The advantages of the exercise would soon be apparent. The monthly examinations would include a military parade out of doors, and the pleasing novelty of such affairs can well be imagined. The schools would soon be numbered by companies, regiments and brigades, and every graduate of these nurseries of the army would be qualified to lead a column in the field. We