

wood-work for the upper classes, and let us ask in all sincerity whether, under such conditions, the primary school would not better answer its object than it has done hitherto. Our schools are places for study, workshops for intellectual labour, say our opponents; but, the question is not in the least settled whether the school ought to be exclusively occupied in intellectual development, and whether it is only by books that it should afford preparation for social life.

If we admit in principle that manual work would be of indisputable utility in the school, it still remains for us to ascertain whether its immediate and complete introduction into our Belgian schools would be expedient. In our opinion we should do better in this respect by following the example of neighbouring countries where this instruction is promoted as much as possible without the direct intervention of the State, and so to bring it to pass that it shall become a matter of custom without violently shocking received ideas. Above all, it is for philanthropic societies to take the thing in hand, and to erect workshops where a child would be able to practise several hours a week, so that he could be spared the sad trials of apprenticeship. It is above all on the population of our great towns that the duty rests of setting an example and of introducing this instruction, were it only into a few schools, to prove to those who are prejudiced against it that this work may find a place in every educational establishment. Moreover, the professional schools, the special object of which is to train good workmen, should receive our boys of from twelve to fifteen years of age, and should allow them the privilege of intellectual and technical instruction at once. This, at the same time, would be the best means of retaining the child the longest possible time at school and of placing him in an apprenticeship as late as may be; two very suitable methods of raising the moral and intellectual level of the masses of our people.

As we have already said, the general State regulation for normal schools and for primary normal sections, contains the following proviso: "A workshop for manual labour will be established in every normal school for the training of teachers. The scholars will there practise, during certain hours of recreation, the setting-up of simple and easy apparatus for the demonstration of instruction in the primary schools. . . . Manual work is conducted during leisure time—namely, two hours a week for pupils of the first two years of study and one hour for the rest."

Manual work has, then, in point of fact, its appointed place in our normal schools, and, what is more, this instruction is obligatory there. The pupils who are now attending the normal school classes will constitute, therefore, in two or three years' time, the vanguard of a staff capable of giving practical instruction in manual work, and who, I am convinced, will hold manual work in high esteem. This introduction possesses still another peculiar advantage for the normal school students themselves, for it cannot be denied that, for those whose intellectual faculties alone are in operation, bodily exercises are a happy counterpoise to this protracted mental strain. They will therefore find in manual exercises a useful and healthy gymnastic for body and mind.

The objection will perhaps be raised that the pupils of the normal schools already have so much to do that it would be cruel to rob them of two hours more of their leisure. Let us not make a mistake; manual work possesses so many attractions for the young people who are occupied with it that they will regard the hours spent in the workshop as the pleasantest of their pastimes. I have myself had proof of this in the normal school at Brussels. Last summer I gave the second-year pupils of that establishment a course of pasteboard-work and carpentry. The lessons were given on Saturdays, between the hours of 1 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon; that is to say, during the only half-holiday. They were left entirely at their own will to attend or not at these lessons, and, in spite of that, I had but one absence to record from the 1st of April to the 6th of July.

Instruction in manual work in the normal schools cannot, however, be left to chance. To yield fruit it must be conducted under the direction of an able and devoted professor, and should consist of a series of graduated and useful exercises. The pupil should never rest content with work that is badly done or unfinished. As soon as disorder begins to get the upper hand in the workshop, the instruction ceases to bear any fruit. Finally, every pupil ought to have an idea of the quantity and of the value of the materials consumed during a certain period, and to render an account of the use he has made of them.

When the pupils in the normal schools shall have practised regularly two hours a week for their first two years, they will be able, during their third year, to dispense with assistance, and even to render aid to the younger scholars.

In normal schools where the means of establishing a workshop are completely wanting, it should not be forgotten that many occupations, such as pasteboard-work, and wood-cutting, and carving, may easily be carried on in an ordinary class-room or in the play-room. Efficient organization of this instruction, therefore, need meet with no serious obstacle. Even in the girls' normal schools such occupations as pasteboard-work, plaiting, and modelling would be thoroughly in their right place.

But, then, it still remains to find men capable of giving instruction in manual work. It is evident that, in a few years' time, a large number of young teachers will be able to undertake these lessons. For the present, the best example to follow will be that which has been employed so successfully in neighbouring countries—the organization, namely, of temporary courses. The different tools necessary for a course of this kind might then easily be employed in the normal schools of the country.

We conclude with these words of M. Hermann Pergameni: "The study of manual arts is not only useful to those who will by-and-by have to live on the work of their hands, but it is of general interest, since it contributes to produce equilibrium with intellectual toil, and happily supplements the work of gymnastics. In fine, it familiarises children with the various domains of human activity, and it is capable of becoming a precious source of recreation and of enjoyment."