

V.—*The Want of Industrial and Practical Education in Irish National Schools.* By Charles Dawson, Esq.

[Read Thursday, 23rd April, 1896.]

THERE is no doubt that the Irish people are behind the rest of the world in industries, and there is a concensus of opinion that the reason is the unindustrial and impractical character of our primary education. With regard to the first point there is no need to quote proofs. The flood of foreign-made goods, and the comparative absence of Irish ones is obvious to all. As to the second, as an introduction to this paper, I shall quote three eminently typical and trustworthy authorities. In his address to the Society for the Revival of Irish Literature, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy says:—

“I lived for a quarter of a century in Australia, and there rarely came a ship into the port of Melbourne that did not bring me letters of introduction with young Irishmen who hoped to make their home in the new country. Some of them were as bright, intelligent young fellows as ever I met in the world, *but they* were wholly untrained in any business. They had no *profession* and no *trade*. Multitudes of them sank to be waiters in hotels and cabmen. The man who had a trade prospered in a wonderful manner.”

In his evidence before the Select Committee on Irish Industries, in 1885, that eminent Irishman, Dr. Wm. K. Sullivan, late President of Cork College, said, in answer to question 14:—

“I think there is a general want of practical education as respect almost everything, but especially as regards industrial matters. The National Schools have directed the population mainly to literary matters. The whole tendency of the National education has been disastrous in that respect as diverting the people's attention altogether from practical subjects. I am sorry that the majority of the young men prefer to be clerks or anything in which they were not called upon to labour.”

To the testimony of these two distinguished authorities I shall add that of a practical and clever man. Mr. Jolly, the President of the Cork Trades, a shrewd Northern, said at the Trades Congress held in Cork last year:—

“To judge by the present provision for intermediate and higher education in Ireland, it would seem as if all the youth of the country were destined to be clergymen, physicians, lawyers, or civil servants. Industry has certainly no place in it, and it is not a factor in the discussions on education which perpetually go on.”

In the address I have before quoted from Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, after showing how other nations developed their resources by industry, says:—“A little book which told this great story would be a boon to our people.” Not being able just now to tell this story of the success of other nations, I thought I would, at least, try to tell what appears to me one of the great reasons of the backwardness of our own, namely, the not only useless but positively obstructive system of National Education. I omit reference to voluntary schools as I have no statistics regarding them, and in reviewing the National School System I shall deal chiefly with boys’

schools, as those of girls are far better catered for, both by the rules and by the actual teachings. My case shall rest *entirely on the reports of the Inspectors*—capable and educated gentlemen—whose criticisms and suggestions, if carried out, would have long since reformed the abuses of which I complain.

Mr. Fitzgerald, A.B., in a paper read in Trinity College, in 1881, said the Inspector's report is a document "written by experts for experts." I agree to the expertness of the Inspectors, but I demur to that of the Board, constituted as it is mainly of gentlemen more fit to ordain the curriculum of a university than the training of the artizans and labourers of Ireland. I give far more credence to the significant announcement at the head of each appendix of reports of Inspectors, which is as follows:—

"The Commissioners desire it to be distinctly understood that they do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions expressed in these Reports, nor do they feel called upon to adopt any suggestions they may contain."

Indeed it is quite clear from the continued complaints of the Inspectors that their reports are utterly discarded. But *cui bono*, therefore, the preparation of these voluminous Blue Books. One good has, however, arisen, their careful preparation and their publication enables a person, like myself, interested in this question to lay before a statistical society the following quotations from their pages. I go back for three years. In their report for 1892, on the Training Colleges under local management, Messrs. Purser and Headen say:—

"We cannot say that drawing was successfully taught. The other extras are more or less *ornamental* as they are seldom taught in the National Schools."

One of these ornamental subjects is handicraft. When drawing and handicraft are neglected in the training of the teachers, the report of Mr. Newell, Inspector of the Cork, Limerick and Kerry districts, cannot surprise us, he says:—

"Drawing is, no doubt, receiving some more general attention, and proficiency is improving in it. Still, the standard which has been reached is not a high one, nor is drawing taught in any large number of schools. We must look to the training colleges for teachers qualified to give instruction, and many years must elapse before the use of the pencil is taught in the majority of Irish primary schools."

And yet every one knows that drawing is the foundation of most mechanical operations. That eminent pioneer of industrial education, Sir Philip Magnus, says:—"I have suggested that drawing should be taught generally in public elementary schools." His suggestion has been carried out in Great Britain, where drawing is no longer an "extra" but an obligatory subject in the national schools. Referring to the absence of industrial training for boys, Mr. Newell hits a blot in the National system—namely, the absence of any effort to adapt the teaching to the practical requirements of the locality; for he says:—

"In schools near the seaboard especially, but indeed anywhere, net-making, long and short splicing of ropes, and other nautical matters, also of use to every handy person, might, I think, be a useful occupation."

I cannot find that any notice has been taken of this suggestion, How little importance is attached even to commercial education may be gathered from the fact that Mr. Newell refers to book-keeping as an *extra* branch. Mr. Downing who has charge of the important district of Donegal, Londonderry, etc., has to report that drawing is an optional subject, and he makes this significant remark :—

“It is a fact that in this province, where the people are so intensely practical, comparatively little importance is attached to industrial training in the schools, the prevailing idea being that as the children can be left but for a very limited time at school, the main portion of that time should be devoted to literary instruction.”

Literary instruction appears to be paramount where industrial education should hold the first place. But not only is industrial training ignored, but practical business training for this commercial province is imperfect, and of it, Mr. Downing writes, that he learned from the employers “that the boys who go into offices have tedious methods of calculation.” In this state of affairs who then can blame the boys sent out to manufactories and to learn business, the first without the barest elements of industrial training, and the others into offices without quick process of calculation. It is not their industrial and commercial ignorance we ought to be surprised at but even under such difficulties at the success attained by their own unaided brains and hands.

That the want of industrial training is felt by the employers of labour is evident, for Mr. Downing says :—

“By the employers the *necessity* for having drawing, mechanical as well as freehand, more generally if not universally taught, was very commonly and very strongly urged. The boys who go to carpentry, he says, might be, I am told, more expert at mensuration, and have acquired *some* familiarity with the rule and tape.”

Here is the condemnation of the National System in a nutshell. The future operative or clerk gets no chance. The apprentice goes ignorant of the first principles of manual training to his trade. The clerk, slow and inaccurate to his desk. The whole thing looks like a huge conspiracy against the material progress of the people. And to these annual intelligent and fearless demands for reform from educated gentlemen like the Inspectors a deaf ear is turned. It must be said in justice to the Inspectors that the faults of the system do not lie at their doors. Mr. Downing tendered the following practical advice :—

“The optional or extra subjects to be introduced should be selected for each school by the manager purely on the ground of their usefulness to the pupils. No teacher should be permitted to introduce any inappropriate branches, merely with a view to results.”

But this is exactly what they do. For here again the State system comes in. It places the reward in Ireland on the most impractical subjects and the teachers are forced to cultivate these and neglect the useful. Mr. Connellan, Inspector of the South Dublin and other districts, says in reference to industrial training, “handicraft is not taken up in any school,” and as for commercial training in the district containing portions of the Metropolis, he has to say, referring

to book-keeping, "In city schools it is, of course, more important than in country schools, and *yet* it is not generally *intelligently* or *usefully* taught." It must be remembered this is the report of an eminent Inspector of the failure in the Metropolitan district of Ireland of the National System to impart either industrial or commercial training, Mr. Hamilton whose district embraces the manufacturing districts of Belfast, Lurgan, etc., thus referring to the teaching or rather the "treatment" of drawing, says:—

"Considering its value and importance as an introduction to technical training, I should be glad if it were taken up universally. In some of the schools drawing is carefully and successfully taught, in others the teaching is perfunctory and ineffective. In some schools the teacher, so far as I could see, did nothing beyond sharpening a pencil occasionally. At a certain hour the drawing copy books were handed round, the pupils drew a line or two, found generally that the lines were wrong, used the indiarubber energetically, and presently at the end of half an hour, hustled the books away."

It is quite evident, as remarked by Mr. Newell, that the teachers themselves have not been taught this essential portion of education, and cannot, therefore, impart it. In the Antrim and Armagh district, Mr. Duggan says, referring to the industrial programme—"I find that the operation of the System is a dead letter in this district."

Mr. Browne, reporting on the Omagh district, says of Book-keeping, "it is not extensively taught, but it is *sometimes* neatly done and fairly understood." He adds "Arithmetic is, on the whole, fairly attended to, though exception may be taken to the method of teaching it. Working sums by rule appears to be the practice, learning principles and reasons, and *mental calculation the exceptions*; whereas the mental calculations are the real basis of all arithmetical work." His report of the teaching of writing is equally unfavourable. "I cannot," he says, "record any marked change in the penmanship of the district. Careful imitation of the headlines in any series of copy books would lead up in a short time to a good hand, but this imitation of the model requires *somewhat* more trouble than most teachers are disposed to give." In fact the impression conveyed from a perusal of the inspectors reports is that the primary fault lies at the training colleges. Inspectors, teachers and pupils are the victims of an imperfect and unsuitable system. Before dismissing Mr. Browne's valuable report I wish to quote the reference he makes to a want existing in his district, and, unfortunately, very generally throughout the National System. "A little drill," he says "is much needed in some schools; the pupils often do not walk firmly, speak distinctly, or obey orders promptly." Other Inspectors complain of the want of physical drill even more strongly than Mr. Browne. For instance, Mr. Connelly, Inspector of the Youghal district, says.—

"It were much to be wished that in at least the larger boys' schools some drill were practised, and that wherever a drill sergeant was available his services might be employed. But," he adds, "avocations like these to which there is no specific result payment attached, cannot, I fear, be contemplated."

Here is the running sore of the National System which demoralizes

teachers and sacrifices the pupils. The necessary practical subjects are unrewarded, and naturally, therefore untaught. Mr. Connelly has, however, one cheering reference in his report, it is to the promotion of "Savings Banks," but unfortunately this reform, like everything useful, is only to be found in the girls' schools. Speaking of the system, the inspector says:—

"It owes its origin to the influence of the Bishop of the Diocese (Dr. Sheehan). The movement was begun in the middle of December, and one month after it was taken in hand; in March, 1893, there were thirty-three depositors."

I cannot pass from the subject of Savings Banks without referring to the use which similar funds are applied to in other countries, and to which they could be applied to in this. The savings are deposited in the Post Office at a low interest in this country. A writer of a remarkable article in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review* of 1893, on "Ireland of To-day," refers to the fact that "The Post Office Savings Bank has an aggregate Irish capital of (at that time) £3,974,968, working out the unfortunate result of not contributing to Irish industrial development." And yet the Congested Districts Board is crying out, not for a few millions, but for thousands to open up and develop the resources of the country on land and sea. Continuing our quotations we find, according to Mr. Connellan, book-keeping is not well taught:—

"It never seems," he said, "to have occurred to the teacher that a boy can learn ten times faster through his eye than his ear, and that by drawing out a sample of each of these accounts upon a blackboard he could have taught more book-keeping in five minutes than he was doing in half-an hour."

But then arises the question, who teaches these teachers? If they are not taught to teach it is the blind leading the blind. These extracts are painful, but I must add that of Mr. MacMillain, of the Wexford district—and this in 1893:—

"Few indications of intelligent knowledge or judicious training are noticeable," and he concludes "only pitiable bewilderment, and the hopeless dullness and stupidity, almost everywhere to be met with, could be the outcome of such a course."

But in Ireland how can we expect capable people from such a system and such training in the year 1892. Coming to the report for 1893 the head inspectors, Messrs. Purser and Headen, say as to the training colleges, with regard to drawing and handicrafts:—

"As a rule only a moderate number of students presented themselves for examination in any of these subjects."

This means, in plain terms, that these bread-earning subjects are completely neglected. And continue these eminent head inspectors:

"Drawing as it forms so excellent a mental training, and is, moreover, one of such practical utility in every-day life, ought, in our opinion, to be treated as an essential subject for a teacher."

It is not yet so ; for the encouragement hitherto given to it has not, the inspectors report :—

“Improved the proficiency in the subject, or indeed, induced many teachers to give in to it. It is to the teaching given in the training colleges that one must look for teachers competent to conduct classes in drawing effectively.”

And this is the verdict of the Inspectors of these very training colleges. The reports of District Inspectors for 1893 are not more encouraging. Want of punctuality is a great obstacle to industrial progress in Ireland. We all know this well. How it is provided for in the national system will appear from the words of Mr. Connellan, reporting on the Dublin, Tipperary, and Kilkenny districts—

“Although there is an improvement to be recorded as to the morning attendances of the pupils, there is still much to complain of in this respect. I fear, he continues, the *eleven o'clock* rule for marking the Rolls has, in some measure encouraged, or at least contributed to this evil. For it is an evil, whether we consider the loss of the pupils' time or its effects on their character. It would be idle to deny and wrong to hide that the Irish lower classes (these are the inspector's words) set little value on time. It is, therefore, doubly wrong to encourage the idea that pupils who are in attendance at eleven o'clock are *supposed* to be in time, although the business of the school begins *nominally* at *ten o'clock*.”

This commentary needs no comment. A board of education thoroughly appreciating the wants of a bread earning people would put a high premium on this virtue in preference to the many subjects picked out for reward. Mr. Connellan pleads like his colleagues, but pleads in vain, for the obligatory teaching of drawing, it is, he says “by far the most important of the extra branches taught in Irish national schools, I hope it will soon be classed amongst the obligatory subjects.” We shall see further on, that even at this moment this recommendation has not been carried out. In his report on the Dublin, Meath and Queen's County schools, the Head Inspector makes this melancholy remark, “most of the teachers are earnest and attentive but many are deficient in skill, *and totally ignorant* of what good teaching is.” This is written in 1894 of the system in 1893, and it must be true on such authority as Mr. Purser. What can be said except that the whole system is a farce. In the same report Mr. Purser says—“book-keeping is a subject taught only for the result fees payable for it, and as it is learned, of little practical value,” and continuing his remarks he reminds the “board” that “drawing ranks amongst extra subjects, but ought to be made an ordinary subject as it is in British and foreign schools.” It strikes me that the board which persistently rejects the recommendation of men like Mr. Purser, *if indeed these reports ever come under their notice*, must be forgetting that it has in its hands the training of the artizans and labourers of Ireland, and imagines that it is only concerned, as the president of the Cork trades said, with the educa-

tion of professional men and Civil Service clerks. Mr. Downing, writing of Donegal, Derry, and Tyrone District says:—

“I regret to be unable to record any marked improvement in point of skill. I do not see it. In most cases I find the lesson given to be rambling, and devoid of method.”

Evidently, according to the almost unanimous opinion of inspectors, the art of teaching is not taught. Mr. McClintok, referring to that all essential requirement of an industrial people—punctuality, reports—

“Another point which might be noted is the want of punctuality on the part of a large number of the pupils. Not only do they attend intermittently, but when they do come they arrive so late so as lose the first half hour’s instruction. I find *teachers* occasionally conniving at this evil by not commencing the day’s work *till after ten o’clock.*”

There is no doubt, therefore, that from this and the other instances the inspectors report, the evil of unpunctuality is absolutely encouraged in the present National System of Education. Did an appreciation of their functions exist amongst the directors of a people’s training, it is on such a habit as punctuality they would place a substantial reward, instead of on some abstruse and, to the multitude, useless acquirements. The teaching of an industrial and business character is, as we have seen, at a low point.

Mr. Bateman, in the Limerick district, has also to complain of unpunctuality on the part of teachers who were to train monitors—the future teachers. Mr. Bateman reports and complains that out of 118 schools, drawing, the only approach to practical training, is only taught in eleven schools. But if the responsible body which has the national education in its hand, is backward in promoting industrial teaching, there are, fortunately, in Mr. Bateman’s district, some people who are doing much to promote useful and industrial training:—

“The Ahane Schools,” he says, “owe no little of their efficiency to the great interest manifested in them by the patron and his daughter. A penny savings bank was established in 1892; Ninety-three pupils are depositors. Miss A. E. Bourke, in addition, has had for many years a wood-carving class for boys. As the class is limited to eight she has constantly to refuse applications for admission. After some time, if a boy is careful, and has bought for himself (at a reduced price) a tool or two, he is allowed to take home his piece of work to work at of an evening; for the work when finished he is paid a small sum.”

Here we find a country rector and a lady doing what the board of a great National System seem unable to perform. Mr. Smith, reporting on the Clonmel district, after criticising the manner of teaching of book-keeping as useless, referring to another most important matter, has to complain of—

“The untidy appearance of the schoolroom, the straggling late-comers, the throwing of caps and shawls into an indiscriminate heap, the unkempt appearance of the pupils.”

In another district Mr. Daly, reporting from Dunmanway, has to say on the same subject of want of order and cleanliness:—

“It is distressing to see many fine buildings shorn of the attractions they would otherwise have, by the all-pervading presence of disorder and dirt.”

The inspector does not include all, but makes this statement:—

“In these schools to which I refer as exceptions, the chief difficulty lies in combatting the teachers obstinate colour-blindness. *He*, I use the pronoun advisedly—cannot be made to see that dingy boards could, under other circumstances, be made to look white, that walls, clouded over with anything but a pale cast, call almost aloud for the sweeping brush and the lime bottle.”

So far for the inspectors' reports for 1892 and 1893. In that for 1894, the appendix to which has only been lately published, there does not seem much promise of reform. Nearly all the subjects touching on industrial training are still left extra or voluntary. Even that essential drawing, after all the appeals of the Inspectors, is thus dealt with by a Board charged with the education of the artizan classes:—

“We do not consider that the circumstances of our schools at present would warrant us in making drawing a compulsory subject, *as it is to a large extent in England*, but we should be very glad to see it more extensively taught in the National schools than it is at present, as it is a form of instruction which is most appropriate for elementary schools.”

Was there ever anything so self-condemnatory? Most appropriate, and yet left to chance. I have quoted Sir Philip Magnus' opinion as to the necessity of the teaching of drawing, let me add that of Herbert Spencer, one of the best authorities on teaching:—

“The spreading recognition of drawing as an element of education is one among many signs of the more rational views on mental culture now beginning to prevail.”

How the board has regarded the annual representations of the inspectors on this matter may be gathered from the joint report of the head inspectors of the training colleges, Messrs. Purser and Headen:—

“Drawing should rank amongst the ordinary subjects of the school programme. Yet at the last July examination only a small percentage of the Queen's scholars, in their final year of training, succeeded in obtaining a certificate of competency to teach drawing. This is not encouraging.”

In the schools, no more than in the colleges, is there much improvement in 1894. Writing on that important subject Arithmetic, in the Dublin district, Mr. Purser says:—

“In my last report I referred to some defects in arithmetic observed during my visits to schools; this year's inspections have confirmed my observations. No part of the programme is well taught if it does not pay—*i.e.*, carry a fee. Tables pay and they are attended to, but mental arithmetic is unnecessary, because the pass is given on slate and paper work.”

Mr. Downing's report from Londonderry, dated 1st February, 1895, there occurs the following:—

Whilst anxious to do justice to the schools, and to avoid under-rating the value of the good work that has been done, I feel that much more is reasonably possible in the future, and consequently I regret to be unable to record any new development, any enlargement of the scope of usefulness of the schools. No new subjects of instruction have been introduced, no improved plans have been devised, *little or no* advance has been made in industrial training, no *increased attractiveness* has appeared.”



How wide apart is this system thus reported on from the ideal of Herbert Spencer, who referring to a great teacher, said :—

“Much of his power (Peralozzi’s) was due to, not to calmly reasoned-out plan of culture, but to his perfect sympathy, which gave him quick perception of childish needs and difficulties.”

And he continues—

“As a final test by which to judge of any plan of culture, should come the question, does it create a pleasurable excitement in the pupils?”

Mr. Downing complains, like many of the Inspectors, of the want of punctuality in attendance, and continues :—

“More important still is the training of the children in deportment, good manners, and neat and orderly habits; very little is done in these directions. There is very little attempt at drill, and consequently both boys and girls stand in clumsy attitudes and walk awkwardly.”

He also evidently observes the want of industrial training, for he says :—

“It seems, therefore, worthy of consideration whether some impetus might not be given to the introduction of *manual* instruction, by allowing the option of substituting for grammar and geography of sixth class an adequate amount of hand and eye training.”

One useful and needful reform, the School Savings Bank, receives, in 1894, but scant encouragement. Mr. Steele’s report of Dundalk district may be taken as typical of all Ireland, except Waterford, where the Bishop, Dr. Sheehan, has fostered it with care. Mr. Steele says :—

“The establishment of School Savings Banks too has been a failure as far as this district is concerned, only one such bank, to my knowledge, having been established.”

Again, this year, Mr. Newell, of the Westport district, has to say :—

“Handicraft is, I regret, taught only in one school.”

Evidently if it were success would attend the effort. For he continues :—

“At last examination about twenty-five pupils were presented. All appeared to like the work and acquitted themselves satisfactorily. At first the teacher had a good deal of difficulty to contend with; he had to provide the various appliances. Since then, however, he has had the satisfaction of seeing his efforts rewarded.”

Mr. Headen, head inspector, reporting on Dublin :—

“Drawing, which is the foundation of all technical education, should be taught in every primary school. As a training of the hand and eye it is superior to any other method available.”

And yet in the face of this opinion of a head inspector, the board regards its teachings as not necessary.

The quotations I have submitted from the reports of the inspectors, which had I the time, could be much supplemented, prove unquestionably that our national system of primary education is wholly unindustrial and largely impractical.

Justice is done neither to the intellectual or physical capacities of our people, and if we are behind the rest of the world in industrial progress the fact is due, not to the incapacity of the people, but to the utter unsuitableness of our primary education.

With the voluntary primary schools I have not dealt, and there are no official reports on which I could depend, but from my own observations, I have come to the conclusion that many of them are, under the inducements of the intermediate results, drifting from their natural role of educating an industrial race, into preparing a select few, on whom all attention is rivetted, to acquire the information necessary to win prizes in high-class literary subjects, whilst the vast majority who are destined to compete with other nations and earn their bread by the cunning of their brains and hands are comparatively neglected. Things are different elsewhere.

In other countries the system of national primary education is far more industrial. To each primary school on the Continent and in the United States is attached a workshop. There the boy who draws a cube or a square is required to make one—he who draws a vase is made to mould it. But we have examples of successful primary teaching nearer home. These are afforded us by the Scotch parish primary schools. According to Sir Charles Gavan Duffy in Ireland “we learn little thoroughly and little of a useful or re-productive character, and we commonly pay the penalty in a lower place in the world.” “As far as I am able to judge,” he says, “Scotsmen are not gifted by nature with qualities superior to those of Irishmen, but in more than one country *I have seen Irishmen performing some of the roughest and most mental offices in gangs directed by Scotch overseers.* And why? No intelligent man has any doubt of the cause. For nearly two centuries Scotland has had excellent parish schools, where children of the industrious population get a practical and *religious* education at the cost of the State.” Before I quote from the Scotch Code I wish to add the words spoken the other day by an eminent statesman on these very schools; Mr. A. J. Balfour said:—

“Not only do you find as under my knowledge a school board which has a Presbyterian and a Roman Catholic school supported out of the rates, but in addition to that even though the School Board in Scotland may have provided a sufficient number of places for every child in the parish, *still if there be thirty children of different denominations to the majority, who desire a denominational teaching, they have a right to claim the public funds, and to erect a school which shall be supported out of the public funds.*”

This being always my view of justice in the matter of education, I am glad to hear it proclaimed from a source at once so eminent and so powerful. But let me point out in contrast to the account of our Irish system how the Scotch Code not only provides for freedom of religious teaching, but insists upon industrial and practical training. One of the first conditions is that “the *education must consist chiefly of elementary instruction.*” For to my mind there appears to be some confusion of terms in applying the word “technical” to any instruction in the primary stage of education. The teaching in that stage should be a general training of the brain and hand and eye.

The “technical stage” comes after when that general knowledge is to be applied to any particular manufacture.

I was glad to see how clearly His Excellency, The Lord Lieutenant, put this difference the other day when he said :—

“In the opinion of one school of thought on the subject, technical education consists of in so training the mind and fingers of youth as to make them more receptive of any future technical education they may receive in the later stages of life.”

And I was also glad to find that His Excellency leans to that school of thought which would give that general industrial training in the primary school. Now my proposition is that the present National Schools, do not afford that general industrial training, nor does it inculcate those habits which would create that *receptiveness* to which Lord Cadogan referred.

Instead of the Inspectors' reports, as in Ireland, being formally disregarded by the authorities, the Scotch Code says :—

“The grant may be *withheld*, if, on the Inspector's report, there appears to be any serious *prima facie* objection. One Shilling and Sixpence is granted if the Inspector reports that the organisation and discipline are excellent, or One Shilling if he reports they are good. The *higher* grant will not be recommended unless *drill* or some other form of physical exercise approved by the Inspector be included in the curriculum.”

How different this from the indifference of the Board in Ireland to the reports of the Inspectors on these very points.

Another most important point in the school education code is the admirable manner laid down for teaching the Gaelic-speaking pupils. Not only is the teacher remunerated, but under section C, article 19, it is laid down—

“In districts where Gaelic is spoken, the intelligence of the children examined under any paragraph of this article may be tested by requiring them to explain in Gaelic the meaning of any passage read or recited.”

And a note is added—

“Gaelic may be taught during the ordinary school hours, either by the certificated teacher or by any person employed for the purpose.”

I did not find in the Irish reports any such instruction for the Irish-speaking pupils being thus taught. And the outcome is that the pupils seldom receive any intelligent knowledge. In the same article, No. 19 orders that :—

“Some form of *educational manual work* to be taught in connexion with drawing.”

I have shown how in the Irish system, whilst the manual work of the needle is made obligatory in female schools, there is no manual work made compulsory for boys. The Scotch Code, on the other hand, lays down the rule :—

“The scheme must provide for their suitable instruction during the time in which the girls are taught needlework.”

The teaching of the teachers in Scotland is better than in Ireland, and in addition there is a term of probation. Candidates, says article 51

“For certificate, after successfully passing the examinations in second year papers must, as teachers continuously engaged in the same schools, *obtain two favourable reports* from an Inspector, with an interval of one year between them.”

Here, then, in Scotland, at our door, this eternal primary education question appears to be settled. Religious teaching is unfettered; teachers are taught, and pupils are sent out physically and mentally equipped to fight the battle of life. I shall conclude by hoping that in the present State Schools, and in *any aided by it* in the future, the same excellent provision for the training of the Irish pupil may be introduced *and enforced*, as in the Scotch schools.

NOTE.—Since the above paper was finished three remarkable evidences of the inability of our present system of National Education to educate the people in literary or industrial matters have been made public.

The first is the vast number of illiterates voting in Ireland at the last election, as compared with those in England and Scotland.

The second is found in the following words of Mr. Justice O'Brien at the last Cork assizes:—

“It has been to me—taking a survey of many of the counties of which the Province of Munster consists—a means of arriving at the conclusion that though there are many causes that interfere with public prosperity, *there is none which occupies such a predominant part in that result as the want of industry in any community.*”

The third is the admission of the teachers at the Cork Congress, that the result system is injurious and that industrial training is neglected.

Surely this is a grave question, worthy not only of the attention of this Society, but urgently needing the prompt action of the responsible government.

---