

JOURNAL OF

Upper



EDUCATION,

Canada.

VOL. XV.

TORONTO: AUGUST, 1862.

No. 8.

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MILITARY DRILL IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

So much attention has during the last year been devoted to the subject of military drill in the public schools, both in England, in the Northern United States, and in Canada, that we have felt it desirable, for the information of parties concerned, to collect together some articles on the subject, and publish them in this number of the *Journal of Education*.*

The school authorities in these several countries have sought many ways to promote this patriotic object, and public opinion has more than sanctioned this innovation on the quiet routine of daily school life. Those who have given most prominence to this new feature in school management, have done so chiefly for two important reasons. The first reason is that military drill is designed to foster in the youthful mind a love of country and its institutions, and a disposition to defend them in the most skilful and effective manner to the very last. The other reason—which has a direct practical bearing upon the well-being of the school itself—is, that nothing else is so well adapted to secure those habits of obedience and discipline in the schools as military drill *per se*.

Lately in discussing this matter with a prominent American educationist, he remarked that the introduction of military drill had already affected a most salutary change in the discipline of American schools. Order had been more generally established in the schools; and that fatal defect in American juvenile character—disobedience and disrespect for authority—had received a most salutary check. Everywhere he had found that teachers were most anxious to establish a system of military drill or gymnastics in the school, not so much for military purposes as for its beneficial effects upon the discipline and *morale* of the

* See also articles on this subject in the *Journal* for June.

school. The very habit of prompt obedience acquired by the pupils while under drill insensibly affected their whole conduct in the school-room, and rendered their government there comparatively easy and agreeable.

The subject of introducing military drill into our Canadian schools has been more than once under the consideration of the Educational Department for Upper Canada as well, we believe, of that of Lower Canada. In February last, a letter was addressed to the Department on the subject, which we give below, together with the reply to it. The writer observes:—

"The passing events of the day call forth the energies of minds capable of grappling with it. During this lull in the excitement on the war question, it strikes me that there might be something done in the way of preparatory drill in our already very excellent common schools.

"What I would suggest is, that an amendment be added to the present common school law, during the present session of Parliament, making it one of the qualifications of male teachers to learn the rudiments of infantry drill, either by joining a volunteer corps or by attending the Normal School; so that the teacher might be able to drill such of the youth of our country as are above the age of ten years. It would be a very healthful, useful and lively exercise for them; and it is now certain that we must of necessity become a military country for our defence. This plan would, I think, assist the teachers in their school discipline. If it were carried into effect, we would see, in a few years, we should have great numbers drilled and prepared, at no additional expense to the country, and ready on a very short notice for any emergency. I do not say they would be perfect in drill, but they might be taught to face right and left, to march, and to form fours deep; and being taught while young, they would never entirely forget it hereafter.

"While writing, reflection brings to mind the impulse of my youthful mind, about fifty years ago (about the time the French threatened to invade England), how warm I felt against them when I saw the English volunteer militia on parade at that time. The same ardour now animates my breast, for I go to drill every week, and have no doubt in my own mind of the same attachment of the youth of our country to their native home if they are well trained and employed. I may remark that I saw the students of the higher schools at drill when I was young; and as the common schools of our country constitute the bone and sinew of it, why not prepare them for any future contingency which may arise in the country. Perhaps by changing