I had the privilege last year of being allowed to spend several months of this busy year in examining an improved system of child education, by which girls who are taught the method at the training college at Ambelside can immediately command large salaries, and I am quite sure that those of my readers who have tried the system and the training have found that a delightful career has been opened up for them as widely differing from the evils of the old daily governess as can well be imagined. This time I have to acquaint my fair readers with another movement, by means of which those who like to be independent can comfortably and pleasantly earn their livelihood not by their brains so much as by their muscles. And here let me at once say that I do not in this the conclusion to the growing popularity of the theatrical profession, for the drawbacks that still surround it are so great that it cannot be recommended to any readers of this paper. I do not say that the strain is new, it is indeed very new, having been organised a little over one year ago, and only originating within the last decade; but as I am sure we all wish to be up to date, and as the movement is one of great importance, I propose to lay its features before my readers.

This movement is not only new but in the sense of being recent but in being novel. I have in my hand a very valuable book called The Cyclopedia of Education by Fletcher (Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., published 1889), and I search its pages in vain for any trace of the methods of training or the duties of teachers of physical education. In fact, though the word physical education occurs, not a word is said as to how it is to be taught or who is to teach it. And when I turn to training of teachers I find that these are exclusively teachers of the mind, those of the body being ignored altogether. And so on throughout the work, which in other respects is so valuable that I recommend any of my readers who have to do with normal education to get it.

Bain, indeed, went so far as directly to limit the word education to the training of the mind, saying that it did not concern itself with the body at all. We have, however, widened the use of the word now so effectually that the word physical education no longer sounds strange to our ears.

And it is indeed high time this phrase was coined, for the need of it is appalling. Let any one of my readers think of twelve girls of hormone age, and he will be sure to see that amongst them is one or more that are of distorted, dwarfed, or imperfect physical developments arising from causes entirely within the control of the parents.

Let her again think of these twelve, and if they are in any centre of activity she will find one or more who are suffering from overexcited nerves and from mental and physical distress unrelieved by physical exercise. At any rate, whether my readers can discover them or not in their own select circle, both types are familiar enough to me in dealing with overworked nervous and undeveloped bodies. It is said that one-third of our population are utterly deformed from purely unnecessary causes.

The changes too that have taken place since the establishment of high schools and recognised colleges at Oxford and Cambridge in valuing the mental and physical education of girls, of which the necessary strain needed to earn an independent livelihood, renders it at the same time increasingly necessary and increasingly difficult for us to develop the body and the physical powers to their utmost limits. The Greeks could well do this who never thought of mental development; but our ideal is to combine the perfect form of the Greek maid with the well-stored mind of the Girton girl.

The growing need, therefore, for physical development has caused a rapidly increasing demand for girls' schools for teachers of gymnastics and calisthenics both for boys and girls, but especially for the latter. Until the last year the way this demand has been met has been the most haphazard description. Various teachers of gymnastics, working in different ways and in diverse manners have sent out pupils of very varied attainments, but few of whom have had any real grounding in the construction of the body, in its real needs, and in how to meet these needs by appropriate exercises. In fact the rule of thumb is largely prevalent. But this is the age of the reign of law, and it was not to be expected that such a rising and popular and money-making profession would long be allowed to go on on haphazard lines.

When we remember that a growing majority of these teachers are young ladies, and that their pupils are still younger ladies, the importance of this subject to the readers of this magazine from every point of view is apparent.

We have lately seen in the case of the Royal British Nurse's Association, a very successful attempt to adopt a rule of thumb by the reign of law. Nurses are to be trained up to all sorts of standards, or to no standards at all. Since, however, this association has been incorporated by Royal Charter, and published its list of registered nurses, it is found to be the interest of every nurse to conform to its uniform requirements of a three years' course of training. Now the British College of Physical Education, under the presidency of Lord Meath, is seeking to do a similar work for teachers of calisthenics and gymnastics. Indeed, it does more, for it not only establishes a standard of excellence and gives a diploma of attainment, but it superintends the training and conducts the examinations. When we consider what a suitable career this is for young ladies to take up on account both of the pleasantness of the work and the liberal scale of remuneration, and when we see the demand for these teachers growing by leaps and bounds everywhere, from Board Schools upwards, we feel we shall best serve the interest of our readers by concluding this paper with a condensed account of the way to obtain a diploma.

The British College of Physical Education (52, Long Acre, W.C.), was founded (1) to provide a high-class instruction on the principles and practice of physical education based on our present knowledge of the structure and functions of the human body and the laws of health, and thus to enable persons of either sex to take up physical education. (2) Also to impart an elementary knowledge of the theory and practice of physical education to school teachers and others, who wish to combine the physical with the mental training of the young. (3) To prepare diplomas and to register qualified instructors; and (4) to promote physical education generally in the true sense of the word.

The result of these efforts should be to render physical education precise, ethical and scientific; to protect the public from incompetent teachers, and to establish the positions of fully qualified teachers on a higher and firmer basis, all of which greatly enhances the value of this profession as an opening for young ladies. Among the vice-presidents of the college are Sir James Crichton Brown, Rev. J. R. Biggle, Herbert J. Gladstone, Esq., Lord Beresford, Sir Richard Webster, Sir Spencer Wells, Lord Wosley and others; while on the Council are the directors of our leading gymnasia together with medical men interested in hygiene.

The college consists of members, licentiates and members of gymnastics, etc.

Licentiates are those who have passed the examinations of one college and receive its diploma.

These two classes are entitled to use after their names the letters M.B.C.P.E. and L.B.C.P.E. respectively.

Members are those interested in physical education, who may be elected by the Council.

Examinations are held twice a year, and it will be interesting for the readers to know that at the first examination four-fifths of the candidates were ladies.

Candidates are required to do both theoretical and practical work.

The theoretical work consists in an examination in Anatomy and Physiology, in Hygiene and Dietetics; in simple human measurements and the theory of physical education; and in first aid to the injured. For these a list of appropriate text-books is published.

Pupils who have passed at South Kensington are examined from a written examination on those subjects in which they have passed, and holders of St. John's Ambulance Certificate will not be examined in First Aid.

The second division is practical work, and for certain books are recommended; but practice and teaching in a recognised gymnasia are essential.

The examination is written, oral and practical.

The practical examination includes personal performance on the horizontal bar, the parallel bars, the rope, the vaulting horse, the inclined ladder, and in jumping. Also the teaching of a class before the examiners in drill and in mass exercises. In free movements, wand, drill sticks and Indian clubs.

Enough has now perhaps been said to show how easy it is for a young lady of good physique and fair mental power to enter this honourable and rising branch of education, and to earn an independent livelihood in a much more healthy and pleasant way than by entering diplomatic and underpaid arena of mental education.

Note.—Lists of books, dates of examination, etc., can be obtained from the Secretary B.C.P.E., 92, Long Acre, W.C.