

In Great Britain.—It is provided for by drawing being made a class-subject in primary schools; by optional special subjects taught in such schools; by introducing manual training into some of the larger schools for special classes of pupils who have passed the Sixth Standard; and by the Science and Art Department's work. In official reports (that of the Royal Commission on Technical Education, &c.) special stress is laid upon the importance of teaching drawing and agriculture; and as to free technical instruction, Professor Huxley is inclined to think that such instruction should be supplied free to the artisan population. In 1887, a Technical Education Bill for Scotland was passed by Parliament; and one for England and Wales was introduced into the House of Commons, and passed as far as the second reading, but was subsequently withdrawn to be re-introduced in the next session. During the discussion on the Bill it was argued that technical education would be well restricted to agriculture and to other subjects which are of a really practical character, such as practical plane and solid geometry, machine construction and drawing, building-construction, &c.

Ireland.—In no part of the British Empire has such complete and satisfactory provision been made for imparting technical instruction as in Ireland. There the Commissioners of National Education have made technical instruction an essential part of the ordinary school-course, and have agreed to pay for results in this as in other subjects. Workshops have been established in connection with the Marlborough Street Normal Schools, and the students are practically trained in handicraft. The idea underlying the Commissioners' scheme is, not to teach trades to pupils—that would neither be practicable nor desirable—it is merely intended to train the pupils in linear drawing, and in such practices of handiness as will enable them to learn trades with comparative ease and become successful in them afterwards.

OFFICIAL EXPLANATION of the LAW relating to the ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT of
PRACTICAL SCHOOLS of AGRICULTURE and FARM-SCHOOLS in FRANCE.

To the Director of the Farm-school of

SIR,—

Paris, 12th August, 1875.

A law of the 30th July, 1875, has just reorganized the practical elementary teaching of agriculture. While establishing schools of an intermediate grade between State schools and farm-schools, the law has permitted these latter schools to remain, and has even given them a new departure. Whatever may have been the opinion which has been formed respecting the utility of the instruction they provided, such of the schools as have withstood the tests to which they have been submitted have exercised a real influence for good upon agricultural progress, and we have cause to be thankful to them for the services which they have rendered, not only by the example they have furnished of a model system of cultivation, but also for the instruction given by them to their pupils. But, inasmuch as the old farm-school had no *raison d'être* in districts which were, from an agricultural point of view, most advanced, this type of school ought also to cease to be carried on under its original organization in certain departments in which its work has been accomplished, and where it has prepared the way for an intermediate system of instruction which the legislation of 1875 was especially designed to provide.

Farm-schools are recruited in a great measure from among the rural workmen, and this should be the case; for, on the one hand, the apprentices execute all the laborious work of cultivation which would otherwise have to be done by hired labour, and, on the other hand, the instruction does not there rise beyond the most elementary. The resources of these schools under this head are insufficient for young persons prepared to receive a more advanced education, such as the sons of farmers in easy circumstances, and of the small proprietors who are so numerous in our country. But, while the farm-schools cannot offer them what they have the right to demand, the State schools of agriculture are difficult of access, and too costly for a large number of people. Thus professional agricultural instruction of the high scientific character which is imparted in the State schools, and that having the exclusively practical direction which is maintained in the farm-schools, are equally wide of the middle degree of education which would suit a large class of cultivators—precisely that class, in fact, which can contribute most powerfully to stimulate agricultural progress. The principal object of the law of the 30th of July, 1875, was to fill this gap.

The schools created in pursuance of the 1st Article of that law will, however, preserve a practical character. The time in them will be divided into two nearly equal parts; the one devoted to a superior primary instruction, to which natural sciences and special courses will be added; the other being assigned to working on the farm. The teaching will not, however, be regulated in accordance with any uniform programme. On the contrary, the endeavour will be to render it appropriate to the cultural conditions of the different districts, and to make it, so to say, reflect the particular features of each. The same variety is also to be introduced in the programmes of the farm-schools.

There can be no doubt that an instruction thus constituted must have a considerable influence in perfecting the methods employed in the cultivation of the soil; and it is much to be wished, also, that the sons of small cultivators, once provided with a good primary instruction, may have the desire to acquire such knowledge as is indispensable to an intelligent and reasonable practice of the profession which they will one day exercise. If you consider, sir, that the time has arrived when you can advantageously transform your farm-school into a practical school of agriculture, such as is defined by the law, my department will lose no time in considering the question, and will gladly give you its support, under these circumstances, before the General Council of your department. Allow me to add that I earnestly look forward to the moment when this change may be effected, for I shall see therein the proof that progress has been realised in your neighbourhood. In the meantime the farm-schools will continue to be administered by the law of the 3rd October, 1848, with the exception of some modifications which I am about to bring under your notice.