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"MANUAL TRAINING."

A Paper Read at the Carleton County Teach-  
ers' Institute, by Miss A. Gertrude  
O'Brien.

It is not my purpose to consider Manual  
Training as a specialty or even as a subject,  
rather as a method of teaching.

From the derivation of the word "educa-  
tion" we know that education in drawing or  
leading out, not pouring in.

We will then consider our Manual Training  
room as a place of training not teaching.

As Sestalazzi says: "education is the har-  
monious development of all the powers."

We know the hand and brain are the most  
important powers and more than that, that  
they are natural allies; hence their need of  
being trained together. The mind speculates,  
the hand tests the speculations by the law of  
practical application. The hand explodes the  
errors of the mind, for it inquires by the act  
of doing whether or not a given theorem is  
true. The hand is therefore not only con-  
stantly searching after the truth but con-  
stantly finding it.

Ruskin says: even by the strictest atten-  
tion it is not possible to give complete or  
strict truth in words. We could not by any  
number of words describe the color of a  
ribbon so as to enable a dealer to match it  
without seeing it: but an accurate colorist can  
convey the required truth at once, with a tint  
on paper.

It is also possible for the mind to indulge  
in false logic, to make the worse appear the  
better reason, without instant exposure.  
But the hand to work falsely, is to produce  
a mishapen thing, which in its very construc-  
tion, gives the lie to its maker. There the  
hand that is false to truth, in the very act  
publishes the verdict of its own guilt. The  
hand is less the guide than the agent of the  
mind, we might say it is the mind's moral  
rudder, its balance wheel. A false proposi-  
tion in the abstract, may be rendered very  
alluring but a false proposition in the concrete  
is always hideous.

One of the chief aims of Manual Training  
is the discovery of truth. "To know the  
truth, we must do the truth." We cannot  
follow out a long train of reasoning without  
committing results to paper by the agency of  
the hand; because the compliment of thinking  
is acting.

We should not separate the idea from its  
object. To scorn things is to disregard facts,  
and disregard of facts is contempt of truth.

Nearly all school methods of the past have  
developed a one brain power, they have trained  
the mind to received knowledge and let it  
lie in a passive state. All knowledge should  
seek expression. Heretofore in our schools  
we have had but three ways of expressing  
knowledge, by speech, by drawing, and  
writing. To these is now added Manual  
Training.

Manual Training consists of kindergarten  
work clay modelling, paper cutting, card-  
board construction, wood-working, drawing,  
metal work, etc.

The kindergartn comes first in the order  
of development and leads logically to the  
Manual Training school. "As the child is  
father to the man, so the kindergartn is  
father to the Manual Training school."

The same principals underlie each. In  
each it is sought to generate power by deal-  
ing with things in connection with ideas, to  
form the child, not to impart knowledge.  
Both have common methods of instruction,  
and can be applied to the whole period of  
school life and applied to all schools.

Our work deals primarily with the trinity  
of education, will, body and emotion, or head,  
hand and heart, three H's rather than three  
R's.

The natural desire of a child to run about  
and be active gives a starting point for all  
educational principals. How often mothers  
say in speaking of their children, "They will  
not be still." It was never intended that  
they should be still.

What a child wants to do within certain  
bounds, that is spontaneous action and is the  
really valuable part of education. It is quite  
evident then that any subject or method  
which provides educational activity will de-  
velop the mind in the proper way. We  
cannot have a healthy mind without a healthy  
body because movement or exercise is neces-  
sary for growth.

The school should be the garden where the  
child grows, the teacher the gardener who  
tends the plants and supplies the materials  
for their growth and development.

It is not natural for most young children  
to love books. The power of giving attention  
is often seriously weakened by the efforts of  
teachers and parents to compel children to  
attend to things that are not interesting to  
them. Now I do not mean to say that school  
work should be sugar coated. Their work  
may be very difficult and yet so interesting  
that they will overcome all obstacles with a  
good will. There can be no developing at-  
tention without genuine interest. Real  
things are interesting to children but even real  
things lose their interest when they are used  
in school to be examined or studied. We  
claim that Manual Training develops the  
power of attention.

The very nature of the work calls for the

boy's undivided attention. He recognizes  
this himself in a dim way, and feels if he  
allows his attention to wander he will come  
to grief. He is really not aware that he is  
giving attention he is interested and attends  
unconsciously. It never occurs to him that  
he is being educated. The work seems to  
him largely for his entertainment. He is  
thinking constantly and in an orderly way.  
His brain is being exercised and hence de-  
veloping. He is happy in his work because  
he is exercising his individuality, and we  
know happiness is a very important element  
in moral development. Thus his brain, hand  
and soul form an invincible triple alliance.  
The brain informs the muscles, thought  
directs every blow, and thus there is harmony  
between his trinity of powers.

One of our first aims in Manual Training  
is to gain habits of accuracy and truthfulness.  
It brings to mind the old adage "So an act  
and reap a habit." In the early days of the  
course the boys will frequently bring up  
their work and say "Is that good enough?"  
They are invariably sent back to find out  
with square and rule, whether or not it is  
good enough. They must learn to exercise  
their own judgment, see for themselves, and  
the truth that right is a little better than  
just about right is forced on them. It kills  
the habit of well enough. Things must be  
done well and thoroughly for the truth of  
them.

Accuracy, definiteness and exactness are  
the fundamental constituents in character.  
They are the essential element in truthfulness.  
I know of no other school work which so  
completely reveals the importance of  
accuracy, definiteness and exactness.

Its plans and calculations must be definite,  
its measurements and drawing must be ac-  
curate and its work with saw and chisel and  
plane must be exact in order that its finished  
product may be perfect. The effort to pro-  
cure exactness in material products helps to  
make these characteristics dominant in a  
child's life. When a boy forms a good piece  
of work he is incidentally aiding in the  
formation of a good character.

From this habit of doing things orderly  
and truthfully comes a conscious power over  
the material world. Froebel says:—God  
created man in his own image, therefore man  
should hover over the shapeless and move it  
that it may take shape and form a distinct  
being and life of its own. This is the high  
meaning, the deep significance, the great pur-  
pose of work and industry, of productive and  
creative activity.

Let us now consider Manual Training as a  
factor in training the observant powers.  
Children rarely look definitely at anything  
without a definite motive. They examine  
most definitely when the motive is their own.  
In examining definitely they develop judg-  
ment of size, form and the relationship of  
parts to wholes and this forms a good basis  
for mathematical culture. From the powers  
of attention and intelligent observation he  
gains the power of reflection and concentra-  
tion.

If a boy is trained to observe and think in  
an orderly way along a certain line it must  
give him power to think and reason along  
kindred lines as well.

For instance:—In making a certain model  
the boy becomes familiar with a certain kind  
of wood. He asks the name of it. By work-  
ing with it he finds out certain characteristics.  
He compares it with other woods and in his  
mind is fixed perhaps a difference between  
hard and soft woods. He begins to look  
about the home to see what the different  
pieces of furniture are made of and how they  
are made. He associates the wood with the  
tree from whence it came. He is soon  
familiar with the tree. He knows its leaves,  
its general form, the appearance of its bark.  
Probably the other trees about attract his  
attention. He notices their characteristics.  
His observations gradually broaden, until all  
real things have a keener interest for him.

We as teachers know how important this  
intelligent observation is. We can all readily  
recall to mind two of our boys, one bright,  
intelligent and observant, the other careless,  
indifferent, lacking interest and ambition.  
One seeing things the other looking at them.

How often we notice the country lad who  
has had no such chance as the city boy  
coming out far ahead of his fellow students.  
Why do we find this? I should say first because  
of his closeness to nature and the practical life  
he has led. He has been working about with  
father, imbibing unconsciously a knowledge  
of things. Life is more real to him. He  
has more real wholesome things to think  
about, more that he is interested in.

Rousseau says:—Man should think like a  
philosopher but work like a peasant.

Further we claim our work trains to habits  
of patience and perseverance. A boy's first  
mistake is perhaps his first lesson in patience.  
Probably that mistake means from a half  
hour to an hour or more work that he will  
have to repeat. It seems lost time to him,  
but we know it has been well spent. When  
he sees his fellow students doing work in ad-  
vance of him it is surely an exercise of pati-  
ence on his part to repeat the work. One  
boy out of about twenty may be satisfied  
with his first piece. Usually they come out  
and ask for a new piece saying "I spoiled  
the other."

To prevent utter discouragement we do  
not allow the quicker boys to get too far  
ahead. A course of extra work models is  
furnished so that the quicker boys may have  
work to do while waiting for the slower  
workers. These extra models are really a  
repetition of exercises in models they have  
done before, but in a different form.

The boy should not be guarded too closely  
from mistakes, if so, he is being deprived of  
his power to stand alone. Mental help in  
his work may be worse than physical help.

We gain confidence from success it is true  
but we also gain confidence from failure but  
not from repeated failure.

Following perseverance we gain independ-  
ence and self reliance. The boy battles with  
real difficulties overcomes them and imbibes  
unconsciously the power of self reliance and  
of doing. He is independent. He is a leader  
and we know how much better it is to have  
the boys leaders than followers.

We say still further, Manual Training in-  
culcates a respect for manual labor. Once  
he appreciates the difficulties of certain tool  
operations he shows an added respect and  
even admiration for the man skilled in the  
use of tools.

The greasy mechanics of the 18th and 19th  
century did more to hasten the worlds pro-  
gress than all the statesmen of all dead ages.

But what a life they led, toiling away many  
hours each day for a shilling or two, living in  
stuffy hovels, often without any education  
whatever, scorned and despised, but their  
names are treasured and honored now.  
Makers of books today are groping about the  
old shop where inventors of the last century  
worked and cottages where they lived in  
order to tell the simple story of their lives.

It is clearly then to the men who made  
things that we are indebted for progress in  
civilization not to men who made laws. In-  
ventors not statesmen rule the world.

Before closing we might speak of the  
majesty of tools. To realize the potency of  
tools it is only necessary to contrast the two  
states of man. One without tools the other  
with.

In the first state naked shivering with cold,  
now hiding away from the beasts in caves,  
famished and despairing, creeping stealthily  
like a panther upon his prey.

Then see him as Carlyle says: "Man is a  
tool using animal, he can use tools, he can  
devise tools. With these granite mountains  
melt into light dust before him. He kneads  
iron as if it were soft paste. Seas are his  
smooth highways, winds and fires his un-  
wearying steeds. Nowhere do we find him  
without tools. Without tools he is nothing,  
with tools he is all."

What a picture of the influence of tools  
upon civilization. It is through the use of  
tools that man has reached the place of ab-  
solute supremacy among animals. As he in-  
creases his stock of tools he recedes from the  
state of savagery.

Will not future generations marvel at us?  
With the knowledge we have of the influence  
of tools upon the destiny of the human race  
as depicted by Carlyle, is it not astonishing  
that we have been so slow to incorporate tool  
practice into Educational methods. Hamme  
says: The distinguishing features of civil-  
ization sprang as definitely from cunningly  
devised and skillfully handled tools as any  
effect from its cause.

We so often hear of the want of continuity  
between the school and after life. When a  
boy's school course is over, he is not asked  
what he knows but what he can do. His  
occupation is chosen for him without regard  
to its fitness. How often we see people  
doing the things they are least fitted for,  
doing these things indifferently never heartily.  
There are many misfits in the world and  
misfits are cheap. Prof. J. W. Robertson  
in an address once said.

Manual Training enables a boy to find  
himself and supposing it did nothing else it  
deserves a place on our school curriculum,  
Closing we may say Manual Training deserves  
a place in our school system, not because it  
fits men and women to earn a living, not be-  
cause it teaches trades; but, because it gives  
more power, not to mould material things  
but to mould humanity, not to give manual  
dexterity, but to lead to creative activity,  
not to make things, but to make better men  
and women.

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