

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Speaking at the Bristol Health and Nursing Conference, Miss Johnson, of the Swedish Institute on Physical Education, said it was impossible to over-estimate the importance of the subject of physical education. But what did physical education mean? To those who did not understand it, it meant development of the muscular system, but to those who did understand it, it meant much more. It comprised the whole of mental and moral education also. It consisted of an intimate knowledge of the sciences of anatomy, physiology, hygiene, chemistry, and physics; a serious study of all that related to heredity and environment, and the latest young advent into the scientific world, the science of eugenics. It gave to the character discipline, self-control, accuracy, uprightness in figure and in character, truthfulness and nobility of purpose, steadfastness and perseverance, presence of mind in danger and difficulty; it increased brain impressionability, sharpened the intelligence, steadied the nerves, improved the health, and established a sound mind in a sound body. The student of physical education must acquire a considerable knowledge of all physiological functions in order to stimulate or retard, in order to modify or to accelerate, in order to produce any desired effect by carefully-selected medico-manual movements.

She could only point out to them in the time at her disposal the basis of the foundations of her subject, worked out by the steady acquisition of knowledge, the patient gathering in of the results of experiments and of experience, the reverent following out of education and discipline and law.

She desired the audience to notice in the first living illustration (a wonderfully perfect Sailor's Hornpipe) the rapidity of movement possible to a trained co-ordination of brain, nerves and muscles animated by the suggestive imaginings of the great expanses of sea and sky, the breezes and motion of the ocean expressed by the navy in the hornpipe.

Miss Johnson afterwards showed how the training was achieved by the development of the muscle groups successively, with other physiological considerations regarding the respiratory and circulatory systems, &c. As the stage was small these movements were shown in a triangle by three illustrators, a marked feature being the extraordinary rapidity with which they replied to unexpected orders from Miss Johnson.

The next illustration was designed to show that it was possible to develop grace, some æsthetic movements being beautifully carried out by Miss Johnson's assistant, to musical accompaniment, to the great pleasure of her audience.

There followed some charming, bright, dignified and yet sportive old Swedish dances in the correct costume, as seen by Miss Johnson in the pine forests of Sweden on Sunday evenings, to quaint old Swedish airs.

SOCIAL UNREST.

Life is a riddle, who can doubt it?

If you know the answer you needn't shout it.

Many have answered it in their own fashion long before you were born.

"Ask on, thou clothed Eternity!
Time is the false reply."

Turn a few pages back in history, wiseacre of to-day, and read the views and dogmas of those who were fronted with the same unrest, trouble, and change that face this generation.

Carlyle is not read as much as he used to be, but in a volume of his Miscellaneous Essays I came the other day upon one entitled "Signs of the Times" (1829), that might easily have been written by a sombre, didactic, and self-opinionated philosopher of to-day. Except that there are references to the rumbling of the last echoes of the French Revolution instead of the dock strike, and men's minds are exercised by the repeal of the Test Acts and of the Catholic disabilities instead of Home Rule and the Insurance Act Carlyle might be criticising the trend of to-day's life and thoughts. He says:—

"Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of the word: the age which, with its whole undivided might, teaches and practises the great art of adapting means to ends."

With the space at his command—and the *Edinburgh Review* must have been a ponderous tome in those days to grant him so many columns—he elaborates his argument, enumerates with a kind of awe the, to us, clumsy though ingenious first efforts at controlling the great forces which have by now been so efficiently yoked for our service. The weaving-machine, the steamboat, "the Birmingham Fire King has visited the fabulous East"—the railway ("even the horse has been stripped of his harness")—"nay, we have an artist that hatches chickens by steam; even the very brood hen is to be superseded." (I must own that last sentence touched me personally very nearly.)

This leads him on to the change in our social system—the gathering of wealth in masses, the altering of the old relations between rich and poor—"a much more complex and important question for political economists than any they have yet engaged with."

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