

# DOMESTIC SCIENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS

An Excellent Paper Read by W. R. Campbell, M. A. Principal Truro Academy at the Annual Session of the Teachers Convention Last Week.

Education is something more than the three R's of school work. It is more than books and school books are but the means of handing down the accumulated wealth of the past. The aim of Education is twofold. (1) the imparting of knowledge and (2) the development of all the faculties and qualities of the child and the formation of character so as eventually to give to the world a fully developed intelligent man or woman, one fitted to take his or her place in the community, self dependent, active, with true ideas of life and our relations to life. The sphere of Education is to give knowledge and power or perhaps better to give neither knowledge nor power but citizenship through both. It includes every duty of man to man in his social, religious, political, and business relations. It should make for character, for ideal citizenship, for the highest type of social living. It has to do with developing minds and intellects, minds with their growing likes and dislikes; minds with their growing tendencies to good and evil; minds free to choose the good or the bad. In our modern system of Education with our many and excellent text books and our well defined courses of study I fear that the true aim of Education is sometimes lost sight of. We endeavor to teach this subject or that subject or some other subject to crowd into the minds of our pupils the contents of a course of study and overlook the fact that it is the child that is to be developed, trained, a child whose character is to be formed, whose future destiny is largely in our hands. Books and courses of study are but means, and very often but a small part of the means which a teacher should employ especially in the training in our lower grades. Some one has said that the pupil is not a blank book in which to develop a system of knowledge but a living organism that must assimilate its food. Here is one of the great

mistakes we make, especially new teachers, the efforts to cover a course of study against a future examination. In order to bring about a proper development or proper training the teacher must not remain content with books alone, he must have access to all nature. As teachers we should never forget the fact that before us are a hungry mind and restless bodies longing to be satisfied, we must also remember that they have not the power of application, the ability to "stick to it" in any marked degree. It is only by interesting them, by leading them step by step, that we can develop this power of application until eventually they become "habits of life." Hence the need of interest in school work.

Mental studies alone fail to bring about a full or proper development, we see this in the student of mature years who shuts himself up to his books, we soon have a one sided man. In the child the same is true excepting that they are wiser than we and secure out of school much of that training which should be systematically given in school.

They teach a child to think without acting, one part of the child is being developed to the neglect of the other. The child to be properly developed must be taught to do as well as to think. The hand must be taught to carry out what the eye observes, and the mind suggests. We learn by doing. By this observing, reasoning, doing, the child is taught to think well and to act well and the result is the harmonious development of all the faculties, mental, moral, physical. The learning of any good thing and the endeavor to apply it carefully to thought and conduct, has a good effect in character, it strengthens it, and refines it. Education begins with life and only ceases when life ends. The period of school life so called should not differ in its widest sense from the period that goes before or that follows after, our whole life should be one of thinking and doing. The period of child life is preeminently of this class. Observe a child, you will find that he is always active, busy, listen to his questions and you will find that he is thinking, many of his questions are not the meaningless prattle of the child. His life is as real to him as ours is to us. His game, his play, his house of blocks, are all real things, his joys and his sorrows are as real as ours only less lasting. It is in these very activities of the child that our hopes lie. It is here that the foundation of Kindergarten is laid. Kindergarten has for its object the training and educating of the child through his senses and by means of those objects and materials with which he is familiar. It is briefly speaking, directing his play so as to make it a means of training, a gradual leading from the known and the familiar to the unknown. By laying a proper foundation in kindergarten work the whole after education of the child becomes much easier. During the period of school life proper this ideal of an all round training is almost entirely lost sight of. It is supposed to be the period of thought and study, unfortunately it is too often the period of loitering, of growing repugnance to books, of mental inactivity. Emerson said books are only good as far as the boy is ready for them. He sometimes gets ready very slowly. You send him to the latin class but much of his education comes from the shop windows. He hates his grammar and loves his gun, fishing rod, and horse; well, the boy is right; and you are not fit to direct his bringing up if your theory leaves out his gymnastic training. Archery, cricket, fishing rod, gun, boat, horse, are all educators.

In other words a proper training must be an all round training, one which appeals to the better instincts and nature of the child and produces a harmonious development of the whole being.

The period of school life should be as active as any period of our existence. The best endeavours of the teacher should be put forth to stimulate an interest in everything and through this interest should come development, growth. Plants, rocks, birds, everything which appeals to the child should be the field of work, remembering always that it is not how much we teach of any subject but how we use these things to train the whole being.

As I said the foundation of education lies in the kindergarten methods. It is the natural development of the child. It should be followed up with different forms of practical hand and eye work in all the grades, systematic, graduated educative through.

It is with the object of furnishing a thorough practical training to pupils that manual training and domestic science are now being given a prominent part on the curricula of so many of our schools. It is simply the giving to our boys and girls a practical hand and eye training by means of those materials which are most easily secured and which appeal most directly to every child, for boys wood and tools, for girls sewing, cooking, household science.

Regarding manual training I shall not say anything. This work has already become part of your course.

We have not advanced the price of our tobacco. Amber smoking tobacco, Bobs, Play chewing tobaccos are the same size and price to the consumer as formerly. We have also extended the time for the redemption of Snowshoe Tags to January 1st, 1904.

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Regarding Domestic Science as part of school work let me say a few words. (1) It is intensely useful and practical. (2) It is educational. (3) It appeals directly to every girl (and hence is stimulating.)

(4) What in all the education of our girls is more important than that they should know something of the home and the cares of the home, how to sew, mend, cut, and make simple garments, that they should know something of the foods that support our bodies, how best to buy these foods, what foods are the most economical and at the same time best adapted to the support of the body, how to prepare, cook and serve such foods, what foods are most nourishing and what ones least nourishing why some foods are better cooked in one way, others in another. Then there is the care of milk, butter, cheese, water, ice, meat, etc., and the frequency with which these are adulterated become means of transmitting disease. Equally important is the subject of heating, lighting, proper ventilation, general hygiene. Then there is the selection and care of clothing. How if not through the schools are our children to get a proper knowledge of these things.

The subject of household economics too is a question that is of the utmost importance to every one of us. At the present time the cost of living is increasing with alarming rapidity, while in many cases the income has not increased at all. In the United States the cost of living from Dun & Co's., reports has increased 40% within the last three years. In Canada from statistics recently, quoted in the House of Commons the increase, has been 15%. This is well within the mark. If this be true, and it is true then the schools have a new problem before them, namely the study of the care of living so that there may be a proper ratio between income and expenditure; the practical study of the economics of household science.

Another fact equally potent confronts us. As the present time over 50% of our girls leave school and go directly into teaching or into shops or offices as bookkeepers, typewriters, seamstresses, or in some one or others of the many positions opening up for women, and never know anything of home work or home life until they return to homes of their own. (How then are these girls to get any idea of the science of household life or the economics of household work unless it is made part of their school work.) The result is that many of our young women enter on the duties and responsibilities of life ill fitted for almost anything else than for general housekeeping and with a knowledge of almost anything else but household science. They have not been taught these things in the homes as their mothers were, because their time was given up to school work, music, etc., and when school days were over other matters claimed their attention. Does it not seem a little strange that we should spend so much time in geometry, algebra, geography, etc., and yet not spend even one hour a week in teaching our girls needle work, or domestic economy. Would there not be just as much education and much more practical good done by if some of the time were spent in teaching the girls sewing, mending, cutting, fitting, cooking, heating and ventilating of houses, selecting of goods, setting of table, etc., and would not such a training be of the greatest importance in its effects in the future homes of many of our children. Art, science, literature, everything must bow before the genius of the woman who has the art of good home making. Again this work is educational. None on the course more so. Take for example the work and the methods of conducting the work. Some particular group of foods e. g. cereals is to be studied. The lesson may be wheat. The plant is first studied in its habit of life and growth. In this we have nature study. The chemical composition of the food, here we have chemistry, then comes the careful measuring, mixing, chemistry and physics, then, and by no means the least important, the effects of the foods upon the body.

The mathematical side of the work must not be forgotten. Each girl must compute the cost of each particular dish on the basis of the market value of the material used. Pupils are required from time to time to make drawing of roots, fruits, plants, animals, showing different cuts of meat, short sketches of their work must be written occasionally thus aiding in their general composition.

Accuracy and thoroughness are the two great principles of such work. The lack of these are the two most marked defects in our school work at the present time. Everything used in a practice lesson must be accurately measured, carefully mixed, the result clearly observed; and the reason for everything explained. There is no chance work, no luck. A child must know that a little too much or too little is as fatal to the best results in household work as in computing an exercise in mathematics. By this means the child is taught accuracy, neatness, observation, carefulness of detail. Hand, eye and mind, are all occupied and are all working in harmony.

Has it occurred to you that of all our members the hand is the most badly trained. It does our bidding the poorest. Did any ever try to saw a board perfectly straight, throw a stone, trim a hat neatly cut a garment or try to make your left hand do what your right has been in the habit of doing. If so you will have some idea of how your hand does what the mind suggests or the eye sees to be correct.

Hence it is educational, it gives training, it also appeals to the child. The kitchen, the model of neatness, order and cleanliness, this ideal grows upon them and finally becomes a habit, a practice in keeping it so. The materials which appeal directly to their nature the stimulating of interest, it dignifies household work, it places it as a science and it is a science the most practical of all our sciences, the most important, it stands at the foundation of the nation's safety, the health and happiness of the home.

Regarding the importance of this work

let me quote a few lines from the report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Lord Lieut. General and Governor of Ireland whose report was published about four years ago. This commission held sittings in Dublin, London, Birmingham, and half a dozen other centres in Britain and several places in Sweden and Denmark. The inquiry was the most exhaustive ever made into any place of educational work.

The report says "We may at once express our strong conviction that manual and practical instruction ought so far as possible to be introduced into all schools where it does not at present exist, and that in those schools where it does exist it ought to be largely developed and extended. We are satisfied that such work will not involve any detriment to the literary education of the pupils, while it will contribute largely to develop their faculties, to quicken their intelligence and to fit them better for their life work. We think it very desirable that cooking, laundry work, and domestic science, should be taught as far as may be found practicable in girls schools, needle work should continue to form an important element in all schools for girls.

Some of our reasons for coming to the above conclusion are the following. The present system which consists largely in the study of books is one sided in its character. It leaves some of the most useful faculties of the mind untrained. We think it important that children should be taught not merely to take in knowledge from books but to observe with intelligence the material world around them that they should be trained in habits of correct reasoning on the facts observed, and that they should even in school acquire some skill in the use of hand and eye to execute the conceptions of the brain.

Such training we consider valuable to all but especially to those whose lives are to be mainly devoted to industrial arts and occupations.

We have been told over and over again that the introduction of practical training has contributed greatly to stimulate the intelligence of pupils, to increase their interest in school work, and to make school work brighter and more pleasant, as a consequence the attendance is improved, children remain longer at school, and much time is gained for the purpose of Education.

We inquired if the literary side of school life had suffered. The uniform answer was that it had not. In some cases we were assured that they had been positively improved. The consensus of opinion by managers of schools, inspectors and parents that the value of Primary Education has been greatly enhanced by the change.

The consensus of opinions as given by the different head masters is summed up thus. It makes the children alert, it makes them more intelligent, it is entirely a training of intelligence, there is no getting off with guess work, it cultivates the power of rapid observation, it makes the children from the very first attach great importance to exactness, it goes to develop the inventive faculty, it is a relief to the children by varying the nature of their school work, refreshed and brightened by it, they have greater zest for their book work, it has been found an effective check in nervousness, it gives a dull child the chance of getting on the same plane with smarter children, and thus gives to dull children a useful incentive to exactness in other work of the school. It is popular with the school."

Prof. Campbell then gave an outline of the method of conducting the classes, cost equipment and cost of maintaining such a school. He also spoke of the rapid advances made in this work in the public schools of Nova Scotia during the last two years.

In reference to cost, he said that outside the teacher's salary, the cost of a Domestic Science School would be for equipment \$125, and for material 25c a year per pupil would be sufficient.

In speaking of equipment, he said that a foundry man of Nova Scotia was so interested in the work, that he has offered to donate a range suitable for the work, to every school started in Nova Scotia. He also said that shortly before leaving to attend the Convention, he mentioned the fact to this same foundry man, of being invited to come to P. E. Island, to speak on Domestic Science, and he was authorized to say that the same offer was open to the first school of Domestic Science started in P. E. I.

The further interesting announcement was made by Mr. Campbell, that if any from P. E. Island wished to take the training course in Domestic Science, given by the Truro School, that they would be admitted for a time on the same terms as students from Nova Scotia, viz: free tuition. The only expense attending the course would be board and cost of material used in the course.

FOURTEEN MONTHS IN BED.  
Long Period of Suffering of Mr. Kernohan at Last Brought to a Happy Termination.

GELERT, Ont., Sept. 29th, (Special).—Mr. Samuel Kernohan, of this place, was laid up for over fourteen months. He was very ill and five doctors attended him without any improvement in his unfortunate condition. Three of the doctors said he had "Floating Kidney" and that nothing could cure him. The other two said it was "Spinal Disease," but agreed with the others that his case was absolutely incurable.

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